DIALOGUE

A Journal of Mormon Thought

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

Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought is published quarterly by the Dialogue Foundation. *Dialogue* has no official connection with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Third-class postage is paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. ISSN 0012-2157

Dialogue is also available on microforms through University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1346 and 18 Bedford Row, London WC1R4EJ, England. *Dialogue* is indexed in the *ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Dr., 16th Flr., Chicago, IL 60606, email: atla@atla.com; website: http://www.atla.com; also by ABC-CLIO, 130 Cremona Drive, Suite C, Santa Barbara, CA 93117, website: http://www.abc-clio.com.

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Contents

Tolerance for "Cultural Mormons"

I appreciate William J. Hamblin's article ("There Really Is a God," 36, no. 4 [Winter 2003]: 79–87), and appreciate *Dialogue*'s publishing it. It is useful to see all sides of important issues—in this case, "Is the Book of Mormon authentic history or not?" Dr. Hamblin supports the literal historicity of the book and critiques another's support for a more recent origin.

I would like to comment on Dr. Hamblin's statement: "This is simply more of the same . . . from some cultural Mormons." The word "some" suggests that Dr. Hamblin doesn't himself think this way but that among *some* true believers a "cultural Mormon" is automatically a second-class member, barely to be tolerated and certainly not to be trusted.

One of my favorite scriptures is: "To some it is given *to know* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . . [T]o others it is given *to believe on their words*, that they also might have eternal life *if they continue faithful* (D&C 46:13–14; emphasis mine).

"To know" (to have a testimony) is a wonderful gift, but I take the second half ("continue faithful" to "have eternal life") to be an equally fine gift.

As a supportive and faithful (but also cultural) Mormon, I would simply ask those of you who have been "given to know" to accept those of us who have not yet received such knowledge but who desire to "continue faithful" in full fellowship in the Church. Those of us who live by faith alone have the same important spiritual, historical, traditional, family, service (and, yes, cultural) ties to the Church as those of true believers. True believers themselves often have strong cultural connections to the Church. That is one of the basic aims of the Church, wouldn't you say?

David G. Pace's essay ("Our Big Fat Temple Weddings: Who's In. Who's Out. And How We Get Together," (36, no. 3 [Fall 2003]: 243–53) cites a statistic from my *Sunstone* column ("Braving the Borderlands," No. 127 [May 2003]: 67–69) as follows: "It may suggest an option for that LDS population, eighty percent by some estimates, which is *excluded from temple worship*" (emphasis mine). The actual *Sunstone* statement was, "Statistics hint that as many as 80 percent of those baptized worldwide either leave the Church, are asked out, or move to

Group 3 [non-participators] during their lifetimes."

D. Jeff Burton
Bountiful Utah

Joseph, Peepstones, and Pirates

In his article "From Captain Kidd's Treasure Ghost to the Angel Moroni" (36, no. 4 [Winter 2003]: 17–42), Ronald V. Huggins links legends of treasure, Captain Kidd, and spirit guardians to Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.

If, as he says "murdered spirit-guardian ghosts . . . are in all probability the true small talk and old wive's [sic] gossip of the 1820's" (34), why attribute all that legendary nonsense to Smith instead of to ordinary community "small talk" where it belongs?

Huggins's primary error is relying explicitly upon biased anti-Smith "witnesses" as if the latter were infallible—including Willard Chase, an anti-Smith Methodist preacher and admitted peepstone keeper, whose sister, Sally, who shared the same home, peeped into her own peepstone by placing it into a hat to exclude all light in order for her to "see" visions and locate buried treasure. Indeed, Smith reportedly came to Sally Chase several times to ask her to "look" in her peepstone to find buried treasure (Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996-2003], 2:64, 65 note 3, 85, 87, 96–97, 106). Huggins cites Willard Chase twenty-three times in his article.

Apparently there is a professional "conspiracy of silence" never to mention nor acknowledge Smith's 1820 First Vision, which alone adequately explains Palmyra's early polarization into pro-Smith versus anti-Smith camps. It also explains the rise of various anti-Smith stories, Hurlbut's "affidavits," anti-Smith personal reminiscences, suppression of treasure-seeking by individuals other than Smith, the suppression of accounts of peepstone use by individuals other than Smith, neighborhood jealousies, criminal litigation, and latent and blatant religious animosities, especially among the professional clergy.

Perhaps, if we "all" ignore it, the First Vision will go away. Why must we repeat the obvious—i.e., that if Smith actually saw God and Jesus in the spring of 1820 as he stated, then all orthodox Christian clergy instantly become unemployable and most of their groundwork and doctrine becomes false. And the latter includes Methodist preacher Willard Chase (whose possession of a peepstone is, except for Vogel, never mentioned) and his "vision-

ary" sister Sally, Smith's purported mentor in "peepstone gazing" (Vogel 2:65 note 3).

In light of my recently published attack upon both the 1834 Hurlbut-Howe "affidavits" and the 1826 Joseph Smith "examination" (not trial) (*Dialogue*, 36, no. 4 [Winter 2003]: xi-xv), I must mention Huggins's erroneous interpretation (41) of the "fictitious record" testimony of Jonathan Thompson about the two quarreling Indians, one "*killed by the other; and thrown into the hole beside the tru[n]k, to guard it, as he* [Thompson, not Smith] *supposed*" (emphasis Huggins's). This quotation attributes nothing whatever to Smith *re* a "treasure guardian ghost." Indeed, it refutes Huggins's main thesis that the interred corpse was killed "for the purpose" of guarding the buried treasure. Even if the italicized statement purportedly by Thompson *were* attributable to Smith, it was simply a burial resulting from an apparently unplanned "quarrel," not an execution intended to produce a "guardian" ghost.

I call the "1826 examination" record "fictitious" simply because legally (and actually) it does not exist. The original is admittedly lost. Three alleged copies thereof disagree with each other about content. The provenance of each of the three divergent "copies" is murky and may involve criminal felony in removing the original 1826 record, if any, from the Chenango County Court archives. It is a felony in modern law to remove an official court record (especially a criminal record) from the courthouse. Not even Vogel has considered this possibility, so enamored is he of the Rev. Wesley Walters's 1971 discovery of Justice Neely's handwritten purely fiscal notes and Chenango County constable fiscal records, neither of which validates the content of the divergent copies of a purported 1826 nonexistent court "record." Without the original record, we have no basis upon which to evaluate the quality or accuracy of the purported "copies" thereof nor those who may have made them. All of the copies are plainly inadmissible as accurate records of what actually occurred at that 1826 "examination"—an examination which Smith plainly won.

Rev. Walters also removed in 1971 the newly discovered 1826 fiscal notes from their official premises without permission, but that doesn't concern me. What concerns me is that no one has faulted Miss Emily Pearsall, Judge Neely's purported niece who allegedly "*tore the leaves out of the record found in her father's house*" according to a statement made in

1886, some sixty years after the hearing (Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:239–42; emphasis mine). How did that purported "record" leave the official premises and enter Pearsall's "father's house"? Who was Pearsall's "father"? How did he obtain the purportedly original, official record? Not even Justice Neely himself, let alone some relative, would have been properly in possession of that "1826 record" outside the official court premises (and long after the events were final).

Huggins's reliance on dubious sources calls into question the link between Joseph Smith, peepstones, and pirates.

Gerry L. Ensley
Los Alamitos, California

Serving Two Masters

I stand by my critique of Mark Thomas's essay, "Form Criticism of Joseph Smith's 1823 Vision of the Angel Moroni" (35, no. 3 [Fall 2002]: 145–60). My critique was "Either/Or" (36, no. 1 [Spring 2003]: ix–xii). He responded to it in a letter to the editor titled "A Fictional Account" (36, no. 3 [Fall 2003]: vii–viii).

Thomas repeatedly characterizes my comments as a personal "attack" (vii). This troubles me. I did not "attack" Thomas. I *critiqued* his essay. On the contrary, I have a high regard for Thomas's work but was disappointed by this essay. Ironically, Thomas resorts to *ad hominem* attack in the form of sarcasm when defending his essay. This is nothing but an attempt to draw attention away from the real issues raised in my critique.

Thomas complains that I have misrepresented him on two points. The first deals with Joseph Smith's 1838 claim that the Angel Moroni in 1823 added the following words to Malachi 4:5: "Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet" (JS-H 1:38). These words are anachronistic to the 1823 setting and date to after Joseph Smith's and Oliver Cowdery's 1836 vision in the Kirtland Temple (D&C 110).

In the beginning of his essay, Thomas agreed with H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters that the words were added by Smith and said that "Smith placed new words in the mouth of the angel—not to relate history, but to address the theological concerns of Mormonism in 1838" (151). In juxtaposition with unqualified agreement with Marquardt and Walters, Thomas should not have been surprised that at least one reader concluded that Smith had intentionally added words to his account. How else is Smith to "address theological concerns" if not

intentionally? Near the end of his essay, Thomas explains that the words Smith added to Malachi were an honest mistake, that Smith "simply mixed up his own meditations on scripture with his previous vision" (160). I will leave to readers to decide whether the apparent contradiction is a product of my "remarkable creativity" or of Thomas's undisciplined writing.

Actually, consistency is less important than his implausible assertion that Smith had unintentionally added words to his 1823 vision. Thomas asks: "Who could possibly remember precise quotations after fifteen years?" (vii). Sounds reasonable, but that's an inaccurate description of what Smith did. Smith did not leave out information due to his inability to remember events that happened fifteen years earlier, but rather added details that were less than two years old. In fact, there is no evidence that Smith thought of his anachronistic reading of Malachi 4:5 before composing the 1838 history—so, for all we know, the added words were invented at that time. Indeed, how reasonable is it to assume that Smith mixed up a post-1836 interpretation of Malachi 4:5 with a story that by 1838 had taken form—even for Smith—through repeated telling? The inescapable conclusion is that Smith knew the added material was foreign, both to Malachi and his 1823 claims.

Form critics generally assume that anachronisms are intentional and assign motivations. In this instance, Smith's motivation was apparently a perceived need to connect his and Cowdery's 1836 vision of Elijah with the Book of Mormon. Indeed, by 1838 several of Smith's early followers—David Whitmer, for instance—had apostatized and become critical of his hierarchical innovations. By making Moroni predict Elijah's restoration of priesthood keys, which placed Smith and Cowdery indisputably at the top of the power structure, Smith was attempting to counter criticism that hierarchy was contrary to his original plan. Similarly, Cowdery's ordination as co-president in December 1834 was said to have been predicted by John the Baptist in May 1829 (Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Autobiographical and Historical Writings. Vol. 1* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989], 20-21).

Thomas's second complaint is that I make it appear that he had compared Joseph Smith's 1823 vision exclusively to "typical evangelical visions of . . . an angel" (vii) when he had actually argued that "the literary form of the 1823 vision is . . . a mixed one, depending

on the version" (vii). Thomas misrepresents my criticism, which was that Smith's "necromantic encounter" with the spirit of a dead man cannot be described as "typical" of evangelical visions since "angels" are traditionally special creations of God, not former or future humans (xi). In this light, Smith's later use of the term "angel" is incompatible with the treasure-seeking context of the original story.

Ignoring this criticism, Thomas takes up what he thinks is "non-controversial" evidence, declaring that Smith's "prayer for forgiveness" is the "principal evangelical element in the 1832 account" (vii). Since I had questioned the element of repentance as incompatible with the 1823 setting, suggesting that it "should probably be considered part of Smith's later manipulations" (xi), Thomas makes a subtle shift from historical reconstruction to literary analysis: "I am not saying that this evangelical element [of repentance] was the [1823] vision. I am simply stating that Joseph Smith drew from a variety of literary forms, including evangelical, in the 1832 account" (vii).

Thomas has apparently forgotten that he had argued that Smith's 1823 vision was real, or at least hallucinatory, because it was consistent with "the common setting for evangelical visions" (157). Smith's repentance, according to Thomas, was a "throw-away detail" with "no particular theological or apologetic significance," and therefore constituted the "most convincing piece of evidence that the historical core of Joseph Smith's narrative reflects sense data" (157).

Now that he has backed off the historical-core argument, perhaps he should also withdraw his "sense data" speculation, which had no merit to begin with. For one thing, his argument is based on the incorrect assumption that Smith's 1832 history was free of apologetic concerns. In addition to responding to internal challenges as discussed in my introduction to this document, Smith was also aware that details about his treasure-seeking exploits were already circulating in Palmyra and Kirtland (Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003], 1:26; 2:223–50; 3:8–10). But even if Smith's mention of repentance were incidental, it still doesn't prove that the 1823 story is based on a real event.

Thomas's closing statement is a jumble of poor reasoning. He commits another non sequitur when he argues that, since Smith could "induce visions" in the Three Witnesses and others, he must have had real mystical experiences himself. The two are not necessarily

connected. It is possible to be a good hypnotist without being a good hypnotic subject or even proficient at self-hypnosis. I do not doubt that Smith had some religious experiences, but that does not preclude his committing pious deception on other occasions.

In arguing that mystics like Ann Lee, Teresa of Avila, Muhammad, and John of the Cross better "avoid anachronism" or historians will conclude that they are liars (vii), Thomas employs an argument contrary to fact or counterfactual argument, also known as the fallacy of fictional proof. For this argument to have merit, Thomas would need to show that these mystics (1) had real visions and (2) committed unintentional anachronisms. To assume that these mystics would have committed anachronisms had they had the same opportunities as Smith to tell their stories, of course, begs the question.

Actually, Smith probably should not be compared to most other mystics since he tried to provide tangible evidence for his claims. When he produced the plates to be felt through a cloth or lifted in a box, he left the mystical realm of subjective truth and entered into the physical world of conscious deception. The plates were not a product of delusion; they were constructed by either Joseph Smith or Mormon. This is not a false dichotomy but simply the only reasonable possibilities. Thomas tries to ignore this fact, but he must deal with it before his implied unconscious fraud theory can be taken seriously.

Finally, Thomas attempts to associate himself with "the great scholars of the mystical tradition" (viii) who, for reasons other than Thomas thinks, have chosen not to question the veracity of their subjects. As far as I know, there is no universal rule barring historians from making naturalistic conclusions about mystical claims, whether delusion or fraud, especially where the evidence warrants. Nevertheless, if Thomas wanted to set aside the issue of veracity, as some scholars certainly do, that would have been acceptable; but he didn't do that. Instead, he labored to "prove" that Smith's visionary claims were based on "sense data" (154–57). However, if one concludes that the plates were fake—as Thomas must—it becomes unnecessary, if not impossible, to maintain that Smith's claim of an 1823 encounter with a treasure guardian was based on hallucination. In that case, the whole story is fabrication, not just Smith's later anachronisms dealing with Elijah and the priesthood.

I would advise Thomas to reconsider his attempt to satisfy both

sides of the debate by trying to create a false middle and use his talents for more defensible positions.

Dan Vogel
Westerville, Ohio

Editor's Note: In Response to Douglas F. Tobler

The letter to the editor of Douglas F. Tobler, "Writing Something That Matters" (37, no. 1 [Spring 2004]) has evoked many responses, all of them so far taking exception to some of his assertions. We are happy to publish some of those responses here, which, while defending a wide range of scholarship on Mormon matters, also articulate the ideals and purposes of Dialogue *as a journal. Be it said in Professor Tobler's defense that his point of view is widely held by Latter-day Saints; and for that reason it needs, even if we oppose it, our thoughtful recognition that it may well obtain in that good brother or sister by whom we happen to sit during sacrament meeting.*

Civility, Compassion, Honesty

Thank you for printing Douglas F. Tobler's letter. While I disagree with some of his criticisms, as well as his choices of words and phrases, I appreciate his cautionary advice. I believe he is correct in suggesting that the hallmarks of real scholarship (assuming, of course, the prerequisite intellectual training) are meekness and humility; that "we should be very careful about whom and on what we sit in judgment"; and that "we should write our history from the standpoint of respect, not adoration, humility not arrogance or sycophancy, observing all the canons of real scholarship including accuracy, honesty, self- awareness—making every effort to write what is true and meaningful" (vi).

From my own reading of Mormon studies, I have benefitted most from those writers whose works exemplify balance, charity, fairness, and generosity—traits that, as nearly as I can tell, depend more on the breadth and depth of one's life experiences than on one's religious affiliation, testimony, or degree of participation. On the other hand, I have learned little from those writers whose works, as I read them, seem to be marked more by arrogance, dogmatism, and intolerance than by civility, compassion, and honesty.

My own encounters with the writers whom Doug criticizes by name—as well as some of those he may have in mind but does not identify—have clearly been different from Doug's, since I believe they, and many others like them, all have something valuable to contribute to Mormon studies. I know

that my life has been made all the richer because of them.

Gary James Bergera
Salt Lake City, Utah

Fair-Minded People

I agree with Douglas Tobler that insider historians have a perspective that no one else can quite command. There are nuances, pressures, aspirations, even spiritual forces that will elude outsiders, no matter how perceptive and sympathetic. This proposition holds true for the feminist movement, the Communist Party, and the ACLU as well as the Latter-day Saint Church. Perhaps the value of insider history is even greater in a movement like Mormonism that is based so heavily on spiritual experiences.

I do not agree, however, that all histories except insider histories are invalid. Every perspective, even the most negative, can add something to the picture. Wesley P. Walters, who worked ferociously to discredit Joseph Smith, may have irked Latter-day Saints but they learned from his inquiries. Thanks largely to Walters's work, virtually every historian of Mormonism now agrees that the 1826 Bainbridge hearing of Joseph Smith really happened.

Drawing too sharp a line between insider and outsider history can dim our powers of discrimination. We lump people into categories that do them an injustice. Jan Shipps surely does not belong in the same lump as Jon Krakauer. Shipps has been a defender of the Church as often as she has been a critic. Many Latter-day Saints including me have come to understand their own religion better because of Shipps. She is among the leading theorists of Latter-day Saint history. Krakauer, who focuses primarily on an extreme aberration in Mormonism, has virtually nothing of value to say.

Perhaps no outsider fully "understands" Mormonism in the deep spiritual sense Tobler is thinking of. But Joseph Smith strove to cultivate friends of the Church whether or not they believed. He understood that not everyone who refused to become a Mormon was an enemy. He valued the support of all fair-minded people. Believing Mormon historians would do well to follow his example.

Richard L. Bushman
New York City

An Excess of Zeal

We write in response to Douglas F. Tobler's letter published in your spring 2004 issue. Although parts of Tobler's letter could be characterized as intemperate, his central claim deserves

attention and a thoughtful reply. This we seek to do with this response.

All of us are convinced that it is possible to do meaningful and valuable historical work on Mormonism and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from multiple perspectives, including those of nonmembers, inactive and former members, as well as "faithful" Saints. Such work is evidence of the maturity and breadth of the Church as well as its importance, rather than its vulnerability, as Tobler suggests.

Contrary to his list of authors who engage in "pure nonsense or self-delusion," for example, Jan Shipps has revolutionized the field of Mormon history, explaining in original and productive ways how the Church and its members have established a "new religious tradition." Michael Quinn and Will Bagley are also hard-working and meticulous members of the historical community, whose work should not be dismissed cavalierly. As with all historical scholarship, it is certainly possible to debate specific conclusions drawn by any of these scholars and to argue that the evidence points in a different direction. To rule out their contributions on the basis of a lack of particular religious commitments, however, is extreme and implausible.

By this criterion, every band of terrorists, Democrats, Republicans, and every religion or secular movement could declare irrelevant any attempt to understand from outside. As the religious scholar Martin Marty put it recently when responding to militant Hindu claims that scholars outside the faith should not be allowed to work on Hinduism: "Today we are learning again that, while heirs of a tradition have a special claim on stories and interpretations, at least at certain stages, good stories are too good to be hoarded by those who claim insider-status" (*Sightings* 10 [May 2004] retrieved June 2004 from http://marty-centr.uchicago.edu/sightings/archive_2004/0510.shtml).

The LDS Church is not alone in enduring the derision and vilification of sensation-seeking writers like Jon Krakauer and others. Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Hasidic Jews, and many more have been and continue to be their targets. There can be no immunity from such attacks in a free country. However much one might deplore such sensationalism and its resonance with nineteenth-century persecution, it is vital not to confuse that sort of writing with scholarship nor its au-

thors with scholars. By conflating two entirely distinct kinds of writing, Tobler has done a disservice to Mormon studies and to the scholarly community.

Equally important, his rejection of all work other than that which he regards as "faithful" implies that current members of the LDS Church have nothing to learn from the rest of the world. Sensible people know well that this is not the case, and that such a position cannot be consistent with an ambitious and mature faith. Indeed, the position seems at odds with the Church's own Thirteenth Article of Faith.

Of course, we do not mean to imply that historical scholarship written by current members of the Church is itself somehow suspect or uninformed. Every faith benefits enormously from the perspective of "insider" scholars. To confuse membership with what should count as scholarship, however, is to elevate parochialism over professionalism. In an excess of zeal, Tobler's letter goes too far.

Sarah Barringer Gordon
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Jana Riess
Winchester, Kentucky

Valeen Tippetts Avery
Flagstaff, Arizona

Philip Barlow
Hanover, Indiana

Room for Reason and Study

I was taken aback by the assumptions and prejudice toward intellectuals displayed in Douglas F. Tobler's letter to the editor. I have always believed that Latter-day Saints were urged to use their intellect and study out gospel matters in their minds before a spiritual witness was granted (D&C 9:8). Thus, I am glad that *Dialogue* provides an open forum to those who wish to freely express their thoughts and present findings of their research to a broad Mormon audience.

As a sincere Latter-day Saint, currently serving as bishop, I faithfully revere the Church primarily as God's kingdom on earth. Nevertheless, I acknowledge and am at times painfully reminded that the Lord's Church functions in a real world, not in an isolated habitat or a social vacuum. Though supervised by revelation, it is human-led and operates an extensive bureaucracy and financial empire. While non-Mormon writers may not share my own sense of awe as I marvel at the workings of the Holy Spirit in Christ's restored Church, I do not know why principles of reason and scientific methods would cease to be in force when

dealing with Mormonism as a human institution and movement.

I will be the first to bow to the valuable experience of seasoned writers, but I also do not understand why being younger than forty would disqualify an otherwise skilled researcher from participating in any type of scientific discourse. But then, as you may have guessed, this is a thirty-one-year-old talking.

Ralf Gruenke
Erlangen, Germany

Respecting Opposite Opinions

Now in my sixtieth year, I have come to value differences of opinion and what those differences represent far more than the search for any specific answer or truth. So I can value Douglas F. Tobler's passionate perspective, even though his views are the antithesis of mine at this point in my life.

What is disquieting in reflection, however, is that I publicly, personally, and privately expressed opinions very much like Tobler's during my years of strident ecclesiastical orthodoxy that disingenuously denigrated people whom I later came to know, understand, love, and finally respect.

Doug Ward
Longmont, Colorado

Embodied Mormonism: Performance, Vodou and the LDS Faith in Haiti

Jennifer Huss Basquiat

IN HAITI RELIGIONS ARE RARELY UNDERSTOOD to be autonomous from one another. It is not unusual for seemingly disparate mythological systems to coexist not only across the Haitian landscape, but also within individual Haitian practice. Given Haiti's peculiar history, it is perfectly reasonable to most Haitians that they attend a Vodou ceremony on Saturday evening and a Catholic mass or Protestant sacrament on Sunday morning. In this often chaotic coexistence, "magic exists with reason, history with myth, [and] the epic sound of the bugle with that of the ritual drumbeat."[1] Thus, in Haiti, the question of culture and specifically cultural identity locates itself in the "in-between" spaces of dominant religious and cultural practices. Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha identifies these same spaces as belonging to the "beyond" where "beyond is

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1. Antonio Benitez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island,* translated by James E. Maraniss (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 303.

neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past, [but] a moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion."[2] In other words, religious (and thus cultural) identity in Haiti emerges as a malleable, often paradoxical process susceptible to the barrage of influences that a postcolonial world affords. But what does such a reality signify for LDS missionaries who enter such a landscape and for the Haitians who investigate the Church?

Operating from Joseph Smith's 1833 edict that "every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language" (D&C 90:11), LDS missionaries have entered Haiti with the purpose of encouraging Haitians to join the Mormon Church. Despite the necessity of foreign language mastery, missionaries across the world proceed with missionary work that is remarkably uniform in practice. It matters little where the mission office is located; the mission manuals and accompanying lessons remain the same. For individuals raised in an environment where truth is absolute and religious practice is a direct reflection of that ontological position, such an approach to missionary work is hardly problematic. But for the Haitian investigator who is accustomed to piecing together parts of differing mythologies to create an often highly personalized cosmology such uniformity begs to be challenged.

Some observers have suggested that a strict conformity to the standard missionary lesson is not always desirable. For example, Spencer J. Palmer and Roger B. Keller maintain that "members of the Church must decide from a tactical point whether the evangelical mission of the Church can be accomplished more effectively by emphasizing the diabolic nature of the similarities between the gospel and the native faiths or by emphasizing the common heritage of the pre-earth life, the influence of the Light of Christ, the partially accurate deposit of faith and truth from ancient times and so forth."[3]

Unfortunately, this debate whether native religions are diabolic or merely imperfect is largely relegated to academic circles and has had little impact on actual missionary practice. What prevails, then, is an approach

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2. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 1.

3. Spencer J. Palmer and Roger R. Keller, *Religions of the World: A Latter-day Saint View* (Provo, Utah: Scholarly Publications, BYU, 1990), 225.

to religious practice that can often neglect the contextual and cultural nuances that new members (in this case, Haitian members) of the Church bring, not only to the missionary lessons, but also to their newly chosen religious identities. In crafting their new religious identities, many Haitian Mormons ignore Mormonism's claim of absolute truth; instead, they borrow only what appeals to them and add it to already existing patterns of belief and behavior.

In this article, I examine the relationship Haitian Mormons have created with the LDS Church.[4] Informed by notes taken in the field, I argue that Haitian Mormons simultaneously emerge as both conformist Church members enacting proper LDS behavior and as subversive performers who take from Mormonism only what they need to best craft their individual designs for living.

Mormonism Comes to Haiti

In comparison to other religions found in Haiti (Vodou, Catholicism, various Protestant denominations), the Mormon Church has existed there for a very short time. In 1977, Alexandre Mourra, a prominent Haitian businessman of Jewish-Arabic descent, wrote to the Florida Fort Lauderdale Mission president, Richard L. Millet, requesting baptism and a Book of Mormon.[5] In July, Mourra traveled to Fort Lauderdale where he was baptized and ordained a priest. A year later, Millet and his counselors presided over a group baptism of twenty-two Haitians whom Mourra had introduced to the gospel, in Hatte-Maree, north of Port-au-Prince, on July 2, 1978.

The first four missionaries arrived in June 1980 and achieved moderate success as more French-speaking elders arrived in Haiti from the missions in Paris and Montreal. The first missionary called from Haiti,

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4. This article is based on research and fieldwork completed in 1999. Although I provide some updating at the end of this article, the analysis here generally applies to the first two decades of Mormonism in Haiti and more specifically to the period of my 1995–99 visits to that country. I make no claim that expressions of Mormonism (or of any other new religion) would remain unchanged in Haiti with the passage of time and the maturing of LDS institutions there. What I offer is a Mormon illustration of a fairly common process occurring in the early years of new religions when they are imported into "exotic" settings.

5. Elizabeth VanDenBerghe, "Beginnings: A Church of One," *Ensign*, March 1991, 37.

Fritzner Joseph, served in Puerto Rico (1981–83). On April 17, 1983, Haiti was officially dedicated "for the preaching of the Gospel and the building up of the Kingdom of God."[6] It became part of the newly organized West Indians Mission on June 20, 1983, under the direction of Kenneth Zabriskie, former Fort Lauderdale Florida Mission president. The Haiti Port-au-Prince Mission was created August 4, 1984, with James S. Arrigona as president.

By 1986 Haiti numbered 1,685 members of the Church and 14 branches. Of its seventy-six full-time missionaries, twenty-eight were Haitian. By 1991, the Church had grown to 3,500 members and 18 branches. Full-time missionaries numbered 140 but only 26 of them were Haitian.[7] Although the Church was growing, it suffered many losses in 1991. Due to political instability and near-daily riots, the American elders were evacuated (the sister missionaries had been evacuated ten months earlier), and Fritzner Joseph served as acting mission president.

When foreign missionaries returned in July 1996 under the direction of Harold Bodon, missionary efforts began with renewed vigor. On September 21, 1997, Church membership had reached a level to allow the creation of the Port-au-Prince Stake, Haiti's first, with an estimated 5,300 members. This stake included the Carrefour, Carrefour-Feuilles, Centrale, Delmas, Haut-Delmas, Martissant, and Petionville wards and the Croix-des-Bouquets and Croix-des-Missions branches.[8] By November 1998, this number had grown to 6,000 members, with only forty-eight missionaries serving in Haiti—thirty-two (two thirds) of them Haitian.[9]

Despite these growing numbers, the LDS Church has had to face an interesting and prevailing stereotype held by many Haitians,

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6. "Haitian Mission Chronology," in *Haitian Mission Site*, retrieved June 29, 1999, from http://www.greatbasin.net/~networth/haiti/misshist/htm.

7. Ibid.

8. "Late-Breaking News," *Haiti Mission Site*, retrieved June 29, 1999, from http://www.greatbasin.net/~networth/hait/latest.htm. By the end of 2003, a second stake was created in Port-au-Prince and total LDS membership in Haiti had passed 10,000.

9. Sister Miller, wife of Donald Miller, the mission president, interviewed November 10, 1998, Petionville Ward, Petionville, Haiti. Unless otherwise noted, all interviews are in my field notebooks, organized by date.

that the Church and the Central Intelligence Agency, or CIA, are one and the same. This opinion was expressed, if not believed, by the majority of Haitians I met during my fieldwork. Both Mormons and non-Mormons were aware of this belief. On only the third day of my stay in Haiti, a dear, trusted advisor who also happens to be a *houngan* (Vodou priest), when I told him that many of my informants had said the Mormon Church was connected to the CIA and asked if he had heard this claim before, responded: "Oh, yes. Those people are spreading all over my country. Damn CIA!"[10]

Montina Michelet, a single man now in his thirties and a budding import/export entrepreneur, had been baptized in April 1998. He confided that Mormonism was not well liked in his country. He explained that many of his neighbors told him regularly that the CIA sends agents to Haiti disguised as Mormon missionaries. In fact, many Haitians believe that to join the Mormon Church is to "sell out to the CIA."[11] Closer to home, Montina's grandfather, a *houngan* in Jeremie, admonished Montina every time he saw him: "Mormonism is a bad religion. Why are you going there, Montina? Mormons don't serve God, they serve the CIA."[12] When the woman who ran the guesthouse in Petionville where I stayed part of the time asked what I was researching in Haiti and I explained, she responded, "The Mormon Church is with the CIA, you know."[13]

Yet despite this widely held negative belief, Haitians are joining the LDS Church in record numbers. Further, as my fieldwork illustrates, Haitians are not merely mimicking behavior exhibited at Sunday services; rather, they are actively engaged in crafting performances that showcase a malleable understanding of Mormonism and its tenets. However, before providing examples, it is important to address the concepts of performance and critical ethnography that are central to the thesis of this article.

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10. Marcel ("Papa") Wah, interviewed September 19, 1998, en route to Leogane, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

11. Montina Michelet, interviewed September 30, 1998, Petionville, Haiti.

12. Ibid., October 2, 1998.

13. Name withheld (daughter-in-law of the owner of Ife Guesthouse), interviewed October 25, 1998, Petionville, Haiti.

Critical Ethnography and Performance

My analysis is guided by concepts from critical ethnography, a subdiscipline of modern cultural studies derived from classical anthropology. Basic to this perspective is the concept that the human body itself can be understood partly as an outcome of culture. The body (including the mind with its concepts and emotions) is not only physical but is a receptacle containing and expressing all the traits and products acquired from the surrounding culture. Religion is one of these products; and in Haiti, religion (including Mormonism) goes far beyond forms of spirituality to express economic institutions and values, such as social class and the aspirations for upward social mobility introduced by Western intervention.

Alternatively one might be said to wear or use the body as a "costume" on which has been inscribed language, religion, class, gender, ethnicity, and other cultural products. We see here a convergence with critical feminist theory, including Simone de Beauvoir's notion that "one is not born a woman but rather becomes one."[14] Yet, in this same sense, the body is always a work in progress, never entirely finished, with the capacity to manipulate and stylize the cultural inscriptions as they are received. From this process emerges an identity that enables a person to inhabit and perform appropriately in various social categories and situations.

Performance then becomes an important concept in the analysis that follows. To some extent "an essentially contested concept" because of its variable definitions among the social sciences, the term as I use it here denotes simply the act of doing or expressing—thus, as more or less synony-

14. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, translated by E. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage, 1973), 301. See also Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Helene Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," in *Feminisms*, edited by Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 347–62; Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, translated by Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985); Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," *Feminisms*, 860–79; Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics* (London: Routledge, 1985); Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, edited by L. H. Martin et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16–49.

mous with "physical expression."[15] Performance also implies, however, comparison and interaction with an imagined ideal in the "doing." Where Mormonism is concerned, the question is: How do Haitians do Mormonism? And how do their religious performances compare to the larger backdrop of Mormon expectations? The short answer is that Haitians do Mormonism on their own terms. Yet "patterns of social performance are not . . . [entirely] . . . prescripted by the culture, but are constantly constructed, negotiated, reformed, fashioned, and organized out of scraps of 'recipe knowledge.'"[16] In a practical sense, therefore, performances are socially constructed products of "recipe knowledge"—i.e., ingredients known and available to the performers. Cultural identities and their accompanying performances are individually created or pieced together such that no two are exactly alike.

Understood in this way, performance converges nicely with the concept of *bricolage*, a term widely used by French anthropologists, most notably Claude Lévi-Strauss. The performer thus becomes a *bricoleur*, "adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks. . . . His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand,' that is to say, with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and . . . heterogeneous."[17] The *bricoleur* thus becomes a master at selectively crafting a performance from various sources. What emerges is a patchwork that often does not resemble the component pieces. Such a performance also carries the potential to subvert the very culture from which it has chosen its goods.

It is important to note here that *bricolage* differs somewhat from the idea of syncretism, a term perhaps more often applied to the general process of blending two seemingly discrepant ideological sys-

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15. Mary Strine, Beverly Long, and Mary Hopkins, "Research in Interpretation and Performance Studies: Trends, Issues, Priorities," *Speech Communication: Essays to Commemorate the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Speech Communication Association*, edited by Gerald Phillips and Julia Wood (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), 183.

16. Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 49.

17. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 17.

tems.[18] Syncretism implies a more wholesale merger of entire traditions, often at the institutional level. Certainly within Haiti syncretism exists, just not in reference to Mormonism. Take, for example, the case of Catholicism in Haiti. Decreed in 1685 in the French colonial document *Le Code Noir*, Catholicism was the mandated religion of Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti). All Haitians, free and slave, were, by law, to be baptized into this religion. Haitian slaves, forced to adopt a foreign religion under penalty of death, slowly began to combine the outward symbols of Catholicism with their own West African practices of Vodou.

Vodou, long misunderstood as solely a force of black magic, originated in West Africa. As a religion, it is the worship of animistic spirits or gods, *lwas* in Haitian Creole, for the purpose of meeting the daily demands of living. There is a supreme being in Haitian Vodou recognized as *Bon Dieu*, but heavier emphasis is placed on the pantheon of lesser, more accessible deities that control nature, health, wealth, and happiness. In Haitian Vodou, gods are manifest through the spirits of ancestors and must be properly honored in ritualized ceremonies. Unlike the God of Christianity, Haitian *lwas* must be fed, cared for, and entertained. Consequently, Vodou rituals include prayers, drumming, dancing, singing, and animal sacrifice, all designed to make a spirit feel welcome. It is the presence of these various *lwas* that made it relatively easy for Haitian slaves to incorporate Catholic imagery into their worship. Because each *lwa* is understood to be a representation of humanity, it was quite easy for Haitian slaves to equate their gods with the pantheon of saints honored in the Catholic faith. Thus, Damballah, the serpent god, was visually connected to Saint Patrick; Erzulie, the love goddess, to the Virgin Mary; and Ogou, the war god, to Saint Jacques. During Vodou ceremonies, Catholic lithographs of these saints would be posted, leading French colonial masters to believe that their Haitian slaves were worshipping important figures in Catholic liturgy.

This piecing together of different mythologies to create an altogether syncretic pattern of living occurred over centuries, with the result that Vodou in contemporary Haiti cannot be practiced without the symbolic accoutrements of Catholicism and, occasionally, vice versa. In the

18. Contrast Karel Dobbelaere, "bricolage," and Hugo Meynell, "syncretism," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, edited by William H. Swatos (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 1998), 62–63, 506.

Holy Trinity Cathedral located in downtown Port-au-Prince, interior murals depict traditional Christian mythology such as the Last Supper and Resurrection alongside images of Haitian Vodou drums and animal sacrifice. Furthermore, as Andre Pierre, noted Haitian painter and Vodou priest, comments: "To be a good practitioner of Vodou, one must first be a good Catholic."[19] Clearly, what began as ad hoc religious adaptation, or *bricolage*, among Haitian slaves has over time become institutionally entrenched and enacted across the country, or in other words, "syncretic."

On a much smaller scale, contemporary Haitian Mormons are shaping Mormonism to fit their individual needs. In doing so, they are engaging in the everyday expression or "performance" of cultural and religious identity. But what/how are they performing? I could begin to answer this question only by traveling to Haiti and immersing myself in the Haitian Mormon community.

In the Field

I had done preliminary fieldwork in Haiti during December 1995 and August 1997, but during the fall semester of 1998 (sixteen weeks), I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in and around Port-au-Prince, Haiti, as part of my dissertation research.[20] I attended Mormon services primarily in the Petionville Ward (Petionville is a small town just north of Port-au-Prince), but also in other wards and branches near Port-au-Prince. I was welcomed into the Petionville Ward with open arms by nearly every Haitian Mormon I met. Regarding my participation in the surrounding areas of Port-au-Prince, I conversed with Church leaders and participated in Church activities with my new friends. Some of them were eager and willing to discuss their lives with me. Others gave me only a glimpse. It is largely through the eyes of these people that I came to understand how Mormonism is performed in Haiti.

I tried very carefully to approach my work in the field from the perspective of grounded theory. To be sure, I went to Haiti with a general no-

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19. Andre Pierre, interviewed at his home, Croix-des-Missions, Haiti, August 23, 1997.

20. Jennifer Huss Basquiat, "Between Eternal Truth and Local Culture: Performing Mormonism in Haiti" (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, January 2001).

tion of what I wished to study for my Ph.D. dissertation; but as with many issues pertaining to Haiti, what one wishes to see is not always what is borne out in reality. In hindsight, I went to Haiti intent on studying the now-ridiculous notion that people would openly practice Vodou alongside Mormonism—i.e., that I would see the same kind of syncretic blending of religious symbolism that Catholicism and Vodou have shared over centuries. I discovered the reality of Mormon practice and the simultaneous allegiance to Vodou by some to be a far subtler endeavor.

Over the course of my study of Haiti and its religious complexities—which I now understand as a lifelong passion—I have often been asked, "Why did you choose Haiti?" The truest answer, despite its seeming triteness, is that I didn't choose Haiti. It chose me. Although I had little interest in current affairs as a teenager, a news program about the exile of "Baby Doc" Duvalier that I saw at age fifteen imprinted itself on my memory. Nearly ten years later, I jumped at the opportunity to serve as an international election monitor in Haiti's 1995 presidential elections. As soon as I stepped off the plane, I fell in love with Haiti and planned future trips. Most people experience culture shock when they go abroad. For me, culture shock occurs when I return to the United States. For reasons I cannot rationally explain, I feel as if I am at home when I am in Haiti. A Vodou priest I met at a ceremony told me it was because I have the soul of a *mambo*, or Vodou priestess, a story that remains close to my heart. It seemed inevitable to choose Haiti for my master's thesis and I could not pass up the opportunity to continue research in Haiti for my doctorate, especially when I learned that the LDS Church had recently started missionary work there. That is how Haiti "chose" me.

When I first visited Petionville Ward, I was besieged by Haitian Mormons who wanted to talk to me. Where had I come from? Why was I here? Would I be interested in talking about Utah? Given that I was a white woman from the United States who had appeared seemingly out of nowhere in a Haitian Mormon ward, the assumption was made that I was from Utah. This was not wholly incorrect. When the Haitian Mormons whom I met discovered that I had been born in Utah, they began a willingly reciprocal relationship with me in which we both invariably took on the simultaneous roles of ethnographer and informant. The fact that I hadn't participated in Church services or activities for years despite being born and raised in the LDS faith didn't enter into our conversations. Whether I committed a lie of omission is difficult to ascertain. I always

answered questions faithfully and honestly, but I felt that it was inappropriate to question the newfound faith of Haitian Mormons who had found a way to make Mormonism fit into their lives. They could make Mormonism work. I could not. Nevertheless, I began a series of conversations with several members of the Petionville Ward.

The interviews that I conducted were sometimes highly formal but more often consisted simply of engaging in conversation during Church activities and weekly meetings. The formal interviews all followed the same basic format with questions as follows:

When were you baptized?

Why did you want to become Mormon?

Is your family Mormon also?

Is it difficult to be the only member in your family? (if applicable)

What is the most difficult part of Mormonism for you?

What is the thing you like best about the Mormon Church?

Is it difficult to be Haitian and also Mormon?

What do you think about Vodou?

The answers to these questions often served as a sort of template for future conversations. In all, I conducted roughly twenty-five interviews with Petionville Ward members. However, it should not be overlooked that, in addition to these formal interviews which often took place over lunch at a local café or at the guesthouse where I was staying, I also conducted much of my field work through participant observation in a variety of milieux. I tried to immerse myself in as many activities as possible, ranging from structured Church meetings to recreational activities to completely unstructured chance encounters on the streets of Petionville. Many of the informants who participated in formal interviews also spent many additional (and unstructured) hours talking with me.[21]

Given that I wanted as varied and illustrative a sample of Haitian Mormonism as possible, it was also important for me to interview local Church leaders to understand how Mormonism was being presented to

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21. For a good review of the nature, objectives, and complexities in ethnographic field methods, see Carol A. B. Warren, "Ethnography," in *Encyclopedia of Sociology,* edited by Edgar F. Borgatta and Rhonda J. V. Montgomery, 2d ed. (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2000), 852–56, esp. p. 855. The validity and usefulness of ethnographic methodology do not depend on surveys or interviews with large representative samples of a given population.

Haitian investigators. I conducted formal interviews with two missionaries serving in Haiti (one from Canada, the other from France) and Donald Miller, the mission president, also from Canada. To round out this picture, I also conducted several interviews with local Haitian missionaries and local ward leaders. In addition to attending services and participating in activities in Petionville, I attended several functions at the stake center in Port-au-Prince.

My research is by no means exhaustive. Indeed, no ethnographic account, by definition, "can ever be complete."[22] Given that literacy rates in Haiti are only about 50 percent, much of Haitian experience relies by necessity, not on the written word, but on "embodied" understanding. An "embodied" understanding has implications beyond such standard social science concepts as socialization, internalization, and identity construction. As I use "embodied/embodiment" here, the terms emphasize the physical adaptation and expression of Mormonism, thus stressing the important difference between the usual American expressions of Mormonism, which depend upon intellectualizing and rationalizing a text, and the Haitian dependence upon such "bodily" expressions as ceremonies, memorized and retold narratives, joking, weeping, and the like. Mormonism in the United States has all of that too, but not nearly as much as in Haiti.

Even in the comparatively wealthy area of Petionville where more Haitians understand French than anywhere else in the country, some of my informants could still not read the written material provided to them by the Church. Subsequently, much of my ethnographic work in Haiti revolved around an embodied understanding—and thus "performance"—of Mormonism, not on the specific understanding of scripture. Obviously, the standard missionary challenge to read the Book of Mormon and learn the truth it contains falls flat in a country where half the people cannot read.

Embodied Haitian Mormonism

The cultural performances of Haitian Mormons are not merely the regurgitation of Mormon missionary lessons, scriptures, and other textual scripts. Given that "people negotiate meaning in face-to-face interactions

22. Paul Bohannan and Dirk van der Elst, *Asking and Listening: Ethnography as Personal Adaptation* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1998), 26.

. . . as embodied social beings"[23] and not necessarily in compliance with the printed page, how do Haitians Mormons *do* their recently acquired faith? In this section, I illustrate the ways in which Haitian Mormons engage in an "embodied" practice of Mormonism, discuss the impacts these embodied performances have on the Haitian Mormon community, and argue that Haitian Mormons are shaping themselves through the use of definitional ceremonies and personalized cosmologies, emerging neither as purely Haitians nor as purely Mormons, but as something uniquely different.

Joseph Smith and the First Vision

Those familiar with Mormonism's approach to missionary work know that missionary lessons during the late 1990s were presented in an explicitly structured and formatted method. Missionaries were trained to introduce certain concepts at certain times without regard for what might be their investigators' specific interests. The goal of such a pedagogical approach was to explain the acceptable interpretation of scripture and its connection to larger Mormon ideology. However, this lofty goal was often not the only one to be reached. Many Haitian Mormons came to understand the Mormon Church, not through the sterile presentation of Mormon scripture, but through their own embodied understanding of it.

Take, for example, the presentation of what were then the first and fourth missionary lessons, which focused on Joseph Smith's emergence as a modern prophet and the textual product of his calling–the Book of Mormon. The ultimate goal of these lessons was to have the investigator understand the Book of Mormon as scripture and accept Smith's role. The missionaries first explained that, in answer to Smith's prayer, God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared and instructed him not to join any existing church. The Angel Moroni later appeared in response to his prayer for guidance and instructed him to unearth gold plates that recounted the story of ancient peoples in the Americas. This explanation gave considerable attention to the narrative of how Smith received the angelic message, uncovered the plates, translated them, and produced a written text that is the foundation of Mormon belief. For Haitian Mormons

23. M. Jackson, *Paths Toward a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 184.

and potential members who can read and follow along in their scriptures, such a textual explanation of Smith—or the fact that the text takes center stage—is not problematic. However, Haitian members and investigators who cannot follow along in their texts are often moved by something more physical and existential: the unexamined role of the body in both Joseph Smith's First Vision and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

Alex Lamoricie, baptized in 1995, saw Joseph Smith's visions in a remarkably different way than they are initially presented. While the missionaries emphasize the finished product (the Book of Mormon), many Haitian members emphasize their identity with Joseph Smith's experience. To Alex, "Joseph Smith is like me. He came from humble beginnings and was a simple man. He was not an intellect."[24] Alex's emotional and visceral connection to Smith, not the text, is an important distinction because it bypasses the written word in favor of shared bodily experience.

By their own admission, Haitians certainly understand the experience that stems from being poor and uneducated. To share such humble beginnings with the founding prophet of the Mormon Church is, for many Haitians, a reminder that God does not require worldly goods as a prerequisite before showing favor to them. Moreover, casting Smith as one of their own allows many Haitians to see the Mormon Church as the product of humble beginnings and not as the corporate empire it has become. Such a realization suggests that even the poorest and uneducated of Haitians is important in the eyes of God. To a population that has been historically debased and undervalued, such recognition is certainly a welcome change. Perhaps this is why Alex proclaims Joseph Smith to be his "favorite thing about the Mormon Church."[25]

Haitians identify not only with Smith's humble social station but also with his experience as seer. Smith's First Vision occurred when he asked God which church he should join. God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Smith and instructed him to join none of the denominations available to him. The missionaries I interviewed reported that Haitians

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24. Alex Lamoricie, interviewed November 19, 1998, Ife Guesthouse, Petionville, Haiti.

25. Alex Lamoricie, interviewed November 16, 1998, Ife Guesthouse, Petionville, Haiti.

readily accept present-day revelation through visions. Elder Vigliotti, a French elder who had almost finished his service, described what typically happens when he taught this concept to Haitian investigators:

> You know, when you say he [Joseph Smith] had a vision, . . . what do you think about that? They say "Well, that's all right, that's good. My friends just saw God and Jesus Christ last night." In their baptism interview when I ask them "How do you know the Church is true?" they say, "I got a vision." I say, "Do you want to share your vision with me?" and they explain that somebody just came to them and said, "You need to go to this church," or appeared to them holding the Book of Mormon or just crazy things that never happen to us.[26]

Elder Vigliotti's account illustrates two significant points. First, Haitian investigators often claim to have made their baptism decision based on an embodied experience, not because of the text's veracity. Second, the missionary characterized having a vision as "crazy," even though Mormonism teaches that Joseph Smith had not one but many visions. Also implicit in this statement is an aura of moral superiority. For Elder Vigliotti these visions are suspect, not because they occur, but because they occur to Haitians and not to "us." Unspoken, but clear enough, is the bias that doctrinal certitude can bring. As a missionary who has been taught that spiritual confirmations come only in an authorized way, is he not a more reliable judge of an authentic vision from the Lord? He does not consider the possibility that the nonliterate Haitian investigator may be better prepared, not only to receive such a vision, but also to have the intelligence to both trust and expect that such a vivid bodily experience will occur.

Living Mormon History

This analysis should not imply that Haitian Mormons are ignorant of Mormon text; ironically, they often know the scriptural stories and characters better than their Western counterparts. Nevertheless, in Haiti what was originally formal scripture becomes oral history with historical Mormon characters becoming ancestral embodiments of contemporary Haitians. During one of my first sacrament meetings in the field, each of the speakers made clear references to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other Mormon prophets. They didn't read such references from a book or

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26. Elder Vigliotti, interviewed at the mission office, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, October 27, 1998. President Miller arranged these interviews. Audiocassettes and transcribed notes in my possession.

from notes they had written, but instead referred to these figures as though they were personal ancestors.[27]

Casting historical Mormon figures in an ancestor's role occurs frequently among Haitian members. Alex states: "When I was called to go on a mission, I didn't want to face it. Then I remembered Jonah and I knew if he could do it then I could too. We can learn a lot from our prophets. For me, Alma is important because he is like a father to me. My own father is dead so I learn from Alma."[28] Thus, Alex draws personal applications for his own life from the lives of these prophets, regardless of individual cultural differences. Montina uses Brigham Young in much the same way: "Brigham Young was like me because he, too, was looking for the perfect place to call home. I think of Mormonism and I think 'This is the place.'"[29] In addition, Neal, a young father of three and recent convert to Mormonism, states, "Now I am like Joseph Smith. I have a testimony."[30]

Andrise, the most recent Petionville convert to the Mormon Church during my stay in Haiti, also illustrates this desire to incorporate historical figures into daily life. Unable to read any language, Andrise has memorized nearly all of the hymns that are regularly sung during Sunday services. Her favorite is "Joseph Smith's First Prayer," she says, because she relates to a poor, uneducated farmboy.[31]

Such a characteristic indicates the process of *bricolage* in which Haitian Mormons piece together aspects of Church history that help to explain themselves (or at least their new history). Barbara Myerhoff, in her work with a community of elderly Jews in Southern California, notes that religious communities often take up "odds and ends, fragments offered up by chance of the environment–almost anything will do," incorporat-

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27. Sacrament meeting notes, September 20, 1998, Petionville Ward.

28. Lamoriciere, interviewed November 19, 1998.

29. Michelet, interviewed October 2, 1998, Ife Guesthouse, Petionville, Haiti.

30. Neal (last name withheld), interviewed November 28, 1998, Moulin sur Mer, Haiti.

31. Andrise (last name withheld), interviewed November 1, 1998, after sacrament meeting at the Petionville Ward.

ing them "into a tale . . . to explain themselves and their world."[32] By crafting personal histories that include historical Mormon figures, Haitian Mormons are in a very real way reinventing their cultural identities by casting themselves as active players in a historical tradition that, before baptism, seemed far removed from Haitian experience.

Treating historical Mormon stories and figures as part of a larger oral tradition is a marked departure from the way these same accounts are understood in the West.[33] This departure calls attention to the particular way in which Haitian Mormons make Mormon history their own. Here Mormon scriptures and stories are not simply read and forgotten, only to be textually referenced again when memory fades. Many of the Mormon fold in Haiti cannot read, and even literate members in Petionville opt for a more embodied, and thus personal, understanding of Mormonism. Doctrinal details matter little to Haitian Mormons; rather, it is the personal adaptation of these stories to their individual lives that carry real authority. For Haitian Mormons these stories are not about distant characters. They are the tales of personal, living ancestors, ancestors to be proud of and ancestors to emulate.

Definitional Ceremonies

Mormons, no matter in what corner of the world they practice, work hard to cultivate a strong sense of local, regional, and global community. In Haiti this reality acquires special significance because, for many Haitian members, the people they regularly see at Church meetings and activities constitute a shared sense of family that is often lacking in Haitian society at large. Unlike the continents of South America and Africa where nuclear or extended families often convert together, in Haiti the majority of Church members are young, single men. Donald Miller, the mission president, comments: "The ages of the people joining the Church are very

32. Barbara Myerhoff, *Number Our Days* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 10.

33. Here I mean the ontological West, which gives primacy to the written rather than the spoken word. From this perspective, Haiti is "non-western," since, even though Haitians achieve the same goal of "liken[ing] all scriptures unto us" (1 Ne. 19:23), they do so almost exclusively through the oral tradition and are not bound to the sterility of the printed page. Another characteristic of an oral culture is that it is inescapably communal, while much scripture study by Western Mormons is individual.

reflective of the country. We have a lot of young men, of young adults, which is a surprise to me. In most developing areas of the Church, the women join the Church and their families follow; but here there's lots of men joining the Church. The reflection of who is joining the Church follows the demographics of the country. There are very few normal families functioning in the country."[34]

Despite the ethnocentric tone apparent in Miller's understanding of what constitutes "normal," comparatively fewer families in Haiti have traditional nuclear or even extended family structures. Thus, new members in Haiti most often make the decision to be baptized on their own, without familial support. Montina remarks that "at my baptism, only the missionaries came."[35]

Billy, Sandy, Andrise, Jimmy, Charles, and Alex had virtually the same experience.[36] All of these new Haitian Mormons made the decision to join the Church alone and without family support. Given the often direct disapproval these members feel from both friends and family members, constructing a safe homeplace where members can define (and redefine) their newfound religious identities assumes the utmost importance.

For Haitian Mormons, this homeplace is constructed within the framework of definitional ceremonies which, simply put, are ways for people to develop "their collective identity, their interpretation of the world, themselves, and their values."[37] Through these ceremonies, Haitian Mormons "renew their commitment to their belief, their ties to each other, and clarify their understanding of their identity by having once more performed it."[38] For the Haitian Mormons I observed, this process began at the most local of levels, the Petionville Ward itself.

Fast and Testimony Meeting

On the first Sunday of each month, sacrament meeting becomes fast and testimony meeting. Instead of the regular program consisting of

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34. President Donald Miller, interviewed October 21, 1998, mission office, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

35. Michelet, interviewed October 14, 1998.

36. See "Sacrament Meeting Notes," September 1–December 1, 1998, Petionville Ward.

37. Myerhoff, *Number Our Days*, 32.

38. Ibid., 150.

speakers who have been previously assigned and thus have had time to prepare, the only speakers during fast and testimony meeting are members of the congregation who spontaneously volunteer remarks. During this time, most of those who speak share their personal stories of experiences and insights that have strengthened their belief. Given this type of self-disclosure, this meeting is usually fraught with emotion, with members both weeping and laughing within a matter of moments.

This type of meeting carries specific significance in Haiti. Nonliterate members who are not often requested to present talks during sacrament meeting regularly have an opportunity to speak. Because the sharing of testimonies is purely an oral and often emotional activity, it is the body that takes center stage. Unlike assigned speakers, speakers at fast and testimony meeting are not expected to refer to scripture or consult notes; rather, they are expected to share how they feel. Due to this emphasis on bodily emotions rather than calculated thoughts, Haitian Mormons clamor for a chance to tell their stories. This is a marked difference from my twenty years of attending testimony meetings in southern California wards where it was very common for several minutes to pass in silence between speakers. In Haiti, however, the bishop of the Petionville Ward had to interrupt the flow of testimonies because he saw the long line behind the podium and knew that, given the time restraints of the meeting, no one else could possibly be heard. Moreover, on Fast Sundays Haitian Mormons packed the Petionville building, filling every pew, something that did not occur at any other time during my project.

Through the personal disclosure that occurs during a fast and testimony meeting, the Haitian Mormon community grows closer and community ties are strengthened. Although many members may have joined the Church on their own without family approval, these meetings serve to bond together what can be seen as disparate members. In a very real way, members of the Petionville Ward can be seen (and learn to see each other) as family.

Another significant characteristic of fast and testimony meeting at the Petionville Ward in Haiti is the language that is spoken during the service. Although scriptures, manuals, and hymnbooks are all printed in French, it is largely Haitian Creole that is spoken during Mormon services. Given Haiti's social and economic disparities among its own people, this reality bears further investigation. Only educated citizens in Haiti have been taught to read and understand the French language. Con-

versely, everyone can speak and understand Haitian Creole. Instead of privileging the text, Haitian Mormons are privileging the spoken and understood word. Performances that are spoken (not merely read) by individual members and subsequently heard by the larger congregation are trusted over the printed page. Truth is found not in the rigid, fixed form of scripture; rather, it is discovered in the embodied performances of both personal and collective narratives.

During the two fast and testimony meetings I attended in Petionville, many Petionville members spoke of their personal struggle to abstain from both food and drink until evening. One member commented, "When I first started to fast I originally thought 'I can't do it,' but I prayed to Heavenly Father and was able to succeed. Sacrifice is important. We need it to grow closer to God."[39]

Another common theme was expressing belief in Mormon teachings and leaders. Nearly half of the Petionville members who volunteered to share their testimony made specific reference to Joseph Smith. Nearly all who mentioned Smith also expressed profuse gratitude to him for having the desire to know the truth. One member went as far as to say, "If it were not for Joseph Smith and his belief and trust in God, I would be lost today." Others echoed this sentiment, asserting that the Mormon Church was the best church on earth because of its apparent lack of hypocrisy. Further, underlying virtually every speaker's words was the concept of faith in all things because "through faith, we can overcome anything."

Family Home Evening

Customarily in the LDS community, family home evening occurs on Monday night in the homes of individual members. Monday night is chosen because, churchwide, no official meetings are scheduled for that evening. Traditionally, as depicted in both illustrations and texts of official Church publications, *family* means a nuclear family consisting of a priesthood holder/father, child-rearer/mother, and several children. While there are no formal guidelines that dictate what should occur at family home evenings, a generally accepted practice is for the family to have some sort of spiritual lesson or discussion, often drawn from a manual or resource book designed for that purpose, followed by a more secular

39. "Fast and Testimony Meeting Notes," November 1, 1998, Petionville Ward. The following reports of testimonies are from these notes.

activity. Family home evening does not typically include other members of the ward and is almost always conducted in the family's home.

In Haiti family home evening is practiced much differently. Given that few members of the Petionville Ward are members of a traditional family, let alone a traditional Mormon family, Church leaders have encouraged holding the *Soirée de Famille* (family night) at the meetinghouse. At this ward-sponsored family home evening, all who are interested are invited to attend. I observed weekly family home evening meetings in November 1998. These gatherings were held on Tuesday night, allowing both the mood and attire of the Haitian members to be more casual than during Sunday meetings. For many of them, family home evening does not have a "family" component but is just another means of connecting with others who share both beliefs and experiences.

The four *soirées* that I observed followed a standard format: an opening hymn, an opening prayer, a spiritual lesson, a closing prayer, and an informal activity. Lesson topics ranged from "following gospel principles," to "obedience in the Lord," to "managing family finances."[40] Sunday lessons were typically delivered in a lecture format, with those attending seated in rows and being expected to quietly absorb the message. In contrast, at family home evening, discussion and dialogue occurred, facilitated by chairs arranged in a circle. Interruptions were not only common; they were welcomed and seen as a necessary tool to move the discussion along. During most of my experience at family home evenings, nearly everyone who attended participated by either posing a specific question or making a comment. Clearly, the Haitian members who attended these meetings came to participate in community, not just to fulfill a religious obligation.

Once the formal portion of the evening was concluded the secular activity began, most often a simple social hour. Haitian members became even more relaxed and began to share interesting and humorous experiences that had occurred during the previous week. One practice in particular that seemed to occur after every family home evening lesson was telling jokes. The atmosphere became almost rowdy in comparison to the more decorous behavior during the lesson. Members egged each other on to tell stories and jokes, and the storytellers themselves stood in the center of the circle for their performance. These performances ranged from simple stories to jokes to spiritual riddles. On one occasion, Brother Viellard,

40. "Soirée de Famille Notes," November 1998, Petionville Ward.

a ward member, stumped the group with a spiritual riddle that asked Haitian members to answer his question with the correct scriptural reference. Even though he offered 10 gourde (roughly 55 cents U.S.) to the person who could answer correctly, no one in the audience could meet the challenge (presumably because not every member present could read).[41] Still the atmosphere remained jovial.

More common than the occasional challenge thrown out by Brother Viellard was telling jokes. During this process, one member would tell a joke and then invite someone else to tell another. The pace of this process was furious, no one was exempt from the challenge (even me), and I never saw anyone refuse to participate. The joke-telling session certainly created a close-knit atmosphere for those who chose to actively participate. During my month of observations, one joke was requested by name at every social function, an unusual fact that reminded the participants that leaving Haiti's hardships was a fantasy, though a common one. At all four family home evenings I attended, someone during the social hour would ask Sandy, age nineteen and the Petionville Ward clerk, to tell his joke about the American flag. The joke goes something like this:

> A young Haitian man goes to the American consulate in preparation to receive his American visa. He is asked a barrage of questions regarding American culture and history. He answers every question correctly and is feeling really good. Then the last question comes: "What are the colors of the American flag?" He pulls open his waistband and looks at his underwear which is a replica of the American flag. "Red, white and blue," he proudly says and receives his visa. He goes home and tells his friend all about his adventure. His friend, who is going for his visa the next day, asks if the questions are very difficult. "Not too bad," replies his friend, "but here, you better wear these," at which time he takes off his underwear and hands them to his friend. The next day the friend is being interrogated and doing well in all his answers. Then the last question is asked, "What are the colors of the American flag?" The friend begins to panic until he remembers his underwear. Then he peers down at his open waistband and proudly answers, "100 percent cotton!"[42]

While this joke is arguably not very funny, its content is more significant than the possible humor embedded within it, particularly be-

41. Ibid., November 10, 1998.
42. Ibid., November 24, 1998.

cause it serves to further bind the community together. It achieves this end in two significant respects; first, this joke places the immediate community in the here and now, juxtaposed against those seeking to leave Haiti; and second, it shows Haitians who are seeking an American visa as not particularly bright. In the former, the telling (and retelling) of this joke allows Haitian Mormons to "reiterate their collective and personal identities, to arouse great emotion and energy, which is then redirected toward some commonalities, some deep symbols, and stable stated norms."[43] Because this joke is so commonly requested by Haitian Mormons in Petionville, it serves as a ritual, a definitional ceremony of sorts, that inevitably reminds each member that he or she belongs to a stable community that seeks not to leave Haiti, but to stay and share kinship. By casting Haitians who seek American visas as apparently lacking intelligence, this joke manages to pass judgment on others while simultaneously praising the immediate community created by Haitian Mormons in Petionville.

General Conference

If Sunday Church meetings and weekly get-togethers like family home evening represent definitional ceremonies that occur within the local framework of the Petionville Ward, then the semi-annual general conference exemplifies the creation of a global homeplace in which local identity merges with a universal identity. By attending the satellite broadcast of conference, Haitian Mormons participate in a definitional ceremony that connects them to Mormons across the world, beyond those within their immediate community.

Like every other Mormon stake worldwide, the stake center in Port-au-Prince (which houses the Centrale Ward) has a satellite dish over which it receives official transmissions, among the most important of which are general conferences. Port-au-Prince Stake receives this conference in English, French, and Haitian Creole. To foster greater understanding, the transmission is beamed into separate language rooms. The smallest of the rooms is set aside for English speakers consisting primarily of missionaries, mission authorities, and visiting English-speaking members. The largest room is the chapel, containing at least thirty full-length pews; here Haitian Creole speakers gather, with French speakers in an-

43. Myerhoff, *Number Our Days*, 185.

other room. In front of each of the rooms is either a large television set or movie screen on which the transmission images appear. Both the Haitian Creole and French language rooms have the translations piped in over a loudspeaker system in coordination with the speaker on the screen, while the English room receives the direct feed.

During the October 1998 general conference, which I observed, Haitian members of the Church turned out en masse. All of the rooms were filled to capacity and often overflowing, with the exception of the less crowded room for English speakers. Since this is arguably the only time Haitian members have a direct link to the prophet, such attendance is not surprising. Montina states, "When I see the prophet on television it is like he is here in Haiti. If we believe in him then we will see miracles."[44] Indeed, President Gordon B. Hinckley's appearance in Haiti (through the medium of television) reminds many Haitians that they are part of a global community. Regardless of what may happen daily in Haiti, each Haitian Mormon can boast of a greater connection to the outside world. Because many Haitian Mormons believe they are "Mormon first, Haitian second," this link to something larger than themselves and seemingly as far away as Salt Lake City carries particular significance. In the realm of Mormonism, not only are they treated as part of a larger community, they *belong*.

Not to be overlooked is the fact that general conference is an oral event. Scriptures are not required for the members and text is not framed as primary, even though the scriptures that the speakers quote are frequently posted on the screen. In addition, because the messages of the General Authorities receive simultaneous translation, they appear to be speaking directly to Haitian members. Hearing Mormon doctrine from Church leaders in Haiti's native tongue is an experience that many members do not readily forget. Montina continues, "When I hear President Hinckley speaking in Creole my heart is full. It is like he is speaking directly to me."[45] With the Mormon prophet seeming to actually speak in Haitian Creole, the image of solidarity is firmly created and the benefits of belonging to a global community become further entrenched. In this room, Haitian Mormons are not exiles living on the borders of Mormon

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44. Montina Michelet, interviewed October 4, 1998, before and after the general conference broadcast, Port-au-Prince Stake Center.

45. Ibid.

experience; rather they are full-fledged members of the Church, worthy of the prophet's attention.

Personal Cosmologies and Mormon Vodouists

As these various activities and practices witness, it becomes obvious that embodied Mormonism can not only negotiate a small space in which it can be performed by Haitian Mormons, but it can also thrive through its own process of both redefining and reinventing itself. Furthermore, embodied Mormonism provides another benefit to its Haitian members: the ability to create personal cosmologies within the general framework of Mormonism. Simply argued, Haitian Mormons, acting as *bricoleurs*, lift patches of Mormonism's tapestry and sew these individual scraps together with other experiences to produce something personal and unique to the user. What is perhaps most remarkable is that they have found space within the practice of Mormonism to do so.

Despite the Mormon Church's heavy reliance on text, mission authorities in Haiti, at least while I was there, had no formal policy outlining opposition to the practice of Vodou. This apparent tolerance is in stark contrast to the policies of most other Protestant churches and missionary efforts in Haiti. Still, the question remains: If a person chooses to join the Mormon Church, then why does the issue of Vodou matter? Simply put, because Haitians, Mormon or not, still practice it.

Vodou has long been misunderstood as the practice of black magic. This belief is incorrect, even though supplying a correct definition is not the focus of this article. Vodou enjoys a significant place in the annals of Haitian history. Given its close ties to the fight for Haitian independence and the subsequent nation it helped to create, Vodou is very much a cultural and political influence. Although some may shrug off its importance and deny their personal participation, to be Haitian is, to some extent, to be a practitioner of Vodou.

Haitian Mormons, despite their faith in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, often find themselves seeking the help and guidance of a *houngan* or Vodou priest. This reliance on more than one cosmology is not seen as oppositional, but complementary, again illustrating the skill many Haitians have in piecing together seemingly incongruous material. Elder Christensen, Elder Vigliotti's companion, bemoaned the fact that Haitian Mormons "have no problem understanding that the Church is the only true church, but [claim] that there are just other true churches,

too. You can ask them if they believe this is the only true church and they say 'yes.' But then you ask them if other churches are true and they say 'yes.' It doesn't make a lot of sense."[46] What makes little sense to Mormon missionaries makes perfect sense to many Haitian members. Why would a person rely on only one religious system or cosmology when multiple mythologies are available, especially when one of the possibilities is the culturally significant practice of Vodou?

Even as a Haitian Mormon, Montina is adamant that "tous les Haitiens practiquent Vodou (all Haitians practice Vodou)."[47] I followed up promptly:

Jennifer: Even Haitian Mormons?

Montina (after a lengthy pause): Oh mon Dieu! Do you really want me to tell you the truth?

Jennifer: Yes.

Montina: Do you really want to know?

Jennifer: Yes.

Montina: Yes, all Haitians practice Vodou, even Mormons. This happens because the *houngans* were the first doctors, and it was the *houngans* that cured the sick. Then with the occupation of the American troops came Western medicine. But now when a person gets sick they go back to their country, their culture. But if you ask someone if they practice Vodou, of course, they're going to say no because it's seen as a bad thing, but the culture is Vodou and they are practicing it, even if they won't admit it.

Jennifer: So do you practice Vodou, Montina?

Montina: Me? No, no, no, I don't practice it; but if I say I don't practice Vodou, I'm lying because I'm Haitian and every Haitian practices.

Jennifer: So are you going to the Guede Fête [the November Vodou feast held in celebration of Guede, the Haitian god of the dead]?

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46. Elder Christensen, interviewed September 27, 1998, mission office, Port-au-Prince.

47. Montina Michelet, interviewed October 7, 1998, Ife Guesthouse, Petionville, Haiti.

Montina (smiling): For my research, I have a custom to go.[48]

Despite Montina's claim that he practices Vodou simply to satisfy research interests, he certainly illustrates the common Haitian behavior of simultaneously denying and supporting Vodou. The significance of this realization is not that Haitians practice Vodou, but that they practice it in conjunction with other religious traditions—in Montina's case, Mormonism. As one Haitian member states, "I believe in the gospel, not in religion."[49] Remarkably, it is the surprisingly quiet stance of the mission policy regarding Vodou that makes room for Haitians to practice it if they so desire.

Not only do mission leaders in Haiti lack a written policy regarding Vodou, they also lack a clearly articulated oral policy. Elder Vigliotti stated, "We know Vodou is here, but we don't talk about it. I can tell you that I know members of the Church who as soon as they have a problem they just go to a *houngan*, but we don't confront them."[50] Elder Christensen agreed. Similarly, the mission president told me, "We know it occurs and the people believe, but we don't openly address the issue."[51] When pressed to answer if the Mormon Church has essentially adopted a "don't ask, don't tell" policy regarding its Haitian members and the practice of Vodou, Miller admitted, "Yes, that would be correct."

The presence of Vodou in conjunction with the LDS faith provides particularly strong evidence of the religious *bricolage* that occurs among Haitian Mormons. During my stay in Haiti, several members of the Petionville Ward alluded to their own beliefs and practices in Vodou. They kept altars for Vodou worship in their homes consisting of small spaces devoted to particular *lwas*, upon which they would place the *lwas*'s favorite foods, colors, images, and even monetary offerings. The members might attend Saturday evening Vodou ceremonies in which particular *lwas* were courted and of which possession was a desired outcome. They might also consult with neighborhood *houngans* for spiritual or secular guidance as well as for homeopathic remedies for common ail-

48. Ibid.

49. Name withheld, interviewed October 25, 1998, Petionville Ward.

50. Elder Vigliotti, interviewed September 27, 1998.

51. President Donald Miller, interviewed October 21, 1998, mission office, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

ments. Typically, these Haitian Mormons maintained that their allegiance to Vodou did not undercut their faith in the Mormon Church.[52] They professed a strong belief in Mormonism and saw the inclusion of Vodou, not as oppositional, but as complementary. In terms of shaping their own cosmologies, Haitian Mormons select ideas and beliefs from both Mormonism and Vodou to create what they consider a better design for living.

Because Mormonism is a lived religion and not merely experienced on Sunday through scriptural references, Haitian members of the Church, like Mormons elsewhere, can carve out space in which the text is cast in a role secondary to the body. Through the construction of definitional ceremonies and acting as *bricoleurs*, Haitian Mormons can create for themselves culturally appropriate visions of Mormonism, even though some elements may be in opposition to Church authorities' desires.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion generates questions for further exploration. To what extent are the experiences of Haitian Mormons unique to Haiti? Don't other countries and cultures, particularly those with illiterate societies, adapt their practice of Mormonism in similar ways? Even more important, how much *bricolage* can and will Church leaders tolerate before they classify such behavior as incompatible with Church doctrine and membership? Without some assertion of formal Church control over the accumulating *bricolage*, it might eventually lead to an institutionalized syncretism between the two.

While Haitian Mormons are certainly carving out unique performative spaces in regard to their religious and cultural identity, to what extent is their performance unique to Mormonism? In other words, is the way Haitians do their Mormonism similar to Mormon practices in other developing nations? Undeniably, similarities will exist across national boundaries. Indeed, individuals everywhere act as *bricoleurs*, piecing together personal religious tapestries that best suit their particular needs. Further, it follows that actual Mormon practice and doctrine will

52. Each of the members I spoke to regarding Vodou (with the notable exception of Montina) asked that I not use their names. See field notes, September-December 1998, Petionville and Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

bend to some degree, allowing small pockets of indigenous Mormonism to flourish, whether those communities are found in Haiti or in any other developing nation. Most notable is the subtle way that *family* is redefined to encompass a larger community in which Mormon nuclear families are rare.

Mormonism's adaptability to embodied experience has practical application in other Caribbean, South American, and African nations in which formal education is neither guaranteed nor practical. I imagine it would be quite common to see Joseph Smith and his First Vision emerge as popular and recognizable icons for Mormons who find a poor, uneducated farmboy a familiar figure. Unfortunately, there has been scant anthropological work on this subject. Further, in these same societies in which oral tradition is favored over the written word, the bodily performance of Mormonism would understandably follow. In short, it is not the experience of embodied Mormonism and its performance that makes Haitian Mormonism unique.

What remains exceptional about the Haitian experience is its mingling of Mormonism and Vodou, a religious practice that is inextricably embedded in the national character, yet which still carries the stigma of illegitimacy. For most Haitians, to be Haitian is to practice Vodou. Given that Mormonism lacks a clear and enforced policy regarding the practice of this religion, many Haitian Mormons have incorporated their new faith into their preexisting cultural identities as vodouists. It cannot be denied that Mormonism, in part, allows for this creation. Such a reality raises the question: How creative will Mormon leaders allow their Haitian members to be? Since Mormonism, much like Catholicism before it, is a religion attempting to exert centralized control over doctrine and practice, how far can Haitian *bricoleurs* alter the practice of Mormonism before Church leaders brand their behavior heretical? From my professional perspective, for Mormonism to thrive in Haiti, a continued "don't ask, don't tell" policy seems most productive. Perhaps such an approach sounds irresponsible; but if history teaches any lesson, Vodou cannot (and should not) be entirely erased, nor can Haitian Mormons readily become Vodou-free any more than American Mormons can be made entirely free of the pagan-influenced celebrations of Halloween, Christmas trees, Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, or even astrology.

In 1685, under French colonial law, King Louis XIV ordered that missionaries be "sent to St. Domingue [colonial Haiti], to inspire faith in

the true God in the Africans, to take away their old idolatry, and to make them persevering until death in the Christian religion."[53] Further, this desire insinuated itself into colonial life with the inception of the *Code Noir*, a document requiring every Haitian to be baptized Catholic, thus ensuring Catholicism's place as the only legal and socially recognized religion in Haiti. Yet, as expected, Haitians continued to practice Vodou, using the symbols and accoutrements of Catholicism to cloak their behavior.

Understandably, the Vatican was not pleased with this syncretic blending and, after Haiti emerged as a sovereign nation in 1804, sought to reaffirm its power by instituting the Concordat of 1860. This document branded the practice of Vodou as illegal and appointed an archbishop to oversee renewed missionary efforts in Haiti. Both clergy and government officials set to work to rebuild the Catholic empire, in part, by policing and punishing the practice of Vodou. However, the most notorious attempt of the Catholic Church to rid Haiti forever of Vodou and simultaneously to bring Haitian Catholicism back in line with Vatican doctrine came in 1941 with *Operation Nettoyage* (Operation Cleanup). It consisted of "burning and destroying hundreds of *ounfos* [Vodou temples] and ritual paraphernalia throughout the country."[54]

At the height of this campaign, the Church imposed an oath upon its members, which required them to "renounce their superstitious practices," to abandon the practice of "feeding" and coercing ancestral spirits, and promise "to renew their baptismal vows," be fruitful members of the church, and to raise their children exclusively according to the strict teachings of the Catholic Church.[55] Because the entire nation was Catholic, everyone was required to take this oath. Several bloody incidents of resistance followed until the Catholic Church, under advisement from Hai-

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53. Michel Laguerre, "The Place of Voodoo in the Social Structure of Haiti," *Caribbean Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1973): 38.

54. Leslie Desmangles, *The Faces of the Gods: Vodou and Roman Catholicism in Haiti* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 52.

55. Laennec Hurbon, *Dieu dans le Vaudou Haitien* (Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Editions Henri Deschamps, 1987), 21. See also A. Slosage, *A la Recherche d'une Pastorale Haitienne* (Port-au Prince, Haiti: Imprimerie d'Etat, 1967); J. M. Salgado, *Le Culte Africain du Vodou et les Baptistes en Haiti* (Rome: Université Pontificale de Propaganda Fide, 1963), and C. E. Peters, *La Croix contre l'Asson* (Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Imprimerie Telhomme, 1960).

tian president Elie Lescot, abandoned the campaign, leaving Vodou to be forever entangled in Catholicism. Moreover, since the 1980s, with a worldwide explosion in Protestant conversion,

> the [Catholic] Church has begun to experiment with accepting culturally diverse innovations of the High Mass[;] for example, throughout Latin America, the Church has endorsed initiatives of the part of the black clergy to perform "Afro Masses" which incorporate elements of Afro-derived dances, music, instruments, dress cosmologies and food. In Haiti, the Church publicly praises Voodoo artists and even employs them. The same drums that are played during Voodoo ceremonies are now permitted in some parish churches.[56]

Certainly the Mormon Church has approached missionary work in Haiti in a much different fashion. First, it entered the Haitian landscape at a time when freedom of religion was guaranteed to all Haitian citizens.[57] Then on April 4, 2003, then-Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide issued a decree granting Vodou the status of an officially recognized state religion.[58] It is in this environment of unprecedented religious freedom that Haitian Mormons have chosen and continue to choose to become Mormon.[59] Second, as I have illustrated previously, the Mormon Church lacks a clearly articulated or enforced policy against Vodou. The assumption seems to be that Haitian members of the Church

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56. Doris Chernik, "Introduction to the Republic of Haiti," in *Orphans International Haiti*, copyright 2001, revised February 20, 2004, retrieved February 28, 2004, from http://www.internationalorphans.org/Haiti-republic.

57. This freedom existed informally under Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc) until 1986 but was formalized by inclusion in the Haitian Constitution in 1987.

58. Carol J. Williams, "Haitians Hail the 'President of Voodoo,'" *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 2003, A1.

59. According to "Haiti," *Cumorah Project International LDS Database*, retrieved February 28, 2004, from http://www.cumorah.com/cgi-bin/db.cgi?view_records=View%2Brecords&Country=Haiti, Haiti has slightly more than 10,000 members with a projected annual growth rate of 11.58 percent. On September 7, 2003, the Port-au-Prince Haiti North Stake was created by Elder H. Aldridge Gillespie of the Seventy. "Second Haitian Stake Organized," *Haiti Port-au-Prince Mission News*, retrieved February 28, 2004, from http://www.mission.net/haiti/port-au-prince/news.

"simply know better."[60] However, given the widely held Mormon belief that although "the 'symbolic vehicles' of the various world religions 'can provide valid functions and services' for those who believe in them, in order to conform to 'the celestial order of things' members must in time be adapted to meet the principles of truth,"[61] the Catholic experience in Haiti may be a cautionary tale. Some Haitian Mormons will always practice Vodou.[62] That is *their* "celestial order of things."

Given the understood presence of Vodou in Haitian cultural identity, it seems to be in the Church's best interest to understand the religion of the Haitians they wish to convert. Certainly much effort is given to studying foreign languages so that missionaries can more clearly communicate with those interested in Mormonism, but should all effort end there? Indeed, Joseph Smith argued that "every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language," but what does such a statement imply? Palmer and Keller offer an interpretation that could remarkably strengthen how the Church conducts missionary work: "There may be a key here that draws a distinction between a 'tongue' (language) and a 'language' (way of thinking, religion). The non-Christian nations of the earth are to be taught in their own tongues in the context of their own ways of expression and thought. But in order to be fully prepared to carry the gospel message effectively to all nations,

60. Donald Miller, interviewed October 21, 1998.

61. Palmer and Keller, *Religions of the World*, 222.

62. Perhaps one reason for the historical syncretism of Haitian religious practice has been Haiti's isolation from ecclesiastical governing forces. The Catholic Church has adopted a "hands-off" approach to Haiti since the 1685 *Code Noir* (even then it was France that demanded baptisms), and the Mormon Church seems to be developing the same methodology if only rhetorically. The evacuation of foreign missionaries in the wake of the 1991 political turbulence makes it seem likely that the cultural vacuum thus created furthered the opportunity for homegrown religion and *bricolage* to develop. See Sam Penrod, "LDS Missionaries Pulled Out of Haiti" in *KSL.com News on Demand*, February 23, 2004, retrieved February 28, 2004, from http://tv.ksl.com/index.php?sid= 76882&nid=5&template.

we must first study and learn both the 'tongues' and the religions of these peoples."[63]

However accurate this interpretation might be (and I find it significant), the prevailing belief among Church leaders holds that exposure to foreign religious practice may erode the faith of young men and women serving abroad. Elder Christensen explained, with Elder Vigliotti's nonverbal confirmation, that they were instructed during their weeks of language training at the Missionary Training Center, "Just don't get into it [Vodou] and don't try to figure out what it is."[64] Miller confirmed a policy of avoiding any discussion of, or interest in, Vodou: "When missionaries become involved in diabolical things, Satan has power over the missionaries. So it [Vodou] is off limits."[65] Such a characterization of Vodou as satanic seems unnecessary and incorrect, not only historically but also because it could foster an attitude of superiority and moral repugnance ill-suited for religious conversion.

However, it cannot be overlooked that the possible erosion of faith may be of some concern simply because many religions have similarities in both doctrine and practice that can often surprise the uninitiated. Even within the seemingly odd pairing of Mormonism and Vodou, similarities exist. In fact, by virtue of its emphasis upon testimony and other gifts of the Spirit, Mormonism seems to have more in common with Vodou than any other Christian religion.[66]

However, Church leaders should have more confidence in the strength of their missionaries' faith. They should realize that missionaries who understand the current faith of the Haitians they wish to convert are not being seduced by "satanic" practices; rather, they are building a bridge of mutual respect that can only foster greater interest in the Church. Vodou and Mormonism do not need to be at odds with one another. Many Haitian Mormons see them as complementary and not at all oppositional. Perhaps Montina, one of the most faithful Mormons I en-

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63. Palmer and Keller, *Religions of the World,* 10.

64. Elder Christensen, interviewed September 27, 1998.

65. Miller, interviewed, October 21, 1998.

66. Although not the purpose of this article, marked similarities between Vodou and Mormonism include the recognition of a female and married deity, the possibility that practitioners can reach godhood, and the understanding that religion is a living, breathing process that can be changed by revelation.

countered during my stay in Haiti, says it best: "Me, I'm a Mormon and I love Mormonism, but I also respect the culture of my people. We must not forget that Vodou is a good thing."[67] What remains to be seen is whether the Mormon Church can reconcile itself to this fact.

67. Michelet, interviewed October 2, 1998.

Toward a "Marriage Group" of Contemporary Mormon Short Stories

B. W. Jorgensen

> "The truth is that marriage is difficult to imagine."
>
> —Carolyn Heilbrun[1]

IN A NOW-CANONICAL ARTICLE in 1912, "Chaucer's Discussion of Marriage," George Lyman Kittredge applied the term "marriage group" to a subset among Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*: the Wife of Bath (and her polemic and confessional prologue), the Clerk, the Merchant, and the Frank-

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1. Carolyn Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life* (1988; reprinted, New York: Ballantine, 1989), 91. Her remark provoked an intermittent ongoing project that I call "imagining marriage," a branch of which became "imagining Mormon marriage." A twig from that branch is a 1996 essay called "Imagining Mormon Marriage, Part 1: The Mythic, the Novelistic, and Jack Weyland's *Charly*," *Mormon Letters Annual, 1997*, edited by Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Association for Mormon Letters, 1997), 128–37.

lin. Later scholars sometimes enlarged the group or questioned the inclusion of various tales, but it has persisted as an object of critical attention. Obviously, in proposing a "marriage group" of contemporary Mormon short stories, I cannot expect to discover the kind of "conversation" or "debate" that Chaucerians from Kittredge to Kaske and beyond have analyzed.[2] Any list I make will be, like the present list, both tentative and incomplete, as well as subject to augmentation as more stories of Mormon marriage are written and published. And though I can't suppose that these stories are "talking to" one another as Chaucer's marriage tales clearly do, yet still they might be listened to as statements in an ongoing, implicit conversation in Mormon fiction about one of the culture's central concerns.

In the introduction to her book *Love's Knowledge*, the American philosopher Martha Nussbaum proposed

> that there may be some views of the world and how one should live in it—views, especially, that emphasize the world's surprising variety, its complexity and mysteriousness, its flawed and imperfect beauty—that [can] be fully and adequately stated . . . only in a language and in forms themselves more complex, more allusive, more attentive to particulars . . . only in a form that itself implies that life contains significant surprises, that our task, as agents, is to live as good characters in a good story do, caring about what happens, resourcefully confronting each new thing. . . .
>
> And what if it is love one is trying to understand . . . ?"[3]

What, I have echoed, if it is marriage? We would need novels, I have suggested, "to imagine Mormon marriage in ways that could help us endure it and flourish in it"; "long ones, . . . to tell the long stories of marriages."[4]

Here I propose, rather, to take up short stories, and I also want to stress the plural: "Mormon marriages." I feel compelled to nominalism: There is no one ideal or archetype or model of a modern Mormon marriage, even if all or most of them might share certain minimal traits or conditions. We can suppose that they will all be (as "The Family: A Proclama-

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2. George Lyman Kittredge, "Chaucer's Discussion of Marriage," *Modern Philology* 9, no. 4 (April 1912): 435-67; Robert E. Kaske, "Chaucer's Marriage Group," *Chaucer the Love Poet*, edited by Jerome Mitchell and William Provost (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1973), 45-65.

3. Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 3-4.

4. Jorgensen, "Imagining Mormon Marriage, Part 1," 136.

tion to the World" describes or prescribes) heterosexual and monogamous; yet we can't suppose that all will be temple marriages (though clearly the Proclamation would prefer that). And however "eternal" they may be in wish, intention, or sanction, the ones we can watch and write about, here and now, will be temporal, however long they last.

What have Mormon short story writers, so far, done with the subject? In some stories, such as Doug Thayer's "Under the Cottonwoods" (and several others in his collection with that title), the marriage looks like background circumstance rather than foreground action: the story takes place *in* the marriage, as within a space the marriage defines, but may not be *about* the marriage and may not materially alter it.[5] This distinction will not be easy to maintain. Even in Thayer's story, the marriage is a circumstance that threatens its own continuance, or at least weakens its own chances of flourishing. In Don Marshall's rather similar "The Wheelbarrow," the marriage itself has clearly created the protagonist's perplexity and near-despair, and is at risk because of them.[6]

It has sometimes bothered me that, in Mormon life as I've watched and tried to live it, once certain major choices have been made—wife, work, worship, if you like alliterative (and gender-biased) triads—there seems to be no story, only routine and habit (and, alas for these latter latter days, the culture of the planner); I've thought of trying an essay titled "Life without Story." But perhaps it is not entirely a bad thing to think of marriage as circumstance rather than story; perhaps it is meant at least partly to be the circumstance within which other (and mercifully short) stories play out. As anyone learns who has children, other protagonists soon take center stage, and man and wife, father and mother, begin to play little more than walk-on roles: cook, launderer, chauffeur, answering service, tutor, good cop and bad.

Perhaps one reason marriage is difficult to imagine is that, once underway, it is indeed, and even should be, rather resistant to story—if by story we mean the nonhabitual or nonroutine, the significantly life-altering event or act that happens only "once," and not the common run of days. Elizabeth Tallent, one of the finest contemporary American writers

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5. Douglas H. Thayer, "Under the Cottonwoods," in his *Under the Cottonwoods* (Provo, Utah: Frankson, 1977), 155–72.

6. Donald R. Marshall, "The Wheelbarrow," in his *Frost in the Orchard* (1977; 2d ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 182–206.

of short stories (and so far one novel) about marriage, used as an epigraph to one of her collections this beautifully ambiguous sentence from the Irish writer Edna O'Brien: "They chopped wood, they lit the stove, they kept busy; there is always something to do in a house."[7] Is that a curse or a blessing?

Marriage for the most part is a prosaic rather than a poetic circumstance—"a sequence of terribly time-bound days," in a memorable phrase from Marden Clark.[8] I have in mind here the literary theory proposed by Gary Saul Morson, strongly derived from the work and thought of Tolstoy and Bakhtin, which Morson calls "Prosaics." He stipulates "two closely related meanings" for his neologism:

> It is, first of all, a way of thinking about human events that focuses on the ordinary, messy, quotidian facts of daily life—in short, on the prosaic. As it happens, this form of thinking also offers a reason to take novels with renewed seriousness: of all literary forms, novels are best able to capture the messiness of the world. Thus the second meaning of "prosaics," which is opposed to "poetics," suggests an approach to verbal art that focuses not on epics or lyrics or tragedies, but on the novel and other forms of prose. Prosaic facts have been best represented in prosaic art.[9]

Prosaic prose fiction, whether at novel or short story length, may have the best chance of grasping the prosaic circumstance of marriage. And this fiction will require a finely attuned prosaic reading (which Morson exemplifies, and which I also find in Nussbaum's readings of fiction), a continuously attentive "moral alertness" ("Prosaics," 525) to "tiny alterations" (521, 523) in characters' thoughts, speeches, and actions; a reading alert not to the overt "message" of a story or the "moral" it might be supposed to "illustrate," but to the emotional and moral judgments we readers "practice moment to moment while reading it" (527), "the tiny, tiny alterations in [our] consciousness in process," "the moment-to-moment decisions we make in reading" (528). I have only a beginner's sense of how to do this, and will not attempt it in this survey; my attention to any stories I

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7. Elizabeth Tallent, *Time with Children* (New York: Knopf, 1987), [ix].

8. Marden J. Clark, *Liberating Form* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1992), 138.

9. Gary Saul Morson, "Prosaics: An Approach to the Humanities," *American Scholar* 57 (Autumn 1988): 516.

discuss here will simply be too hurried, too impatient, for serious prosaic reading.

I want some rough heuristic categories or phases to sort the stories on my list—nothing more elegant than echoes of Aristotle. Let "Beginnings" refer to stories set anywhere in marital time from the wedding or honeymoon to a first child's birth, or, say, a first half-dozen childless years. Let "Middles"—or as I will prefer prosaically to say, "Middlings"—refer broadly and vaguely to any time between the Beginning and the Ending of any marriage even nominally intact; we might at times want to distinguish early Middlings from middle and late Middlings. And let "Endings" refer to any temporal dissolutions, separations (which might not prove an ending), divorces, or deaths. Adultery or estrangement might occur in any of these phases but, like separation, would not necessarily prove an ending. John Fowles has remarked that "adultery is the disproof of a marriage rather than its betrayal,"[10] yet some marriages rebut that refutation and survive it.

Second marriages, as in Robert Christmas's "Another Angel," Judith Freeman's "Family Attractions," Mary Clyde's "A Good Paved Road," and some stories by Margaret Young, would by definition follow an Ending, yet would also pass through their own Beginnings, Middlings, and Endings. And Endings themselves will often entail "Afters": not always "happily ever afters," but times into which an ended marriage still intrudes its ghostly presence, welcome or not, as in Margaret Young's edgy and tender "Hanauma Bay," in which the wife's ex-husband visits and sleeps in the basement of her present household: "Later, in my husband's arms, I could hear Gus downstairs, moving around; could hear the bed creak as he climbed into it; could imagine him in the dark, curled up like a comma, a lonely, angry man. Hiding in places I'd never suspect."[11] "Like a comma": a pause in a sentence that is not over yet.

All five of the stories in the "Exes" section of Margaret Young's second collection, *Love Chains*, seem to me to belong to this odd inevitable (and un-Aristotelian) category, "Afters." So does Phyllis Barber's award-winning "Ida's Sabbath," in which Ida, after nearly twenty years as

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10. John Fowles, *The Aristos* (1970; reprinted, New York: New American Library, 1975), 167.

11. Margaret Young, "Hanauma Bay," in her *Love Chains* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 165.

ward organist, comes to church one Sunday morning without her temple garments because she was washing every pair the night before and was stopped mid-cycle by the same electrical storm that destroyed the steeple of the chapel. Blushing "in places no one could see" and feeling that "something in her was set adrift, something was loose," she still does her duties, distracted by recollections of her marriage and her husband Louis leaving her some years ago, and by a vision (fantasy, if you like) of climbing onto the chapel roof for a colloquy with the Lord.[12]

Given the brevity of short stories, and the historically persistent habit of the genre to subtend only a short arc of time (a scene, an episode, a Sunday morning like Ida's), we might very seldom see a short story try to dilate across the full span of a long or even a short marriage. Metaphoric condensation, extended summary, perhaps in retrospect from somewhere in the middle or from near or after an ending, or a chronological series of snapshots seem the most likely narrative strategies. Phyllis Barber's "Almost Magnificence" uses the first tactic to figure the marital career of a woman who "leaked at the edges" and finally "dwindled down to a few powdery body parts, which her pets mistook for catnip."[13] Barber's "White on White" uses the third strategy,[14] as does Neal Chandler's anxious and perplexed "Roger across the Looking-Glass," which frames its snapshots of the history of Roger's and Ellen's nineteen-year marriage within a single (and, on Roger's part, deliberately controlled) act of sexual intercourse ("roger" in the eighteenth-century sense of the word, as in William Byrd's reiterated diary note, "I rogered my wife").[15] Helen Walker Jones's "Six-Buck Fortune" and my unaccountable twin Wayne's "Two Years Sunday" use retrospection (Wayne's from after the husband's death, Jones's from the middle of the marriage but up against a gypsy fortuneteller's predicted twelve-year limit).[16]

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12. Phyllis Barber, "Ida's Sabbath," in her *Parting the Veil: Stories from a Mormon Imagination* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1999), 37, 41.

13. Phyllis Barber, "Almost Magnificence," in her *The School of Love* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 15, 16.

14. "White on White," ibid., 39–44.

15. Neal Chandler, "Roger across the Looking-Glass," in his *Benediction: A Book of Stories* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989), 47–61.

16. Helen Walker Jones, "The Six-Buck Fortune," in *In Our Lovely Deseret:*

I'll pigeonhole and comment on some instances in each of my broad phases.

Beginnings

No Mormon writer I can think of comes near the power, the beauty and terror, of D. H. Lawrence's imagining of the beginning of the marriage of Will Brangwen and Anna Lensky in Chapter 6 of *The Rainbow*: "a great steadiness, a core of living eternity" near "the supreme center," but also "continually, the recurrence of love and conflict between them"; "some endless contest," "an unknown battle."[17] Virginia Sorensen gave us an idyllic marital beginning, the sheep-camp honeymoon of Call Kels and Cloie Roe in the penultimate chapter of her tragicomic novel *The Neighbors*.[18] Lawrence's novel set a daunting high mark; and after all, Lawrence, more than simply a writer about sex, is, in English fiction, the great anguished poet of relation, who said in a letter to Edward Garnett in 1913: "After all, it is the problem of today, the establishment of a new relation, or the readjustment of the old one, between men and women."[19]

In this latter day of Mormon literary history, John Bennion's "A House of Order" reaches in Lawrence's direction; and now (for another day, another essay, maybe another critic) we may read the novel for which that story seems a forestudy, *Falling toward Heaven* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 2000). In "A House of Order," Howard and Sylvia Rockwood, married three years, have gone three weeks since they "last made love," and Howard thinks it will now "take singular effort"; "if he wasn't careful the cultivated green which was his life would slide away into the desert and dissipate in the dry heat." "If he could just keep his patience and humor. They had sacrificed too many days to tension, too many nights of her lying

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Mormon Fictions, edited by Robert Raleigh (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 37–45; Wayne Jorgensen, "Two Years Sunday," *Wasatch Review International* 1, no. 1 (1992): 25–36. Editor's note: Wayne Jorgensen is a pen name of Bruce W. Jorgensen.

17. D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (London: Methuen, 1915; New York: Penguin, 1995), 135, 155, 156.

18. Virginia Sorensen, *The Neighbors* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947).

19. D. H. Lawrence, *Selected Letters*, edited by Richard Aldington (1978; reprinted, New York: Penguin, 1996), 54.

still on her side of the bed." The almost thirty-page story details their "singular effort," tangled and difficult and painfully funny, and they do make love near its end. But although Howard "strain[ed] toward comprehension of the gifts she lavished on him and which he waited and waited to return to her," it's not quite clear at the end that the distance or barrier between them (which Howard has created by fantasizing about his old girlfriend: adultery of the heart?) is yet crossed.[20] No wonder John Bennion wrote a whole novel to imagine the Beginning of Howard Rockwood's marriage, and it's a novel in the line of succession from Thomas Hardy through D. H. Lawrence.

"I'm not yet twenty-one. Patty's just turned twenty," says the narrator of Darrell Spencer's "The 12-Inch Dog." "Isn't there a grace period? Aren't we underage? Don't we get a couple of years during which the good times roll?" Maybe not. Maybe. At the end of the story this couple, six months married, sit on their redwood deck in the sunset, and he asks her, "We doing all right?" and she answers, "Only time will tell" (89). "Quoting who?" he tacitly wonders. "Her mother? Her grandmother? That Victorian lady who's taken up housekeeping in one corner of her mind?" She tells him aloud, "No more peace at any price."[21] This doesn't look like a grace period. It looks like difficulty. And they look like they mean to go through it. The edgy movements and sometimes edgier endings of Spencer's stories leave you wondering if his characters will make it, knowing they don't quit easily.

One of my favorite stories of marital beginning by a Mormon writer is Myrna Marler's "Leaving the Farm," which wryly and comically rewrites the Beginning of Beginnings, Genesis itself. Teenagers Bud and Eve elope, and Bud's wealthy father threatens to annul the marriage unless they live on his summer estate, "a small banana and papaya farm in the back woods of Punaluu," and have "no babies" until they can support them. On the farm, they'll have "nothing much more to worry about than coming in out of the rain." But you guessed it: Eve, abetted by Bud's renegade older brother Stan, develops a bad case of baby fever, and Bud and Eve do have to leave the farm, with "no real idea at all what they'd gotten

20. John Bennion, "A House of Order," in his *Breeding Leah and Other Stories* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 69, 75, 96.

21. Darrell Spencer, "The 12-Inch Dog," in his *Caution: Men in Trees* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 80, 89.

themselves into."[22] The story says what all stories of Beginnings say: beginnings middle and end; you won't stay long in Paradise. Or as a better maker put it, "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, / And summer's lease hath all too short a date."[23] In John Milton's rewriting of Genesis, *Paradise Lost,* when Satan first sees the primal couple, he apostrophizes:

> Ah! Gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
> Your change approaches, when all these delights
> Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe,
> More woe, the more your taste is now of joy. (Book 4, ll. 366–69)

And as he turns away he says, "enjoy, till I return, / Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed!" (Book 4, ll. 534–35). Even discounting reptilian envy, he's telling more than a little truth, as Milton well knew.

Zina Petersen's pair of young Provo escapees in "Now Let's Dance" are nominally in a Beginning, married at nineteen and twenty-two, now three years and counting; yet the wife-protagonist Liza has begun to "feel like . . . someone in the background of a grocery store commercial. I consume. All I do is buy things and find a use for them and use them up and buy some more. And if I weren't there it would not distract from the message any." Liza is just doing some of what there is to do in a house, keeping busy (chopping wood, lighting the fire); but "she wanted to say" to her counselor, "My marriage is fine, sort of. It hurts, but so does being alone."[24]

We don't get far into these stories, or far into the marriages they imagine, before the cries or sighs of distress start suspiring. Denis de Rougemont wrote that "Happy love has no history."[25] But stories are about trouble, and some of the trouble Mormon short story writers have to tell us about comes in marriage, and comes early. At the end of her

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22. Myrna Marler, "Leaving the Farm," *Wasatch Review,* 3, no. 1 (1994): 35, 37, 53.

23. William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 18," ll. 3–4.

24. Zina Petersen, "Now Let's Dance," in *Turning Hearts: Short Stories on Family Life,* edited by Orson Scott Card and David Dollahite (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994), 239, 246.

25. Denis De Rougemont, *Love in the Western World* (1956; reprinted, New York: Harper, 1974), 15.

story, Liza, "hearing pain and music," is laughing in bed with her husband Jay: "they laughed together, in their ancient embrace . . . they laughed at all of it, through it, because of it, with it" (248)—yet this can be only a temporary, temporal respite, no full resolution. The story of marriage, Rilke wrote, is of "two people who were making life difficult for each other."[26]

Joanna Brooks's second-marriage young couple in "Badlands" seem still beginning but edging into middling, as their marriage has "got dark and sinewed, like plums past season," and they've learned "There's nothing nice about love in these parts. It's farther than nice and more dangerous." They're at an edge of temporary separation too, and the wife narrator is sure "that he'll never come back completely, that we'll be sitting at the breakfast table reading the paper with toast and the morning radio and part of him will be far, far away. And that far away part I can't have is what I'll fall in love with, desperate and desperate." To her, and maybe to us too, "What's shocking is this next thought: I'm not horrified."[27]

"Who ever desires what is not gone?" asks Anne Carson, and answers, "No one. The Greeks were clear on this. They invented eros to express it."[28] Erotic desire—or call it romantic love if you wish—rather normally impels toward marriage in our culture. Yet de Rougemont long ago warned of a deep antithesis between romantic eros and Christian marriage: "Passion and marriage are essentially irreconcilable"; "Romance calls for 'the faraway love' of the troubadours; marriage, for love of 'one's neighbour.'"[29] Brooks's narrator exposes this deep problem in contemporary marriage: its Beginning naturally entails not only its Middling (as in Aristotle's definition) but also its instability.

Middlings

Obviously, marital Beginnings can modulate swiftly into Early Middlings, and sometimes rather directly toward Endings. Most stories

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26. Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, translated by Stephen Mitchell (1983; reprinted, New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 21.

27. Joanna Brooks, "Badlands," in *In Our Lovely Deseret: Mormon Fictions*, edited by Robert Raleigh (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 179, 183, 185.

28. Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet* (1986; reprinted, Normal, Ill.: Dalkey Archive, 1998), 11.

29. De Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, 277, 292.

on my list fall into the Middling phase; and not surprisingly, since the middle is where (and middling is how) most of us live most of our lives, neither beginning nor yet quite ending. We live, in the archaic phrase Frank Kermode used, "in the middest."[30] Among Mormon writers of marriage stories, Darrell Spencer, along with Margaret Young, looks most prolific to me and looks like our most abundant writer of Middlings. His characters, like the narrator in "As Long as Lust Is Short" (actually a Beginning story, a marriage of one year), might always be asking one another Hank Williams's "cowboy questions about why and how"—"Why don't you love me like you used to do? How come you treat me like a worn-out shoe?"—and they might also, like this narrator, "talk hard and sad about love and tears."[31] You might think Spencer's stories shouldn't all count, since only a few are manifestly about characters who are or might be or have been Mormon. But the medieval Catholic Chaucer wrote about ostensibly pagan characters; so I wouldn't be too quick to excuse Spencer's stories from the conversation.

The news from stories of Middlings is much like the news from Beginnings, pretty sobering, though perhaps one hopeful sign is that there are still marriages to write about. The British critic Tony Tanner once quoted Roland Barthes: "If we managed to suppress the Oedipus complex and marriage, what would be left for us to *tell*?"[32] Every culture will always have something to tell about marriage; in Mormon culture, I've begun to suspect it may vie with missions as one of our top topics, something about which nearly everybody, participant or spectator, could a tale unfold. (In *Falling toward Heaven*, John Bennion takes up both.) It might also be true that, as with missions, the guardians of the culture might rather we not unfold much; in the post-Proclamation era, this preference might prove increasingly true: Mormon marriages as too sacred to tell stories about. Still, though we have a Church Missionary Committee, we don't yet have a Church Marriage Committee. (Stay tuned.)

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30. Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (1967; reprinted, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 17, 58, 64.

31. Darrell Spencer, "As Long as Lust Is Short," in his *Our Secret's Out: Stories* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 126.

32. Tony Tanner, *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 277.

In Michael Fillerup's "The Bowhunter," the marriage is background for the hunter's story, but also one large reason why the hunter hunts:

> Every trip now he drove further and further from home and hiked deeper and deeper into unfamiliar territory, as if intentionally trying to lose himself inside the forest labyrinth. At nightfall when he should have been heading home, he would continue his aimless wandering as the full moon stalked him from tree to tree. . . . Sometimes he would . . . imagine himself falling asleep and waking up like Rip Van Winkle, with a beard to his knees. The thought always enticed him, but, ultimately, he would hike back to his truck by moonlight and drive on home, stumbling into bed at 3:00 or 4:00 A.M. Carmen? She was out. Zonked. Slipping in beside her, he always wondered if he hadn't made a mistake.[33]

We may wonder which mistake, out of several possible? Later in the story, waiting out a hailstorm, Jack wonders: "What had happened to Carmen? To him—*them*? Had they become dumb statistics, victims of the life-cycle: boy meets girl, they fall in love, get married, have children: they grow old, they die" (76). And he muses:

> A universal lament among men. Maybe the Italians had the right idea—or polygamy. Then again . . . one wife was plenty. If they only realized their holding power, what just an occasional surprise, to wake up in the middle of the night to her hand stroking you. Yes. No. Go. It wasn't just the raw thrill of it either, but her, your wife, with you and no one else. A stroke of righteous wickedness once in a while. If they only realized. But maybe it was better they remained stale. On ice. Easier to get out the door. (77)

Before the inconclusive end of the story, Jack has curled up on the ground in fetal position (another comma, a suspended sentence) and prayed "Dear God, Father," and lost and found himself in a momentarily paradisal aspen grove and felt "light as air" and then seen two bull elk, one "slightly larger than the other, like a mature father and son" (79) (an echo of Joseph Smith's Sacred Grove experience); but at the end he is listening to "the sound of twilight, of the wind . . . the sound of the rock he had tossed over the great canyon's rim whistling all the way down to the bowels of the earth. A bird, a falcon falling" (80).

Living in the middest, trying to write stories of middling marriage (of "midlife crisis," if you like), how shall we end our stories? (Will visions help?) How shall we go on to tell them out? The final image here looks

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33. Michael Fillerup, "The Bowhunter," in his *Visions and Other Stories* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 64.

oddly like that at the end of Thayer's "Under the Cottonwoods": enacted or only anticipated, a gesture of letting something go; or, more clearly here, an image of entropic decline, a fall strictly subject to inexorable natural law. It feels as if Jack will go home again, and this time maybe before midnight; and maybe if he does he will not find Carmen has already "slipped off to bed to play possum" (78). But who could tell?

Divine intervention may have helped this story's protagonist to go on in what the narrator of another Fillerup story calls "a game of inches."[34] Divine or angelic or Three-Nephite intervention appears to resolve Margaret Young's "Zoo Sounds" too: a "vagrant . . . preaching near the seals" who conveys guilty and angry runaway Martha back to her husband Ross, and at the end "makes a simple, graceful gesture with his arms, . . . upward and out," and "there's a sound like wind. Or wings."[35] Are the vibrations or (Lawrence's word) "tremulations" starting to come through? Are we hearing the still sad music of humanity, the faint pedal-steel wail of slow-dance heartbreak, the gasped prayers for deliverance from the body of this death, from devouring time?

But after all, this is nothing new in the literature of marriage. In chapter 20 of *Middlemarch* (1874), one of the great English novels on the subject, George Eliot interrupts her account of Dorothea Brooke's very early marital misery in Rome:

> Not that this inward amazement of Dorothea's was anything very exceptional: many souls in their young nudity are tumbled out among incongruities and left to "find their feet" among them, while their elders go about their business. Nor can I suppose that when Mrs Casaubon is discovered in a fit of weeping six weeks after her wedding, the situation will be regarded as tragic. Some discouragement, some faintness of heart at the new real future which replaces the imaginary, is not unusual, and we do not expect people to be moved by what is not unusual. That element of tragedy which lies in the very fact of frequency, has not yet wrought itself into the coarse emotion of mankind; and perhaps our frames could hardly bear much of it. If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we

34. Michael Fillerup, "A Game of Inches," in ibid., 101–16.

35. Margaret Young, "Zoo Sounds," in *Love Chains*, 3, 20.

> should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity.[36]

Mormon writers of marriage stories, beginning, middling, or ending, are trying to hear the roar on the other side of our pervasive cultural silence about what the Wife of Bath called the "wo that is in mariage,"[37] and the rumors they bring back will not likely thicken the cultural wadding of our encouraging rhetoric about "celestial marriage" and "eternal families."

Every celestial marriage works out its eternity in fear and trembling here on earth, in the teeth of time. In an AML meeting more than two decades ago, Marden Clark invited us to

> consider the potential for tragedy that is built into the Mormon vision of eternal marriage and eternal family, surely one of the most sublime parts of the total vision of our destiny. Most of us catch at least part of the vision, respond to the marvelous promise, and willingly accept the responsibility. But having done so, having made those covenants in the joy and flow of young love, we find ourselves in our time-bound bodies and time-bound wills having to work out that eternal destiny in a sequence of terribly time-bound days, in the routine of home and work and child bearing and child raising with their joys, to be sure, but also with their frustrations and disappointments and sorrows and sometimes downright tragedies.[38]

Clark went on to regret that "as a people we have implicitly denied the tragic implications of what I have been outlining, largely because we have kept our eyes so firmly fixed on the ultimate resolution in Heaven that we have denied the earthly paradox," and to suggest that the "heavenly resolution makes of our earthly suffering and tragedy divine comedy, to be sure. But much of it cannot be easy comedy" (139).

"Uneasy comedy" makes a good rubric for many of the stories I've surveyed about marital Middlings. What I like about the word "middling" is its sense of the "not unusual," the "average" or "ordinary," its noise of a ball bouncing faster but ever lower, its rhymes with "fiddling," "diddling," "twiddling," "piddling," and "riddling," its cousinlike semblance to "earthling" (children of this world, who marry and are given in marriage), its near-pun with "muddling," its hint of a ghostly revenant verb, "to mid-

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36. George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, edited by Bert G. Hornback (1874; reprinted, New York: Norton, 1977), 135.

37. Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, edited by F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), l, 3.

38. Clark, *Liberating Form*, 138.

dle."[39] Lovely word. (My dad used it, as in "fair-to-middlin," his answer to "How you doin'?") True word. We're middling through, here in the middest. So it's not surprising if stories of middling Mormon marriage are often uneasy comedies, like Darrell Spencer's "There's Too Much News" (a temporary separation) or his earlier "Planet of Surprise" and "Nothing Sad, Once You Look at It," which might be an Ending to a five-year second marriage (unless these two are just living together), since the narrator's wife Francie "was flying the coop because Francie was flying the coop. Nothing could stop her"; "her leaving grew into a God-given stubborn fact." She has told him, "'I've got to go, for good,' as if that could mean something between two human beings, something other than a fist crammed down your throat, a fist squeezing the shit out of your heart while it beats." "I'm a forty-five-year-old roofer," the narrator tells us at the end, "and I sat there amazed. What did you expect?"[40] For all the headspin and heartbruise in Spencer's stories, I think he is one of our least desperate writers; uneasy, yes, but resiliently comic.

The unease of Middlings may become acute, dangerous, even horrific, as in Brian Evenson's "Bodies of Light," in which a young husband wakes to find his infant dead in its bassinet, cleans it of the vomit which has apparently suffocated it, and does not tell his wife before he leaves the house, tragically denying and evading the monstrous bad luck of the infant's death.[41] The unease might be milder, temporary, and funny, as in John Bennion's "Breeding Leah," with its last line like the ending of a sitcom, when the husband whose hog-farming project has failed conceals "pamphlets on beef cattle" under his side of the bed.[42] In Pauline Mortensen's brief monologue "Woman Talking to a Cow," the unease feels keener, or jaggeder, than in Bennion's story, though its occasion is similar—a husband's failed scheme to make money raising Karakul sheep:

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39. My *American Heritage Dictionary*, 3rd ed., does give two transitive verb senses for "middle," and three noun senses for "middlings," none directly related to my uses in this essay.

40. Darrell Spencer, "Nothing Sad, Once You Look at It," in *Our Secret's Out*, 51, 52, 55, 68.

41. Brian Evenson, "Bodies of Light," in his *Altmann's Tongue* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 135–39.

42. John Bennion, "Breeding Leah," in his *Breeding Leah and Other Stories* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 26.

> So we got those six sheep over there eating us out of house and home, and we got a fistful of black curly hides drying hard in the barn, and we got two kids in the house breaking everything I got and waiting to be fed, and we haven't got enough of those black curly hides to make one coat.
>
> And he goes off like that to crack one more deal.[43]

The unease may be mostly implicit, covered over with tenderness, as in my twin Wayne's "A Song for One Still Voice," in which a husband lets his wife sleep despite his desire for her and reflects that "There is no loneliness like the body, nor any delight." His lit-up moment of solitary grace at the story's very end, like Fillerup's bowhunter's vision, might help him go on, though it also seems to cover or try to compensate for something he misses in his marriage.[44]

The "universal lament among men" may not be universal (a word I habitually mistrust) and it is not heard solely "among men." (In Mormondom, consistent with our general silence, I don't think it's much heard *among* men, mostly just within them.) It's sometimes a woman's lament too, as in Linda Sillitoe's "Susanna in the Meadow." The story is about a good deal more than sexual deferment—for one thing, a woman's sense that her husband presumes the privilege of naming her; for another, a separation of the spaces in which men and women can share spiritual company (her husband Finn has high council meetings, and Susanna has her women's "dream group)".[45] This night, while Finn is gone to a disciplinary council, Susanna takes a perfumed bubble bath by candlelight to "summon up Lila"—a sensual, inner self—"to bring her closer to Finn":

> Oh, she had denied Lila's existence for a long time, even as a teenager, certainly as a bride, then as a young mother. She could remember lying in bed one Sunday night wondering if a pregnant Primary president could or should ever be sexy. Most of the women in her dream group had trouble admitting they had a Lila in them somewhere, but, Susanna confessed, she

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43. Pauline Mortensen, "Woman Talking to a Cow," in her *Back before the World Turned Nasty* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1989), 161.

44. Wayne Jorgensen, "A Song for One Still Voice," in *Greening Wheat: Fifteen Mormon Short Stories*, edited by Levi S. Peterson (Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1983), 5. Susan H. Miller, "'A Song for One Still Voice': Hymn of Affirmation," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 80–85, noted this "one disquieting feature of the story" (84).

45. Linda Sillitoe, "Susanna in the Meadow," in her *Windows on the Sea* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 80.

> had been rather eager to discover her. Someone, after all, let that top button slip open and her skirt creep above her knee. When Susanna noticed, she hurriedly adjusted her clothing, her eyes as innocent as dawn. (83)

By the time Finn comes home, late, tired after "excommunicat[ing] two people, disfellowshipp[ing] one. Adultery, homosexuality, and heresy" (85), and talking in his car with another high councilor, Susanna has fallen asleep, and when wakened she can't "recover her mood," "her body lay stiff as a fork in a satin case" (85). A dream has shown her the ground cracking between her and Finn, and "remorsefully, she gave Lila the night off" (86–87).

Is the lurking narrative question, the "subtext" underneath a lot of these Middling stories, none other than "When do we make love?" It's not a bad question. Not frivolous at all. The "act of love" (as we've learned euphemistically to call it) is the body of marriage, the "one flesh" a man and wife may graciously make; the only "one flesh" they might sustain eternally. (Unless you think it's logically possible for each and every "eternal family" to inhabit its own celestial mansion just like a late twentieth-century American nuclear family in its suburban split-level. Which "eternal family unit" do you and your spouse figure to live with, and which does each of your kids?) We might take our euphemism "make love" seriously and suppose that "making love" or even "making the beast with two backs" (or whatever you call it, since no name really comprehends it; we just talk as if we knew what we were talking about) really does make something; and that what this act, this deed of two, makes really is something: a "symbol" and a "sacrament," as Jeffrey R. Holland said,[46] yes (and "sacrament" means something made holy); but still more than those. Call it Love. Call it Marriage. Suppose that making it might help it persist, endure. This seems to happen between Tom and Lydia Brangwen at the end of Chapter 3 in Lawrence's *The Rainbow:* "At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other, and had stood in the doorways facing each other, whilst the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, the glorification, the admission"; "When at last they had joined hands, the house was finished, and the Lord took up His

46. Jeffrey R. Holland, *Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments* (pamphlet) (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001).

abode. And they were glad."[47] There could be some hope in that. So, no wonder if a marital embrace seems (alas for the pun) a fit climax for a story; or, as in Wayne's "Who Jane, Who Tarzan," the terminus and telos the story aims at, but which we must suppose it reaches (as in old-fashioned romantic movies) somewhere past the closing lines, offstage, off-camera.[48]

We might be of several minds about whether it is fit to present marital sex in fiction. I think it is, and I'd rather see more than less—if for nothing else, to balance the overabundant nonmarital varieties. My twin Wayne has tried to do this obliquely in his recent "Measures of Music," a decidedly Middling story (if it is a story and not just a middle, an evocation of incipience or inchoateness, in which nothing either quite begins or ends).[49] But still, one cannot deny the wisdom of both Chaucer's Franklin and the American philosopher Stanley Cavell. "Who coude telle but he had wedded be," the Franklin asks near the start of his marriage tale, "The joye, the ese, and the prosperitee / That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wyf?"[50] Near its end, when Dorigen and Arveragus have happily rejoined, he says, "it were inpossible" for him "to wryte" (1549), and thus "Of thise two folk ye gete of me namore" (1556). And Cavell with less charming music takes the marriage bed "to stand for everything in marriage that is invisible to outsiders, which is essentially everything, or everything essential."[51]

The dazzling philosopher-critic and fiction writer William H. Gass alludes to "that dangerous feeling" we have in reading fiction, "that through that thin partition [the page] we can hear a world at love."[52] But we do indulge that feeling—because ours is *not* a world at love? Reading fiction *does* feel a bit like eavesdropping, or like window-peeping, though I

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47. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, 90–91.

48. Wayne Jorgensen, "Who Jane, Who Tarzan," *High Plains Literary Review* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 6–30.

49. Wayne Jorgensen, "Measures of Music," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 32, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 133–40.

50. Chaucer, "The Franklin's Tale," *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ll. 803–5.

51. Stanley Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 195.

52. William H. Gass, *Fiction and the Figures of Life* (1971; reprinted, Boston: Godine, 1979), 54.

prefer to liken it to the kindly knowledge of the angels. Shannon in Linda Sillitoe's (likely Ending) story "Coyote Tracks," like perhaps a lot of us, "couldn't help herself" looking through lit windows of houses driven by at night: "She'd never seen anything obscene or unusual, just a head bent over a desk, graceful arms reaching into high cabinets, children whirling to silent music, old people criss-crossing a golden dining room. It did her good, that lamplit domesticity."[53] Our hunch that it does us good might be one reason we read fiction: "people in their lighted windows, so peaceful as they went through the tired motions of living" (45).

Perhaps it does us some good even when the world we listen in on is not at love, as in Wayne Carver's searing story of a Middling marriage in its tenth year, "Benvenuto ad Anzio." An American academic couple staying in Rome on foundation grants drive to what was *not* the site of the husband's wartime experiences: On January 22, 1944, he "was flat on my rosy red rump on my bunk at Fort Benning" when more than sixty thousand men left their "face-prints in the sands of time" on that beachhead.[54] This pair's scorched quarrel, I've long thought, is literarily fit to stand beside Katherine Anne Porter's "Rope"[55] as a story of a man and woman at war. It's not clear if these two will survive their Roman holiday. The wife has told "assorted drunks" at the shipboard bar, "We're not going to Italy to *visit* the ruins. We're going to Italy to *reconstruct* one!" (49). But at the end the husband reflects that "they were separated by all the years that nothing—absolutely nothing—he knew it now—could ever span" (58).

For a slightly kinder, gentler case, put Lewis Horne's "What Do Ducks Do in Winter?" alongside Carver's story: this Later-Middling academic couple go to a conference dinner where the husband does his old standup comic routine, and she slips and falls on the icy sidewalk as they leave and gets furious when he tries to help her up. They come to words and then to blows, and end in an ambiguous, unnameable gesture: "His knuckles touched her temple at the hairline. He moved them back and

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53. Linda Sillitoe, "Coyote Tracks," in her *Windows on the Sea* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 45.

54. Wayne Carver, "Benvenuto ad Anzio," *Carleton Miscellany* 4, no. 4 (Fall 1963): 56.

55. Katherine Anne Porter, "Rope," *The Collected Stories* (1965; New York: Plume, 1970), 42–48.

forth briefly, not in a caress—the bone was too hard, the skull too prominent—but as a reflex of a purer and older act."[56] Uneasy comedy again.

Another joker husband—"Why had she married him? Why hadn't he told her she was in for this kind of humiliation?"—makes for uneasy comedy, too, in Linda Sillitoe's "The Spiral Stair," though at the end of that story it looks as if Gina might begin to be won over by Ken's antics that likely have cost him a chance of being "asked to serve in a bishopric." She's probably right that Ken "would happily teach the Blazers forever," and she may be discovering at the end how lucky she is in that.[57]

Janet, wife of a punster husband named Everard Cormier, in Dennis Clark's "Answer to Prayer" is so tired of middling and mothering that she warns him she's about to turn into "a witty jello salad"; and she's understandably put off by his jokey "feeling of [her] from behind" at the kitchen sink. He's desperately seeking divine help and guidance in overcoming occasional masturbation and deflecting his erotic attention from a co-worker named Janis who wears a black jumpsuit. One sort of answer to his candid prayer precedes it in his punning scramble of "men's magazines whose names formed a litany of reproach in his mind: "*Playhouse, OuiPent, Boy.*" Another sort arrives when his co-worker starts to make friends with him; beginning to know her, he forgets to notice what she wears, can't just abstract her into his fantasies.[58] That, we might say, was God's move; the next move is Everard's. The ending is open, uneasy, guardedly and ironically hopeful.

Michael Fillerup's "Family Plantation Day" might be an explosive Ending for one of its Middling couples, Floyd and Charlene Fairbanks, "the couple with the proverbial everything" except children, in an Arizona Mormon ward where everybody else seems pregnant and prolific and "the final verdict was family." "We're not, after all, talking hard-core tragedy." But at the ward's "family plantation day," Floyd cracks and drives "a rented John Deere tractor across the ward garden, through the picket fence, across Brother Guillermo's weed field, through another fence,

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56. Lewis Horne, "What Do Ducks Do in Winter?" in his *What Do Ducks Do in Winter? and Other Western Stories* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 89.

57. Linda Sillitoe, "The Spiral Stair," in her *Windows on the Sea*, 108, 104, 94.

58. Dennis Clark, "Answer to Prayer," in *Greening Wheat*, 163, 152.

across the dirt highway, and into the irrigation canal." For its more fortunate narrator, "a partaker of the fulness" with his wife Jenene and four kids, it looks as if Middling marriage will go on more or less as usual after that startling afternoon. They've agreed they've reached their limit of kids but can't agree yet on whose surgery will set that limit once and for all. Their story ends that night in unprotected sex on the bathroom floor before Jenene can find her diaphragm.[59] When do we make love? And how and why?

Endings

In this world, Mormon marriages are supposed to middle till death temporally suspends them. "Eternal marriage"—however it carries on in the world beyond—by definition would be all Middling, no Ending. That story will be difficult indeed to imagine or tell, and the better part of this-worldly narrative and marital wisdom might be to try to imagine temporal marriages that do middle until death. Still, Beginnings and Middlings do sometimes come (sadly but sometimes gladly) to other Endings—to "finalities / Besides the grave,"[60] in Robert Frost's line. And some of our writers have imagined those.

The early Middling marriage in Margaret Young's "Grandpa's Growth" is tearing apart from the husband's cruelty. The wife's second pregnancy (she miscarried the first and tried to leave him then) parallels the growth of his grandfather's stomach cancer. At the end, after Grandpa has died, "the future kicked at Linda's womb. Wanting, wanting, wanting out."[61] In "Grandma's Dying" a similar marriage has ended, and the ex-wife tends her ex-husband's dying grandmother: "I get her one of my nightgowns. One I kept in this room for nights when I wanted to sleep alone. She puts her arms out to accommodate the sleeves. And when her face is covered and my gown half on her, I shudder deep and beg God to

59. Michael Fillerup, "Family Plantation Day," in his *Visions and Other Stories,* 3, 8, 4, 6.

60. Robert Frost, "The Impulse," in *The Poetry of Robert Frost,* edited by Edward Connery Lathem (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 128–29.

61. Margaret Young, "Grandpa's Growth," in her *Elegies and Love Songs* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1992), 44.

finish his work. I tell him I will not last the night. Some things, I say, are too hard to be borne."[62]

Early Middling comes to early Ending in Judith Freeman's "Going Out to Sea," in which a very young Utah Mormon couple's marriage fails in the Midwest under the pressures of graduate school, a heart-damaged child, and the husband's infidelity. Driving to Minnesota, Marva feels as if she's "headed for the most unfamiliar place on earth"; and once there, she discovers that "so many things were uncontrollable, even when you thought you had control," and at the end that "the shoddy, provisional fragility of chance brought her here, kept her here, made all things possible, resulted in the terrible as well as the good."[63] Another of Freeman's stories, "Clearfield," imagines the After to this Ending.[64]

In Darrell Spencer's "I Am Buzz Gaulter, Left-Hander," Buzz has, for some reason, kicked his wife Lois out of the family home they "stole" from her brother for $60,000, and "ripped [their] king-size bed in two from baseboard to headboard" with a McCulloch 510 chainsaw and burned her side of it. West of Orem, Utah Lake rises and encroaches. (This is floodtime, 1983.) Elsewhere on the Wasatch Front, "polygamists were shooting each other in the head"; and "obeying a revelation from God, two crazies slit the throats of a twenty-four-year-old mother and her one-year-old daughter." This might be an Ending; Buzz feels it might be The End: "Leland Freeborn the Parowan prophet" has warned, "Say your goodbyes," and behind Buzz "the Wasatch Fault grins."[65]

It looks as if an Ending might have come—albeit a less apocalyptic one—in Linda Sillitoe's "Coyote Tracks," too. Married in the temple at twenty to twenty-year-old Don but not going back to the temple after that, and having suffered with Don the crib death of their first child, a son, then "fighting" and "silence between them," Shannon has left him after

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62. Margaret Young, "Grandma's Dying," ibid., 134.

63. Judith Freeman, "Going Out to Sea," in her *Family Attractions* (New York: Viking Press, 1988), 181, 188, 202

64. Judith Freeman, "Clearfield," in her *Family Attractions*, 203–27.

65. Darrell Spencer, "I Am Buzz Gaulter, Left-Hander," in his *A Woman Packing a Pistol* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Dragon Gate, 1987), 66, 69, 63, 74.

discovering his affair with a young clerk in his law office.[66] She has renewed her teaching certificate and relocated from Salt Lake City to the Navajo reservation with her small daughter Marci. Yet when Don calls her, his voice, "as familiar as a warm hand on her skin, . . . lock[s] the tension into her bones" (39), and she admits to a friend in Monument Valley, "Maybe I'm more married than I think" (51). She's separated, an "amputation" that leaves her "maimed" (40), and expects soon to make her divorce final, though Don has now broken up with his girlfriend Heidi and wants Marci to stay with him through the winter holidays.

Yet when Shannon's friendship with her colleague and neighbor Stan Yazzie, the Navajo football coach and "son and grandson of Navajo medicine men" (41), becomes sexual, she finds "herself thinking more kindly of Don" and "thinking more seriously about home" (57). Stan's friendship, including his sexual tenderness, begins to heal her grief and anger, even her guilt, to the point that she can "imagin[e] Don and Heidi together . . . and for the first time [feel] no pain. If Don had found solace even temporarily—a possibility that had struck her as terribly unfair at the time—she could almost be happy someone had given him what she could not. Not then" (63). At this story's somewhat uneasy open end, the trickster coyote is still at large, yet *hozros* (Navajo harmony and wholeness) might be reconfiguring, as Shannon "turn[s] north up the highway" toward Salt Lake City for the holidays, "watching for livestock and creatures, confident that they could all share the unfenced road" (64).

Middling Till Death

E. M. Forster once "put forward," as he remarked to Angus Wilson, "the golden wedding as one of the great achievements of civilisation."[67] "Long marriages," writes Louise Erdrich, "are beyond anyone's explanation, perhaps most especially those who live within the

66. Linda Sillitoe, "Coyote Tracks," in her *Windows on the Sea,* 38.

67. J. H. Stape, ed., *E. M. Forster: Interviews and Recollections* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 34. Wilson reports that this "was said lightly but with marked seriousness." Forster referred to his then forthcoming brief (and wry) essay, "De Senectute," in *London Magazine* 4, no. 11 (November 1957): 15–18, which was reprtinted as "One Cheer for Old Age" in the American magazine

bonds."[68] What are the great or even good stories in the English language—or for that matter, any language—about long marriages?—if it is not indeed the case that long happy marital love has no history and is simply too difficult to imagine. We need a good syllabus here; maybe it starts with Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and might include Wendell Berry's *The Memory of Old Jack*, Wallace Stegner's *The Spectator Bird* and *Crossing to Safety*, Reynolds Price's *Good Hearts*, and (thanks be to Oprah) Robert Morgan's *Gap Creek*. Few Mormon writers that I know of have written stories, long or short, about long marriages, or stories focused on Late Middling. But I can mention three.

In Darrell Spencer's "Park Host," Red and Rose Cogsby have been park hosts at Canyon Glen in Provo Canyon every summer for twenty-three years, and "they get into these one-on-ones where they lock horns"; "these give-and-takes, push-and-shoves."[69] "Red and Rose, their talk's turned basic. You up. I'm up. Good. Do this. Do that. Curt and fundamental, that's Red and Rose Cogsby. Red misses their pillow talk, their comparing of notes," but also "he's a man who relishes the bones they pick" (3). This summer, right after the 5th of July, a man broken by Alzheimer's asks Red to shoot him and "Red won't take the gun" (19) though the man's "sadness cuts up Red" (20). Later he and Rose read the man's obituary and Red "puts in a few phone calls" to find out how he died: "Accidental, he is told. While Earl was cleaning his guns" (22). "The day of the funeral, the O. J. Simpson trial is in recess, and Red talks Rose into driving up to Bountiful with him" (22) for the graveside service, full military honors.

After the service, Red starts telling lies to family members about military service with Earl, and Rose, disgusted, heads for a cemetery exit: "It's an eighty-mile walk if that's her plan" (24). Red thinks: "He could have shot Earl Tall. He could have done that favor for his friend"; and he

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Harper's Bazaar, April 1957, 186–87, 212. In the essay, Forster says that "any civilization that hinders it [the "golden wedding" class] from coming into being has failed" and that this class is "the highest manifestation" of "the true history of the human race [as] the history of affection" (18).

68. Louise Erdrich, introduction to Robert Stone's short story "Helping" in *You've Got to Read This*, edited by Ron Hansen and Jim Shepard (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 490.

69. Darrell Spencer, "Park Host," in his *Caution: Men in Trees*, 1.

thinks, "Maybe he'll get in the truck and just drive. Let Rose walk. Get a lift. Do whatever she can. . . . But he won't." He sees himself overtaking her and "talking a mile a minute, . . . lay[ing] down a ladder of logic, rung after rung," on which "Rung two" is "love never dies." "She'll trudge on, and Red'll beg. Red'll court her" (25). Yet in the story's last moment, Red is thinking (and the narrator is guessing), "Maybe, when [he] locates the truck, he'll head east. Or west. . . . America was built on the concept that this is a big country. . . . There are places where no one knows Red and he can stop . . . and tell any story he wants. He can tell the one about how Red Cogsby shot a man as a favor simply because the man asked him to" (25). It comes down to this: Red could try another life. Will he? Won't he? Willy Wonty? Reader, choose: any story you want.

Wayne Carver's cluster of Plain City stories all deal with one family in northern Utah, one long-married couple, Josiah and Louisa, though "With Voice of Joy and Praise" takes place in the Salmon River country of Idaho. Here, sixtyish Jos and Lou take a sidetrip from an Idaho Falls Temple excursion into memory, nature, and myth. To Jos, "it just sort of seems like something in me today wants to reach out to this country here."[70] But to Lou, "a temple excursion's one thing and it's our duty to do the work for the dead, but tramping through all God's green earth is another. And following some fool river called the River of No Return appears somewhat out of the way" (33). The story assesses the cost their conventional lives have exacted in terms of youthful passion, adventurousness, and hope but also reveals the tired, kindly, habitual devotion with which they bear that cost. As they prepare for bed in a motel room in Salmon, Josiah hears "Louisa's voice behind him, 'Jos? oh Jos'" (33), and we recognize how this raises in his mind the echo (or persistent dream) of her young voice "stricken and crying with desire" (23). But here and now she just tells him, "Jos, I just don't know when I been so wore out," and he answers, "Well, Lou . . . I guess we better get to bed. If we don't want to fall asleep on the road tomorrow and kill ourselves." Then "he stood up, reached down for the road map, and began to fold it up as he walked over to flip off the light so they could undress in the dark" (33).

Wallace and Zelva Rucklestead, in Levi Peterson's "A Wayne County Romance," "had unwittingly, in the front seat of a car" in 1946, "forged a

70. Wayne Carver, "With Voice of Joy and Praise," in *Greening Wheat,* 32.

marriage from uncircumspect disrobings and acrobatic couplings"[71] that has lasted forty-two years, till Wallace feels their friends think of him "not as an individual but as an indispensable component of an entity known as Wallace and Zelva" (171). The story covers just a few days, beginning on a Monday morning in August when Zelva is set to depart for a week of supervising girls at camp, and Wallace asks her to "get back in bed after breakfast . . . for just a little quick one" (144). True to her good-natured habit, Zelva tells him, "Well, gosh, yes, if you really want to." But then the phone rings for Wallace: a load of lumber to deliver to a construction crew waiting at a ranch. Zelva is still cheerfully "ready to go upstairs" and "do one of your little slam-bam jobs and get you on your way in ten minutes"; but Wallace has "lost [his] spirit for it" (144) and suggests they wait till she gets home Saturday night. "He hated to concede to age, hated to admit the fire in his stove was dying down to a few banked embers" (145). When do we make love?

Wallace secretly reads romances and wants to express his love to Zelva with "tender, solicitous words" (144); he likes romances because in them "things get said that should be said" (160)—perhaps in contrast to Zelva's earthy sexual candor. Wallace is scheduled to stand guard at the girls' camp Wednesday night and spends three days dealing with other obligations. Monday, on a fast trip to Salt Lake and back for parts to repair a log loader, he stops to visit their daughter in Springville and tells her, "It has weighed on me lately . . . and made me somewhat depressed that I have never, not once in our entire marriage, told Zelva I love her. I got that trait from my old daddy. Father would have rather had his tongue jerked out than say something personal" (151). At the airport in Salt Lake, Wallace "longed to be made a new man. As for the fresh, novel, virgin setting of his transformation, it could be any of the great coastal cities" (152). Tuesday he substitutes for Zelva driving the county library bookmobile; that evening he delivers a book to the Californian newcomer Judith Swaner at the ranch where he'd delivered lumber, stays for dinner with her, admits to her he's "puked on Wayne County. It bores me. It has always bored me. It hasn't bored me just a little. It has bored me high as a mountain, deep as a canyon" (162). She hugs him a couple of times but tells him she "couldn't be a man's mistress" and hopes they can "still be friends." He spends the night "on the cushions of her dinette" and leaves

71. Levi S. Peterson, "A Wayne County Romance," in his *Night Soil* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 173–74.

"in desperate haste" before dawn (163). He spends much of Wednesday using a crane to help a Richfield undertaker lower the coffin of a 543-pound woman into her enormous grave in Bicknell cemetery. He tells the undertaker, "Don't be surprised if you hear I'm walking out on Zelva," and explains, "The problem is she and I have run out of things to say to each other" (167). He hauls a load of firewood to the camp, still "confront[ing] the imminent necessity of informing Zelva that their marriage was at an end" (170), and the campfire program that night seems "a second funeral, . . . a grieving farewell to Zelva" (171).

Even when she wakes him in the bed of his pickup at 3:30 A.M. and asks him, "Do you want to hoe my garden?", Wallace "slip[s], almost consciously, into an evasive vacillation over the question whether it was ethical to make love to a spouse one has decided to abandon" (172). But when she moves under the big double sleeping bag with him, "an utter incontinence came over him," and they make love, after which "Wallace mulled the deceitfulness of tactile experience, the willingness, that is, of his roving hands to persuade him, in contradiction of what his eyes had for many years too clearly discerned, that this woman who lay pressed against him in the dark had neither aged nor deteriorated but was young, virginal, and ripe with promise and expectation" (174). He weeps "maybe a little" (174), tells her a childhood story about his old dog Jack, and apologizes "for never having any sweet words" for her. "Who wants fancy words?" she says. He tells her, "I couldn't ever leave you, no matter what," and she answers, "Of course you couldn't. . . . I couldn't leave you either" (175). As Wallace said about old Jack, "Sometimes things turn out all right in this world, don't they?" "'That's the truth,' Zelva murmured" (175).

Conclusions?

This has been more ramble than guided tour, and I have, here at a middling end, nothing so firm as conclusions. Most of the interesting implications have come up by the way; and my second hope for this essay is to provoke further conversation about what Mormon writers have written—not only in fiction, but also in essay, poetry, or drama—on a topic that persists with some urgency for not a few of us.

My first hope is to provoke the writers. I don't know any fiction writer or poet or philosopher any smarter about this subject than, for in-

stance (well, a favorite instance, I admit), Bruce Springsteen. For starters, listen hard to his 1987 *Tunnel of Love* album.[72] It's like he says: "spare parts and broken hearts keep the world turnin' around"; and "if you're rough enough for love" you need somebody "tougher than the rest." You'll have to do what you can to "walk like a man and . . . keep on walkin'"—maybe "one step up and two steps back." For sure, "there's things that'll knock you down you don't even see coming," and "it's just nobody knows honey where love goes, but when it goes it's gone gone" and "when you're alone you ain't nothing but alone." As the title cut says:

> It ought to be easy ought to be simple enough
> Man meets a woman and they fall in love
> But the house is haunted and the ride gets rough
> And you've got to learn to live with what you can't rise above
> if you want to ride on down
> down in through this tunnel of love.

A "Marriage Group" of Contemporary Mormon Short Stories: A Selected Reading List

Barber, Phyllis. "Almost Magnificence," and "White on White." *The School of Love.* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990. 15–16, 39–44.

Barber, Phyllis. "Ida's Sabbath," and "Bread for Gunnar." *Parting the Veil: Stories from a Mormon Imagination.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999. 37–51, 75–88.

Bennion, John. "Breeding Leah," and "A House of Order." *Breeding Leah and Other Stories.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991. 15–26, 69–77.

Brooks, Joanna. "Badlands." *In Our Lovely Deseret: Mormon Fictions.* Edited by Robert Raleigh, pp. 179–87. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998.

Cannon, Ann Edwards. "Separate Prayers." *Sunstone* 6, no. 6 (November-December 1981): 32–37.

Carver, Wayne. "Benvenuto ad Anzio." *Carleton Miscellany* 4, no. 4 (Fall 1963): 45–58.

Carver, Wayne. "With Voice of Joy and Praise." *Greening Wheat: Fifteen Mormon*

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72. Bruce Springsteen, *Tunnel of Love* (New York: Columbia Records, 1987).

Short Stories. Edited by Levi S. Peterson. Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1983. 17-33.

Chandler, Neal. "Roger across the Looking-Glass." *Benediction: A Book of Stories.* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989. 47-61.

Christmas, Robert A. "Another Angel." *The Fiction.* Springville, Utah: Art City Publishing, 1997. 66-86.

Clark, Dennis. "Answer to Prayer." *Greening Wheat: Fifteen Mormon Short Stories.* Edited by Levi S. Peterson. Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1983. 151-76.

Clyde, Mary. "A Good Paved Road." *Survival Rates.* 1999; reprinted New York: Norton, 2001. 35-52.

Edwards, Jaroldeen. "Me and the Big Apple." *Turning Hearts: Short Stories on Family Life.* Edited by Orson Scott Card and David Dollahite. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994. 91-105.

Evenson, Brian. "Bodies of Light." *Altmann's Tongue.* New York: Knopf, 1994. 135-39

Fillerup, Michael. "Family Plantation Day" and "The Bowhunter." *Visions and Other Stories.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990. 3-27, 55-80.

Freeman, Judith. "Family Attractions" and "Going Out to Sea." *Family Attractions.* New York: Viking, 1988. 1-16, 177-202.

Hall, Randall. "Father, Forgive Us." *Turning Hearts: Short Stories on Family Life.* Edited by Orson Scott Card and David Dollahite. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994. 61-67.

Horne, Lewis. "What Do Ducks Do in Winter?" *What Do Ducks Do in Winter? and Other Western Stories.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993. 75-89.

Jones, Helen Walker. "The Six-Buck Fortune." *In Our Lovely Deseret: Mormon Fictions.* Edited by Robert Raleigh. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992. 37-45.

Jorgensen, Wayne. "A Song for One Still Voice." *Greening Wheat: Fifteen Mormon Short Stories.* Edited by Levi S. Peterson. Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1983. 1-5. This story is signed Bruce W. Jorgensen.

Jorgensen, Wayne. "Two Years Sunday." *Wasatch Review International* 1, no. 1 (1992): 25-36.

Jorgensen, Wayne. "Who Jane, Who Tarzan." *High Plains Literary Review* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 6-30.

Jorgensen, Wayne. "Measures of Music." *Dialogue* 32, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 133-40. This story is signed Bruce Jorgensen.

Kump, Eileen G. "Sayso or Sense." *Bread and Milk and Other Stories.* Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1979. 71–80.

Marler, Myrna. "Leaving the Farm." *Wasatch Review* 3, no. 1 (1994): 35–53.

Marler, Myrna. "Balancing Acts." *Dialogue* 28, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 169–77.

Marshall, Donald R. "The Wheelbarrow." *Frost in the Orchard.* 1977; 2d ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985. 182–206.

Mortensen, Pauline. "Woman Talking to a Cow." *Back before the World Turned Nasty.* Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1989. 97–99.

Mortensen, Pauline. "Something in the Shape of Something." *In Our Lovely Deseret: Mormon Fictions.* Edited by Robert Raleigh. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998. 143–52.

Petersen, Zina. "Now Let's Dance." *Turning Hearts: Short Stories on Family Life.* Edited by Orson Scott Card and David Dollahite. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994. 236–48.

Peterson, Levi S. "A Wayne County Romance." *Night Soil.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990. 143–76.

Rosenbaum, Karen. "Hit the Frolicking, Rippling Brooks." *Bright Angels and Familiars.* Edited by Eugene England. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992. 81–89.

Saderup, Dian. "A Blessing of Duty." *Sunstone* 4, no. 3 (May-June 1979): 17–20.

Sillitoe, Linda. "A String of Intersections," "Coyote Tracks," "Susanna in the Meadow," "The Spiral Stair," and "Mornings." *Windows on the Sea and Other Stories.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989. 1–14, 37–64, 79–87, 89–110, 119–45.

Spencer, Darrell. "Doing the Bats," "Rooster Loves," "I Am Buzz Gaulter, Left-Hander," and "The Planet of Surprise." *A Woman Packing a Pistol.* Port Townsend, Wash.: Dragon Gate, 1987. 3–6, 17–24, 63–74, 99–112.

Spencer, Darrell. "Nothing Sad, Once You Look at It," "As Long as Lust Is Short," and "The Glue that Binds Us." *Our Secret's Out.* Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993. 51–68, 115–26, 134–51.

Spencer, Darrell. "Park Host," "There's Too Much News," "The 12-Inch Dog," "Caution: Men in Trees," and "Late-Night TV." *Caution: Men in Trees.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000. 1–25, 52–71, 72–89, 90–111, 112–31.

Strange, Susan Dean. "Still Dancing." *Turning Hearts: Short Stories on Family Life.* Edited by Orson Scott Card and David Dollahite. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994. 200–6.

Thayer, Douglas. "Under the Cottonwoods." *Under the Cottonwoods and Other Mormon Stories.* Provo, Utah: Frankson, 1977. 155-72.

Young, Jerry M. "Mallwalker." *Turning Hearts: Short Stories on Family Life.* Edited by Orson Scott Card and David Dollahite. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994. 106-31.

Young, Margaret. "Grandpa's Growth," "Invitations," and "Grandma's Dying." *Elegies and Love Songs.* Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1992. 31-44, 89-101, 123-34.

Young, Margaret. "Zoo Sounds," "The Affair," "Hanging Out the Dirty Language," "God on Donahue," "Hanauma Bay," "Balance Beam," "Griever," "The Go Between," and "Project." *Love Chains.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996. 3-20, 21-27, 29-33, 35-55, 157-65, 167-74, 175-86, 187-96, 197-200.

In the Garden; ceramic earthware; 2003; 19x8x10 inches

Ecclesiastical Polity and the Challenge of Homosexuality: Two Cases of Divergence within the Mormon Tradition

O. Kendall White Jr. and Daryl White

THE RESPECTIVE WEBSITES of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and the Community of Christ,[1] provide explicit access to the public images both churches wish to project. Upon these websites, each de-

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Ken and Daryl wish to thank Marnie Leavitt, Arlene Burraston-White, and two anonymous reviewers for very helpful criticisms and comments, and William D. Russell for so graciously sharing his work and knowledge. Their research was supported by a Glenn Grant from Washington and Lee University. They presented an earlier version of this paper, "Institutional Responses of LDS and RLDS Churches to Gay and Lesbian Challenges," to the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, November 1–3, 2002, Salt Lake City.

1. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints adopted

nomination articulates its position on homosexuality. Under the heading of "frequently asked questions," the LDS website presents a brief statement by Church President Gordon B. Hinckley. Referring to "those who consider themselves so-called gays and lesbians" and who "may have certain inclinations which are powerful and which may be difficult to control," he asserts that "we love them as sons and daughters of God" and "want to help," "strengthen," and "assist them with their problems" and "difficulties." "But we cannot stand idle," he continues, "if they indulge in immoral activity, if they try to uphold and defend and live in a so-called same-sex marriage situation. To permit such would be to make light of the very serious and sacred foundation of God-sanctioned marriage and its very purpose, the rearing of families."[2] Though Hinckley's allusion to "so-called" in reference to gay and lesbian self-identification and same-sex marriage calls into question the reality of sexual orientation and denies the legitimacy of same-sex unions, the LDS website does not mention the Church's political campaign opposing any extension of gay and lesbian rights.

In contrast, the Community of Christ website provides a glimpse into the recent history of a denomination struggling to answer questions posed by homosexuality. Prior to the 2002 World Conference, the website presented two resolutions that requested a review of Church policy. The Greater Los Angeles Stake urged the First Presidency to "work with appropriate councils or quorums of the Community of Christ to implement a policy on homosexuality that is consistent with the principles of inclusion, wholeness, acceptance and the worth of persons," with a further resolution that "the First Presidency is directed to report to the next World Conference on progress towards a new policy on homosexuality."[3] Another proposal from the British Columbia District asserted:

> Whereas, The church had declared itself to be an inclusive, non-discriminatory community where all can seek acceptance and equality and

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this name by conference action on April 6, 2001. For simplicity of reference, we will use the contemporary name throughout except in quotations.

2. "Frequently Asked Questions," 2002, retrieved June 6, 2002, from http://www.mormon.org. Hinckley made this statement in October 1998 general conference, published in the *Ensign*, November 1998, 71.

3. "Legislation," 2002, retrieved June 6, 2002, http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2002/legislation.

have the expectation of just and fair treatment as well as the opportunity of full participation; and

Whereas, The church's current policy toward homosexuality and homosexuals is outdated and potentially discriminatory; and . . .

Whereas, The process of democratic approval of priesthood calls allows for cultural diversity on this issue to be respected; be it therefore

Resolved, That the church set aside the document on homosexuality dated March 1982 and adopt a policy, either written or unwritten, that will permit the full participation of homosexual persons in the life of the church, including, without limitation, the option to join same-sex couples in marriage, where local laws permit, and to ordain homosexual persons who give evidence of living a moral lifestyle under the same criteria applied to heterosexuals and who are living or committed to live in monogamous, long-term relationships.[4]

Following the 2002 World Conference, the World Church Leadership Council met in retreat and produced a document describing how the Church would proceed as it encouraged "a loving and respectful dialogue on the difficult and often divisive issue of homosexuality." Recognizing that the issue could not even be discussed in the "cultural and legal" contexts of some nations, the council acknowledged that in other places, regardless of how individuals feel, there is "no choice but to talk together about it." With the acknowledgment that some congregations had ordained "practicing" homosexuals, apparently in opposition to a 1982 policy (see below), the document assured members that there would not be "further exceptions to the guidelines on calling and ordination unless they are adjusted through the common consent of the people."[5] Some of the more conservative jurisdictions proposed resolutions for the 2004 World Conference, which concluded in early April, seeking to freeze the 1982 policy prohibiting priesthood ordination of "active homosexuals" and any recognition of same-sex unions. The South Mississippi District, for example, proposed resolutions that (1) called for "specific scriptural authority" and "theological interpretation" to justify a "proposed document"; (2) this scriptural authority and theological interpretation "shall be provided to the general body of members prior to each conference"; (3) the "first step" in consideration of a document shall include discussion

4. Ibid.

5. "Community, Common Consent, and the Issue of Homosexuality," 2003, retrieved November 6, 2003, from http://www.cofchrist.org/news/oct2002.

and a vote over "whether the scriptural authority used to justify the document is in accordance with the recognized scriptures of our faith"; and (4) "failure of the conference to agree by a two-thirds (2/3) vote on the adequacy of both the scriptural justification and theological interpretation shall be grounds for removal of said document from any further consideration."[6] Such resolutions placing inordinate restrictions upon what could be done and requiring immediate action were "set aside" without "prejudice or specific action to the First Presidency as not to hinder or limit the continuing dialogue."[7]

Indeed, before the 2004 conference ended, the First Presidency had issued a statement, approved by the conference, defining procedures for addressing Church policy regarding homosexuality. Of primary significance was the creation of "Listening Circles," designed for "understanding" rather than advocating a point of view, where for "the first time" some participants could "freely share their thoughts in a safe environment."[8] A committee charged with studying the Church and homosexuality had begun experimenting with Listening Circles following the 2002 World Conference and found that they diffused tension, generated understanding, and furthered dialogue in a more civil environment. Four missions (districts) currently employ Listening Circles, and the committee has recommended their use, with trained facilitators, in all jurisdictions of the Church where it is culturally feasible.[9] Acknowledging that "Listening Circles are in their earliest stages," the First Presidency endorsed the committee's recommendations and announced that the First Presidency would report on the results and make any further recommendations to

6. "World Conference Legislation 2004," 2003, retrieved November 6, 2003, http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2004/announcements.

7. Press release, "Community of Christ Votes to Continue Dialogue on Homosexuality," April 1, 2004, retrieved April 11, 2004, from http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2004/pr/g13.asp.

8. See "Legislation," 2004, retrieved April 11, 2004, from http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2004/legislation/G-13.

9. See "Legislation," 2004, retrieved April 11, 2004, from http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2004/legislation/H-9.

the 2006 World Conference. No date would be set for the determination of Church policy.[10]

Not only do LDS and Community of Christ websites suggest important differences in views about homosexuality, but they also illustrate the divergent paths taken by the two major denominations within the Mormon tradition. Various items on the LDS website emphasize as virtues, and celebrate in practice, obedience to authority and institutional loyalty. Pronouncements from ecclesiastical officials define or underscore LDS beliefs and practices; and the website's allusions to general conference speeches by Church officials suggest that the general conference is not a deliberative body, but rather a mechanism for instructing the Saints, announcing structural and policy changes, and reinforcing or strengthening individual commitment to the institution.[11] The World Conference of the Community of Christ, in contrast, may realize similar ends, but it acts as a deliberative and legislative body. Instead of officials simply announcing decisions made by the highest councils of the Church, participants are actively engaged in organizational decision-making as they propose changes, instruct the First Presidency and appropriate Church councils, and ratify official decisions. The early Mormon polity that was sometimes described as "democratic theocracy" or "theocratic democracy," depending upon where one chose to place the emphasis, is manifest in its democratic flavor within the Community of Christ and its theocratic character within the LDS Church. While these polity differences have already shaped the way each institution has dealt with challenges posed by homosexuality, they promise to affect the future even more profoundly. Our purpose is to provide a brief history of institutional responses to homosexuality within both denominations through the lens of ecclesiastical polity.

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10. "Legislation," 2004, retrieved April 11, 2004, from http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2004/legislation/G-11.

11. On LDS general conferences, see Daryl White and O. Kendall White Jr., "Charisma, Structure, and Contested Authority: The Social Construction of Authenticity in Mormonism," in *Religion and the Social Order,* Vol. 6 in *The Issue of Authenticity in the Study of Religions,* edited by David G. Bromley and Lewis F. Carter (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1996), 93–112, and Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984).

Ecclesiastical Polity

The polity of a Church, its decision-making process and power structure, constitutes the foundation for addressing both internal and external challenges to the institution. Ranging along a continuum from highly centralized hierarchical polities at one end, to decentralized, congregationally based polities at the other, particular denominations vary in their fundamental decision-making structures and processes. While institutional policies and practices are determined by top officials in hierarchical religious organizations, they are established by local congregations in decentralized structures. Within the free church tradition, for instance, the selection of pastors, decisions about doctrinal matters, and even ownership of the chapel and property reside with the local congregation while hierarchically structured denominations assign pastors (priests), determine doctrine, establish creeds, and own ecclesiastical property. In short, a formal organization rather than a community of participants owns and controls the major economic, political, and social resources in hierarchical organizations.

The actual meaning of "Church" also differs at the two ends of the continuum. For hierarchically based organizations, the institution itself enjoys a metaphysical status as a corporate entity charged with the administration of sacred sacraments deemed essential for salvation. Since divine authority rests in the institution itself, especially in formal aspects of its hierarchically structured social relationships, individuals can be saved only through participation in its sacramental structure. In contrast to this fusion of the organizational and the sacramental, congregationally based denominations radically separate the two. For congregationally based denominations, the church is a democratic community of believers who come together for worship and mutual support. Often there is nothing metaphysical or sacred about the organization itself except to the extent that it collectively supports individuals whose salvation is grounded in personal religious experience.[12] Sometimes sacralized by collective covenant, the congregation is a site of symbolic, if not sacramental, perfor-

12. There is a parallel in these differences in religious polity with the sect-church distinction developed by the German sociologist Max Weber and his student Ernst Troeltsch. Rejecting pejorative connotations often associated with sects and the idea that they were simply underdeveloped churches, Weber and Troeltsch identified sects with democratic and egalitarian structures, including a

mances including confession of faith, baptism, and communion. For congregationalists, the church is essentially a "body of believers."

Between these two extremes are various forms of ecclesiastical polity. Embodying both hierarchical and congregational elements, but in varying combinations, these denominations often have autocratic and democratic propensities. For instance, the recent ordination of an openly gay bishop within the American Episcopal Church threatens the broader unity of the Anglican tradition. Some African bishops may refuse to acknowledge the Americans as members of the larger communion, and many American Episcopalians talk of establishing a more conservative alliance within the Church. The conflict may result in two distinct denominations within the United States. However, church polity and the importance of church buildings as the locus of liturgy and worship within the Episcopal tradition reduce the probability of such a split. Since challengers know that the building and property they regard as central to the local congregation's worship are owned by the central body, they will find it difficult to withdraw. A compromise is more likely, perhaps formal recognition of "liberal" and "conservative" congregations.[13]

Similar conflicts have erupted among Baptists following the takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention by fundamentalists. Opposition to gay rights and the ordination of women have resulted in the expulsion and withdrawal of numerous congregations and the formation of moderate and liberal alliances. A few Baptist Churches have applied for and re-

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lay, unpaid ministry, and churches with hierarchical structures, including a professional priesthood and a sacramental doctrine of salvation. See Max Weber, "Church and Sect," in *Sociology and Religion: A Book of Readings*, edited by Norman Birnbaum and Gertrud Lenzer (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 318–22, and Ernst Troeltsch, *Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, 2 vols., translated by Olive Wyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). For an analysis of the impact of American culture on the development of religious polity, see O. Kendall White Jr., "Constituting Norms and the Formal Organization of American Churches," *Sociological Analysis* 33 (Summer 1972), 95–109.

13. For a review of news coverage of the challenges posed by homosexuality for the Anglican communion, see Frank Kirkpatric, "The Anglican Crackup," *Religion in the News* 6, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 2–4, 20.

ceived affiliation with the United Church of Christ which welcomes gay-friendly congregations.[14]

Within the Mormon tradition, the Latter-day Saints and the Community of Christ, in response to both internal and external challenges throughout their respective histories, have diverged in the development of their polities. Moreover, these divergent polities are clearly affecting responses of the two churches to gay and lesbian members and broader cultural challenges posed by issues surrounding homosexuality.

The LDS Church and Homosexuality

Latter-day Saints typically identify their polity in terms of a lay ministry in which only the very top officials, known as General Authorities, receive monetary compensation for their services. No one occupying leadership roles in either centralized or local positions is required to complete any theological training. Both doctrinal and policy decisions reside in the governing bodies of the First Presidency, composed of the president of the Church and his counselors, and the Council or Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, all of whom are believed to be called by revelation. In the ideological justification of Brigham Young's assumption of leadership, the LDS Church formally began the institutionalization of a succession process in which the senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve, upon the death of the president, automatically becomes the next president of the Church. Moreover, the First Presidency, sometimes with the involvement of the Twelve, selects all new apostles. Sustained as the prophet, seer, and revelator, the Church president can speak for God and enjoys ultimate deci-

14. See Daryl White and O. Kendall White Jr., "Issues of Homosexuality in Congregational and Denominational Realignment," paper presented at the Association for the Sociology of Religion, Atlanta, Georgia, August 15–17, 2003; "Gay-Affirming Congregations, Local Church Autonomy, and the Remaking of Southern Baptist Polity," paper presented at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, October 18–21, 2001, Columbus, Ohio; Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Baptist Battles: Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1990); Nancy Tatom Ammerman, ed., *Southern Baptists Observed: Multiple Perspectives on a Changing Denomination* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993); Arthur Emery Farnsley II, *Southern Baptist Politics: Authority and Power in the Restructuring of an American Denomination* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

sion-making prerogatives regarding doctrine and policy. A highly centralized bureaucracy, composed of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, is the decision-making body that determines Church doctrine and policy. Though Church officials and, rarely, formal doctrinal changes are presented for approval to Church members at semi-annual general conferences, the process of "sustaining" Church leaders and accepting new doctrine or policy is a purely perfunctory ratification ritual in which opposition is completely absent or ignored.[15] Given the thousands of local, regional, and central offices held by members of the Church, it may be said that the LDS Church depends upon extensive lay participation to carry out its ecclesiastical operations, but it would be a misnomer to identity it as a participatory democracy. Although highly participatory, the LDS Church is not democratic. Notwithstanding a rejection of the distinction between clergy and laity, the Church is governed by a highly centralized bureaucracy with decision-making prerogatives, control over institutional resources, and other forms of power located at the apex of a well-defined hierarchy.[16]

It is within this structural context that the official LDS response to homosexuality must be understood. D. Michael Quinn's examination of a variety of same-sex relations among Mormons during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, indicating much more tolerant attitudes, implies that current LDS policy and practice could be quite different.[17] Contemporary policy, as we will argue, is primarily a function of an organizational structure that grants exceptional power to General Authorities.

Perhaps no one played a more crucial role in defining modern Church policy than J. Reuben Clark Jr.. His influence as a counselor in the First Presidency (1933-61) not only thwarted a potential liberalization of Mormon theology and democratization of LDS polity, but it also enhanced a growing preoccupation with Victorian sexual relations and attitudes. Along with Clark's aggressive attacks on polygamists emerged a new preoccupation with homosexuality. Though Apostles Spencer W. Kimball and Mark E. Petersen had been assigned the task of counseling

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15. White and White, "Charisma, Structure, and Contested Authority," 99-100.

16. Ibid., 106-7.

17. D. Michael Quinn, *Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

prospective missionaries who were dealing with problems of homosexuality in 1947,[18] Clark delivered the first public address mentioning "homosexuality" by name in 1952. Speaking to a Churchwide audience of women and alluding to "the crimes for which Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed," he lamented the coining of the "softer name" of "homosexuality, which, it is tragic to say, is found among both sexes" and asserted that this "malformation" threatens to destroy American society as "homosexuals are today exercising great influence in shaping our arts, literature, music, and drama."[19] Led by conservative Church officials like Clark and Kimball, the Latter-day Saints shared the homophobia of the McCarthy era.

The 1960s, with the invention of "the pill" and advent of a new sexual revolution, only strengthened Mormon commitment to Victorian sexuality and the resolve to resist national trends toward the redefining of gender roles, a less restrictive sexual code, and an emerging tolerance of same-sex relations. Brigham Young University not only implemented a strict dress code, but expelled gay and lesbian students, embraced reparative therapy with the use of a behaviorist form of aversive conditioning, and worked closely with local and state law enforcement officials to identify and prosecute gay students.[20] The conference addresses of General Authorities, according to Gordon and Gary Shepherd's highly sophisticated content analysis, increasingly emphasized premarital chastity, marital fidelity, and "celestial" or "temple" marriage.[21] The *General Handbook of Instructions*, which outlines policy and procedures for Church officials,

18. Ibid., 434.

19. Quoted in Rocky Donovan, "'The Abominable and Detestable Crime Against Nature': A Brief History of Homosexuality and Mormonism," in *Multiply and Replenish: Mormon Essays on Sex and the Family*, edited by Brent D. Corcoran (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 147.

20. Ibid., 146-60; Daryl White and O. Kendall White Jr., "Mormonism and Homosexuality: A Historical Overview," in *Anticipating the End: The Experiences of the Nineties. Proceedings of the 1999 Virginia Humanities Conference*, edited by Susan Blair Green (Staunton, Va.: Mary Baldwin College, 1999), 109-20.

21. Shepherd and Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed*, 85-87.

first identified homoerotic behavior as punishable by excommunication in its 1968 edition.[22]

However, this aversion to homosexuality is not simply a result of homophobia. LDS beliefs that the family can persist beyond death (eternal or "celestial" marriage), the requirement of celestial marriage as a necessary condition for ultimate salvation (exaltation), and a preoccupation with procreation define as threatening any form of human sexuality that does not entail marriage and fertility. Thus, contemporary trends encouraging childless families, easier divorce, cohabitation outside marriage, single life styles, redefined gender roles, and greater tolerance of homosexuality within the broader society are presumed to challenge the Mormon ideal of celestial marriage.[23] This was the context in which Church leaders entered the political arena to oppose ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. During the late 1970s, they initiated a formal, overt campaign to persuade Mormons and non-Mormons alike of dangers to "traditional" family values along with an informal, covert mobilization of people, money, and institutional resources in anti-ERA lobbies at state and national levels.[24] The covert campaign disguised both the identification of participants as LDS and the Church's involvement in fund raising, and it sometimes led to informal coalitions with the new Christian Right.[25]

Emboldened by the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment, Mormon officials embarked on a political campaign against the legalization of

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22. Quinn, *Same-Sex Dynamics,* 380.

23. See White and White, "Mormonism and Homosexuality"; O. Kendall White Jr., "Ideology of the Family in Nineteenth-Century Mormonism," *Sociological Spectrum* 6 (June 1986): 289–305; Armand L. Mauss, "On 'Defense of Marriage': A Reply to Quinn," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 53–65.

24. O. Kendall White Jr., "Overt and Covert Politics: The Mormon Church's Anti-ERA Campaign in Virginia," *Virginia Social Science Journal* 19 (Winter 1984): 11–16, and his "Mormonism and the Equal Rights Amendment," *Journal of Church and State* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 249–67; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), chap. 10.

25. O. Kendall White Jr., "A Review and Commentary on the Prospects of a Mormon New Christian Right Coalition," *Review of Religious Research* 28 (December 1986): 180–88.

same-sex marriage and domestic partnerships. Hiring a marketing agency, Hill and Knowlton, in 1988 to monitor activities of state legislatures and the U.S. Congress and to promote the Church's political agenda on same-sex issues,[26] Church officials could shield their involvement while benefitting from the continuous monitoring and lobbying activity of an ostensibly independent firm. Consequently, the Church was well prepared when, in 1994, the First Presidency issued a proclamation against same-sex marriage, urging members to "appeal to legislators, judges, and other government officials to preserve the purposes and sanctity of marriage" and to "reject all efforts" for "legal authorization" or "official approval" of "marriages between persons of the same gender."[27]

As Church officials created front organizations similar to those employed in the covert campaign against the ERA, Latter-day Saints joined like-minded citizens in grass-roots opposition to gay and lesbian rights in local and state referenda in Hawaii, Colorado, Alaska, and California.[28] While Church officials publicly acknowledged spending millions of dollars of Church funds in Hawaii, Alaska, and California, they also admitted "setting apart" (a religious ritual involving the "laying on of hands") retirement-age couples on short-term missions to assist local political organizations in their campaign against same-sex marriages in Hawaii.[29] The most visible and perhaps most divisive of the Church's anti-gay rights activities to date was California's 2000 campaign for Proposition 22 that prevents the state legislature from passing laws supporting same-sex marriage and requires that California not acknowledge such unions recognized by other states or nations.[30] Whether such state laws can withstand legal challenges is unclear, especially given the U.S. Supreme Court's June 2003 decision overturning Texas's sodomy

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26. Richley Crapo, "Chronology of LDS Involvement in Same-Sex Marriage Politics," Paper presented to the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, November 8, 1997, San Diego, California.

27. "LDS Church Opposing Gay Marriages," *Deseret News*, March 30, 1994, A-10.

28. Crapo, "Chronology"; Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 402-6; D. Michael Quinn, "Prelude to the National 'Defense of Marriage' Campaign: Civil Discrimination against Feared or Despised Minorities," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 1-52.

29. Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 402.

30. Quinn, "Prelude to the National 'Defense of Marriage' Campaign";

statute (*Lawrence v. Texas*) and the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's decision in November 2003 permitting same-sex marriage; but both decisions are likely to intensify the political activity of Mormon officials and to increase their willingness to use institutional resources, including Church funds, in opposition to extending gay rights.[31]

Whatever the motivation of LDS leaders in their campaign to prohibit same-sex marriage and corporate and state recognition of domestic partnerships, their commitment of institutional resources and mobilization of Church membership follows the autocratic character of LDS polity. Since Church officials decide when to enter the political arena and which institutional resources will be employed, Latter-day Saints committed to a different political agenda find their Church acting against their own interests. Decisions are made at the highest level of the Mormon hierarchy by processes that are opaque to members; members are strongly urged to participate; and values of obedience to Church authority and loyalty to the institution are invoked to elicit compliance. In both the anti-ERA campaign and the current crusade against same-sex marriage, a number of people were threatened with reprisals and/or subjected to Church discipline for active opposition to a political agenda contradicting their own values.[32] Below the apex of the hierarchy, Latter-day Saints play no formal or direct role in the determination of Church policy and practice.

Mauss, "On 'Defense of Marriage'"; "Proposition 22 Dominates California Wards' Attention, Divides Members," *Sunstone*, No. 118 (April 2001): 86–92.

31. Brooke Adams, "Court Rules Gay Couples Can Marry," *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 19, 2003, online edition.

32. In spite of formal denials, some Church members were "called" to positions leading local opposition to ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, and others were informed that it was their "assignment" to mobilize opposition. See White, "Overt and Covert Politics," 13–14, and Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 385-91. Notwithstanding official claims to the contrary, the loyalty of dissenters was often questioned and some people experienced reprisals and even Church discipline. Sonia Johnson's excommunication was the most famous case, but Mormons for ERA also received letters from faithful Church members whose bishops impugned their loyalty, threatened to deny temple recommends, and sometimes suggested even more extreme measures. Many of these letters are now available in the Sonia Johnson Papers, Special Collections, Manuscript Division, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. See also

The Community of Christ and Homosexuality

Following the assassination of the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith Jr., in 1844, the Mormons were in disarray, and the major problem confronting them was leadership succession. Factions formed around various charismatic claimants to Church leadership and different rules for guiding the succession process. Arguing that the Council of the Twelve was to become the governing body upon the death of the Church president, Brigham Young successfully led the largest group on the trek westward. Others followed various charismatic figures with revelatory claims to be Smith's legitimate successor, but a principle holding that the Church presidency should pass through the lineage of the Prophet Joseph was introduced by Jason Briggs.[33]

Briggs, who had supported Brigham Young in opposition to Sidney Rigdon, subsequently left the Utah Mormons, joining, and later leaving,

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Sonia Johnson, *From Housewife to Heretic* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1981); Alice Allred Pottmyer, "Sonia Johnson: Mormonism's Feminist Heretic" in *Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History,* edited by Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 366–89; O. Kendall White Jr., "A Feminist Challenge: 'Mormons for ERA' as an Internal Social Movement," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 29–50; and Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1984), chap. 7.

With the even more aggressive public campaign against same-sex marriage in Alaska, Hawaii, and California begun in the mid-1990s, the same pattern of intimidation emerged. Although the Church again officially disavowed any threat of discipline for those opposing its campaign on behalf of Proposition 22 in California, members received letters on official stationary requesting money, and some families were asked to meet with their bishops to determine the amount of their contribution. Though many disgruntled Latter-day Saints who complained about intimidation would not allow reporters to use their names, a few identified themselves. Alan and Yvette Hansen, for instance, were placed on "informal probation" by their bishop when they wrote a letter to the editor of a local newspaper opposing the church's position. See "Proposition 22," 90–92; Crapo, "Chronology"; O. Kendall White Jr. and Bryan Waterman, "Revisiting the Mormon-Conservative Christian Political Coalition," Paper presented to the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, November 5–7, 1999, Boston.

33. Alma R. Blair, "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints: Moderate Mormonism," in *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon*

groups led by Joseph Smith's brother William and James J. Strang. In 1851, Briggs claimed a revelation affirming the principle of lineal descent for selecting the Church president. Several loosely linked factions, already rejecting the claims of Young and other "pretenders" to the office, began coalescing into a more formal body that soon became the basis for the Reorganization. On April 6, 1853, a general conference convened to reorganize the Mormon Church. Following two days of debate, this conference endorsed the principle of lineal succession, selected Briggs as conference president and as "President *pro tem* of the Church," and chose seven members of the Quorum of the Twelve, twenty Seventies, and a high council.[34] Despite initial resistance, Joseph Smith III finally consented to accept the presidency in 1860, and the new organization officially became the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Though the fundamental ecclesiastical structure followed the model established by Joseph Smith Jr. which remains recognizable in its LDS form, the experience of the Community of Christ has produced an organization in which its members exercise much greater influence over institutional policy and practice. In spite of increased organizational efficiency obtained through a centralization of power from the leadership of Frederick Madison Smith, the son of Joseph Smith III,[35] the Community of Christ traditionally uses its General Conference as a deliberative body. Controversies during the 1960s enhanced the significance of the conferences. Meeting biannually, they were renamed World Conferences. Through Church leadership and World Conferences, the 1960s saw the RLDS Church redefine itself more along the lines of mainline Protestantism than traditional Mormonism.[36] No longer claiming to be the "only" true church, its emphasis on inclusiveness, nondiscrimination, and ecumenicalism subsequently resulted, in the 1984 acceptance of women for

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History, edited by F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards (Independence, Mo.: Herald House, 1879), 207–30.

34. Ibid., 215–16.

35. Paul M. Edwards, "Theocratic-Democracy: Philosopher-King in the Reorganization," in *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History*, 341, calls him "the most controversial figure in Reorganization history."

36. Roger D. Launius, "Coming of Age? The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the 1960s," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 31–57.

priesthood ordination and callings to top ecclesiastical offices, including the Quorum of the Twelve.[37] According to historian Roger Launius, the RLDS Church has left its sectarian status and has become a denomination sharing broader societal values.[38] Its realignment with Protestantism undoubtedly encouraged the World Conference in 2000 to authorize changing the name of the organization to the Community of Christ, a step that became operational in 2001.

The Community of Christ World Conference, unlike the LDS general conference, provides Church members with the means of shaping institutional policy. The conference establishes budgets, sustains officials, and addresses legislative issues. Marjorie Bradley Troeh, who was ordained a high priest in 1994, noted that "2,800 delegates are selected proportionately from throughout the world, and each jurisdiction selects its own." While approximately thirty general Church officers act as ex-officio delegates, the rest are elected.[39] Local jurisdictions, until recently called districts, stakes, or regions, are now organized as mission centers; one of their prerogatives is initiating resolutions prior to the World Conference. Delegates at the World Conference, through priesthood quorums and

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37. Reactions to the general theological liberalization during the 1960s and 1970s resulted in some schismatic activity, but conservatives ("fundamentalists") typically remained in the fold, largely by transferring their membership to more compatible congregations. The World Conference's approval of the ordination of women in 1984 resulted in approximately 100 formal withdrawals. A movement to rescind the decision failed at the 1986 World Conference. For those choosing not to leave the Church, the favorite strategy is to affiliate with like-minded congregations that do not ordain women. However, at the institutional level, women hold offices of apostle as well as membership in leading church councils. See William D. Russell, "Defenders of the Faith: Varieties of RLDS Dissent," *Sunstone* 14, no. 3 (June 1990): 14–19; Paul M. Edwards, "RLDS Priesthood: Structure and Process," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 6–11; Madelon L. Brunson, "'Stranger in a Strange Land': A Personal Response to the 1984 Document," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 11–17.

38. Launius, "Coming of Age," esp. 54–55. See also William D. Russell, "Ordaining Women and the Transformation from Sect to Denomination," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 61–64.

39. Marjorie Bradley Troeh and M. Richard Troeh, "'We Have a Stronger Church': An Interview with Marjorie and M. Richard Troeh," interviewed by Bryan Waterman, *Sunstone* 20, no. 2 (July 1997): 61.

bodies for unordained members and for youth, can initiate additional resolutions at the conference. Then, collectively, delegates deliberate upon and pass or reject resolutions urging the First Presidency, various councils, and the Church body as a whole to address specific issues. They also vote to accept or reject documents identifying new Church policy. Revelations are deliberated upon by delegates in priesthood quorums, meetings of the unordained and youth, and then collectively by the Church. When passed by conference vote, they are added to the Doctrine and Covenants.[40]

Madelon L. Brunson, former head of the Women's Commission, provided a historical account of the role of each World Conference from 1970 to 1984 leading to the admission of women to the priesthood.[41] A delegate to the 1984 World Conference, Brunson voted to accept President Wallace B. Smith's presentation of the priesthood document with some reservations because she feared that women might be assimilated into a structure over which they would have little control. Given a much more limited and selective priesthood than the LDS Church, requiring recognition of unique potential and worthiness of the candidate by a Church official, along with evaluation and approval from the congregation, only women who qualify by the criteria of male officials would be called to priesthood offices.[42] Whatever the merit of Brunson's concerns, the Community of Christ now appears to be following a comparable path regarding gay and lesbian issues, perhaps with the lag of a few decades.

Like the Latter-day Saints, the RLDS first publicly addressed the question of homosexuality during the 1950s, when Apostle George Mesley resigned his position during the April 1954 General Conference. Mesley, who tendered his resignation in the face of threats from critics who intended to "out" him as a homosexual, was subsequently "silenced" (his priesthood was removed) over charges regarding his sexual orientation. Later, in the early sixties, the First Presidency assigned the Standing High Council to study homosexuality in the Church, especially to determine if it constituted grounds for divorce or called into question an individual's priesthood and/or membership. While the First Presidency en-

40. Ibid. For some additional detail, we are indebted to one of the anonymous reviewers.

41. Brunson, "'Stranger in a Strange Land.'"

42. Ibid.

joys the prerogative of accepting or rejecting the council's advice, they apparently adopted the council's conclusion that the "persistent practice" of homosexuality was a sin and that such individuals should be excommunicated, which, in the RLDS tradition, means that they are no longer members in "good standing" and cannot partake of communion or be a delegate to the World Conference. Though a male homosexual could not be expelled from the Church, as in the LDS meaning of excommunication, he could be silenced from his priesthood should he continue an active homosexual life. The Standing High Council's 1962 policy was never published, but in 1971 portions were quoted in an article in the *Saints' Herald*, initiating some discussion among members of the Church.[43]

With the RLDS Church moving toward mainline Protestantism during the 1970s, there was some reconsideration of the 1962 policy. Within two months of Wallace B. Smith's 1978 ordination as president, the First Presidency appointed a Human Sexuality Committee comprising a wide range of professionals in psychology, counseling, medicine, and education. The 100-page committee report contained nine pages on homosexuality written by Kenneth Robinson, a professional clinical psychologist who is currently a member of the First Presidency. The report urged continued study with the appointment of a Task Force on Human Sexuality. According to William D. Russell, a historian at the Community of Christ's Graceland University, the task force's "interim draft on homosexuality (April 1981) was very progressive, advocating acceptance of homosexuality and responsible covenant relationships and calling for civil rights advocacy for gays. It left open the ordination of gays."[44] A distinction in the report between homosexual orientation and homosexual activity left an opening for celibate homosexual ordination to the priesthood.

The First Presidency, possibly in response to negative reactions, prepared a compromise that barely advanced the 1962 policy. All that this compromise policy established was that homosexuals who committed themselves to celibacy could be ordained. It made no distinction

43. William D. Russell, "Homosexuals in the RLDS Church: A Continuing Tension," 1-2, paper presented to the John Whitmer Historical Association, September 9, 2000, Independence, Missouri, photocopy in our possession, used by permission.

44. Ibid., 4.

between promiscuity and committed, monogamous relationships. Again, publication of the policy followed the 1962 scenario, with pertinent parts being published three years later in a "Question Time" column in the *Saints' Herald.* All homosexual acts were equated with promiscuity, and any active homosexual should be silenced from his priesthood, but celibate gay men could be ordained.[45]

The 1982 statement from the Standing High Council remains the official position of the Church. However, resolutions proposed for the 2002 World Conference, described in our introduction, urged the adoption of an inclusive nondiscriminatory policy embracing same-sex unions and the ordination of gay and lesbian members to the priesthood. The attendant conflict resulted in the publication after the conference of "Community, Common Consent, and the Issue of Homosexuality" by the World Church Leadership Council, composed of the First Presidency, Council of the Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric.[46] It stated that the Church would follow the provisions of the 1982 policy while encouraging dialogue and discussion in countries and areas where change is possible and dialogue is permitted. A conservative reaction expressed in the resolutions proposed by traditional jurisdictions for the 2004 World Conference, like that of the Southern Mississippi delegation (see introduction), suggests that homosexuality will remain a contested issue, at least for the immediate future.

The most promising signals of change come from the organizing of gay and lesbian members, the action of local congregations, and the commitment of some Community of Christ officials. Like gay and lesbian Latter-day Saints who joined one another in the formation of Affirmation, an organization establishing networks and articulating collective interests, Community of Christ gays and lesbians have created GALA (Gay and Lesbian Acceptance), which organizes retreats, publishes a newsletter, maintains a website, and mobilizes support for their interests within the Church. Unlike the LDS situation, where Affirmation's voice is heard only in marginal contexts such as the Sunstone Symposia and internet chat groups, GALA enjoys some success in reaching the mainstream Com-

45. Ibid., 5.

46. World Church Leadership Council, "Community, Common Consent, and the Issue of Homosexuality," retrieved November 6, 2003, from http://www.cofchrist.org/news/oct2.

munity of Christ. Organized in 1987, GALA made its presence known at World Conferences during the late 1980s and early 1990s, soon taking charge of the AIDS Ministry, organizing services for parents and friends of lesbians and gays, obtaining an official booth, which has enjoyed an increasingly central and more visible location at World Conferences, and enjoying the support of prominent ecclesiastical officials, including apostles and members of the First Presidency, who have preached to and/or participated in GALA-sponsored worship services.[47]

A few officers in various jurisdictions of the Church have ordained to priesthood positions homosexuals who live in committed, monogamous relationships, apparently with support from the local congregation and in defiance of the official 1982 policy.[48] Speaking of one couple, Keith and Robert, whose congregation has accepted their relationship and Keith's priesthood ordination, Russell, who with his wife Lois, is an enthusiastic catalyst for GALA, nonetheless acknowledges "a nagging, haunting fear" that "the Church may someday pull the rug on Keith and Robert and withdraw the support and love that they have received."[49] But there are encouraging signs for gay and lesbian members of the Community of Christ. The author of the most progressive position on homosexuality in the 1978 document, Kenneth Robinson, is now a member of the First Presidency. Some apostles appear supportive of a new policy; and at least one official, John Billings, regional administrator for the East Central States Region, vowed to engage in "ecclesiastical disobedience" by refusing to enforce the Church's policy on silencing gay priesthood. He was "warmly applauded" when he announced to the St. Louis Stake at a fellowship service that as a matter of conscience he would leave his new appointment as stake president if there were no place for gays and lesbians in the Church.[50] Many gay and lesbian members were encouraged by the sermon of W. Grant McMurray, Community of Christ president, at the 1998 World Conference:

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47. Russell, "Homosexuals in the RLDS Church: A Continuing Tension," 5-6.

48. Ibid.; William D. Russell, "Christ and Culture in Conflict: The Church and Homosexuals," *GalaNews Letter* 12, No. 1 (Winter 2001): 1, 7-8.

49. Russell, "Christ and Culture in Conflict," 8.

50. Russell, "Homosexuals in the RLDS Church: A Continuing Tension," 7.

> We struggle today with the proper way of expressing the sense of calling and giftedness of persons with varying lifestyles and orientations, including those who identify themselves as gay and lesbian. We often do not speak openly of the issue. Tonight I will. Let me make a heartfelt plea with all of you, whatever your views on this difficult issue may be. In a world that cannot come to common ground on any of the medical, psychological, cultural, and social issues that swirl around this topic, the church cannot be expected to have ready answers.
>
> But here is what we can expect—that every person who walks through our doors will be received with open arms. We will listen to the life stories of each person who graces our fellowship and embrace them in love. On this there can be no compromise.[51]

While the World Church Leadership Council acknowledged deviations from the 1982 policy, it committed the Church to that policy until it is officially changed. Staff who are specialized in conflict resolution are designing procedures for continuing the discussion, and the 2004 World Conference has extended the dialogue with the introduction of Listening Circles and trained facilitators, a process that should raise the quality of discussion, enhance prospects for a more inclusive policy, and reduce the likelihood of schism. Whatever the eventual outcome, the involvement of members of the Community of Christ in the fundamental decision-making processes of the organization, between and during their World Conferences, is ensured by their polity. Local congregations through their delegates will decide institutional policy. Consequently, the Church as a whole is much more likely to be responsive to its gay and lesbian members than is the LDS Church.

Conclusion

It is quite clear that the hierarchical nature of LDS polity limits decision-making prerogatives to the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve. The particular beliefs and attitudes of rank-and-file members of the Church on the merits of gay and lesbian rights and same-sex unions are irrelevant to institutional policy. To the extent that members agree with the edicts of ecclesiastical officials, they will enter the political arena in coalitions with other opponents of gay and lesbian rights with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Should they disagree with Church officials on

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51. Quoted in William D. Russell, "Homosexuals in the RLDS Church: A Progress Report," *GalaNews Letter,* special edition, n.d., 1.

these matters, they must either abstain from active political action in opposition to the Church's position or run the risk of potential disciplinary action. Whatever the position of individual Latter-day Saints, the resources of the institution will be mobilized, at least in the immediate future, in both overt and covert campaigns to defeat same-sex unions and domestic partnerships in political jurisdictions throughout the land. The continuing development of gay and lesbian organizations on the periphery of the Church, which is a topic for a different article, will provide limited sources of acceptance and support within the broader Mormon community—i.e., marginal subcultures. However, there is virtually no possibility for these Latter-day Saints to influence institutional policy and practice at any time in the foreseeable future.

The polity of the Community of Christ, on the other hand, appears to be in a more democratic trajectory and increasingly responsive to the Church membership.[52] We suspect that General Authorities in the LDS Church are more conservative than the general membership while the general membership in the Community of Christ is more conservative

52. The democratic polity of the Community of Christ does not ensure that the final policy will be progressive or inclusive. It simply means that the general membership will have a much larger say in the outcome. James R. Wood, "Authority and Controversial Policy: The Churches and Civil Rights," *American Sociological Review* 35 (December 1967): 1057–69, in a comparative analysis of denominations in the American South during the 1960s, found that those with the most democratic polities, including the congregation's ownership of the chapel and right to hire and fire their own pastors, were much less likely to support civil rights for African Americans or integration of their own congregations than denominations with more hierarchical structures where pastors were assigned by ecclesiastical officials and property was owned by the denomination. See also James R. Wood and Mayer N. Zald, "Aspects of Racial Integration in the Methodist Church: Sources of Resistance to Organizational Policy," *Social Forces* 45 (December 1966): 255–65. For the importance of polity, also see Mayer N. Zald, "Theological Crucibles: Social Movements in and of Religion," *Review of Religious Research* 23, no. 4 (June 1982): 317–36. D. Paul Sullins, "An Organizational Classification of Protestant Denominations," *Review of Religious Research* 45, no. 3 (March 2004): 278–92, found polity to be a very good predictor of voting for George W. Bush among Protestant fundamentalists during the 2000 presidential election. The more hierarchical their denomination, the greater the likelihood that they would vote for Bush—53 percent in denominations with decentralized

than the leadership. If we are correct in these assumptions and accurate in the descriptions and importance of organizational polity, then, ironically, the general advancement of the interests of gay and lesbian members in both denominations is inhibited by their institutional polities. Why? The more progressive leadership in the Community of Christ is restrained by the power of a less progressive membership while any progressive influences among LDS members are mitigated by the inordinate power of a conservative hierarchy. The Community of Christ World Conference has become a deliberative body that enables its members to participate in setting the agenda for issues to be discussed, debated, and decided in the name of the institution. While there are reasons for concern among gay and lesbian members of the Community of Christ, with the Church still maintaining an official policy that permits the ordination of only celibate homosexuals, there are other indications that many within the Church may be moving toward a much more inclusive policy that will recognize the legitimacy of homosexual relations in the context of commitment and monogamy. This tendency may be reinforced by general societal trends toward greater acceptance of homosexuality and the legal extension of fundamental rights acknowledging sexual orientation. GALA is clearly gaining access as a legitimate body at World Conferences and other contexts within the Church. If some observers, including William Russell, are correct, then the Church is not likely to experience the adoption of an inclusive policy as a significant challenge to its membership base. He suspects that the "majority of the seriously homophobic members left the Church in the 1980s, in the battle over women's ordination."[53]

Whatever the merits of Russell's judgment, the two major denominations within the Mormon fold are once again taking divergent paths. While the Community of Christ, in both theology and social policy, moves closer to liberal Protestantism, the Latter-day Saints, in both theology and social policy, move ever closer to Protestant fundamentalism.

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polities, 61 percent in moderately centralized polities, and 75 percent in highly centralized polities.

53. Russell, "Homosexuals in the RLDS Church: A Progress Report," 4.

"Who Shall Sing If Not the Children?": Primary Songbooks, 1880–1989

Kristine Haglund Harris

> Who shall sing if not the children?
> Did not Jesus die for them?
> May they not with other jewels,
> Sparkle in his diadem?
> Why to them are voices given—
> Birdlike voices, sweet and clear?
> Why, unless the songs of heaven
> To begin to practice here?[1]

In 1989, THE PRIMARY ASSOCIATION released a new songbook for Mormondom's children, its first since 1969. Evaluating it for a professional hymnody publication, one reviewer commented: "This handsome volume's 8½ x 11" pages exude a special kind of coziness. . . . The plentiful decorative illustrations use pastel colors exclusively—and so, in their way,

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1. J. P. Olsen, *Primary Association Song Book* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1920), 28.

do most of the songs. . . . [F]or every song about a specifically Mormon doctrine or practice, at least four would fit into practically any Christian, indeed any civilized context."[2]

This review of the 1989 *Children's Songbook*, cited approvingly in an official history of the Primary,[3] suggests a degree of acceptance by the "sectarian" world which would have been unimaginable to the compilers of the first Primary songbooks. When Eliza R. Snow compiled the first book of songs for Primary children in 1880, Mormons were generally regarded as neither Christian nor civilized. In trying to understand the remarkable assimilation of Mormons into American culture during the twentieth century, scholars have rarely turned to hymnals and even more rarely to children's songs as sources of evidence that could illuminate this study. Yet in a church with a profound investment in the links between generations, what is taught to children is surely a useful index of which doctrinal commitments are most important to Church members at a given time.

Within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hymnals and songbooks occupy a unique place as sources of doctrine and theology. The Church has a relatively small body of truly official doctrine, augmented by a large body of authoritative pronouncements accorded varying doctrinal weight. Precariously balanced between these two poles is an enormous body of folk doctrine and unofficial exegesis. It has been argued that the Church's emphasis on continuing revelation renders it essentially "atheological," so that every member, besides being a missionary, is under some obligation to be a theologian.[4] Hymns and Primary songs provide a useful common basis for this type of lay theologizing, and are accorded quasi-doctrinal status. Elder Dallin H. Oaks made this connection explicit in a 1994 general conference talk: "The singing of hymns is one of the best ways to learn the doctrine of the restored gospel."[5] Thus, hymns and chil-

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2. Hugh D. McKellar, *The Hymn* 40, no. 4 (October 1989): 37–38.

3. No author, *Primary History 1988–1994*, typescript, 18, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives).

4. See, for instance, Mark Leone, *Roots of Modern Mormonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 171–72.

5. Dallin H. Oaks, "Worship through Music," *Ensign*, November 1994, 9.

dren's songs published with the imprimatur of the Church bridge the gap between official Mormondom and lived Mormonism.[6]

The Primary songbooks also represent a specific, little-studied aspect of women's experience in the Church. If we hope to develop an historical understanding of the intellectual contributions women have made to the Church, we will have to look at unconventional sources like the Primary songbooks, because women have often been too busy with traditional "woman's work" to participate in scholarly discourse and, furthermore, because they are excluded from some avenues of theological contributions since they are not ordained to priesthood office. While women's deep *feelings* about the Church have been evident from their devotion and dedication to doing the work of the Church, it has been harder to discover what and how they have *thought* about the Church and the gospel. Primary songs, both those written by LDS women and those composed by others but selected by officers of the Primary for inclusion in the songbooks can, with some probing, yield insight about women's intellectual life in the Church. Primary has been—from its beginning until the Church correlation movement from the late 1960s on—an almost exclusively female province: women have been the teachers, the writers and editors of instructional materials, and the architects of the Primary song books. Although the 1951, 1979, and 1985 songbooks were prepared in conjunction with the Church Music Committee, the Primary General Presidency, and members of the Primary general board were still heavily involved in the selection and, in many cases, the composition of the songs included.[7] Women are dramatically overrepresented as composers of songs in the Primary songbook as compared with the hymnal, and women have usually had the responsibility for teaching the songs to children in weekly

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6. My terms "official Mormondom" and "lived Mormonism" follow Gary Shepherd's and Gordon Shepherd's "official" and "common religion," as they use the terms: "Everywhere and always common religion is the shadow of official religion. It is the personalized, practical side of religion as interpreted and implemented by individual believers in their everyday lives. . . . If the Mormons are prone to displays of the common religion, they are also closely supervised by and typically submissive to the directives of the official religion." *A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 11-12.

7. Primary general president Dwan J. Young and Virginia B. Cannon, in conversations with me, described this process. See also Vanja Y. Watkins, Oral

Primary meetings. LDS women contributed more than 50 percent of the songs in the 1989 Primary songbook, compared to just 16 percent of the hymns in the 1985 hymnal. In the selection of songs for inclusion in Primary songbooks, we can discover the doctrinal points that have seemed most salient to Mormon women; and in their composition of Primary songs, we have an invaluable record of their efforts to poetically articulate and explicate their theological understandings.

In this essay, I will use evidence from the Primary songbooks to explore women's and children's roles in changing doctrinal understandings and cultural practices throughout the twentieth century. These changes are illuminated by reference to the theoretical framework outlined by Armand Mauss in *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994). Mauss reads the history of the Church in the twentieth century in terms of cyclical movement between "assimilation"—the Saints' attempt to gain acceptance in the wider American culture and "retrenchment"—a defensive emphasis on Latter-day Saint uniqueness and separateness from "the world." The Primary songbooks offer an interesting case study in the effects of the cycles of retrenchment and assimilation Mauss describes, while also offering evidence which seems not to fit this framework, at least not in an uncomplicated way. I focus on three key topics: the adoption and gradual rejection of progressive educational theories in the Primary, the articulation of the principle of reverence in response to the felt incursions of the "acids of modernity"[8] into Latter-day Saint life, and finally the transformation and "spiritualization" of millenarian and utopian expectations about the kingdom of God. First, however, I will briefly summarize the publication history of the songbooks.

Publication History

In 1878, the Primary Mutual Improvement Association[9] for Latter-day Saint children was founded. Aurelia Spencer Rogers, the mother of twelve children, five of whom died in childhood, in Farmington, Utah, and Eliza R. Snow, a plural wife of Brigham Young and president of the re-

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History, interviewed by Gordon Irving, January 31 and February 7, 1986, James H. Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives.

8. Walter Lippman, *A Prelude to Morals* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 178.

9. The Church's organization for children has been variously called the

vitalized Relief Society, had discussed their concern about the children of Deseret and determined to establish an organization that would provide religious and civic instruction for them. At first, the organization was intended exclusively for boys; however, Rogers soon decided that "singing was necessary" and that girls' presence would help the singing. So both boys and girls were gathered for weekly instruction in Farmington beginning in August 1878.[10] A further aid to singing was the first compilation of songs for use in the Primary organization, collected by Eliza R. Snow and published in 1880.[11] It was a tiny (approximately 3"x4") book, lengthily titled *Hymns and Songs, Selected from Various Authors, for the Primary Associations of the Children of Zion, by Eliza R. Snow* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1880). It contained 121 texts, divided into "Hymns" and "Songs." In the same year, the Juvenile Instructor office issued the *Tune Book for the Primary Associations of the Children of Zion*, also collected by Eliza R. Snow, which contained about forty pages of songs with words and music, as well as suggestions for other texts which could be paired with the given tunes. This collection was reprinted in 1888. The first songbook prepared by a Primary General Board, *The Primary Songbook*, was pub-

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Children's Primary, the Primary Association, the Primary Associations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and simply Primary. Early documents suggest varying local usages, sometimes referring to a local ward Primary, but to the "Primary Association" of the Church at the general level. Others use "Primary Associations" to denote the general organization. Moveover, the songbook titles do not consistently use the organization's official title. The songbook currently used in Primary, for instance, contains no reference to "Primary" in its publication information or introduction, and is called *Children's Songbook of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. To avoid confusion, I have therefore used "Primary" to refer to the organization throughout this paper and used the titles of the songbooks as printed. For a brief history of the Primary, see Naomi Shumway, "Primary," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 1146-50.

10. Carol Cornwall Madsen and Susan Staker Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Primary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 5-7.

11. In this section, I rely extensively on Virginia B. Cannon's excellent history, published as "Appendix: A Brief History of Children's Music in the Church," *Our Children's Songs: Teaching the Gospel with the Children's Songbook* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 357-65.

lished in 1905.[12] It was a larger book (about 5"x8") and contained ninety-three songs with text and music printed together. This book was reprinted several times, at least in 1907, 1909, and 1912, although it is difficult to determine the precise number of reprintings.[13] In 1920, a significant revision appeared called *The Primary Song Book, including Marches and Voluntaries.* This book was also reprinted several times, with minor editorial changes and the occasional addition of several new songs in the 1930 edition.

The next significant new edition was the 1939 songbook, published as *The Primary Songbook, including Marches and Voluntaries.* It was reprinted with minor changes in type font and indexes in 1946 and 1948. In 1951, *The Children Sing* was compiled, combining songs from the Primary song books and the Deseret Sunday School Union Songbooks into a single volume, with songs "selected to correlate with the lessons taught in the Primary Association and the Junior Sunday School and to provide valuable experiences in the building of complete personalities through music, verse, religious teachings and social activities."[14]

The first Primary songbook published after the 1960-61 formation of the Correlation Committees was *Sing with Me,* published in 1969, "under the direction of the First Presidency by a joint committee from the Deseret Sunday School and Primary Association general boards, in coop-

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12. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *The Primary Songbook* (Salt Lake City, General Board of Primary Associations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1905).

13. The songbooks were printed by different presses, often in different versions. Orson F. Whitney's personal copy of *The Primary Songbook,* printed in 1912 and preserved in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Lee Library, Brigham Young University, was in a deluxe leather binding. At least two different colors of cloth binding are also available, with subtly different typesetting styles. The contents seemed identical with the same number of songs in the same order. Similar variations exist with many of the printings, and this study was further limited by the limited holdings of various libraries. Though it is beyond the scope of this essay, a serious attempt to determine precise dates of publication, circulation statistics, etc., would yield useful insights into how widely known these songs were.

14. Preface to *The Children Sing* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1951). Another potentially fruitful area of further study would be a comparison of the early Primary songbooks with the many Sunday School songbooks published in the first decades of the twentieth century.

eration with the General Music Committee."[15] *Sing with Me* seems also to have been the first songbook prepared with significant input from outlying Primaries, given through a survey conducted in 1967 to determine children's favorite songs. A general call for new compositions was also issued through the *Church News*, which yielded hundreds of submissions of original songs from throughout the Church. The 1989 *Children's Songbook* was produced by similar committees (with the exception of the Sunday School board members), with surveys conducted to determine children's favorite songs, as well as those most frequently sung, and those which were most familiar to the children. Although the Primary did not issue a general request for songs, several songs were commissioned on topics which were not addressed by existing numbers.[16]

This brief history suggests three important contextual points for this essay. First, significant changes in content and format of the Primary songbook have tended to occur every fifteen to twenty years. Second, the Primary songbooks have become steadily bigger, both physically and in terms of the number of songs they contain. Despite the strong drive throughout the latter half of the century to simplify and reduce the size of Church-published materials, the 1989 *Children's Songbook* is a large (8½x11") book with four-color illustrations, containing 255 songs, more than double the number in Eliza R. Snow's first compilation. Third, many of the changes in our view of children are clearly demonstrated by the physical aspects of the book. The current songbook's style is characterized by soft and sentimentalized illustrations of children and of members of the Godhead in pastels, while the earliest children's songbooks were essentially small versions of grown-up hymnals. In short, we now have a book that is clearly intended for young children.[17]

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15. Cannon, "Our Children's Songs," 359.

16. Ibid., 360.

17. One could argue that the adult hymnal, and perhaps even most Church curricular materials have undergone a similar sentimentalization and softening. Many of the more rousing and martial hymns from older hymnals have been removed over the century, and the new hymns that have been added have tended to be both more sedate musically and more sentimental in the tone of their texts (e.g., "Because I Have Been Given Much," "Each Life that Touches Ours for Good," etc.). Warrick Kear, "The LDS Sound World and Global Mormonism,"

"O Come, My Little Playmates All": Primary and Progressive Education

O come, my little playmates all,
And you can learn the way,
The Gospel came upon the earth
In this the latter-day.
O, I can't stay away,
O, I can't stay away,
I love my little meetings so,
I cannot stay away.[18]

This song, included in Eliza R. Snow's 1880 compilation of songs for the Primary, hints at the combination of childish fun and serious gospel learning that characterized the Primary's early decades. However, the proper ratio of play and instruction was not arrived at immediately or without difficulty. Indeed, questions over the nature of the "little meetings" and their appropriate place in the lives of the Saints took decades to work out and were intricately bound up in the Saints' first struggles with assimilation. Primary was organized just as a serious debate about the correct methods of educating young Latter-day Saints began in earnest, intensifying as it became wrapped up in the conflicts over separation of church and state that marked the debate over statehood for Utah. Primary, Sunday School, and the weekday Religion Classes (1890–1929) all were attempts to respond to perceived threats of assimilation that came with statehood.

In *The Angel and the Beehive,* Armand Mauss vividly characterizes the situation of the Church in the decade just following the establishment of Primary: "As this [twentieth] century began, Mormons faced the predicament of disrepute to an extreme degree. The relative isolation of Utah during the entire second half of the nineteenth century had made possible the unrestrained development of [the charismatic element of Mor-

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Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, 34, nos. 3/4 (Fall–Winter 2001): 79–93, labels these changes the "feminization" of LDS music and helpfully situates them in the context of the Church's worldwide growth.

18. "Tis Meeting Day," *Hymns and Songs,* no. 33.

monism]. The Mormons, under their own prophetic inspiration and leadership, had self-consciously cultivated institutions, both religious and secular, that were uniquely their own."[19]

These institutions were perceived by non-Mormon Americans as simply too threatening to be tolerated. Thus, "as a condition for obtaining Utah statehood, and for enjoying peace and national toleration more generally, the Mormons were required to give up polygamy, theocracy, collectivist economic experiments, and any other flagrantly un-American institutions, and thus to abandon the path of charismatic peculiarity, except at the relatively abstract level of theology."[20]

The Mormons were also forced to cede control of the public schools. The Edmunds-Tucker Act, which had as its primary aim forcing the abandonment of the practice of polygamy, also contained a provision requiring the appointment of the Territorial Superintendent of Schools by the Territorial Supreme Court, rather than by election as had been the previous practice.[21] The predictable effect of this provision was that a non-Mormon was appointed, and Mormons gradually lost control over public education in the Territory. Church leaders feared that the rising generation of Saints would grow up ignorant of their religion. In an 1888 circular letter to stake presidents, Wilford Woodruff, then Church president, wrote: "We feel that the time has arrived when the proper education of our children should be taken in hand by us as a people. Religious training is practically excluded from the District Schools. The perusal of books that we value as divine records is forbidden. Our children, if left to the training they receive in these schools, will grow up entirely ignorant of those principles of salvation for which the Latter-day Saints have made so many sacrifices. To permit this condition of things to exist among us would be criminal."[22]

So grave were Church leaders' concerns that they began a twenty-year project of creating a system of separate, Church-sponsored

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19. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 21.

20. Ibid., 21-22.

21. Edmunds-Tucker Act, Section 25, cited in John D. Monnett Jr., *The Mormon Church and Its Private School System in Utah: The Emergence of the Academies, 1880-1892* (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah Department of Educational Studies, 1984), 88, note 10.

22. Quoted in ibid., Appendix, 222.

academies. Sunday School took on new importance, and separate weekday Religion Classes were instituted in 1890, first taught in the public school buildings after school hours and later moved to private homes and nearby Church meetinghouses. While Sunday School, Primary, and Religion Classes all aimed at religious instruction, as early as 1900 the Primary had differentiated itself markedly from the other two organizations in its methods of instruction. Primary became a major locus of assimilation, as it incorporated educational theories from what would come to be called the "progressive" movement in American education, which held that children were natural learners, that purposeful activity was the most effective means of communicating ideas to young minds, and that children's needs should be honored by their teachers. Despite concerns about the secular *content* of public education, the newest *methods* developed for public education were welcomed in Utah; and many prominent American educators gave well-attended and enthusiastically received public lectures in Salt Lake City and Provo. Colonel Francis W. Parker lectured at Brigham Young Academy in 1892; Harvard President Charles W. Eliot spoke in Salt Lake City during the same year; G. Stanley Hall gave a series of lectures in 1897; and in 1901, John Dewey delivered a series of ten lectures at Brigham Young Academy summer school.

In no area were these educators' ideas more welcomed than in the area of kindergarten and early childhood education. The University of Utah and Brigham Young Academy were among the first institutions to sponsor kindergarten training schools. An 1892 editorial in the *Young Woman's Journal* describes a class in the kindergarten department: "It is a lovely sight to see the tiny tots marching and singing with measured steps and folded arms, or sitting at play cutting papers, molding in clay, planting gardens or other diversions. Some ask what is the utility of having children play all the time; but if mothers once discover by experience the growth of discipline, gentleness and the awakening of the perceptive facilities engendered by this course of training they are ever after its firm supporters."[23]

One of the earliest proponents of kindergarten and progressive methods for educating young children was Camilla Clara Mieth Cobb, who served for many years as a member of the Primary General Board and

23. Allan Dean Payne, "The Mormon Response to Early Progressive Education, 1892–1920" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1977), 107.

was a close friend of Louie Felt and May Anderson (the first and second Primary general presidents). Cobb was a German immigrant from a family of educators. Her oldest sister, Anna, married Karl G. Maeser, who became the superintendent of the Mormon academies and second president of Brigham Young Academy.[24] Cobb, like her brother-in-law, was influenced by the ideas of a prominent German educational reformer, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Among the fundamental educational principles that Maeser and Cobb adapted from Pestalozzi to fit a Mormon context were the concepts that school and life should be connected, that scholastic and domestic education are parts of the same whole, and that every pupil is a child of God with individual capacities that should be respected and nurtured.[25]

After working with Maeser in the Fifteenth Ward schoolhouse and the Twentieth Ward Seminary, Cobb conducted her own school for a short time. Then John W. Young, a son of Brigham and Mary Ann Angel Young, asked her to start a kindergarten in Salt Lake City.[26] In 1874, she began teaching a kindergarten class in Brigham Young's schoolhouse.

Kindergartens quickly became popular and were the locus of Mormon-Gentile cooperation that was rare in turn-of-the-century Utah.[27] Cobb's kindergarten closed in 1876, but the second one opened in the basement of the Presbyterian Church in 1883.[28] In 1884, the Jewish synagogue in Salt Lake City also opened a kindergarten. Supporters of these kindergartens formed the Salt Lake Kindergarten Association in 1893. This group introduced a bill to the territorial legislature to incorporate kindergartens into public schools. Soon after the bill passed, several members of the Salt Lake Kindergarten Association formed a new group called the Free Kindergarten Association, whose purpose was to secure funding for the new kindergartens. In September 1894, this association persuaded Alice Chapin, a gradu-

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24. Catherine Britsch, *Camilla Cobb: Founder of the Kindergarten in Utah* (Ed.D. diss., Brigham Young University, Dept. of Educational Leadership and Foundations, 1997), 81.

25. Ibid., 86–87.

26. Ibid., 100.

27. For a detailed study of the tensions surrounding public education in Utah, see Frederick S. Buchanan, *Culture Clash and Accommodation: Public Schooling in Salt Lake City 1887–1994* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), esp. chap. 1.

28. Britsch, *Camilla Cobb*, 139.

ate of the Boston Training School and an associate of Elizabeth Peabody, to stay in Salt Lake City after she had made what was to have been a brief stop en route from California to the East Coast. Louie Felt and May Anderson participated in Chapin's series of classes on kindergarten teaching and later operated their own kindergarten for several years.[29]

I have detailed these examples because they demonstrate an important point in considering trends or movements within the Church: Such changes tend to arise from various and diffuse sources, often hastened by the initiative of one or a few members who are positioned to effect change. The enthusiastic embrace of ideas from the progressive movement in American education and their application in the Primary did not stem from any deliberate attempt at assimilation, but rather from the particular experiences as educators that a few influential women brought to their service in the Primary.[30]

The songbooks published during Felt's (1880–1925) and Anderson's (1925–39) long tenure as general presidents of the Primary reflect

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29. Ibid., 143.

30. A more recent example of this kind of change motivated by the efforts of a few people was the 1978 publication of *Activity Songs for Children*. *The Children Sing* and *Sing with Me* had virtually no activity or "fun" songs, since they were to be used in Sunday School as well as Primary. In 1978, however, the Church published *Activity Songs and Verses* to be used in Primary. Like some of the earliest publications of the Primary, this publication was largely motivated by the interest and enthusiasm of a single Primary General Board member, Mary Jolley, who was studying education at the University of Utah. According to Vanja Watkins, a longtime board member and composer of several Primary songs, Jolley "was working with Elliott Landau, who was a very open-minded supporter of children's rights. It was he who said 'Why are children forced to fold their arms when they walk? When they do that, they're not well balanced. They'll fall over. I mean, we do this for the sake of reverence, but let's forgo some of these things and think of the child. Let him walk with his hands free so he doesn't fall over.'" Landau also urged: "'Let us have some activity songs. Children have been sitting there for a long time. They need to move. That's how they get their attention back to what they should really be listening to.' So knowing that that was the latest thinking in educational circles, we felt that we could go ahead, as long as the songs were not rambunctious or irreverent in any way." Watkins, Oral History, 30. Again, the ideas and experience of a few individuals seem to have motivated the inclusion of these songs, rather than a considered decision to adopt particular educational philosophies or methodologies.

progressive ideals and contain many simple songs about things that would be within the realm of children's everyday experience. They contain fewer songs with abstract theological content, and fewer songs with explicitly "Mormon" content than Eliza R. Snow's compilations. All but three of the twenty-seven songs by Eliza R. Snow in the 1880 and 1888 songbooks disappeared from the 1905 songbook. Six patriotic songs were added, as well as one celebrating Utah's statehood. The 1920 and 1930 Primary songbooks each added at least one more patriotic song, a trend which continued until the 1951 printing of *The Children Sing.* In these years, then, it seems clear that Primary was instrumental in, and representative of, the remarkably rapid assimilation of the littlest Saints into broader American culture. The songs sung by Mormon children would have marked them as progressively educated Americans, rather than as "The Primary Army" of Eliza R. Snow's early songbooks.

"Quietly, Reverently": Correlating Children's Behavior

Besides marking the first decrease in the number of patriotic songs, the 1951 songbook, *The Children Sing,* reflected major changes within the Church, most importantly the beginnings of streamlining and systematizing Church publications that would eventually come to be known as correlation and of the attendant efforts to bring the auxiliary organizations firmly under the umbrella of priesthood direction. The progressive educational ideas that had been so important to Louie Felt and May Anderson were, if not in disfavor, at least no longer viewed as important. Anderson, the strongest proponent of progressive ideas about children, had not been active in Primary work for a decade, and many of the general board members with training and experience in "secular" education were released in 1951 when LaVern Watts Parmley became the Primary general president. This same year also saw the publication of *The Children Sing.*

While changes had been occurring gradually during the administrations of May Hinckley (1940–43) and Adele Cannon Howells (1943–51), Parmley accelerated the changes and forcefully gave new direction to the organization. Contributing to the changes was a widespread feeling among Primary workers that the activities had become excessive, a change in the funding of Primaries from their own fundraising activities to ward budgets, and vastly increased alternative recreational opportunities for children—radio, Walt Disney movies, a boom in publi-

cation of children's books. These forces fueled the movement of Primary toward specializing in "spiritual" education, rather than trying to meet the broader developmental needs of children.[31]

This new emphasis on specifically religious training included a return to the Primary's early concern with children's behavior. The contents of the Primary songbooks show how concerns about proper behavior were gradually incorporated into religious understanding, as well as being informed by ideas from secular educational theory. Early Primary leaders, adapting progressive educational principles, had tried to encourage proper behavior by providing wholesome activities and good examples, without specifically teaching that quiet, respectful behavior was a religious duty. By around the middle of the twentieth century, the influence of the progressive movement had receded, and decorous behavior began to be called "reverence." In the last few decades of the century, "reverence" became a more thoroughly articulated principle, grounded in scriptural interpretations and statements from latter-day prophets.

It was Aurelia Rogers's concern about children's (especially boys') behavior which had provided the impetus for establishing the Primary in the first place. Rogers wrote: "It may seem strange that in a community calling themselves Latter-day Saints, children should be allowed to indulge in anything approaching to rowdyism. But it must be remembered that the age in which we live is one that tends to carelessness in the extreme, not only in regard to religion, but also morality."[32]

Characterizing contemporary times as extreme "carelessness" is repeated at various crisis points as the Saints have confronted modernity in different forms. One of the ways that Saints of the late twentieth century coped with modernity was articulating a doctrine of reverence. And while it has generally been taught that true reverence must be inculcated at home, Primary seems to have been as necessary as ever to correct lapses in parents' attention to their duties.

For a member of the Church who grew up, as I did, in the 1970s, it is startling to discover that there were no songs about reverence in any Primary songbooks published before the middle of the twentieth cen-

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31. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 101–2.

32. Aurelia Spencer Rogers, *Life Sketches of Orson Spencer and Others, and History of Primary Work* (1898; reprinted, Grantsville, Utah: LDS Archive Publishers, 1998), 206.

tury.[33] None of the Primary songs published between 1905 and 1946 contain the word "reverence." Moreover, very few songs in these earlier books explicitly encourage quiet behavior. This absence of controlling children's physical movements and speech was not, apparently, due to the naturally subdued behavior of earlier generations. Indeed, many early Primary leaders complained mightily about the unruliness of their young charges. Historians Carol Cornwall Madsen and Susan Staker Oman quote a notation in the minutes of Salt Lake City's Seventeenth Ward Primary in 1880 when the president "decided that maintaining order and interest was too much for the presidency, and 'if the mothers could not take an interest in it, she felt it too much of a task, and wished to resign the position.' She was released and both of her counselors resigned within a month."[34]

The 1905, 1920, and 1930 books include just one song which mentions the problem:

> What can little bodies do
> Like us little lispers,
> Full of life and mischief too
> And prone to noisy whispers?

The song, rather than admonishing the "little lispers" to be reverent, encourages them to

> . . . come to school
> And, with merry voices,
> Sing about the golden rule,

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33. The *Deseret Sunday School Song Books* contain two instances of the word "reverence": (1) Ebenezer Beesley's "Sunday School Opening Hymn": "With hearts prepared / With one accord / Our eyes with rev'rence close, / In prayer we come before the Lord" (1903 ed., 169) and (2) Louisa L. Greene-Richards's [sic]: "Lift, lift the voice in reverence meet / The heart in sacramental praise." "Hush! Be Every Sound Subdued," (1908 ed., 141). Both of these uses are consistent with typical usage of the word before midcentury, when it was reserved for ordinances or priesthood.

34. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 24.

Till every heart rejoices.[35]

This injunction is in keeping with the idea, borrowed from the progressive movement, that providing purposeful activity was the best way to control children's behavior.

Even *The Children Sing,* published in 1951, contains only six songs explicitly intended to promote reverent behavior. "Reverence" suggests that being quiet is a way to demonstrate gratitude: "Today, dear Lord, I'll try to show how quiet I can be, / To thank thee for the many things that thou hast given me." "This Is God's House" reminds children that God is present during their gatherings. Both songs were borrowed from a Protestant children's songbook.[36] In *The Children Sing,* these two songs appear in the section called "The Children Sing of Strength of Character," accompanied by the note:

> Children like to listen to quiet music. Soft low sounds are restful. Usually loud music excites noisy behavior. Quiet times after the story, when waiting for a turn, or putting away materials, and before going home, afford relief for children. When little people appreciate the need for their being still, they will respond to quiet music. Carefully selected music can be skillfully used to induce the kinds of relaxation and quiet movement that are so essential to their emotional development.[37]

The author of the note acknowledges that quiet might be a necessary component of an adult agenda but gives primacy to the children's needs. These instructions to teachers make no appeal to a doctrine or principle of reverence as the justification for encouraging quiet; instead, quiet behavior aids the children's "emotional development." The major focus is still on physical activity, rather than on children's attitude or any underlying spiritual content of stillness and quiet behavior.

Even as late as 1967, as advisor to the Primary, Gordon B. Hinckley, then an apostle, praised efforts focused on the physical, observable aspects of reverence, rather than on children's attitudes or feelings: "I am confident that because of your effort we are coming to have increased rev-

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35. J. L. Townshend, "Little Lispers," *The Primary Song Book,* no. 80.

36. Frances Weld Danielson and Grace Wilbur Conant, *Songs for Little People* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, ca. 1915); Ruth H. Chadwick, "Reverence," and L. M. Ogelvee, "This Is God's House," *The Children Sing,* nos. 81, 82.

37. *The Children Sing,* unpaginated note following nos. 81 and 82.

erence in our church buildings. The simple song of reverence, the quiet example of officers and teachers, the orderly planning of meetings have slowly but wondrously borne good fruit. It was not perceptible as it happened, but as I have looked across fifty years from the time I first attended Primary until now, I note a difference almost miraculous. You have seen the need and accomplished a remarkable thing."[38]

The "Reverence Programs" published during Parmley's administration commissioned many songs on the topic. It is easy to observe a gradual progression from an emphasis on behavior to a more subtle definition of reverence, including feelings of respect and awe in the presence of God or his spirit. Some of these songs were collected in *Sing with Me*, published by Deseret Book in 1969, toward the end of Parmley's presidency. The index lists eight songs on reverence.[39] Six contain the word "quiet." Several suggest that being quiet or reverent is a way to show gratitude to Heavenly Father. Probably the best known of these songs, "Reverently, Quietly," offers a nuanced understanding of reverence:

> Reverently, quietly,
> Lovingly we think of thee.
> Reverently, quietly,
> Softly sing our melody.
> Reverently, quietly,
> Humbly now we pray.
> Let thy Holy Spirit dwell
> In our hearts today.[40]

Here quietness is a prelude to thinking lovingly of God, praying humbly, and feeling the Holy Spirit. This understanding is amplified in another nineteen songs, listed in the index under the heading "Prayer" and grouped in a section titled "Prayer Songs." For example:

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38. Quoted in Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 159–60.

39. "Father, We Will Quiet Be," A-15; "Father, I Will Reverent Be," B-64; "Gladly Meeting, Kindly Greeting," B-80; "Hear Us, Heavenly Father," B-32; "I Will Try to Be Reverent," A-1; "Our Chapel Is a Sacred Place," A-3; "Quiet Song," B-27; "Reverently, Quietly," A-9; in Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Sing with Me: Songs for Children* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969).

40. Ibid., A-9.

I love my Heav'nly Father
And I will try to be
Reverent when I'm in His house.
Then he'll be near to me.[41]

Father, we will quiet be,
While we listen now to thee,
As we raise our heads we'll sing,
"Thank thee, Lord for everything."[42]

Our chapel is a sacred place,
We enter quietly.
Dear Father, while we sing and pray
Our thoughts will be of thee.[43]

These texts describe both the mechanics of reverent behavior and the appropriate spiritual understanding. Presumably younger children would understand the physical injunction to sit quietly, while older children would begin to understand the subtleties of a reverent attitude. However, a thoroughly articulated principle of reverence still does not appear in *Sing with Me*; it is not always clear, for instance, whether quiet behavior is itself equivalent to reverence, or whether quiet, respectful behavior is owed to the chapel itself, or, if so, whether it is required only during meetings when God's presence is invoked. The now dominant understanding that quiet behavior is a physical manifestation of an inward state called "reverence" would take several years to be fully developed and widely adopted.

In 1976, President Spencer W. Kimball wrote a pamphlet entitled "We Should Be a Reverent People," which generalized the concept of reverence articulated in the Primary reverence programs to the entire Church and offered scriptural undergirding for the principle. Printed in large type on the inside front cover is: "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:30). President Kimball also alluded to Doctrine and Covenants 109 in the body of the pamphlet, asserting that meetinghouses ought to be accorded the same respect as tem-

41. Wilma Bunker "I Will Try to Be Reverent," *Sing with Me*, A-1.
42. Elizabeth Shields, "Father, We Will Quiet Be," ibid., A-15.
43. Ruth H. Chadwick, "Reverence," ibid., A-3.

ples: "In yet another area of extreme importance, the Lord has directed by modern revelation that we should have proper reverence for his holy house. . . . In a very real sense, what is said of the sacred temples of the Church is applicable to every 'house of the Lord,' whether it be a meetinghouse or any place where the Saints worship, or, in fact, any Latter-day Saint home."[44]

Other sections of the pamphlet are headed: "The Meaning and Importance of Reverence," "Reverence for God," "Reverence for the Name of Deity," "Reverence for the House of the Lord," "Reverence Involves Happiness," "Reverence and the Home," and "Reverence at Church." While many of these headings contain practical advice about behavior, in "The Meaning and Importance of Reverence," reverence is described "as 'a feeling or attitude of deep respect, love, and awe, as for something sacred.' To describe it as devotion to God is another way to express the meaning of reverence. Many of our leaders have expressed regard for reverence as one of the highest qualities of the soul, indicating it involves true faith in God and in his righteousness, high culture, and a love for the finer things in life."[45]

This pamphlet appears to be both the earliest and the most complete attempt to ground prescriptions for appropriate behavior in Church meetings in doctrinal concepts. It was frequently cited in the following decades in general conference addresses and other public admonitions to reverence. Although this pamphlet offers a systematic treatment of the topic of reverence intended for a general Church audience—not just for Primary—more than half of its text consists of suggestions to parents about how to improve their children's behavior.

At least through the 1970s, this emphasis on children's behavior appears in almost all sermons and articles about reverence, and it is repeated often. Just a few months after the publication of the Kimball pamphlet, the First Presidency message in the October 1976 *Ensign*, written by Marion G. Romney, the second counselor, was titled simply "Rever-

44. Spencer W. Kimball, *We Should Be a Reverent People* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976), 2.

45. Ibid., 1. The internal quotation is unattributed in the original.

ence."[46] Romney asserted that "reverence is the soul of true religion," and further defined reverence as "worshipful adoration coupled with a respectful behavior toward [God] and all that pertains to him." Components of this respectful behavior include "order . . . cleanliness of person, of apparel, of speech, of action, and of thought and impulse . . . courtesy, respect for one another, and kindred virtues." As examples of this far-reaching virtue, Romney cited Jesus's veneration of the Father in the Lord's Prayer and reported: "It is said of President Wilford Woodruff that while the sacrament was being passed, his lips could be observed in silent motion as he repeated to himself over and over again, 'I do remember thee, I do remember thee.'"[47] Up to this point, Romney's message fits with early twentieth-century uses of "reverence." It most often appeared in conjunction with the names of Deity, ordinances, priesthood, or priesthood office. However, Romney continues with what seems to be a new understanding of the term:

> Some time ago, a custodian of a recently dedicated meetinghouse was proudly showing me through it. When we came to the rest room, I commented on its cleanliness. Whereupon, he told me that on the day of dedication he had come to the rest room and found the floor littered with paper towels. As he stood surveying the situation, the President of the Church entered and immediately began to pick up the towels. "Imagine my embarrassment," he said; then he added, "It will never be disorderly again."[48]

The equation of disorder with irreverence and the idea that the physical components of "God's house" require reverence appear only in the latter half of the twentieth century. Moreover, there is still some confusion about whether "reverence" is primarily a matter of outward observance or of inward attitude. This confusion becomes acute when Romney describes reverence among children: "Home training or lack of it is strikingly apparent in the conduct of children. In some homes when the children are called to breakfast, from the youngest to the eldest, they come in with their faces washed, their hair combed, ready for prayer. When after

46. Marion G. Romney, "Reverence," *Ensign*, October 1976, 2.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.

prayer they take their seats at the table for breakfast, they respectfully wait for the blessing to be asked."[49]

Here not only behavior, but even proper grooming, becomes evidence of "reverence." Largely a doctrine of the twentieth century, this particular interpretation of reverence had a particular application to children and to Primary meetings. Although respect and awe have long been regarded as the proper attitudes toward God, the word "reverence" began to appear frequently in general Church rhetoric only in the 1970s, about a decade after the concept becomes prominent in Primary materials, especially Primary songs.

It is significant that this rhetoric about children's behavior intensified at precisely the point when the Church faced another crisis in its ongoing struggle with assimilation. Just as Aurelia Spencer Rogers and her colleagues undertook to teach the children proper deportment and behavior at a time when the Saints were sufficiently well established and prosperous to begin buying and enjoying "worldly" goods and entertainments, the rhetoric of "reverence" emerged at a time when the Church had shaken off the reputation of being aberrant, become fairly well established in the United States, and was experiencing impressive international growth. In short, it was at this moment that the Church faced what Armand Mauss has called "the predicament of respectability,"[50] as well as widely increasing prosperity, which allowed more indulgence in the luxuries of "Babylon." Calls for reverence thus clearly functioned as a means of retrenchment, separating the Saints from the corrupting influences of an irreverent modern world. As Romney's breakfast table illustration shows, reverence is a nostalgic idea, recalling a time when it did not seem remarkable for families to have time to gather for prayers around the breakfast table as well as the dinner table and when children were still generally expected to be seen rather than heard. It is not surprising that this rhetoric emerged at a point in the Church's history where contact with the outside world rapidly increased, when "modern" notions of streamlining, professionalizing, and bureaucratizing became the hallmarks of Church administration, and when a frightening "modern" American youth culture which seemingly despised all forms of authority and tradition emerged. Modernity, for all of the helpful ideas and technologies it

49. Ibid.

50. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 5.

offered the growing Church, was a distinctly irreverent condition—faster, louder, and more democratic than an earlier era when the family order was more stable and the parents more firmly in charge of their children.

It was also predictable that the nostalgia for a more ordered age should be projected onto children. Children are potent symbols. When they are well-behaved, as when they are singing, they represent all that we hope for the future and much that we cherish about our past. When they are not well behaved, they remind us of all of our past failures and our deepest insecurities about what is to come. In a church as strongly connected to the past as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a church with astonishingly rich and detailed hopes for the future, it is inevitable that children should function as carriers of meaning, and perhaps be overburdened in moments of uncertainty.

From "In Our Lovely Deseret" to "I Am a Child of God"

A careful examination of the way children are used as symbols reveals much about changing LDS ideas and hopes for the future of the Church and even about its most important theological understandings. In this section, I compare songs from the beginning and the end of the twentieth century to identify shifts in understanding and emphasis about home and family life, the nature of the kingdom of God, and the proper relationship of human beings to Jesus Christ and God the Father. These songs demonstrate a general sentimentalization of home and family (and particularly of children) and the "spiritualization" of the Church during the twentieth century. By "spiritualization" I mean the gradual distancing of religious duties from secular ones and a growing emphasis on the blessings of love, joy, and faith over the immediate physical blessings that were so crucial to the Saints during their westward migration and the early years in Utah.

Comparing songs from the two ends of the century offers illuminating contrasts: Early songs generally presume that children can play a significant role immediately, while later songs suggest that childhood should be devoted to preparation for future contributions. Early songs give more weight to quotidian, physical contributions children should make, while later songs emphasize prayer, scripture study, and more abstract virtues. Early songs suggest that home is a good place to practice kindness and learn righteousness, but important work is to be done in the world, while later songs emphasize "love at home" as an end in itself. Early songs tend

to emphasize God's favor toward the Saints as a group, while individual relationships with God are highlighted by the later songs.

Sentimentalizing the Family

Songs about home and family are sparsely represented in the song books compiled by Eliza R. Snow during the 1880s. In part, this lack likely reflects her own childlessness and, hence, limited experience with the daily care of children and opportunities to observe their activity. The songs about families include a few heartwrenching (sometimes near-maudlin) songs about the deaths of children and songs intended for children's funerals, passing references to children receiving righteous training in the home, and some sentimental songs about "My Mother Dear" and "My Father Dear."[51] However, much of this sentimentality is devoid of religious content, possessing only the tone of popular songs about hearth and home that were published for a general audience during that era.

The songbooks published between 1905 and 1939, in contrast, contain many songs about families as part of children's lives and daily activities. This increased emphasis is partly due to the idea, adapted from progressive educators, that children learn a great deal by simply participating in the daily life of a household and that their own daily activities are the best place from which to begin teaching abstract principles. Thus, these songbooks contain verses about adorable but mischievous baby siblings, the work done by mothers and fathers to keep a household running, and even very specific children's tasks like setting the table or washing the dishes.[52] Songs like these reflect the new luxury for the Saints of being able to settle into relatively comfortable domesticity, put the struggle over polygamy and statehood behind them, and rely on an established, if still

51. Snow, *Hymns and Songs for Children*, 1880, 79, 81; also "Angel Whisperings to a Dying Child," 104; "My Own Home," 122.

52. Among these intriguing songs are "Tooth Bugs" and "The Scrubbing Song." "Little Brother Vegetable" promises: "Little Brother Vegetable, brings good health to you, / Cheeks grow red as any rosebud, / Eyes will sparkle, too. /If you want lots of vim and pep / For your work and play, / Better eat your vegetables / Ev'ry single day!" Maryhale Woolsey, *The Primary Song Book*, 151. Alice Baldwin authored another instructive verse: "In a right way or a wrong way / Washing dishes may be done, / And we'll teach you now the right way; / Listen, children, ev'ry one. / We will take the glasses first, / And put them in the shining foam, /

struggling, system of agriculture and industry to sustain them. Songs about children's deaths and numbers for their funerals could be replaced by songs exhorting the children to proper behavior in a somewhat less exaggerated and glorified sphere. These songs were not, for the most part, composed by Latter-day Saints; instead, they demonstrate the Saints' new concern with adopting the progressive, civilized ways of the nation they were finally beginning to belong to.[53]

The virtues of gentility and refinement were explicitly understood as hallmarks of the kingdom of God which the children, along with their parents, were building. Orson F. Whitney and Edward P. Kimball's 1920 song, "The Upward Path," combines the martial rhythm of early songs like "Children of God" or "The Primary Army" (discussed below) with specific instructions to children about how they are to contribute to the work of the kingdom-building:

> Children of the Saints of God,
> Born and reared in truth's abode,
> Shun the broad and downward road,
> Pure and blameless be.
> Climb the upward path of right.
> Find in virtue your delight,
> Put the tempting friends to flight

Then we rinse them, next we polish; / We can practice this at home." "Washing Dishes," ibid., 110.

53. Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 88–89, suggests another, broadly American context for these songs. A growing number of antebellum Americans believed that "the state of their bodies and their souls was as much in their own hands as that of God. Hence, if someone became ill or died, it might well be his or her own fault. This, perhaps, is one reason why nineteenth-century Americans were less willing than their predecessors to accept the inevitability of death. . . . As more and more of the mysteries of nature were being unraveled in the nineteenth century and as this process increasingly captured the popular imagination, the idea began to grow that nature, both physical and human, could be controlled." The drive to teach children to keep house and be orderly and clean, according to this view, is not just a necessity in building a civilization in the wilderness, but also the manifestation of an emergent American belief that human beings could (and should) be partners with God in managing their destinies.

On to victory.
Be to ev'ry creature kind,
Patient, gentle and refined.
Clean in body and in mind,
Scorn iniquity.
Firm with feet upon the rock.
Fear no storm nor battle shock.
Christ will shield His precious flock,
Safe eternally.[54]

Kindness, patience, gentleness, and cleanliness are virtues that LDS children could easily share with their Christian neighbors in the rest of the country. Such an emphasis is not surprising at a time when the Saints were concerned with fitting in, and did it so successfully that they seemed to "'out-American' all other Americans."[55] What is noteworthy is that this assimilation begins, at least for children learning Primary songs, as a turn inward, away from the battle between the armies of Zion and its external foes and toward the building of a physical kingdom of God in Utah, then changes again from industry, cleanliness, and order, to more outward-directed virtues of kindness, patience, and gentleness. The physical virtues of gentility change gradually, almost imperceptibly, into the spiritualized and somewhat diluted virtue of "niceness," which characterized many expressions of Protestant Christianity at mid-twentieth century. The songbooks mark this gradual change, with the physical and spiritual existing side by side in slightly varying proportions until midcentury, when the balance tilts toward the spiritual side.

From Kingdom to Hearth and Back

By the second decade of the twentieth century, building a genteel society in Utah became invested with the same kind of religious significance that had been built on the imagery of conquering armies and great battles between good and evil in the decades when the Saints were struggling (both literally and figuratively) to find their place in America. "Children's

54. Orson F. Whitney and Edward P. Kimball, "The Upward Path," in *The Primary Songbook*, 80. Terminal punctuation added.

55. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 22.

Song" from Eliza R. Snow's 1880 songbook describes the task of children in the following lines:

> How bright have been parental hopes
> About what we shall do,
> In rolling on Jehovah's work,
> And helping put it through.
> We'll stem the tide of wickedness,
> That deluges the world,
> That Zion may appear in all its glory.
> The Savior we'll prepare to meet
> When He shall come again,
> To wield the power of government,
> And o'er the nations reign. . . .[56]

By 1912, doing the Savior's work is described in much less exalted language:

> Jesus bids us shine,
> With a clear, pure light,
> Like a little candle,
> Burning in the night.
> In this world is darkness,
> So we must shine
> You in your small corner,
> And I in mine.[57]

While the differences between the two visions are partly explained by the preoccupations and pedagogical views of the compilers of the two songbooks, they also reflect a real shift in expectations and beliefs about the kingdom of God. Between 1880 and 1912, not only the composers of Primary songs, but many of the Saints were abandoning ideas of Christ's imminent return "to wield the power of government" and beginning to view the kingdom of God as something which could be created in a "small corner," or, at least, in a single region of the United States. By the time of

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56. Snow, *Hymns and Songs*, 76.

57. No author identified, "Jesus Bids Us Shine," *Primary Song Book*, 32.

the publication of the 1912 songbook, the transformation of expectations was complete: Saints had gone from expecting to reign with Christ over the world, to expecting to establish Zion in Utah, to working to create a spiritual kingdom of God that could exist in any corner of the world, regardless of the Saints' political situation.

The change in expectations about the kingdom of God is related to the changing representations of family life. While songs from the first part of the century invest doing one's duty and being kind to family members with religious significance as demonstrations of Christlike character and practice, the mere existence of a family did not yet elicit the kind of religious ardor which it would invoke just a few decades later in songs like "Love Is Spoken Here" (1989), which present family prayer and a righteous home life as ends in themselves, not just as training grounds for doing one's duty in the wider world:

> Mine is a home where every hour
> Is blessed by the strength of priesthood power.
> With father and mother leading the way,
> Teaching me how to trust and obey;
> And the things they teach are crystal clear,
> For love is spoken here.
> I see my mother kneeling with our family each day
> I hear the words she whispers,
> As she bows her head to pray.
> Her plea to the Father quiets all my fears
> And I am thankful love is spoken here.[58]

The shift toward an individual subject or to a nuclear family as the locus of God's favor is an important element of the gradual retreat from the idea that the establishment of "Zion" in the tops of the mountains would, more or less imminently, usher in the last days. It preserves the notion that Latter-day Saints are the favored people of the Lord by allowing God's favor to be evident in the home lives of individuals and families rather than in God's advancement of the Church. These songs also subtly distance God; He is addressed in "whispers" and blesses the child through

58. Janice Kapp Perry, "Love Is Spoken Here," *Children's Songbook*, 190.

"the strength of priesthood power," rather than by "wield[ing] the power of government."

More importantly from a doctrinal standpoint, the children's hope is shifted from reigning with Christ during the millennium to being with Heavenly Father, presumably after the millennium. As historian Grant Underwood has noted:

> Early Mormons basked in John's promise of being made "kings and priests" to rule and reign with Christ during the thousand years. Toward the end of his life, Joseph Smith began stressing the eternal implications of this concept, but before that, the Saints projected all their enthusiasm and expectations for the afterlife on the millennium, rather than on the far-off future state. . . . Whereas modern Mormons anxiously await the day in which they will be crowned with an inheritance in the "Celestial Kingdom," early Saints longed for their millennial inheritance.[59]

Although Underwood (and others) note that this shift began during Joseph Smith's lifetime, I would argue that, like all doctrinal adjustment in a church with multiple avenues of doctrinal transmission, it takes at least a generation, and often even longer, for new doctrinal understandings to take root. Evidence from the Primary songbooks suggests that pre- and post-millennialist understandings of the Saints' role in Christ's reign on the earth persisted into the twentieth century, with the post-millennialist understanding finally becoming dominant in the second and third decades of the century.

In her remarks during a celebration of the publication of the *Children's Songbook* in 1989, Primary General President Michaelene Grassli expressed this new understanding of the kingdom of God:

> As children share the universal language of music, they can experience great joy singing about the gospel. The children of the Church worldwide are unified through their primary music. Though skin colors differ, cultures and languages are many and varied, nevertheless, the songs of the children of Zion unify the children of the world. They gain great strength through this unity, knowing their brothers and sisters worldwide learn the same principles and the same songs. This commonality will continue to be a strengthening, unifying influence to them, as they grow older and spread through the world. Enemy soldiers on opposing battle lines whistle strains

59. Grant Underwood, "Mormons and the Millennial World-View," in *Mormon Identities in Transition*, edited by Douglas Davies (London: Cassell, 1996), 139.

> of "I Am a Child of God" across the foxholes because children of the Church worldwide know the same songs. Who can tell what good may be wrought in the hearts of men through music?[60]

Grassli's remarks reflect a clear assumption that today's children will grow up in a world much like this one, an expectation that conditions of the world will continue much as they are, and the belief that individual Latter-day Saints' lives will be spiritually, rather than materially, transformed by understanding the gospel.

A favorite song from the 1989 *Children's Songbook* will serve as a final illustration of the changing views of the kingdom of God and children's roles in building it. Janice Kapp Perry's "We'll Bring the World His Truth: The Army of Helaman" was an instant "hit" upon publication and remains a favorite among Primary children:

> We have been born, as Nephi of old,
> To goodly parents who love the Lord,
> We have been taught, and we understand
> That we must do as the Lord commands.
>
> *Chorus:*
> We are as the army of Helaman,
> We have been taught in our youth.
> And we will be the Lord's missionaries
> To bring the world his truth.
>
> . . .
>
> We know his plan, and we will prepare,
> Increase our knowledge through study and prayer.
> Daily we'll learn until we are called
> To take the gospel to all the world.[61]

While Primary children love to sing this song, and sing it with great energy

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60. Michaelene P. Grassli, Address, Celebration of *The Children's Songbook*, Salt Lake City, May 1989, my transcription of a videotape of the celebration, loaned to me courtesy of Virginia B. Cannon.

61. Janice Kapp Perry, "We'll Bring the World His Truth: The Army of Helaman," in Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Children's Songbook of*

and enthusiasm, the song ultimately leaves their energy frustrated; there is nothing heroic, or even active, for this "army" to do. Children who sang the martial songs from the earliest songbooks might easily have imagined themselves to be an army defending their homes and temple in Utah. Later songs, up until about the middle of the twentieth century, suggest very concrete and active ways that the children will contribute: going to school, being polite, eating vegetables, washing dishes, brushing their teeth—in short, the things that children could do to contribute to the growth of civilized and genteel society in Utah. By the end of the century, most of these songs about children's immediate and concrete duties are gone, replaced by more abstract, conceptual songs about the contributions children can make in the future "when [they] have grown a foot or two."[62] These efforts are no longer to be directed inward, to the physical building up of a firmly located "Zion," but outward, to the spiritual kingdom scattered through the world. Unfortunately for children, the kinds of things required for building such a spiritual kingdom are largely outside the scope of children's everyday experience, so that their current contributions seem limited to being nice, doing their chores at home, and learning in preparation for their *future* service to the Church. On the one hand, this change feels like a loss. Children's activities are no longer defined as making real or significant contributions; on the other hand, children's future contributions are more thoroughly defined, and certainly more critical as part of the mission of the church, so in some ways children's status is increased.[63]

All of these changes—from a collective to an individual subject, from practical family duties to the abstract joys of an eternal family, from a God who is immediately involved in day-to-day life to a God whose in-

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the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 172–73.

62. Newel Kay Brown, "I Hope They Call Me on a Mission," ibid., 169.

63. Another significant change in this song is the firm grounding in Book of Mormon stories—even though the Mormon genius for rewriting sacred history is fully evident here. Missionary work bears little resemblance to what the army of Helaman was up to. The number of references to the Book of Mormon has steadily increased throughout the century, and the 1989 *Songbook* incorporates the Book of Mormon more fully than any of the previous songbooks or even the current hymnal for adults.

fluence is felt more subtly—can be observed by comparing "In Our Lovely Deseret" with "I Am a Child of God." The former seems to have been the anthem of the Primary Association for its first few decades. It was performed at ceremonial occasions, during birthday tributes to Aurelia Rogers, and at many pageants and public performances. "I Am a Child of God" has become similarly important in the latter half of the twentieth century. "In Our Lovely Deseret" maintains a corporate subject throughout (the "multitude of children" is never individualized), whereas "I Am a Child of God" begins every verse (and almost every line) with the first-person singular. "In Our Lovely Deseret" is concerned exclusively with outwardly observable behavior, while "I Am a Child of God" focuses on the psychology of its individual subject: the child's knowledge and understanding of his or her relationship to Deity. The rewards for understanding and doing the Lord's will also vary in the two songs. Keeping the workaday commandments of "In Our Lovely Deseret" has immediate benefits ("the children may live long, and be beautiful and strong"), while in "I Am a Child of God," the blessings of understanding "all that I must do" are abstract and distant ("to live with Him someday"). The shift in emphasis which is evident in the Primary songs spanning the twentieth century reflects the changes that have occurred as the Church has matured and refined its understandings of foundational doctrines.

Jesus as Leader, Friend, and Savior

> It shouldn't be hard,
> Even though I am small,
> To think about Jesus,
> Not hard at all.[64]

Along with these changed understandings of children's roles in building the kingdom of God, Primary songbooks reflect major changes in Latter-day Saints' understanding of the role of Jesus Christ. Early songs, like the "Children's Song" (discussed above) and "The Primary Army" of 1880 portray Christ as leader of the children's band of the church militant:

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64. Mabel Jones Gabbott, "To Think about Jesus," *Children's Songbook*, 71.

Who riseth like the light enrolled
O'er all the landscape fair and wide?
. . . We are the hope of Israel.

. . .

An army for the Lord enrolled–
The snow-white robes of peace we wear
Fort Zion is the fort we hold,
And righteousness the sword we bear.[65]

Eliza R. Snow's 1880 compilation includes eleven songs specifically referencing Jesus Christ. Several refer to Christ's millennial reign and portray Christ as a political or military defender of the Saints. Three refer to Jesus as a shepherd and describe his gentle, tender care of his followers. Four refer specifically to the incident when Christ uttered the phrase "Suffer the children to come unto me" (Matt. 19:13–14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). The Christ presented is a personal friend of little children. The songbooks published between 1905 and 1946 retain some of these songs and add a few others, but all have the same general theme of Jesus as a friend of little children and tender shepherd of his flock. Most of the songs with specific reference to Christ's millennial reign or his role as military leader disappeared after 1905. In short, the songbooks published from 1905 until 1946 portray Christ as a gentle friend of little children, who is aware of their daily activities and who wishes them to follow His example by being kind to their families and their neighbors.

The Children Sing, published in 1951, contains sixteen songs that are primarily about Jesus. Most of these are contained in the section "The Children Sing of the Lord," which also includes songs about God the Father and/or the "Lord" and "God." While many of these texts still have Jesus's kindness to and friendship with little children as the dominant message, a few refer to a more distant "Lord," a being to be worshipped. A few songs even suggest praying to Jesus.[66] Thus, Christ is not only distanced from the daily affairs of Mormons but is no longer understood in distinctively Mormon terms. Except for Evan Stephens's "Christ and His Little

65. Augusta Joyce Crocheron, "The Primary Army," in *Hymns and Songs,* 75.

66. For instance, the final verse of "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" has the following text: "Yet still to his footstool in prayer I may go, and ask for a share of his

Ones," which describes the Book of Mormon scene of Christ blessing the children of the Nephites, no texts suggest any uniquely Latter-day Saint doctrines about the Savior. *Sing with Me*, published in 1969, contains sixteen songs under the Topical Index heading "Jesus Christ" (and another eleven sacrament songs), about half written by Latter-day Saints. Like the texts in *The Children Sing*, these songs focus on Christ as a benevolent example for children to follow and as a focus for reverence. As in *The Children Sing*, there are fewer songs in *Sing with Me* which suggest Christ's involvement with or awareness of children's day-to-day activities.

These thematic emphases fit well into Mauss's timeline of assimilation. After comparing the religious beliefs of Mormons with those of non-Mormons in the 1960s, Mauss concluded: "By the sixties, the Mormons were pretty well assimilated; that is, that they could not claim many distinctive religious beliefs, practices or experiences that mattered to others enough to make them seem truly 'peculiar' to those others."[67] According to this model, it seems unsurprising that Latter-day Saint Christology, at least in a version simplified for children, would by midcentury have become nearly unremarkable within the broad mainstream of Protestant Christianity. However, the changes between the 1969 *Sing with Me* and the 1989 *Children's Songbook* cannot be simply explained within Mauss's framework as a "retrenchment" or a return to more distinctive Latter-day Saint understandings of Christ. If anything, those changes indicate an approach to certain Protestant understandings of Christ.

The 1989 *Children's Songbook* lists forty-nine songs under the headings "Jesus Christ—Birth (see Christmas)," "Jesus Christ—Savior," "Jesus Christ—Baptism," "Jesus Christ—Blesses Children," "Jesus Christ—Example," "Atonement," "Jesus Christ, Second Coming," and "Jesus Christ, Son of God." In part these entries represent deliberate padding, with several songs now indexed in relation to Jesus Christ instead of (or in addition to) other topics, like "Book of Mormon" or "Beautiful World," as they were in *Sing with Me*. However, the 1989 *Songbook* contains many new songs about Jesus Christ, most of which were written and published in

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love. / And if I thus earnestly seek him below, / I shall see him and hear him above." This verse and a few others containing confusing references about prayer were removed from the 1989 *Children's Songbook*.

67. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 43.

The Friend or as special supplements to the annual Primary sacrament meeting programs in the late 1970s or 1980s.[68] Since the committee creating the new songbook did not issue a general call for songs as it had in preparing *Sing with Me,* I assume that most of these songs were written independently, long before Church President Ezra Taft Benson gave his 1987 talk "Come Unto Me,"[69] which is often cited as the beginning of a move toward highlighting the Church's Christian character in public discourse. It is unlikely, probably impossible, that the composition of these songs could have been directed by correlation committees or any other group or individual from Church headquarters, although the final song selections and the creation of the list were certainly approved through the correlation process. It is possible that a new emphasis on Christ, along with other elements which O. Kendall White has labeled "Mormon neo-orthodoxy," was already finding a place in materials published by the Church Educational System (CES) or by quasi-official presses like Deseret Book by the late 1970s, and thus filtering into grassroots consciousness.[70] Still, the evidence of these songs' apparently independent composition over two decades complicates the attempt to determine where this new emphasis on the figure of Christ came from.

It is not only the increased number of songs about Jesus which is striking in the 1989 songbook. The attributes and facets of Christ's personality which are emphasized also shift quite dramatically. Among songs retained from *Sing with Me* are "Jesus Once Was a Little Child," "Jesus

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68. Since 1970, the Primary has presented an annual sacrament meeting, consisting of presenting songs and readings focused on a year's theme and usually highly scripted in booklets issued for that purpose. In 1980 when Primary meetings shifted from a weekday to the Sunday three-hour meeting block, the outlines for these programs have also served as guides for the curriculum of Sharing Time, a segment of Primary (usually during opening exercises) when several classes meet together, rather than in age-separated classes. Because learning the songs for the sacrament meeting presentation takes up a good deal of the time available for singing practice, it is much easier to determine which songs of the many contained in the songbook have been widely learned and frequently sung in the last twenty years. The sacrament meeting program effectively functions as a kind of "microcorrelation."

69. Ezra Taft Benson, "Come unto Christ," *Ensign,* November 1987, 83.

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

Said Love Everyone," and "I Think When I Read that Sweet Story of Old."[71] These, like most of the songs in the older songbooks, emphasize Christ's kindness as an example for children to follow, and several quote Christ's commandment to "suffer the children to come unto me." Except for the sacrament songs, no texts mention the crucifixion, Gethsemane, or the role of Christ's atonement in the plan of salvation. In fact, only three of the twelve sacrament songs in *Sing with Me* contain a specific reference to Christ's death, and only one mentions the cross. Two of the sacrament songs from *Sing with Me* are retained in the *Children's Songbook*, and these are the most specific about Christ's death:

> Before I take the sacrament,
> I sit so quietly.
> I know that Jesus came to earth
> And died for me.[72]
>
> Help us, O God, to understand
> Our Savior's love for us.
> He paid the price for all our sins
> And died upon the cross.
>
> Help us to love him more each day,
> Though him we cannot see,
> His teachings and his loving heart
> Will lead us back to thee.[73]

Although this dramatic change coincides with Mauss's chronology of retrenchment, in this case it seems that the Jesus presented in the Primary songbooks is becoming more, rather than less, assimilated with the Protestant Jesus. This is not to say that there are no distinctly Mormon elements in this 1989 collective image of Christ, however. Several new songs

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71. *Children's Songbook*: James R. Murray, "Jesus Once Was a Little Child," 55; Moiselle Renstrom, "Jesus Said Love Everyone," 61; Jemima Luke, "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story," 56.

72. Mabel Jones Gabbott, "Before I Take the Sacrament," *Children's Songbook*, 73.

73. D. Evan Davis, "Help Us, O God, to Understand," ibid., 73.

firmly situate Christ's atoning function in a Book of Mormon context, thus emphasizing distinctly Mormon elements for the first time in several decades. These four new songs about Christ in the Book of Mormon are: "Samuel Tells of the Baby Jesus" (describing events in the Americas at the time of Christ's birth), and "This Is My Beloved Son," "Easter Hosanna," and "Had I Been a Child" (all describing Jesus's post-resurrection visit to the Nephites).[74] Also for the first time, a majority of these songs are composed by Latter-day Saints, rather than being borrowed from Protestant sources, a fact that could certainly fit into the retrenchment theme of separateness from the religious mainstream.

Perhaps the best possibility for explaining this apparent contradiction comes from O. Kendall White's model of Mormon "neo-orthodoxy." White suggests that the emerging emphasis on human alienation and distance from God, in contrast to the earlier Mormon emphasis on human beings' godlike potential and God's personal involvement in the Saints' day-to-day affairs, marks a shift among the Mormons from one Protestant view of Jesus to another. That is to say, around the mid-twentieth century, Mormon views were becoming more like those of liberal mainline Protestant churches, while in later decades, Mormon views moved closer to those of evangelical Protestants. Mauss also describes this realignment in his chapter on folk fundamentalism among Mormons, where he demonstrates that Mormons have moved closer to Southern Baptists, for example, in their beliefs on scriptural inerrancy and the authority of ecclesiastical leaders.[75] One of the major parallels to evangelical Christianity which White notices in Mormon teachings of the late 1960s through the early 1980s is a move to define God as thoroughly other than, and incomprehensible to, human beings: "By emphasizing the differences rather than the similarities between God and humanity, Mormon neo-orthodoxy aligns itself more closely with Protestant neo-orthodoxy than with traditional Mormon thought. For instance, traditional Mormon theology

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74. Mabel Jones Gabbott, "Samuel Tells of the Baby Jesus," *Children's Songbook*, 36; Marvin K. Gardner, "This Is My Beloved Son," 76; Vanja Y. Watkins, "Easter Hosanna," 68–69; and Mabel Jones Gabbott, "Had I Been a Child," 80–81. These songs have all been included in the annual Primary sacrament meeting programs.

75. White, *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy*; Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 180–82.

teaches that humans were created in the physical and spiritual image of God and may themselves become gods. In contrast, [Mormon neo-orthodox theologians have] lamented the Mormon preoccupation with anthropomorphic descriptions of God, [urging Mormons] to acknowledge divine uniqueness, or God's otherness."[76]

The emphasis in the Primary songbooks on Christ's atoning role in eternity, rather than on his kindness to human children during his sojourn on earth, demonstrates the redefinition and distancing White observes. Like the God of "I Am a Child of God," Jesus as Savior, rather than as friend of children or leader of the children's army, is accessible only through abstractions that may be beyond the cognitive ability of children.

Obviously, a full consideration of White's thesis and its application to children's curriculum is beyond the scope of this essay. However, I suggest that it is precisely in the effort to evaluate hypotheses such as White's or Mauss's that evidence from the songbooks can be most useful. Considering songs from across the twentieth century makes it clear that the refinements of Latter-day Saint Christology in the late twentieth century cannot be understood as an imitation of Protestant theology, even if both theologies arrive at similar understandings on some points.[77] It is evident from a consideration of other themes in the songbooks that many Mormon teachings—on family life, proper attitudes and behaviors for children, the building of the kingdom of God on earth, and even the nature of God the Father and God the Son—have undergone a process of "spiritualization" during the twentieth century, as the Saints became more confident about the survival of the Church, began to take a longer view of the Church's future, and were able to further clarify and articulate essential doctrines.

The songbooks are also able to demonstrate, in a way that few historical sources or survey results could, that people can and do believe conflicting, even contradictory things. A Primary songbook can contain abstract songs about a distant Father who sent Jesus as part of a grand plan ("How could the Father tell the world of sacrifice and death? / He sent his Son to die for us and rise with living breath"[78]) and, just a few pages later, present a vivid portrait about Joseph and Mary going to Bethlehem, with

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76. White, *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy*, 89.

77. I am indebted to Armand Mauss for this insight.

78. Mabel Jones Gabbott, "He Sent His Son," *Children's Songbook*, 35–36.

concrete, earthy details like Joseph carrying "bread and goat cheese in a little linen sack."[79] While children may now sing more about "the Savior" than about "Jesus" in Primary, they still sing "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus," which has been in every songbook since 1905. Primary songbooks are able to show that the development and articulation of principles and points of doctrine in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a magnificently complex process in which General Authorities, Primary presidents, poets, composers, and even children, in all their wiggly humanness, participate—a process informed by cultural imperatives both within and without the Church. As scholars try to uncover the traces of this process, hymnals and songbooks offer a rich and still largely unexplored repository of the thoughts, beliefs, and hopes of generations of Saints. More than many other sources of historical evidence, they capture the gorgeous admixture of exegesis, folklore, doggerel, committee work, genius, and inspiration that created and creates Mormonism.

79. Bessie Saunders Spencer, "When Joseph Went to Bethlehem," *Children's Songbook,* 38–39.

Afield

Anita Tanner

Just off the highway
in the setting sun
cattle gather on a hill.
My foot lets up
on the gas while
something in me
unhinges. Perhaps
around-the-corner suddenness
or the field's rise
of instant beauty
loosens my grip
on the wheel.

Buxom cattle
graze on blonde grass,
a monarchy
just before winter snows.
Red, russet, brown,
and black mounds,
stark against
the curvature of land,
force a quick intake
of my breath,
a slow, calming
stare coming up
from the dullness
and fatigue
of lost journeys.

The remainder of miles
the image of cattle
keeps brushing up
against my thinking
like a caress,
all my desires,
far-gone afield,
come gathering in.

ANITA TANNER, raised on a Wyoming farm, lives in Boise, Idaho. She has always loved writing and reading, and has published a collection of poems, *Where Fields Have Been Planted* (Kearney, Neb.: Morris Publishing, 1999).

PERSONAL VOICES

An Interview with David Sjodahl King

Val Hemming

DAVID S. KING HAS LED a life exceptional for its combination of public and ecclesiastical service. His parents were Vera Sjodahl King (1891–1955) and William Henry King (1862–1949), a four-term U.S. Senator from Utah. Born on June 20, 1917, in Salt Lake City, King attended public schools in Washington, D.C., and Paris, and subsequently graduated from the University of Utah in 1937. He served an LDS mission to Great Britain (1937–39), received his law degree in 1942 from Georgetown University College of Law, returned to Utah in 1943, served for two years as legal counsel for the Utah Sate Tax Commission, and then established a private law practice in Salt Lake City. He married Rosalie Lehner in the Salt Lake Temple. She was born in 1926 to Chester Hart Lehner and Virginia Gladys West Lehner in Waukegan, Illinois, and was educated as a nurse. Together they reared eight children.

Elected as a Democrat to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1958, he served from 1959 through 1962. He was an unsuccessful candidate for election to the U.S. Senate from Utah in 1962. He again won election to the House of Representatives in 1964 but was defeated for reelection in 1966. In 1967, he was appointed U.S. Ambassador to the Malagasy Re-

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VAL G. HEMMING is a retired physician specializing in virology with an interest in history. He has published in the *Journal of Mormon History* and is researching Scandinavian Mormon origins. He serves on *Dialogue*'s board of directors. He conducted this interview with David Sjodahl King, in Kensington, Maryland, February 14, 2004. The typescript in his possession.

public (Madagascar) and, in 1968, also to Mauritius, serving in both capacities until late in 1969. From 1979 to 1981, he served as alternate executive director of the World Bank.

King also has a long and distinguished record of service as a Church executive. Following his return to Salt Lake City, he served for nine years as second assistant general superintendent of the LDS Mutual Improvement Association (MIA) (1949–58). Later he served for almost eight years as bishop of the Kensington Ward of the Washington D.C. Stake (1970–78). Accompanied by Rosalie, he then served as president of the Haiti Port-au-Prince Mission (1986–89). Soon after their return from Haiti, he was called as president, and Rosalie as matron, of the Washington DC Temple (1990–93). Since 1994, he serves as patriarch of the Washington DC Stake. He derives satisfaction from his long, less conspicuous, but important, service as a full-time missionary, seminary instructor, stake high councilor, and Sunday School teacher. He is also the author of *Come to the House of the Lord* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 2000).

* * *

Val: First, would you tell us a little about your mission and your unique experiences as a returning missionary traveling in Europe on the eve of World War II?

David: After my graduation from college in 1937, I was called on a mission to Great Britain. Before leaving I was ordained a Seventy by Rulon S. Wells, senior member of the First Council of the Seventy. He was then in his late eighties. He had been ordained a Seventy by none other than Brigham Young. Imagine! I could therefore trace my "Seventy" lineage back to the Three Witnesses in three jumps.

My mission gave me the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of serving under the direction of President Hugh B. Brown, who later served as a counselor in the First Presidency. His deep spirituality and eloquence made him the idol of all his missionaries. We loved him with a passion. I believe it safe to say that he became a role model for all who labored under him. He understood the questions raised by his college-graduate missionaries who were experiencing a cognitive dissonance arising from their studies of geology, anthropology, philosophy, and other faith-challenging subjects. He didn't treat elders like apostates simply because they asked

searching questions. Toward the end of my mission, the British were understandably more interested in avoiding a devastating war with Germany than in finding the way to the celestial kingdom. The prewar harvest of converts, therefore, was meager, though the postwar harvest would prove much more abundant.

Immediately following my mission I made a brief tour, with a missionary companion, of a few countries in western Europe. This was permissible at that time. We saw Germany on the brink of war. German military officers, nattily dressed in green-trimmed gray uniforms, were everywhere. In Rome we saw Benito Mussolini review several divisions of his army. He was showing off like a strutting peacock from the balcony of his palace while his ecstatic troops, in battle array, were shouting a thunderous "Duce, Duce, Duce!" while stamping their hobnailed boots on the cobblestones. The Duce knew how to put on a good show. But within six years his army would be decimated; Italy would be in shambles; he would be captured, tried, and executed; and his body would be strung up for public display, like a smoked ham, in a public square in Milan. The fate of the mighty German Wehrmacht and its grotesque leader, Adolf Hitler, promised to be just as sickening. *Sic gloria transit mundi.*

Two days later, on September 1, 1939, while traveling though Switzerland, we heard the word being passed up and down the aisles of our train that Hitler had invaded Poland. When we reached Paris, people were in a frenzy. The Parisians feared that the German Army would move west with its numerous panzer divisions. Their fear was almost palpable, but who could blame them? Millions would die before this terrible scourge would become history. The French were placing their shaky confidence in their presumably impregnable Maginot Line; but the Germans simply flew over it or passed around it through Belgium and Holland. I believe the Parisians had a premonition that that could happen. A year later, all of France had succumbed.

When we reached London we found that everyone there had been issued an individual gas mask—millions of them—for immediate use in case of a gas attack. A 100 percent blackout was strictly enforced, meaning that a plane flying overhead at night literally could not see one single point of light anywhere in a city of 8 million. This was an impressive feat. The English were good at that sort of thing.

London was the designated gathering place for almost all of our European missionaries, who were returning to the United States by the

boatload. This massive exodus was a prudent and well-planned operation. President Brown put me in charge of a group of approximately 250 missionaries sailing on the SS *America.*

Val: Tell us about your relationship with your famous father, Senator William Henry King.

David: Since my father served in the Senate for twenty-four years (1916–40), I was reared in Washington, D.C., although our family regularly returned to Utah during the summers. My father was a man of impeccable honesty. Though he had his share of political adversaries, none of them ever accused him of being dishonorable. The fact that he survived for twenty-four years in the Senate as a member of Utah's minority party speaks for itself. He was a product of his time and took his public duties seriously. While I was growing up, I felt the awesomeness of his presence, but little of his tenderness. I knew that he loved me, but he was tethered to an inexorable lifestyle that made little allowance for expressions of sentimentality. Politics is a rough game.

Val: Did your father influence your choice of law as a profession?

David: Absolutely. I can't think of any other reason for having become a lawyer. If I had to do it all over again, I might prefer the study of ancient languages, or philosophy, or religious instruction, or all three. I love to teach. In my later years, I spent considerable time learning classical Greek. Although I admire the logical precision and tidiness of the legal mind and did quite well in law school, and later enjoyed writing some creditable legal briefs, I didn't like the worldliness of law practice and the bad feelings which its adversarial nature necessarily engendered.

However, to its credit, my law practice did enable me to support my growing family and, even more than that, to run for political office. I could never have done that in any other setting. The lawyer is his own boss and can juggle his professional schedule so as to enable him to campaign and to do all the other things that a strenuous political campaign requires.

Val: What about the influence of your mother, Vera Sjodahl King?

David: She poured out enough maternal love upon her four children to make up for whatever may have been lacking elsewhere. She was sensitive to the feelings of others and expressed affection easily. She was also an excellent organizer and could impose discipline when needed. She served as president of the Relief Society in the Washington D.C. Ward for a number of years. Her influence is felt even until this day.

My mother took me, with my brother and two sisters, to Paris where

I attended a French school during the 1929–30 academic year. There I learned French, a skill which greatly shaped my future. In retrospect, I wonder whether this turn of events was providential or random. The entire French experience, which seemed commonplace to me at the time, I now realize, was of enormous personal significance. It wasn't easy for my remarkable mother to manage this difficult odyssey, especially since she spoke very little French.

My mother also saw to it that I attended my Church meetings and was reared a believing Latter-day Saint. This would not have happened but for her strong will. My only regret is my failure to tell her then, with a little more passion, what I now know and feel—the importance of her guiding hand and her loving encouragement in shaping my life. It takes a lifetime to fully evaluate and understand these precious experiences.

Val: Were there others who had great influence on your life?

David: Excluding my mother and father, my mission president Hugh B. Brown would head the list of the most influential men. My wonderful wife, Rosalie, would head the list of women. I could never have accomplished what I did without her help.

Rosalie not only willingly played her role but also joined me in defining both of our individual roles in our many enterprises. We acted as a team in everything we did. Once our roles had been decided on, she always supported me all the way. As the wife of an ambassador, with five of our eight children still with us, she showed impressive leadership among the other ambassadorial wives. In her own right, she won honor for our country by her conspicuous leadership in the field of aid to the poor and care of the sick. The president of the Malagasy Republic publicly acknowledged her outstanding contributions to his country.

As a "mission mom" during our missionary service in Haiti, her nursing training and experience allowed her to contribute significantly to the missionaries' health by teaching them principles of good health and by supervising their diets and lodging. Our success in Haiti would have been impossible without her. Later, she fulfilled her calling as a temple matron with similar skill and devotion. Her contributions were an inspiration to all. I shall never cease to be grateful for her influence.

I cannot refrain from also telling you that our children, now mature adults, are also a strong influence and an inspiration to me. Their combined wisdom has acted as a North Star, keeping my compass pointed in the right direction.

Val: Tell us more about how your university and legal training impacted on your religious faith.

David: They greatly matured my faith but did not lessen it. I remained active in Church work throughout my university years. I then served on the Washington D. C. Stake high council shortly after my law school graduation, when Ezra Taft Benson was its president. He ordained me a high priest.

Val: You said that one of your most formative Church experiences came while serving in the general superintendency of the YMMIA.

David: That is correct. The MIA has little meaning to the present generation, but in 1958 it had reached the pinnacle of its importance and influence in the Church. It was a huge organization, sponsoring an immense program that included structured regular weekday classes for each age group, plus dance, music, drama, speech, and athletic programs. This youth program earned worldwide admiration. Our dance festival, in connection with June Conference, was held on two successive nights. Spectators filled the University of Utah football stadium. Our music festival amassed youth singers from all over the Church, filling over one-fifth of the Salt Lake Tabernacle. The drama and speech festivals, and our massive athletic programs, including both basketball and softball, were renowned.

Eventually this gargantuan program was gradually phased out without fanfare and was replaced by another, far more modest, but adequate, youth program. Though our hearts were broken, we realized that there were good reasons for the change. One of them was that the MIA's oversize and success became the cause of its own demise. It was just too big, too ambitious. It interfered with young people's homework and other school programs. The high school activities competed with it on every front. The schools also had the advantage of more spacious facilities, a professional cadre of teachers and coaches, and a budget to match. The MIA was so large that staffing it drew strength away from other equally important Church programs and activities such as seminary, missionary and temple work, and genealogical research. Though the change was inevitable, broken-hearted MIA partisans christened its demise "Operation Teardrop."

Val: Tell us about your involvement in Utah politics and your decision to run for Congress.

David: Once I entered law practice, I also became involved in Utah politics. I ran for a seat in the Utah Legislature in 1946 to represent a dis-

trict in the avenues in Salt Lake City. It was heavily Republican, and I lost. In 1952 I managed the campaign of Salt Lake City's mayor Earl J. Glade in his race for governor of Utah. His opponent was the conservative incumbent governor J. Bracken Lee. The timing of the campaign made it difficult, inasmuch as General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was extremely popular in Utah, was running for U.S. President. Harry Truman, who was winding up his almost eight years in the presidency, was disliked in Utah, even though historians now agree that he was one of our truly great presidents. The campaign was vigorous and, occasionally, even nasty. Finally, the Republicans came up with a slogan that was impossible to beat: "We have a good governor and a good mayor; let's keep both."

I decided to enter politics again in 1958, in spite of the mud with which I knew I would be pelted, because of certain political convictions which I had theretofore been unable to articulate. I felt, for example, that Utah remained tepid in its zeal to eliminate discrimination against blacks. Something needed to be done about it. I had always felt that racial discrimination was inconsistent with my understanding of Latter-day Saint morality. In fact, the Book of Mormon very specifically condemns it (2 Ne. 26:33). I also felt that the position of labor unions had never been fully explained and that the law should enable the dialogue between labor and management to take place on a more equal playing field. The protection of existing national parks, the creation of new parks, and the preservation of our environment were also burning issues. These and many other hot-button issues impelled me to reenter the political arena.

My first intention was to run for the Utah House of Representatives. My chances of winning were just so-so because we were living in a marginally Republican district. Just before I announced my intent, however, the Utah Democratic national committeeman, Calvin Rawlings, came to my office and suggested that I fix my sights, not on the state house, but on the U.S. House of Representatives. Wow! That had never entered my mind. It would be like jumping over a two-story building and, therefore, undertaking the impossible. However, as I thought about it during the few seconds I had to make up my mind, I realized that I wasn't young any more. I could feel the succeeding generation of my competitors breathing down the back of my neck. The way I was going, I wouldn't get anywhere; and I obviously needed to change my course. To put it bluntly, I saw politics as a shortcut to the means of accomplishing some of my societal, as well as my political, goals. I had spent many years in the general superintendency of

the MIA. Maybe it was now payback time. If I should decide to go for it, I was also determined to uphold my religious principles, even in the midst of what I knew would be a messy fight.

I also knew that I would encounter stiff competition both within the party and from William Dawson, the incumbent Republican congressman. There were two or three Democrats who had a better right to the nomination than I, based on their much stronger record of public service, plus their superior political skills. Moreover, they had more name recognition and had accumulated a stable of followers for whom they had done political favors and from whom they could expect allegiance and financial help. Money, as everyone knows, is the fuel that keeps the political machine operating. For me, these valuable political assets were almost totally lacking. I had no stable of political supporters, no promises of financial aid, no record of political performance, and no flaming issues with which my name was associated. However, I had acquired some name recognition through my MIA activities, particularly in connection with the YMMIA June conferences. On those occasions, I would stand in line greeting and shaking hands with at least two thousand MIA workers. I had gone through that routine eight times.

Later, I had reason to believe that this suggestion from Mr. Rawlings, which actually bore the cachet of semi-official approval by the Democratic high command, was being made to me because they felt that the timing was not right for the Democrats to run their fastest horse in the 1958 race. He was sure to be beaten. The right year for the race would be 1960, when the nation would turn from Eisenhower's conservatism to someone a little more exciting—it happened to be John F. Kennedy. The prize Utah Democratic horses could be kept in the stables until then, at which time they could be trotted out, and the fastest one selected to run against the Republican incumbent. Apparently these more eligible Democrats didn't object to this arrangement as they did not want to spoil their record by running a losing race in 1958. In the meantime, the party needed a sacrificial lamb who could fly the party banner in 1958 with respectability. If the sacrificial lamb should win by some miracle, then so much the better. The Republican incumbent, William Dawson, had a good record and was well liked. President Eisenhower still had another two years in office. Secretary Benson would, of course, lend his support to Dawson; this I knew. These seemed daunting obstacles.

Nonetheless, my answer to Mr. Rawlings was "Yes." I saw the brass

ring and grabbed it. It probably would never come again. His visit changed my life forever, as well as those of all my posterity. In retrospect I have wondered what would have happened if I had been out to lunch when the fairy princess came to tap me on the shoulder with her golden wand. I assume that she had other names on her list of prospective "sacrificial lambs." They come cheap.

So that is how I received the Democratic nomination by default. The campaign against Dawson was difficult, and at times unpleasant, but not because of any particular act of Mr. Dawson. He was a decent gentleman. The dirty work was left up to others. Since my political organization was jerry-built and my funds meager, I had to depend at the outset on the cheapest of all campaign techniques: public appearances in parades, ethnic picnics, public gatherings, and lots of handshaking. But these devices aren't worth much unless they are also coordinated with the press, with the understanding that the latter will print stories playing up the theme that the candidate is "taking his message directly to the people." This type of article, if you can get enough of them, has great value. Its photo opportunities are pure gold.

I found that a candidate can shake only about 800 hands a day, nonstop, if accompanied by a smile, a brief greeting, and a piece of campaign literature. Paradoxically, candidates who are "taking their message directly to the people" cannot afford to actually discuss their message with the "people." If they do, they'll get into nasty arguments, which they will probably lose, and will use up precious time which could otherwise be spent shaking hands with fifty other prospective voters.

If candidates move too fast, it is demeaning to the voter. If they're too slow, they lose precious time. Also, to meet even 800 voters per day requires working in areas of maximum population concentration, such as large stores and supermarkets. Even under the best of circumstances, a candidate running in a large congressional district and devoting one-fourth of his or her time to hand-shaking, can only hope to shake hands with less than 1 percent of those registered voters who actually vote. Democrats shaking hands in heavily Republican section of their districts will do themselves more harm than good. For every apathetic voter they convert to their cause, they will stimulate five other voters to get out and vote—but for the wrong candidate. In off-year elections, fewer than one registered voter in four actually votes unless pressured to do so. Democratic candidates do better, therefore, to spend all their time in Demo-

cratic areas within their district. These are hard lessons that can only be learned from experience.

When the votes were finally counted, I had won by a margin of about 600 votes. That would represent considerably less than 1 percent of the votes cast. The Democratic National Committee immediately placed my name in the "endangered species" category.

The day following the election my opponent called on me. He was very cordial and said, in effect: "Dave, I want to congratulate you on your victory. I wasn't expecting to lose. The Republicans figured that there would be a Democratic revolt against Eisenhower, originating in California and reaching Utah in 1960. But it reached us before we expected, and so, obviously, our timing was bad. Just recently we bought a house in Kensington, Maryland. We were to have moved into it, but now we can't." At this point I held back some tears. "We were wondering whether you might like to take it off our hands. It was just built and has never been lived in." To make a long story short, we took the house, and forty-five years later we are still living in it.

Val: Were you not in the Congress during the John F. Kennedy years?

David: Yes. Since I was elected in 1958, that meant that I first served during the last two years of President Eisenhower's presidency. In 1960 I was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles which nominated John F. Kennedy, whom I supported. I was reelected in 1960, which meant that I also served during the first two years of the Kennedy administration. In 1962 I ran for the U.S. Senate against the incumbent, Wallace Bennett. At the very end of a very difficult campaign, we had arranged for President Kennedy to fly to Salt Lake, at which time he would meet with Church President David O. McKay. A rally and parade would be held in Kennedy's honor, and he would speak in the Tabernacle and say some good things about my candidacy for the Senate. Things were all set for this climactic event, including excellent press coverage. Two days prior to the big event, which was to virtually sew up my victory, the White House phoned to call the whole thing off. Later we learned that it was canceled because of the Cuban missile crisis! When the votes were counted, I lost to Senator Bennett by a margin of defeat that was narrow enough to lead me to believe that if Nikita Khrushchev had not decided to install a nuclear missile launching pad in Cuba, I would have been elected to the U.S. Senate.

After my defeat, I immediately returned to Utah with my family and started my 1964 campaign for the congressional seat which I had just vacated in order to run for the Senate. Fortunately for me, Sherman P. Lloyd, who had won that seat back in 1962 did in 1964 exactly what I had done in 1962—that is, he ran for the Senate. He lost his bid for the Senate while I won back my old House seat. So I served in the House during 1965 and 1966 when President Lyndon B. Johnson was in the White House. I had the privilege of supporting most of his "Great Society" program, including Medicare, civil rights legislation, and a host of other historic legislative enactments that made the 89th Congress the most productive in the nation's modern history, with the exception of Roosevelt's 72nd "New Deal" Congress.

During my third term, I twice traveled to Vietnam to view first-hand the progress, or lack thereof, of our dismal war there—the war that produced the first military defeat in our history. Perhaps we had it coming for having caused the suffering and loss of so much life, which was inexcusable and unnecessary. Lyndon Johnson could easily have been ranked among America's greatest presidents, but he squandered his political capital by stubbornly pursuing the Vietnam War. Today you hardly ever hear his name mentioned.

In 1966 I ran again for my house seat and was defeated by my old friend Sherman P. Lloyd, who was doing exactly as I had done two years before. Shortly thereafter I was appointed U.S. Ambassador to the Malagasy Republic (Madagascar) and later to Mauritius. I have reason to believe that my qualifications for this appointment were my fluency in French, my legislative and legal background, my sobriety—my predecessor had caused the embassy some problems—and my personal friendship with President Johnson.

Val: Let me ask whether your father, who was a pillar of the Democratic Party in Utah, influenced you to become a Democrat?

David: Probably, but that answer doesn't tell the whole story. I also had reasons of my own. I felt that the Democratic Party generally represented the interests of those who were still struggling to get ahead, as opposed to those who were already prosperous. For that reason, I felt that supporting it came closer to doing what I felt was my Christian obligation to help those in need. And by the way, in retrospect, history will record that from 1933 until the present day, the overwhelming majority of all political innovations that have since become integrated into the very fabric

of our political and social structure, such as Medicare, social security, and civil rights legislation, were initiated by Democrats. These were historic achievements, most of which have subsequently been accepted by the Republicans. This seems to vindicate my decision to become a Democrat, even without my father's influence. I chose to become proactive rather than reactive.

As an interesting footnote, I might add that my father made it one of his crusades to champion the cause of the politically oppressed. This was liberalism, vintage 1910–40. Woodrow Wilson, who championed the League of Nations and freedom from German imperialism, became the liberals' file leader even after his passing. For my father, Jefferson, rather than Washington or Lincoln, was the greatest American president. States rights was still the flaming issue during his day.

My father worked hard promoting Armenian independence from Turkey and became one of their heroes. He worked equally hard for independence for the Philippines. He also worked to withdraw the U.S. Marines from Haiti, whose presence there had become burdensome and humiliating. He favored Zionism for the Jews and denounced Hitler. He had kind words for others aspiring to freedom from oppression like the Greeks, the Native Americans, the Puerto Ricans, and many others. However, for African Americans the story was a little different.

Ironically, notwithstanding my father's liberalism, he would be considered a racist by today's standards. It is not that he treated the blacks badly or wished to deprive them of their rights. It is just that he treated them, socially speaking, like children. The life of the famous Dr. Albert Schweitzer involved a similar irony. Although this world-class Good Samaritan spent fifty years of his remarkable life in bringing medical assistance to the Africans at great personal sacrifice and risk, he refused to eat with them at the same table. Though world-renowned as the consummate black benefactor, in later life he became an embarrassment to the government of black Gabon where he lived.

In my father's case, the reasons for his patronizing attitude are not difficult to understand. Those states which had constituted the southern Confederacy voted solidly Democratic in the national elections. The non-southern Democrats were in the minority, nationally, and found it absolutely necessary to form an alliance of sorts with their southern brethren if they were to have any chance whatsoever in the national presidential

sweepstakes. Even then they fared poorly, electing only one president in more than fifty years.

It followed that the non-southern Democrats were forced to empathize with their southern colleagues' cultural eccentricities. In this light, my father's reactions were quite understandable. The great day of political deliverance for the American blacks wouldn't come for another twenty-five years. I was honored to be part of it by supporting all the civil rights legislation which was part of President Johnson's Great Society Program. Had my father been in Congress at that time, his liberal spirit, I am convinced, would have led him to do likewise.

Val: What about the issue of women's rights?

David: I have always taken the position that women should not be discriminated against in any respect. Husband and wife are equal before the Lord. Neither should dominate the other. Chauvinism is despicable in any form. The proposed equal rights amendment was not before the Congress when I was there, so I was not involved. The legal problem which it presented, however, which made it so objectionable, was that the specific application of the abstract principle of the equality of the sexes to specific situations created so many ambiguities as to make the proposition unworkable, and therefore unacceptable.

For example: Could women reporters be allowed by law to enter men's locker rooms or men's lavatories? Would universities be forced by law, and contrary to their high moral code, to sanction coed dormitories and shower rooms? Would the Boy Scouts be forced by law to admit girls, and the Girl Scouts to admit boys? Could the Catholic clergy be forced by law to ordain female priests? In fact, could *any* organization structured on the basic premise that there is a difference between the sexes be allowed to exist? Should laws enacted for the *protection* of women be outlawed?

Attorneys would grow fat handling the thousands of cases that would explore the endless ramifications of this proposed amendment, some of them leading to disgraceful practices. There are deep moral, as well as legal, questions involved. I think that the common sense of the great majority of the American citizens recognized that the proposed amendment would be impossible to rationally administer. What constitutes its basic flaw is that it proceeded on the premise that there is no difference between the sexes. Any parent who has at least one of each knows very well that there *is* a difference. *Vive la différence!*

Val: At the time you were practicing law and were involved in politics

and in rearing eight children, you must have faced great difficulties in meeting your financial obligations and reconciling your religious beliefs and practices with the rough realities of the brutal world of politics with all its contradictions and impossible predicaments. What specific challenges did you face while you were trying to comport yourself consistently with Church standards in your private, professional, and political life?

David: As a congressman, my striving to uphold the standards of my faith in my personal conduct didn't give me a particularly bad time, inasmuch as I represented a constituency whose overwhelmingly dominant religious influence was Latter-day Saint. Nonetheless, I did encounter difficulties in my political life in deciding which political course to follow. But that had little to do with my religious views. Most of my constituents were basically fair-minded and generous people. But in a free society, there is something contradictory about the way human beings act in certain situations. When kind, generous people find themselves in an adversarial situation where economic survival or personal ambition is at stake, they become very competitive and play hard to win. Self-interest seems to trump everything else. If I had had a thousand dollar reward reserved for the first person who lobbied me in favor of a bill that was clearly against his *own* self interest, but favorable to the best *national* interest, out of the hundreds of suppliants who came to my office, not one of them could have qualified to receive the reward.

On the day following my first election to Congress, I met a good friend on the street. Said he: "Congratulations, Brother King. And now that you are elected, I hope you will forget politics and do the right thing." I knew exactly what he had in mind, and I gave him the answer I knew he wanted to hear: "Thank you, Brother So-and-so. You can be assured that I shall do my best to forget politics and do the right thing." I may have fudged a little in my reference to "politics," but I didn't have time to explain to him how our political system works. And with the answer I gave him, my conscience didn't bother me.

The irony in my friend's statement was that when he told me to do what is "right," what he really meant was to "do what is right for *me*." I do him no discredit in saying this, nor do I betray any cynicism on my own part. This man was a very honorable gentleman. I am only saying what many years in public life taught me about the way the human mind works. In political and public life, the law of self-interest predominates. If congressional representatives look for a textbook providing the guidelines

that they need to distinguish between a "right" vote and a "wrong" vote, they won't find it, because it doesn't exist. The usual procedure for congressmen and congresswomen is to cast their vote according to the desires of those who will give them the strongest support in the next election. Ordinarily they will constitute the majority. And that isn't a bad a thing, either, for that is exactly how democracy is supposed to work. A representative is supposed to "represent." But representatives cannot represent everyone, since many of their constituents have opposite points of view. So, they will have to settle on representing the position of those whom they feel embody the dominant consensus in their districts.

But it's not quite that simple either, because that approach fails to take into consideration the rights and wishes of the minority. They, too, must at least be considered and respected, even if not agreed with. The generally accepted characterization of a democracy is a government where "every man and woman is given the right to vote, and where the will of the majority prevails." But this could also be a recipe for tyranny—the tyranny of the majority over the minority. Democracies can become instruments of tyranny. Witness the fact that Adolf Hitler, history's most diabolical tyrant, became German chancellor (read: absolute dictator) by the eventual approval of the German people. Many other principles must also be present to make democracy work—including universal suffrage, the "equal protection of the laws" clause, and the "due process of law" clause of our own Constitution. So all these considerations must be mulled over by the conflicted congressman or congresswoman before deciding which is the "right" vote to cast.

Now we come to the much-maligned two-party system with all its faults. It is also one of the most indispensable elements enabling a democracy to work. We recall Winston Churchill's famous commentary on democracy, which, he said, is "the worst political system in the world, except for every other system." Ditto for the two-party system. The virtue of having two parties is that the public knows exactly where to pinpoint responsibility: that is, on the party in power. When things go well, the voters know who gets the credit. When things go poorly, they know exactly where to go to "throw the rascals out." The party in power is referred to as the "point with pride" party. The other one is the "view with alarm" party. American democracy has worked this way for many years, representing the way we do things.

Admittedly, the morality of American politics is not sugar-sweet. But

this much can be said for it: When the party on stage knows that there is another party in the wings—ready, willing, and able to step in and take over at any moment of time—that realization has a profoundly chastening and cleansing effect on the party in power, from which the public benefits. A strong Republican Party is the best thing in the world to keep the Democrats pure, and vice versa. Political contests can be mean, but a gladiatorial combat between two mighty organizations provides the best system for keeping each of them strong and healthy. Decadence is the ultimate destiny of every one-party government.

Let's be honest. There are some things that the Democrats just can't say. They prefer leaving it up to the Republicans, and vice versa. If you, as governor, appoint one of your loyal supporters to a position of trust and then find out that he is involved in a nasty scandal, you will be very happy indeed to let your opponents do the dirty work.

The point of this discussion is that the ideal arrangement is for the political game to be played by two competent parties. We have had a flirtation with third-party presidential candidates, such as Theodore Roosevelt, Strom Thurmond, and Ross Perrot, but they have never gotten very far. We just aren't politically attuned to the idea of a third party and likely never will be.

Under our system, it is true that both parties expect their respective congressional represenatives to support the party platform. As with an army, there is strength in unity. However, both parties understand that congressional representatives must also be true to certain principles on which they campaigned but which may be contrary to the party line. The party high command will look the other way, since it would rather have a congressional representative who will vote with his or her party 90 percent of the time and get reelected than vote with the party 100 percent of the time and get defeated. Having said that, however, the fact still remains that when representatives stray from the party fold too often, their influence in the party weakens, and they become less able to bring back the political goodies which can secure their reelection.

Thus, congressional representatives, in planning their agenda, will not forget those things, regardless of their rhetoric back home about high moral principles. Reelection depends on bringing home "the bacon" to the constituents, even though that bacon may be pure pork. To quote House Speaker Tip O'Neill: "All politics are local." This is why, even though constituents make much of wanting their representatives to "vote

their principles," they continue to support the incumbent if he or she brings them back the goodies they think they deserve. This may sound a little crass, but it is generally how the system works. This explains a paradox. Surveys show that the overwhelming number of voters feel that most lawmakers have low ethical standards and that many are corrupt and cannot be trusted. Yet the same surveys also reveal that an overwhelming number of incumbent candidates are reelected time after time. This shows that, although most people imagine themselves to be honest and wish for honesty in their elected officials, when they enter the voting booth they vote their pocketbook and are quite happy to leave the high morality up to somebody else's congressional representative.

This raises an intriguing question for congressional representatives to ponder: Whom do they represent? To whom are they accountable: the entire United States? their congressional district? their supporters? their party? the present generation? the future generation? the worthy? the unworthy? the needy? the defenseless? To give "all of the above" as an answer to the above multiple question gets representatives nowhere since the needs and desires of those falling into the above categories are so diverse, conflicting, and overlapping that acceding to the desires of one will certainly incur the wrath of one or more of the others. Sometimes, at the end of a tumultuous day, representatives finds themselves wondering what fit of insanity made them want to get into politics in the first place.

However, in the midst of this ambiguity from trying to define a congressional representative's responsibility, I want to emphasize that political morality in the halls of Congress is not dead. The spirit of Daniel Webster ("I would rather be right than be president") lives on in the hearts of many congressmen, congresswomen, and senators, who have gone down to glorious but unheralded defeat rather than sacrifice their moral convictions. There are heroes in the halls of Congress, just as there are on the fields of battle. We all understand, of course, that lawmakers are human beings and are driven by the same instincts for survival as anyone else. Naturally they want to get themselves elected or reelected. They have staked their professional future on their success at the polls and, in doing so, have often burned their bridges behind them. And yet I have seen congressional representatives cast votes which I knew were against their own political best interest. It would exact a penalty from them.

Although not many issues coming before the Congress actually call for this kind of moral theatrics, there are some that do; and more than

one congressman or congresswoman has crashed to political death or oblivion in defending what he or she thought was the only moral choice that he or she would feel comfortable in making. In my own case, I can truthfully say that I never cast a vote which I felt violated my moral code, though some of them were unpopular. Whether they contributed to my two defeats I don't know, but I doubt it. There were many other political considerations that played a role.

Val: Clearly then, you assert that in politics a certain amount of compromise is both essential and justified?

David: Of course. Compromise is what democracy is all about. Unfortunately the word *compromise* has unjustifiably taken on an odious connotation. It is true that there are some principles that are so sacred that no compromise is justified, as I discussed earlier. But as far as most of the day-to-day legislation is concerned, situations of this kind seldom arise. So my answer to your question is: Of course, representatives and senators have to compromise every day of their lives. How else can they equitably spread out both the rewards and burdens of the government of a nation of 285 million people unless they are ready to both give and take? In a democracy, the lawmakers frequently find themselves doing things that they wish they didn't have to do. Democracy is an imperfect system. It has to be because it is made up of imperfect people. It does not assume that people are angels. It assumes that they are exactly what they are: full of greedy self interest, as well as noble altruism. Democracy allows these people, with all their moral contradictions, to live together in reasonable harmony, by requiring them to adjust both their noble and their selfish impulses according to the realities by which they are surrounded. This is compromise.

Picture in your mind a congressman who is very anxious to get a bill passed which favors his home district but which would negatively impact another congressional representative's district. An example of this would be the construction of a dam in one district that would impede the migration of salmon or the movement of ships in the adjacent district. So the two representatives must come together and work out a compromise that will make both of them reasonably, if not completely, satisfied.

Compromise played an enormous historic role in the birth of our great nation, as every student of our constitutional convention well knows. The Constitution turned out to be a "bundle of compromises, a tapestry of second choices," as one writer put it, not contemplated by the

delegates when they first assembled. The most historic compromise was between the large and small states, which was necessary to get their final support. There were many others. Without them there would have been no Constitution.

Val: While you were in Congress, did the LDS Church or its leaders give you their opinions on certain pending legislation or bring pressure on you to vote in a certain way?

David: As far as the Church was concerned, the answer is no. As far as the leaders of the Church are concerned, speaking their personal views, the answer is yes. Of course, they gave me their private opinions. But no, they did not bring inappropriate pressure to bear. They had the same right as anybody else to express their opinions, and I was glad to receive them. In fact, I went out of my way to solicit their opinions, as I did those of Monsignor Hunt, the Catholic bishop, and of other prominent clergymen in my district. It must be remembered, moreover, that my district had a great diversity of non-Latter-day Saint faith communities. I owed them exactly the same consideration that I did my own church.

It is true that a few LDS Church leaders had strong individual views on certain issues, as did the leaders of other faiths. The issue of the repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1965 was particularly contentious at that time. This act involved a measure that was designed to strengthen labor union membership to the point where unions could enjoy a more level playing field by making their strikes more effective when bargaining with management over corporate practices they considered unfair. Those private interests that had had trouble with the unions took an anti-labor stance during the debate, doing what they could to discredit unions in general in the eyes of the public.

This downgrading of unions was intensified by the false accusation that most of the labor unions in America were Communist-oriented. First, what the anti-union interests did not seem to understand was that when the Soviet Union took control of a nation, the first thing it did was to abolish labor unions. The Communists hated them. Second, the presence of an effective labor union, capable of meeting with management on an even playing field for the purpose of working out labor-management differences, made it unnecessary for the government to step in to avoid a destructive strike. This situation strengthened the private enterprise system by giving the government a lesser role to play. I knew that the unions regarded themselves as one of the bulwarks of the free enterprise system.

It is true that a few labor unions misbehaved themselves, but so did the CEOs and boards of directors of some of the biggest corporations in America. That didn't mean that all labor unions should be crippled, any more than that all large corporations should be punished.

I must make it clear, however, that at no time did the LDS Church or any other church tell me, officially, what position I should take on any issue. As I said before, I did receive letters from Church leaders from time to time, written in their individual capacity, discussing various public issues and indicating their preferences. I received comparable letters from leaders of other churches as well. I also received a number of letters from private individuals or corporations expressing strong opposition to labor unions in general. Some of these letters rode piggyback on the Church by suggesting that they were merely adopting the latter's position. I knew that this was incorrect, and I never considered these letters to be anything more than the private opinions of zealous, but misinformed, individuals exercising their constitutional right to express those opinions.

While in Congress I was surprised to receive several letters from Latter-day Saints scolding me for taking a position contrary to that expressed by some of the General Authorities, speaking in their private capacities. The opinions expressed in these letters seemed to me so obviously erroneous that to belabor the point any further would seem to be raising a straw man only for the purpose of destroying it. But inasmuch as this erroneous opinion was somewhat prevalent, I believe it now appropriate to elaborate a little further.

The Constitution of the United States, which the Latter-day Saints believe was composed by inspired men, provides, in its first amendment, that "Congress shall make no law respecting freedom of speech." Translated, this means that all people shall have the right to speak as they please and, by inference, to think as they please. The reasoning of the founding fathers was that, if society allowed complete freedom in the marketplace of ideas as well as in the marketplace of commodities, eventually the good ideas would rise to the top, and the bad ones would sink to the bottom and eventually disappear. This position assumed, of course, that the public would be well informed. To ensure that they were, this same article in the Constitution also protected freedom of the press, so that good ideas, even though disagreeing with each other, might circulate freely. This openness would ensure a healthy intellectual climate in which the nation could grow and prosper. I believe it not unreasonable to conclude that the

amazing fertility of ideas for which America is renowned has been made possible, among other things, by the complete freedom of speech and press which we have always so zealously protected.

The question therefore is whether that same principle applies when a General Authority speaks as a private individual. In such a case, are we still allowed to think for ourselves or has his pronouncement preempted all further creative thinking? We acknowledge the inspiration of the words: "What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken . . . and my word shall not pass away, but shall be fulfilled, whether by my mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38). I accept that inspired men can become authorized to act as God's mouthpiece. But does every word spoken by a General Authority fall into that category? As I read my Church history, the Prophet Joseph Smith at no time interpreted that passage to mean that every word that dropped from his lips bore a divine imprimatur or that it was impossible for him to say anything that was less than eternally true. He seemed quite willing to admit that the principle of learning through trial and error applied to him as it did to others. There is something creative and spiritually stimulating in a free exchange of ideas, and the Prophet Joseph Smith well recognized this and frequently sought the counsel of others. I do not believe that the Lord wished for us, either, to be denied that dynamic experience.

When the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors spoke, or now speak, under the type of inspiration from God which forecloses further debate on a subject, that fact usually becomes evident. Otherwise we seem to be free to acknowledge that their words do not fall into that special category. The fact that the opinions of the General Authorities differ among themselves on a number of important subjects, and the fact that they are divided in their membership between our two major political parties, and the further fact that the Church has had both Republican and Democratic General Authorities elected to the U.S. Congress—for example, Republicans George Q. Cannon and Reed Smoot, and Democrat Brigham H. Roberts—and that they disagreed on various questions would seem to settle this issue once and for all.

Val: Were the General Authorities cordial to you after your election?

David: The General Authorities are caring, loving men. They were always cordial to me and offered me any appropriate assistance that they could give. I have already indicated that several of them expressed their views on public matters, in their own individual capacities, as did the lead-

ers of other churches. As I mentioned before, they certainly had every right—perhaps even the duty—to do so.

Val: Discuss a little further your relationship with Ezra Taft Benson.

David: My relationship with him was warm and friendly, almost affectionate. He ordained me a high priest and called me to serve on his high council. He performed the sealing ordinance for Rosalie and me, uniting us for time and all eternity. I admired his courage and supported him with enthusiasm in his calling as a prophet and as president of the Church. It is one of the ironies of my life that we differed in our political views, yet this difference did not affect our personal relationship.

President Benson, as Secretary of Agriculture in President Eisenhower's cabinet, was considered an arch-conservative. His thesis was that the generous farm subsidies which we were lavishing on the American farmers were excessive and counterproductive in that they encouraged overproduction. His ideas were only partially accepted and, from what I could see later, did not substantially change the direction of our agricultural policy. Last year Congress gave the American farmers a subsidy of about $17,000,000,000. Secretary Benson would have been incredulous.

I have a theory. It is just my own idea. I believe that what Brother Benson was trying to tell the nation was that there were just too many farmers, and that the marginal ones were redundant. This was because their total actual and potential agricultural production, due to their vastly increased acreage under cultivation and their unbelievable technical progress in agricultural production, had far outstripped the capacity of their markets (both foreign and domestic) to absorb it, thus depressing the price of agricultural commodities and making farming less profitable. But in politics, there are some things that will never happen; and recommending that our marginal farmers abandon their farms and swell the ranks of the unemployed is one of them. Secretary Benson well knew this. Though he may have been correct in his basic concept, yet many an economically sound principle has had to be sacrificed on the altar of political reality.

On one occasion, in the heat of one of my political campaigns, Secretary Benson lashed out with vehemence at the Democrats and at me, by inference, making serious accusations. I lashed back, pointing out that he had been speaking only in his individual capacity and that it might have been more appropriate for a high Church dignitary to re-

strain his partisanship. This response was the substance of a press release that I regretted having to issue, but the rules of the political game required it. One rule provides that if one side fires a broadside of damaging accusations at the other side, the latter is expected to answer. If it doesn't, the public is entitled to assume that the accusations are accepted as correct and that they may be used as ammunition throughout the rest of a campaign.

Val: You have already discussed the question whether members of the Church were required to agree with a General Authority when he expresses himself on a public matter, even in his capacity as a private citizen. Your answer was "No, they are not." But that raises a corollary question that merits discussion. How are we to tell when a General Authority is speaking under the influence of the Holy Ghost and when he is speaking in his individual capacity?

David: I am convinced beyond any doubt whatsoever that God has spoken, and does speak, through the mouths of his authorized servants and that, when he does, it is as though God himself were speaking. But how does one know, with absolute certainty, that it is God speaking through his servant, and not the servant speaking for himself? Many of the General Authorities have spoken to this subject and have said some wonderful things. Elder B. H. Roberts of the First Council of the Seventy was one of them. He made such a statement in a discourse in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, from which I take the liberty of quoting a small portion:

> "Whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, etc."
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> But it is not given to mortal man always to walk upon that plane where the sunlight of God's inspiration is playing upon him. Men may, by care and devotion and spiritual strength, rise sometimes to that high plane; may stand at times as on mountain tops, uncovered, in the presence of God, their spirit united with his Spirit, until the mind of God shall flow through them to bless those who hearken to their words: and there is no need that one shall rise up and say "This man was inspired of God," for all the people who receive of his ministrations know that by the effect of his spirit upon their spirits. But sometimes the servants of God stand upon planes infinitely lower than the one here described. Sometimes they speak merely from their human knowledge, influenced by passions; influenced by the interests of men, and by anger, and by vexation, and all those things that surge in upon the minds of even servants of God. When they so speak,

> then that is not Scripture, that is not the word of God, nor the power of God unto salvation.[1]

What Elder Roberts was saying is that God has given to each of us the power of discernment and that through prayer, righteous living, and intense spiritual effort, the truth of God's authentic revelations will be made known to us. The mistake we sometimes make in our quest for absolute certainty in theological matters is in downplaying the role which God has assigned to *us*. It's much easier to leave it all up to him. By doing this, however, we lessen the need for putting forth our own effort, and lessen or eliminate the so-called gray areas. Gray areas leave us a little uncomfortable since we would prefer having spiritual truths revealed to us in clearly defined colors.

By way of comment, however, I might suggest that maybe the Lord *wants* us to be a little uncomfortable. Spiritual discomfort has its good points and protects us from falling into spiritual lethargy. First, it motivates us to exercise the mighty faith which, as we learn in Moroni 10:4, is the necessary prelude to receiving a "witness" of the truth. Second, discomfort motivates us to penetrate deeper into God's revealed word and, by so doing, to expand our understanding of gospel principles. I daresay that many, if not most, of the very scholarly works that have recently come forth in overwhelming support of the Book of Mormon were motivated by the desire of faithful scholars to overcome the discomfort involved in understanding the meaning of some of the book's deeper and less obvious passages However, I must make it clear that any intellectual discomfort which we may experience relating to our ability to fully understand certain theological points has no bearing on our ability to reach a conviction regarding gospel fundamentals. As to them, Moroni 10:4, and other comparable scriptural passages, are clear in their meaning, and the Holy Ghost so testifies. They make it crystal clear that every person can receive an absolute witness of the truth of those principles which he or she must know for his own exaltation, and particularly the truth of the Book of Mormon.

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1. B. H. Roberts, *Defense of Faith and Saints* (Provo, Utah: Maasai Publishing, 2002), 665. He was speaking at a Sunday devotional service in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on March 19, 1911, following an address by Charles W. Penrose, an apostle.

The Church obviously recognizes that there is much room for creative thinking within the gospel framework established by the Lord. I see a rough parallel between the pattern established by the Lord for the governing of his kingdom and the pattern of lawmaking established by the inspired Constitution for governing the American people. Under the latter's provisions, the Congress of the United States sets forth the broad legislative framework for governing the nation but leaves it up to various governmental agencies to establish the rules and regulations implementing the congressional mandates. Similarly, the Lord has given us the broad gospel framework, unalterable by humankind, but has left it up to his chosen servants to use both their inspiration and their creativity to put these principles into application. It follows that the Church recognizes that there is ample room for individual thinking, which may even lead to disagreement among those who still faithfully hold on to the iron rod, which represents the word of God. I might add that the Church actually encourages a diversity of cultures and of thinking, especially in politics. By our supporting two strong political parties, a rational political balance is better achieved.

Val: You spoke about the moral dilemmas which confronted you as a congressman. Were there not similar dilemmas during your ambassadorship or during your mission presidency in Haiti?

David: The answer is yes in both instances. There is always a difficulty in moving from an affluent society to a moderately poverty-stricken one, such as Madagascar, or an agonizingly poverty-stricken one such as Haiti. The pain was not only in deciding what to do, but in actually doing what had been decided had to be done. In Haiti, there was scarcely a day when one or more pathetic individuals, obviously in real need, did not come to the door asking for help. When help was given to one, often the next day two of his friends would show up, and so on. Where does one draw the line? As a mission president, I was personally responsible for the moral and physical well-being of over a hundred young, red-blooded, active, homesick, love-starved missionaries laboring in a very strange and turbulent environment. The fact that elders were working within the proximity of some very lovely sister missionaries didn't make the task any easier. The miracle is that they did, for the most part, comport themselves entirely the way they should and made far more converts, per missionary, than were made in Great Britain when I was laboring there in 1937–39. To me this was evidence that God was very near to them and was blessing

their efforts. The fact that these missionaries could actually start preaching the gospel in the Haitian Creole language after a few weeks' training in the Missionary Training Center and three or four months of proselyting (remember that these young men and women were not linguists nor even, for the most part, college graduates) bespeaks the power of God which was blessing them most miraculously. I have no other explanation for their success. The task was not made any easier by the fact that Haiti suffered four *coups d'état* while we were there. One missionary was shot through the stomach but recovered. The miracle was that, with all the political disturbances, we suffered no fatalities out of 300 missionaries over a three-year period, and no permanent injuries.

My situation as ambassador in Madagascar was different. My staff consisted of mature, well-screened, usually married professionals whose careers were on the line. An unfavorable report from me could ruin them. Therefore, I had no disciplinary or moral problems. On the other hand, I was always laboring under the weight of a number of regulations from Washington which, if I violated, could ruin *me.* After closing hours each day, the security officer made the rounds, and woe unto any employee, including the ambassador, who left even one scrap of paper on top of his desk. The penalties were severe. In the foreign service, there was very little room for error.

I must add, however, that my experiences both as an ambassador and as a mission president were filled with excitement and with a wonderful sense of fulfillment. I do not regret for one minute the fact that I answered affirmatively when asked to serve in these two capacities. My wife was with me all the way, and I could never have succeeded without her constant help. I am old enough now to know the truth of the saying: "No pain, no gain." I have often said that pain is not to be regarded as an enemy to joy, but rather as a stepping stone, bearing us up to a higher level of appreciation for the immense joy that the Lord has reserved for those who have met their pain with fortitude.

Our experience in Haiti, in particular, brought with it the blessings of heaven; and we shall never cease thanking God for the privilege of serving there. Almost all of our missionaries showed an uncommon fortitude and devotion to duty. This was due to the powerful spirit which they embodied. These missionaries included a number of Haitians, plus others who came not only from the United States, but from Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain, France, Spain, Tahiti, and elsewhere.

Val: Please contrast your secular responsibilities as congressman or ambassador with your duties as president of the Washington D. C. Temple.

David: I will try. Both the secular and the ecclesiastical callings shared at least one thing in common. Both were carried out in large part with complete confidentiality. The operations of the foreign service are still carried out in secrecy, in spite of all the current talk about the need for public disclosure. This is for a very good reason.

Let us suppose you are an ambassador. Your job is to keep the Department of State completely informed on the condition of things in your host country. Now let us suppose that, based upon your personal observation and aided by your CIA undercover agents, you discover that the president of your host country is an alcoholic, a slob, and not to be trusted. You have secret channels through which that information must be communicated to its designee at the State Department. The magic words in your diplomatic correspondence in such cases are "eyes only." This ensures that no mortal person will read it on the way. If by some slip-up, your message is inadvertently leaked out within the embassy, then you can be certain that it will leak back to the victim of your unflattering evaluation. The effects of the stench that would ensue would alter the whole course of history, as far as that country is concerned. As I said before, there is very little room in the foreign service for error.

Now the confidentiality of much of the work in the temple is just as strictly enforced as the work of the ambassador, but for different reasons. Although some revelations from God are intended for the whole world to know, others are intended only for those engaged in sacred functions who have shown that they understand their sanctity. The reason for this is plain. The Lord has told us that certain ideas, principles, and procedures are sacred, just as certain places are sacred. To expose them to those who do not so understand would be comparable to allowing cattle to roam about inside a chapel, or, as the Savior said, like casting pearls before the swine. This is not because the Savior has anything against swine. It is because pearls are entitled to better treatment. If a different rule were adopted, the temple would become a tourist attraction and would become totally disqualified from performing its sacred functions.

The temple president is the administrator of the temple and presides over all that takes place there. His wife becomes the temple matron, without whose assistance the functioning of the temple would be impossible. In the case of my wife, Rosalie performed her functions and duties

with great vigor and competence. She specialized in scattering love and understanding among all the temple workers and particularly among those patrons receiving their own endowment.

The physical operation of the temple, including the recording of all ordinances, is the responsibility of the temple recorder, who answers to the president. A temple president deals for the most part with mature workers, unlike the president of a proselyting mission. These temple workers are wonderful people who have been refined and screened by time and experience. They have long ago come to terms with the reality that life is no bowl of cherries. Most of them have held responsible positions in the Church. Many have lost a spouse or a child or grandchild. Some have been deeply disappointed by misfortune but have put their disappointments behind them and are carrying on in faith and with remarkable courage. Some suffer physical afflictions. All of them are making a sacrifice—and in some cases, a great sacrifice.

Most of the people with whom I worked were deeply religious. Some of them had miraculous things happen while performing their sacred duties. In three years I estimated having had reported to me over 250. I am certain that there were many more of which I had no knowledge. When I talk about miracles, I am talking about occurrences outside the natural sequence of events, which must be attributed to the operation of God's power to override the known processes of nature. Temple miracles ordinarily occur where loved ones from beyond the veil make it known in miraculous ways that the work which engages us is true and that the day will come when loved ones will be reunited forever. These miracles are profoundly sacred. No one who experiences them can ever question the overruling power of God in directing human affairs. Specifically, the miracles reported consisted, ordinarily, in a strong feeling of the unseen presence of the deceased, or an audible voice, or even a visible presence. The unspoken message accompanying these manifestations was one of gratitude for the work being done.

No two of these miracles were exactly alike. In one case, an officiator saw the walls of the endowment room seemingly disappear and saw a large concourse of persons, numbering perhaps two thousand, seated before him, having come as though from beyond. They were attired in white and were silently observing the proceedings. In another case, a sister very clearly heard the strains of a heavenly choir. She said, "Never in my life have I ever heard anything as beautiful, or even dreamed that anything

could be so beautiful. I was so overcome that when the music ceased after a few minutes, I sobbed because I wanted it to continue."

In another case a lad of about fifteen, being baptized for his deceased grandfather, reported seeing him as the lad emerged from the water. They communicated vocally in the idiom with which they were both familiar, thus confirming the grandfather's identity. The lad was visibly moved, with tears trickling down his cheeks. As I think back about the event—and there were many more like it—I realize how improbable it would be for me to accept any explanation other than the obvious one which the lad himself offered, namely, that he had actually seen his grandfather. Could he have been faking or hallucinating? Not likely. It would take a trained thespian (which he was not) to cause tears to flow at will. Suffice it to say that I had the overwhelming impression that he was telling the truth and that he had been privileged to witness the power of God in a miraculous way. This conclusion was confirmed by the fact that this type of experience was repeated over and over again by a large number of other teenagers who told me the same kind of story.

In other cases I received reports of flashes of enlightenment or of answers to agonized prayers. In still other cases, the miracle consisted in perceiving heavenly beings or receiving messages from afar. These events were so deeply spiritual and so sacred that one is reluctant to speak of them lest the hearer esteem them lightly, and this I do not want to happen. I view them as God's desire that our faith be strengthened and purified by manifestations of his love for us and his desire that we continue this work on behalf of our departed dead until its final consummation.

Val: Were you skeptical or cynical when you first heard of these remarkable events? Did you expect to hear of them when you first assumed the presidency of the Washington DC Temple?

David: I have never seen myself as being either skeptical or cynical, but I'll admit that I have often been disappointed, and this has made me cautious. I have used my caution as a spark to ignite my resolution to dig deeper in my search for truth, and my search has brought forth rich rewards. I must also note that I myself am not a miracle-prone person. The kinds of miracles we are speaking of here are not for everybody. My testimony of them is based on what others have told me. My miracles do come to me, but internally and powerfully. At times I sense God's very presence and feel myself enveloped in the power of his love. This is a very real experience to me, and it is what keeps my faith incandescent. When I became

temple president, I had heard of these temple-miracles and was very curious to see to what extent I would be a witness to them. I must say that their profusion greatly exceeded my expectations.

Hearing these miracles reported to me was so moving as to bring tears into my eyes. These experiences clothed the following words in the Doctrine and Covenants with greater meaning: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Ponder these things in your hearts, and let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your mind" (D&C 43:34).

I have always been driven by a strong sense of curiosity and an unwillingness to accept the expression of shallow generalities without first giving them serious reflection. Some readers may identify themselves with me on this point, and some may not, but we must recognize that we are all poured into different molds. It is this attitude that led me to do the research resulting in my publishing *Come to the House of the Lord,* a book on the glories of the temple. Yet I fully recognize the limits of scholarly research and the consequent importance of faith. Faith is the willingness to accept the fact that human wisdom can go only so far and that, beyond that, faith must take over. Faith is the bridge connecting the known to the unknown. Persons who use it will discover vast areas of intellectual pursuit opened to them which will be closed to those who stubbornly refuse to go beyond what can be proven with mathematical certainty.

Continuing our discussion of miracles, it is interesting to note that, as I have said, not all good people receive them, and it is no reflection on their righteousness if they do not. Apparently some are more miracle-prone than others. Doctrine and Covenants 46:21-26 implies this. The Prophet Joseph Smith's father and Heber C. Kimball and many other early leaders of the Church received miracles even before they were members of the Church, but many did not. Johannes Brahms claimed that his compositions were miraculously inspired by God himself. In fact, he claimed as much for all great music, as opposed to purely "cerebral" music, which was not.

So what can we conclude about miracles? We know that they do occur, that they are manifestations of God's power operating beyond the known processes of nature, that some people are more miracle-prone than others, that God's true church will always experience them, that they may come to the unworthy as well as the worthy, that even Satan can perform them, that they are given mostly to the righteous for various purposes including the building of faith and the confirmation of the power of God.

There is so much about miracles that we do not understand! In fact, that is what makes them miraculous.

Our search for answers to these and other questions inevitably finds us butting our heads against a brick wall. But why should we suppose that God has given, or should give, answers to every question that we could possibly ask and that he should do it right now? If this supposition leaves us dissatisfied, we should turn to the Doctrine and Covenants. What it says in effect is: "Just have a little patience, please. It was never my intention to answer all your questions all at once. The day will come, upon my return, when all your questions *will* be answered, and you will then comprehend the fullness of my glory" (D&C 101:32–34; see also 2 Ne. 27:8–11).

But while we are waiting for all these answers to come, we need not be idle. We can spend our entire lifetime in carefully and prayerfully studying the material that God has already given us, which, we are told, exceeds that which has been given to any previous generation since the beginning of human history (D&C 124:41).

It is true that questions arise from the fact that the present-day pattern for the performance of miracles is quite different from what it was a hundred and fifty years ago. Then we read of spectacular events that today make us gasp, such as speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues, the appearance of cloven tongues of fire, the sounding forth of prophetic utterances, the appearance of angels, and so forth. In the setting of the times, these spectacular events seemed more natural. But we must not conclude that, even then, miracles were automatic or commonplace. When they did occur, they were of special note. There were many times, even in the 1830s and '40s, when the sick were not healed and prayed-for miracles did not occur. God was testing their faith then as he tests ours today.

Miracles do occur today, however, and most members have their own stories to tell of miraculous answers to prayer, particularly those having to do with healing, and, of course, with the innumerable temple miracles of which I have spoken. It is to be remembered that the Lord characterized apostate Christianity as "denying the power thereof" (i.e., of godliness). But the fact still remains that things are a little different today from what they were a hundred and fifty years ago. I myself have never spoken in tongues nor seen cloven tongues of fire. This is not at all surprising. In the early days, the Lord may have needed to "jump-start" the Church by

the use of these spectacular occurrences, even as he did in the early days of Christianity as revealed in the book of Acts. But that is not our need today. The Church is strong and needs *sustaining* power rather than *starting* power.

The Book of Mormon makes clear that the true Church of Christ will always have miracles (Moro. 7:27, 37) and, as pointed out, those miracles do exist in profusion today in Christ's true church restored to the earth in the latter days. It is also true that the occurrence of miracles is associated with the exercise of faith, today as in days of old.

Val: In the light of your university training, as well as your unique world experience, what is the foundation or bedrock of your religious faith?

David: I am pleased to respond to that question. The history and teachings of the Church are viewed and interpreted with slightly different emphases by different members. For example, the late Henry Eyring, perhaps the greatest scientist the Church has produced and the father of Apostle Henry B. Eyring, did not see eye to eye with President Joseph Fielding Smith on a number of issues, yet both men were rock-solid in their faith in gospel fundamentals. In fact, Brother Eyring wrote a book recounting the interesting discussions he had with President Smith regarding these issues.[2]

It seems to me that, notwithstanding the diversity of thinking within the Church, all those who profess to have a testimony of the truth of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ must accept certain core beliefs upon which there can be no diversity of opinion. I cannot list them all, but they would include a belief in the truths declared in the thirteen Articles of Faith, which include an affirmation of the existence of God, our eternal Father, and in the atoning sacrifice of his Son Jesus Christ. In addition, they would also include a belief that Joseph Smith was personally commissioned by God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ to be the instrument for restoring the fullness of the gospel, in the manner recounted by him as it appears in the Pearl of Great Price. They would also include the belief that the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God and that it is a true revelation of God's will. This book solemnly confirms that Jesus came to the earth, both in Judea and on the American

2. Henry B. Eyring, *The Faith of a Scientist* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967).

continent, and offered himself up in expiation for the sins of humankind. It is also necessary for the believer to affirm that Joseph Smith and his associates received a restoration of the priesthood and the power and authority to administer the ordinances of exaltation, both for the living and for the dead. These are principles I accepted long ago, and none of my later experiences or additional knowledge have caused me to change my position.

Val: Tell me more about your efforts to fortify your spiritual life from the buffeting of academic secularism.

David: The most important lesson I learned as an undergraduate at the University of Utah was that spiritual growth was analogous to physical and mental growth in this respect: All three require effort. I discovered this when I noted some of my classmates growing apathetic in their faith. The results of the scenario they were following were very easy for me to see. Their routine consisted in spending twenty or thirty hours a week sweating over their homework dealing with secular subjects, and forty-five minutes a week in Sunday School, listening to an untrained teacher deal with spiritual topics, but demanding absolutely nothing from his class members. These students were lavishing nourishment and tender loving care on their tree of secular learning but were giving absolutely nothing at all to the growth of their gospel tree. Later I discovered that Alma had said exactly the same thing, but in a much more articulate way (Alma 32). However, I was pleased that I was able to figure this out for myself.

What I mean by investing effort in spiritual growth can be demonstrated by my experience with the Book of Mormon. The first time I read this great book from cover to cover, I tried to satisfy the conditions of Moroni 10:4. As I approached the end, I was expecting God to give me some spectacular manifestation of the book's truth. When I reached the book's last page, I don't know exactly what I was expecting. Perhaps it was a voice from heaven, or cloven tongues of fire. But, whatever it was, it didn't happen. No voice from heaven and no tongues of fire. I was disappointed. But I felt that the book had at least made a *prima facie* case for its truth. Over the years, I have since read the book a number of times, and certain passages probably a hundred times. It is a bottomless well of information and spiritual insights. I have become absolutely convinced of its truth, and I can now say unequivocally that I know it to be the word of God. But this conviction came after a lot of prayer and spiritual effort.

Val: Suppose that I were a son or nephew of yours, and therefore one

whose spiritual welfare was of deep concern to you. Suppose, further, that I had been raised in a good LDS family, but that, having reached maturity, I was having some trouble believing all that I had been taught. What would be your response?

David: You are now asking me to entangle myself in the age-old debate between theists (pro-God) and atheists (no-God). It should be added that LDS theology enriches this debate by adding fresh evidence in defense of the pro-God position but complicates it by adding a theology which finds itself at odds with other defenders of the pro-God position. Our young friend's position, theoretically, can either be one of believing that there is no God, or of believing in God but rejecting Mormonism, or of believing in Mormonism. My guess is that he is so bewildered that he doesn't know what his position really is except that he has heard a lot of stuff that is hard for him to believe.

My first statement to him would be, "Hang in there, buddy," and I don't say this as a pleasantry. I have found that time, if you give it a chance, can bring with it a lot of answers and that, in the meantime, you have to stay the course and let time work its magic. I would emphasize to my young friend that he must take his spiritual quest seriously and be prepared to put forth the spiritual effort which this quest requires. This means real prayer in which one approaches his Heavenly Father as a penitent transgressor, stripped of all pride and self-conceit, and pleads for forgiveness and enlightenment. It means that my young friend must earnestly search the scriptures for answers. Now, it is true that there are historical examples of testimonies that did burst forth almost instantaneously, often following a miracle, and that we are free to accept these as manifestations of the glory of God. But that isn't always the way things happen. I think the material we previously discussed on temple miracles may be helpful in building faith. It is hard for me to believe that anyone could seriously consider these marvels that occur in the temples of the Lord and fail to be impressed that these are powerful forces at work, beyond human power to explain.

But God has not promised that these super-dramatic experiences will come to everyone. On the contrary, the situation described in Alma 32 seems to be more typical. There we are told that reaching an absolute knowledge of divine truth may first require a lot of effort, prayer, and faith. Many people never associate the word *effort* with obtaining a testimony. They are captivated by the idea of a "push-button testimony"

which, they assume, will remain with them forever, and without giving the matter any further thought. But that isn't the way it is. Miracles may play an important part in a conversion; but the staying power and the enlargement of that testimony can only come through following the steps so clearly outlined in the scriptures, and particularly in Alma. The sure way may be long and arduous but the Lord has made a promise that the prize is there, waiting for the one who can "endure to the end."

I should say a particular word about the Book of Mormon. If we become convinced that it was translated from the original plates by the gift and power of God, then everything else falls into place. If we approach the Book of Mormon determined to disprove it, we will no doubt find something to support our view. But if we approach it with an open mind, ready to be taught by the spirit of the Lord, we will find a veritable cascade of evidence to support its authenticity. Once again, it will involve to some extent an exercise of faith. The Lord could have made it very easy by providing us with a Central American Rosetta Stone or some other incontestably identifiable artifact to remove any possible doubt as to the book's divine origin. Its truth could have been established as simply as "two plus two equals four." But that's not the way it is. As already pointed out, the Lord wants us to work for what we get, even in regard to spiritual things; and by doing so, we will receive our answer. He wants us to exercise both our faith and our intellect in our quest for a testimony of the Book of Mormon's truth, and I can testify that by doing so, any fair-minded person will find what he or she is looking for.

Let me elaborate a little on the question of why the Lord doesn't give us all the answers we want. First, if the Lord tried to lift us up to his level of thinking, I am certain that we could not understand what he was telling us. After all, the intelligence of the One who conceived this universe, with all its unbelievably gargantuan dimensions and complexities, is pursuing a trajectory totally beyond the capacity of the human mind to comprehend. Although the present generation has received more truth than any previous generation (D&C 124:41), why should we conclude that there is no more to come? Thus, the Lord has his own timetable. The divulging of information has followed an evolutionary course, building one revelation upon another, and presumably will continue to do so. Then again, along with knowledge comes responsibility. We have been frequently told that unto whom much is given, much is required (D&C 82:3). In 2 Peter 2:20-21, we are told that if a person receives the fullness of the truth and

then turns away from it, it would have been better for him not to have received it in the first place. Perhaps the Lord, knowing our capacities and our limitations even better than we do, is doing us a favor by withholding from us knowledge which we are not yet ready to receive.

As I said, we have been told that in the due time of the Lord, all our questions will be answered. In the meantime we need to learn patience. So, my answer to my young friend who is having difficulties with his understanding of the gospel is to keep on searching and to have patience in the process.

Let me say a few words about the sacred calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Lately it has become popular among the Church's critics to emphasize the Prophet's fallibility. This approach seems to proceed on the theory that a prophet of God does not make mistakes. Let me make it clear that we are talking here about the kind of mistakes everyone makes while going through a learning process, but not about moral transgressions. There is a difference. As I have stated previously, "trial and error" is the most effective teaching device known to humanity. We learn by our mistakes, and there is no reason why Joseph Smith should have been deprived of that learning experience. In fact, the evidence is very clear from the Doctrine and Covenants that he did learn from his mistakes and that he did not repeat them.

But the point is not whether he made mistakes. If we insist that the performance bar for a prophet requires that he never make a mistake—not even an innocent one—then we have disqualified every member of the human race, save the Savior himself. My wife and I, while visiting Florence, Italy, were privileged to see Michelangelo's famous sculpture of David. It stands almost eighteen feet high and is truly a wonder to behold. How a man was able to chisel that marvelous reproduction of a human being, with only a mallet and chisel, out of an ungainly piece of cold Carrara marble is beyond understanding. Yet, as the docent observed, the statue is not perfect. Its hands and feet and even its head, are disproportionately large. Yet the statue stands as one of the half dozen most remarkable pieces of sculpture in the world, not because of the absence of its defects, but because of the presence of its indescribable majesty and beauty. And so we find what we are looking for. If we are looking for beauty, we'll find it in abundance.

The contributions of the Prophet Joseph Smith to the enlightenment of the human race will stand as perhaps the greatest contribution

ever made by any religious leader, or perhaps by any leader, except Jesus himself, in the world's history. It is to his credit, not his discredit, that, like that ungainly piece of Carrara marble, he ultimately became a giant among men, sculpted and polished by the Almighty. Viewed from that perspective, we have no hesitation in ascribing to him the exalted role as the prophet of the Restoration.

The question I am raising, however, is almost unfathomable in its profundity, namely, how can God, who is perfect, create so many imperfect and terrible things, and should our recognition of the fact that they do exist cause us to reexamine our belief that there is a perfect God, or even any God at all?

My answer to my young friend is that the things in the universe that bespeak the presence of God completely overwhelm those features that raise questions about his existence. I speak of evidence to be found in both nature and in scripture. Still the question can be asked why God allows imperfections to continue with their attendant human suffering when obviously he could eliminate them if he wished. How can we feel comfortable in an imperfect world?

Our Church has much to say on the subject and, in fact, has more to say that makes sense to me than any other church in the world. I hate to make comparisons, but in this case it is unavoidable. It seems to me that the key word in explaining a life with so much suffering in it is the word "effort." All the features in the universe that we don't like, such as difficulty, pain, suffering, sorrow, ignorance, disappointment, and grief, are designed to cause us to exert ourselves, that is, to make an *effort* to overcome the very things that are so painful to us. So, from an LDS point of view, these terrible things are to be regarded, as I stated previously, not as enemies to joy, but as stepping stones, raising us up to a higher level of appreciation for the things that will bring us increased joy. This is typical LDS philosophy, and it makes sense. We are here to prepare ourselves for a celestial glory, and the ability to overcome evil through our own effort is the prime quality needed to reach our objective. It is through effort, induced by pain or the threat or fear of pain, that we become wiser, stronger, purer, and worthier to enter into the presence of the Lord.

Let me discuss a little further the obsession the Church's critics have with the idea that the presence of human error in the unfolding of the Church's history vitiates its claim to a divine imprimatur. I believe I have shown that it not only does not vitiate it, but it strengthens it by showing

that imperfect human beings can, when touched by the hand of God, do such superhuman things. The Lord did not choose angels to do his work of restoration. He chose fallible mortals and shared with them the glory of the work by enabling them, by retaining their moral agency, and, through much stumbling and with great effort, to finally accomplish the job they were given to do. This is the highest kind of real-life drama.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is so stupendous, so well thought out, so intricate in its doctrinal texture, so far above the capacity of mortals to invent or envision without God's help, and so capable of bringing comfort and hope to the suffering world, that one must conclude, as did the Prophet Joseph Smith himself after contemplating the glories of the plan of salvation, as portrayed in Doctrine and Covenants 76: "Every honest man is constrained to exclaim: 'It came from God.'"[3]

3. Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1902–12), 1:253.

Eve's Offering

Jenifer Lee

Sacred, subtle slavery, the mother's task–
That burden of creation's holy power.
To love a clot of flesh and never ask
If it deserves its soul at chosen hour.
If menses hints to Eve that it may fade,
That jolt which all her feelings can dislodge,
She mourns a cherub loved but never made–
Her grief real, though the creature was mirage.
When Eve shares her essential vapor's red,
Their spirits even mingle as it hides,
Umbilical communions sensed, not said–
Her pulse's sing-song message never lies.
Gray Eve's beauty and love on altar thrown,
Offering left behind and soon outgrown.

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FICTION

At Bay

Lisa Torcasso Downing

THERE ARE NO WAVES on the bay side of the peninsula. The tide simply licks up and back, up and back on the sand shore. Beyond the shore, tall sailboats of vivid blues, greens, and yellows ease across the bay and out to sea. Two young-bodied windsurfers own the center of the bay. His body ripples as his muscles manage his sail, but hers plunges and dips as she fights to keep her sail erect. It falls and fills with salt water. She bends, struggling, fighting to lift the sail again. He glides and passes, glides and passes.

Across the bay, at the far side, the *Jesus Saves* is docked. In less than an hour, with its fresh-voiced crew, it will begin its puttering journey up the bay shore and down the coastline. A lone man will stand on its deck, calling all sun worshippers to repentance through his bullhorn. A few on the ocean side of the peninsula will look up, and some may even follow the boat with their eyes, but those on the bay side—the handful of locals who bother appearing before the *Jesus Saves* passes—will not hear the message again. Instead they will watch their neighbors, mostly singles, young and middle-aged, arrive one by one, each returning to his or her own summer sand niche. Barb will stretch herself out below the small, sand-docked sailboats which separate the bay from civilization. Maurice will be near the water. The high school students will cluster together, facing east, the bay, and west as the sun journeys through the sky. Jack will be on his rooftop, sketching. And so on and so on.

But this season the bay has attracted a new local, Charlotte Brown-

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ing. Charlotte will arrive after the *Jesus Saves* passes, wearing her skirted yellow one-piece bathing suit and that same white hat which flops over her face. Her rounded body will have glossed still pinker overnight, and she will drown herself with a bottle of sunscreen. All day she will sit beside Barb, feeling a kind of warmth she hadn't imagined possible on the day she had made her debut here.

That morning everything should have been clear for her, but it had not been. The ocean haze had hung thickly. Looking out of the window, she had considered going back to bed. Instead she drank an instant breakfast, dressed in her tan capris, and wrapped herself in the navy, nearly black sweater her husband had given her once upon a time. *The children should start rodeo camp today,* she thought, *if Peter remembers.* She resisted the temptation to call home and slipped on the flip-flops she had purchased last night at a K-Mart near LAX. Out the door. *Breathe.* The sandals clucked loudly as she walked between the rows of stucco houses. Climbing the four steps to the sand, she paused. *Breathe.* The salt breeze kissed her cheeks, and she let her eyelids shut tight. She felt a nudge against her arm.

"Excuse me."

Charlotte opened her eyes. A long-legged beauty in spandex shorts and an oversized man's red shirt jogged away from her, across the asphalt.

"No problem," Charlotte muttered. She watched the young woman run and felt sadness.

Charlotte left her flip-flops on the wall, then walked through the cold sand to the water's edge. Across the bay, the *Jesus Saves* left the dock, and she watched it as it sailed free and clean toward the center of the bay. "Come unto Jesus!" it called, then turned toward the ocean. She couldn't help but wonder, if she stepped onto the water, could she cross it? Then she felt the tide swallow her toes.

"Jesus saves!"

A child's scream shattered the wind-chimed air, and Charlotte turned, watched as a father grabbed his pre-schooler just as she leaped off the wall toward the bay sand. Face sulking, the child was carried back to the corner beach-front home. Charlotte sighed. Nothing was saving her. She began her trek back to her little blue bungalow, knowing that no one would be on the sand on this cold day.

It had drizzled most of that first day and Charlotte had cried along with it, then Peter called to ask where she'd hidden the dog food. She told him to look in the garage. He said, "Thanks," and she said, "Did the

kids enjoy camp?" but he had hung up. Just like that. She ordered pizza with pineapple, which she ate in the bedroom, and watched reality TV. The day and the night blended and she fell asleep atop the covers. And dreamed . . .

Worms on the peach tree; broken dishes across the lawn; children without hands; and pianos that explode. . . .

"Oh dear God," she wept in the middle of the darkness, "let the morning come soon."

And He seemed to hear, for He brought the morning in dancing with silver and gold, lavender and blue, all in the wake of the *Jesus Saves.* Following after it, the locals flocked to the bay. Charlotte left her dreams behind and joined them. She nestled a folding chair near the stairs, just below the sand-docked boats to facilitate a quick departure should her state of mind betray her. Nearby was spread a towel with a Hawaiian floral motif. Charlotte let her sweater slide from her shoulders. She hoped the woman who returned to the towel would mind her own business. She folded her sweater gently, nape over hem, and tucked it under her chair. Then she saw Barb.

The smile Charlotte had applied earlier that morning vanished, became lost in feelings of inadequacy as Barb, the bay's own unfound celebrity, a rarely employed fashion model, sat on the towel. Lying down, she stretched long and the milky edges of her breasts puddled below her bikini bra. This was the woman who had been out jogging yesterday morning. Charlotte felt keenly aware that she didn't fit in, not with her cellulite and knee-length shorts. She pulled an Anita Stansfield novel from her purse and began page one.

She was only a few paragraphs in when her feet were trampled and, almost simultaneously, sand flew onto the page. She looked up. The little girl from the corner house was dashing away, her auburn hair bouncing, her bottom naked.

Over his shoulder her father called back to Charlotte, "Sorry, this one's wild," and he laughed. He snatched his girl up and threw her over his shoulder so that her bum touched his ear. He tickled her. "I've got you now!" And the little girl said, "Ow," then farted and laughed.

Charlotte cringed, remembering Brian and Josh.

The father twirled his girl up until her feet rested on his shoulders. Her back stooped, they held hands.

"I don't believe him."

Charlotte pivoted her attention toward the beauty and saw that even a scowl did not make her less attractive. Thinking she ought to respond, Charlotte said, "Is he always so rough with her?"

The young woman looked Charlotte over. "Not him," she said, tugging at her bikini top. "Him." She pointed upward with her chin. "On the roof. White house." She flopped, fish-like, onto her tummy. A narrow stretch of material ran along her natal cleft, exposing her bronzed buttocks. "That's Jack."

Charlotte squinted up through the brilliant sunlight. She saw Jack, silhouetted against the blue sky, a man on the roof, third house down. Before him stood an easel. She flicked the sand off her book. Page two.

"You better cover yourself."

Charlotte looked over at the woman and the woman, head cocked, looked back. Embarrassed, Charlotte tugged at the bottom of her shorts. Were her garments showing?

"No," the woman chuckled. "I mean, you're so fair. I have some sunscreen you can borrow, but it's only got an SPF of 15."

Charlotte examined her arm. She could already detect a patch of crayon-colored pink. "Thanks, but I have some sun block. I thought I'd jump start my tan today."

"That's bad for your skin, makes you wrinkle, causes cancer." The young beauty was up, dragging her towel closer to Charlotte, her perfect behind in Charlotte's face. "Is this your first day with us?" She sat back down, grinning through teeth which were slightly off-line.

"Not exactly," Charlotte said, pulling her sun block from her canvas purse. "I came out yesterday."

"Cold day."

"Yes, I think you finished jogging about the time I came."

"Was that you?" She leaned toward Charlotte. "Sorry, I get kind of focused when I run. Maurice calls it my Zen state of mind."

"Maurice? Is he your boyfriend?"

The young woman threw her head back, laughing. "God, no. You'll meet Maurice. No, I'm unattached and loving it. What about you? Boyfriend? Husband?"

There flickered a moment of silence.

"Maybe a gal pal?" the young woman winked.

Charlotte was taken aback. "Husband," she said and blushed.

The woman nodded, indicating she had expected as much. She said, "I take it you've got time off. Where are you staying?"

"In the blue house down the street." She shrugged. "Who knows? Maybe I'll never leave."

Barb smiled. "Lots of us consider this the next best thing to heaven. My name's Barb."

Charlotte accepted her extended hand. "Charlotte, and thanks."

"I look forward to meeting your husband."

"He stayed home."

"Will he be coming out today?"

Charlotte hesitated. "No, I mean he's back home."

"Oh." Barb shrugged, smiled again. "That can be a good thing. So, what is it you do? Don't tell me. You're a teacher, a professor maybe. No, an electrician!"

"An electrician?" Charlotte giggled. "Actually I don't—I mean, I haven't worked. For a while. But I have an associate's degree in business."

Barb nodded. "Impressive." Charlotte wanted to bury herself.

"I mean it," Barb said. "I took one class at Orange County Community and flunked. Algebra." Her eyes softened. "Kids?"

Charlotte took in all of Barb's face, from her perfectly shaped nose to the gentle look behind her eyes, and saw clearly that this woman was kind. She couldn't blame Barb for feeling curious, so she answered, "Two boys, five and seven."

"Well, I look forward to meeting *them*. God, I bet you're squished in that little house. It's just a one bedroom, right?"

"They're with their father."

The expression on Barb's face told Charlotte that, in spite of her young age, Barb felt plainly the weight of her statement. "Listen," Barb said, "why don't we go to my place? I have a hat that will protect that pretty face of yours." Charlotte blushed and Barb winked at her. "Maybe have a drink? I've got Miller Light, or wine, or something harder if you want."

"Thanks, but I don't drink." Charlotte had thought no one drank in the morning.

"What are you, some kind of Mormon?"

Charlotte shrugged and grimaced with a smile.

"Oh, shit. I'm sorry."

"It's fine." She didn't want to scare off her new friend. "I really could use the hat, though."

Barb gave one firm nod. "Okay. We'll have iced tea. It's early anyway." Barb was up, flinging the sand from her towel.

Charlotte rose. "Maybe water?"

"I've got Arrowhead," she said. "That good enough?"

Charlotte picked up her purse. "Tap is fine." Barb made a face at that suggestion, and off they went, chatting their way to Barb's house. Their words rose delicately, creating that first sky-blue layer of their friendship. This friendship, which filled them with a sort of soul-giving oxygen, grew as the summer grew, day after day, night after night, wine cooler and bottled water after wine cooler and bottled water.

Charlotte accepted Barb's flopping white hat and has worn it ceaselessly. As a result, her face has whitened while her body has ripened. She has burnt and peeled, burnt and peeled. The summer has passed with much the same rhythm. Time has brought Charlotte additional acquaintances. She soon met Maurice. He had approached her, not Barb, which surprised her, and said his mission in life was to know all the beautiful ladies he saw. She stammered a nervous hello and thank you. Then Maurice squatted in front of her and rested a palm on her thigh, making it wag against the bone. "Got any beer?" he asked.

"Back off," Barb said. "She's Mormon."

Maurice examined Charlotte, who was still blushing.

"Repent tomorrow," he said, not skipping a beat. "Let's go have a beer." He had a dashing smile.

Suddenly her mind issued a memory of her last date night with her husband. Dressed in layers, they'd sat on opposite sides, repeating, repeating without communicating anything. She looked squarely at Maurice, wondered that he knew nothing about it all, and felt a hollowness within the never-ending circle of her eternity.

Barb tapped Maurice on the shoulder. "Those kids over there," she said, pointing to a group of high schoolers, "have beer."

"Thanks for the tip." He rose and to Charlotte added, "I'm not an alcoholic or anything."

Barb laughed. "Just a freeloader."

"How do you think I keep from being an alcoholic?" He bowed to Charlotte. "Hope to see more of you soon, babe." He trotted toward the circle of laughter.

"God knows that man tries hard to be a cad," Barb said as the two women watched Maurice catch a beer and flick it open one-handed.

Just as Maurice began to chug, the two teenage boys jumped up and grabbed one of Maurice's arms. Barb softly back-handed Charlotte, then pointed toward the scene she was already watching. "This should be good."

They heard Maurice say, "Whoa, there," and laugh as a blond girl pulled at the waistband of his red trunks. That is, until she dropped in a handful of sand.

"Shit!"

The teens scattered back several paces.

"What'd you do that for?"

"Fun!"

"Damn it!" Maurice yelled. Charlotte noticed heads turning and smiles as the locals watched Maurice waddle toward the water, beer can in hand and sand slipping hour glass-like from his shorts. He muttered as he waded waist deep and shook himself. Charlotte cocked her head. As unpleasant as the scene became, each moment of it belonged to the whole of the bay in much the same manner each incongruent brush stroke belonged in a Van Gogh: jarring singly, yet flawless and fluid when considered all together.

"Don't worry about him," Barb said. "Tonight he'll be telling the story in a bar. And he'll get a free round for it!"

Charlotte drank it all in, mesmerized. Life at the bay was life at last.

That night when her husband called to ask where she kept the Raid, she asked to speak to her children. Peter hung up. She cried for hours, cried as she ran laundry, cried over cold spaghetti, cried until she walked to the corner and bought a six-pack of Coors and a small cooler.

The next day she tossed Maurice a beer. The way her stomach fluttered surprised her more than the gift seemed to surprise him.

"Hold on there," Barb said. "Isn't there a Mormon commandment against a woman giving beer to a man who isn't her husband?"

"Naw," Maurice said, popping the top.

"Actually, there's a Mormon commandment against giving beer to a man who *is* your husband," Charlotte smiled.

"That-a-girl," Maurice said. He offered her a swig from the open can, but of course she declined. Later that afternoon he took her for a sail.

That night, she called Peter to thank him for covering her credit card bill. No one answered. No one cried. And life went on.

Life went on because Charlotte felt connected, finally. Everything,

everyone at the bay was connected: Every day had a purposeless purpose. Warm days were for basking and gossip, and Charlotte loved them. But it was the cool days that she looked forward to. On them, Barb changed Charlotte's look, inch by inch. It began under a hazy sky with a folding ceremony held on the tiny back porch, complete with vanilla-scented candles and mood music—Alanis Morrisette.

"You're telling me you wear these everyday?" Barb held the garment bottoms up.

"You get used to it."

Barb folded the legs together, then folded up at the crotch. "Not me."

"They're comfortable."

"This is the beach," Barb said. "Show some skin."

"I'm too fat." Charlotte rolled a garment camisole into a tight bun.

"All women are too fat," the model said. "But when it comes to hoochie-koochie, men don't care." She took the bun from Charlotte and added it, along with the garment bottoms, to the others in the unused suitcase.

"Hoochie what?"

This freeness was what Charlotte came to love about Barb. That's why she allowed Barb to burn her oversized sleep shirt in one of the fire pits on the ocean side. That's why she trusted her to pick out sun dresses and shorts for her to wear, even in public. That's why she agreed to try on bathing suits, even a bikini. That's why Charlotte had the gumption to step outside the dressing stall wearing that bikini and ask, "What do you think? Maybe if I wear a cover-up . . ."

"I think Maurice will really like it."

Charlotte's eyes widened in mock terror. "Anything but that!" Instantly she yanked the bikini bra over her head.

"Damn. You need a boob lift."

Charlotte closed the dressing room door. "It'll happen to you."

"I hear Maurice does them for free."

"That's nasty."

"That's Maurice."

Charlotte settled on the skirted, yellow swimsuit with the updated 1940s line, the era of Maurice's mother.

Yes, this was connection. Charlotte had slipped so easily into the scenery at the bay that she began to think less and less of the outside

world. She lived in the moment in a way that few people have dreamed possible, much less experienced. It was a glorious moment of rest and relaxation that can neither be hurried nor slowed down. No beginning, no ending: Simply living. Simply breathing it all in and feeling your chest swell. Nothing to write down, no goals to strive for, no forethought or hindsight required. Life here simply happens. No one holds their breath.

So it is no wonder that, on the cusp of yesterday evening, the subtle change in pressure brought by the sun's slow exhalation meant nothing more to Charlotte than that she should hold her place on the shore a little longer than the usual rhythm of the day allowed. Barb, whose heart beat with the bay's rhythm, rose before the sun could finish dousing itself; but Charlotte reached for her arm. "Let's stay," she whispered, her eyes leading Barb's gaze over the water which simmered like a pot of gold. "Tonight will be so clear."

Barb did not reply, simply smiled and eased herself back down. Together they watched the bay-goers drift slowly from the sand. Together they blew Maurice kisses and wondered over the black eye he pretended not to have. Together they watched the *Jesus Saves* launch from the opposing shoreline. Together they watched the sailboat captain sway as he waved one hand over his head and lifted his bullhorn with the other, calling out, "Come unto Jesus!" Charlotte removed her white hat, raised it, and waved back.

"Don't do that." Barb batted down her arm. "It means you're saved. You'll encourage him."

A light post behind them buzzed, then flickered.

"Saved?" Charlotte chuckled, then quieted as the memory of her baptism seeped in, the image of her father's beaming face appearing through the water cascading over her mind's eye. "Maybe we should go in," she said, her voice lowered.

Barb shook her head. "He's nearly passed, and it's such a beautiful night." She smiled as she winked at Charlotte, then said beguilingly, "Besides, this is your idea."

Charlotte acquiesced, consciously letting all tension slip from her shoulders. The two women waited silently as the *Jesus Saves* harbored, feeling the cool air caress their sunned bodies, like wind against a sail. Charlotte watched the man from the *Jesus Saves* walk out of the marina, another day done, then she rested her head back. The stars peeked one after the other and the moon blossomed. She heard the faint crackle of water as it

gently slapped against the shore. Then laughter, a summer's laughter, rolled from the well-lighted home two down where a party was beginning.

"I say we have our own festivities," Barb said, rising.

Charlotte gazed over at her friend.

"Be right back." Barb was climbing the steps to the street.

Charlotte nodded and felt herself sink even more deeply into her chair. She felt these moments alone as sweetly as she had felt her first kiss. Though welcomed, Barb's return seemed a breaking of something whimsical. She smiled as Barb, who now wore that man's red button-down shirt, tossed her her sweater.

"It was on your porch."

Charlotte snuggled into it. Barb let a canvas backpack slip from her shoulder.

"Did you check your website?" Charlotte asked.

"Over twenty hits already. I'm making money tonight." Barb opened the backpack and produced from it a bottle of blush and two glasses. "This should warm us a little."

Charlotte half-groaned, half-grinned, half-shook her head, and held up her water.

"Oh, come on. There's hardly any alcohol in wine," Barb teased. "Who's gonna know? "

"God." And Charlotte laughed.

"Jesus drank wine."

"This sweater warms me all I need, you know that." She tugged the collar higher on her neck.

"Can't blame a girl for trying." Barb sipped. "Your loss is my gain."

Charlotte stretched her legs, smiled. The easy sounds of cars rolling down Beach Boulevard swam about her and, as Barb sipped away, she found herself wondering how she had lived without the bay, how she had tolerated the intricacies of her life; how she had withstood all the endless meetings and endless talk of obedience and service; the annoyance of being called sister by those she hardly knew, and the guilt over store-bought jam. And then there had been the breast feeding, the diaper changing, the whining and the whining and the whining. And all this had gone on when everything was so beautiful at the bay. She watched a small flock of seagulls circle the shoreline. Even the gulls here seemed to glow under the moonlight.

Charlotte watched one in particular as it soared low, flying toward

them from the water. The bird glided up, up a little more. Laughter from the second house gave rise to the wind, and the seagull turned upon its stream and sailed straight over Jack's rooftop. He stood, still sketching.

Charlotte held her bangs back. "How long has he been doing that? Up there, I mean."

"Jack? Long as I've been here." Barb pulled a twig from the sand and placed it between her toes. "I swear his walls are an inch thick with drawings." She took another sip.

"You've seen his place?"

"Aren't you a curious cat? Go see it for yourself."

Charlotte shrugged. "I'd feel funny about it. Not being invited or anything."

"Invited? By Jack?"

Charlotte looked down.

"Honey, you have to *ask* Jack. He doesn't exactly come down to socialize. But don't worry, he doesn't bite." Barb laughed. "He's vegetarian."

"Come with me."

"No way, been there, done that."

"Is he drawing you?"

"Better not be."

"You're a model."

"For hire. Now go on, get up. Be a brave little soldier. Everyone here has to have the 'Jack Experience' sometime."

Charlotte stood reluctantly. "Come with, please. For me."

"Nope." Barb held up the wine bottle and swished its contents around. "'Tis my sacred duty to guard the vintage from reckless marauders."

Charlotte kicked sand at Barb and conceded with a toss of her head. "Don't drink it all. 'Tis not meet for thine liver."

"'Meet?' What planet did you say you're from?"

"Kolob," Charlotte moved away. "Go easy on the juice," she called back.

"Studies show this stuff is good for the heart!"

Charlotte waved off her comment. "Yeah? So's grape juice!" She turned around, straightened her back, let the sleeve of her sweater swing below her fingertips, then moved east with the wind. Jack's house was a mere twenty yards off. She felt self-conscious as she pressed onward, knowing she was under his scrutiny. Arriving all too soon, she cautiously as-

cended his wooden porch, her hand on the rail, and wished his house were lit. She came to his front door, a sliding glass door, and she pressed her face against it, but made out nothing. If only she could see clearly what lay beyond the glass, she wouldn't have to bother him. But alas. She backed up, rapped, and waited. . . . Surely he had seen her coming. Waited . . . . Wasn't he going to let her in?

Suddenly the door slid open, startling her. Before her stood a little man in cut-off shorts. His chest showed bare and dark. His long, graying hair was pushed behind his ears.

"Hello," she said. He stood firm, like an unerasable error. "I hear you're an artist." He stared at her. She gathered in her hand her wind-tossed hair and held it against her neck. "I thought, maybe, if it wouldn't be too much trouble, I could perhaps see some of your work? I've heard you're pretty good."

He moved aside. Bravely she stepped into the dark room and instantly felt assaulted by the warm, unvented air. Jack moved again and the lights bloomed on.

Rows of portrait-carrying easels lined the center of the otherwise objectless room. On the walls, from floor to ceiling, hung more portraits, all of bay-goers, many of whom she knew, each captured in either pastel or charcoal. In these portraits, the children of the bay played while their mothers looked on. Men lounged or laughed, their heads thrown back. Windsurfers soared; sailboats glided. The *Jesus Saves* passed by a child.

"They're beautiful," Charlotte said, removing her sweater. She had long since become comfortable walking about in nothing more than her bathing suit. She moved toward a portrait of Barb sitting in the sand, knees pulled up, her red shirt blown against her body, her long hair wrapped noose-like about her neck. "Oh," she murmured, unsettled, as her eyes scanned the whole of it, saw that Barb's image was bottomless, her shaven labia exposed between her legs. Charlotte felt Jack's hand clutch her sweater. She gave it to him and he hung it carefully on the high point of a vacant easel. "Follow me," he commanded.

She obeyed, but it was her own trepidation which moved her, not his desire. He led her to the door at the far end of the room and nodded for her to enter.

Timidly she pushed it open. Darkness. He reached in and clicked another light switch. Instantly she saw the bed: Her throat tightened. A double, with a coarse khaki blanket, military issue, and an uncovered pil-

low. Her stomach fluttered; she folded her arms across her chest. Thumb-tacked over the raw pine headboard was a large charcoal of a faceless, Renaissance-style nude. Charlotte buried her fingernails in her forearms. Surely Jack had the wrong idea . . . She turned for the door.

"Stop," he said, rolling both arms forward. "Look." She could not move beyond him, so she did look, her head turning first left, then right as it rode the sickening wave of recognition which tore through her. He backed away.

Every inch of the walls in that man's bedroom screamed herself back to her. Dozens and dozens of herselves hung in imperfect rows around the room. From her first day to the current day. Charlotte bore in harder with her fingernails and moved from one portrait to another. She saw herself in her white hat, the sides turned down like blinders; in her bathing suit, the skirt flipped up in back; She saw herself with Barb, with Maurice, and alone. Usually alone, getting pinker and pinker and pinker. Her face, still white.

Then she stopped, gasped. Before her hung a pastel of her standing at the water's edge, dressed as she had been on that first day, staring out at the *Jesus Saves*. Her arms, held horizontally, ended in sand-filled fists, palms turned upward. The wind carried the tiny pebbles from one hand down toward her thigh in the shadowy form of an angel's wing. The sand from the other hand blew away from her body, landing in a pile where the tide would later taste it. The work was shaded over with a charcoal pencil, giving it a darkness, a coldness; not a cloudiness or mistiness, but a combination of day and night.

"This is how the bay sees you."

She pivoted. Jack's eyes were cast up, up to the ceiling over the bed. She willed herself to resist chasing his gaze, but she could not help herself. There above her was a blueness, the color of the heavens, yet it was not sky. She climbed atop the bed for a better look. Water. Bay water, water like uncut glass; water so perfectly drawn it appeared as though it ought to be pouring down upon her and upon the bed. And floating just below the surface, a figure; a large, fleshy, pasty, nude figure stared down at her. Eyes glazed. Her eyes. Her colorless face, wrinkled in the water, showed deep shadows along her crease lines. Deep shadows accentuated her body's folds and tucks. Folds and tucks.

Eyes glazed, her hand raised overhead as though to touch this woman drawn just beyond her grasp. With her hand still in the air, her

eyes rested upon her ring finger and she saw how it had pinkened along with the rest of her body. Charlotte stepped back, lost her balance on the mattress, and collapsed.

Jack touched her bare shoulder. She wheeled on him, her hand now a fist. His arms shot out in innocence and he said, "Easy," then pushed her hand down. A drop ran down his cheek. "Go back where you belong." He led her to the front door and out to the bay. She stepped out. He shut the glass door. Her shadow disappeared when he switched off the light. Alone on his porch, she felt the wind stop dead. She gazed across the bay.

Back where I belong.

The water glistened in the moonlight. She thought of Brian and Josh.

Maybe Peter will tire of them, send them.

The slurping of the tide mingled with the laughter next door.

Maybe not.

She waited and listened . . . and waited some more for something, for someone that could not return. She dared not move. Suddenly the wind kicked back up and she felt it pass through her, east to west, right, left. Quickly she turned toward the ocean, as though the wind was something she could follow with her eyes or grab with her hands. But it was gone. It had passed. And as she looked across the vast expanse of the sea, she knew she never would get it back, never would catch the wind that had once sailed her. She stepped onto the bay sand and chilled as her feet sank. She turned her face into the wind and rubbed her arms against the night as she walked back to her place near Barb. Together they shared that bottle of wine, there in the night, on the bay shore while the *Jesus Saves* slept.

Parenting Is No Cup of Tea; ceramic earthenware;
2002; 22x10x8 inches

The Meadow

Holly Welker

My family and I drove hours one Sunday to see
a meadow in the mountains of Arizona. We stood
behind a split-rail fence. "It's beautiful,"
my dad said. "It's for sale. If we had money
we'd buy it." And we climbed the fence
and wandered that acre of wildflowers and ferns,
ate fried chicken and picked up our litter,
and went home.

This image needs a fence, not to keep anything
in or out, but to designate a crossing. Of course
you know by looking where the meadow ends
and the forest begins, but the act of swinging
one leg and then the other over the fence
while saying, "This boundary marks but doesn't prohibit"
is the gesture I require. The place is
neither pristine nor polluted, neither formidable

nor inviting, just matter-of-factly somewhere on earth;
despite its for-saleness, the meadow seems to belong
entirely to itself. When I decided to give up lying,
I made my mind into that meadow; I opened my countenance
like a split-rail fence, nothing to hide and no profit
to gain except in the exchange of deceit and dissembling
for clarity and candor. *Come look, everybody.*
Climb the fence if you're interested,

but when you finish your picnic
you must pick up your trash and go.
I don't know if anyone takes up that offer,
but I know that since making it my mind
has evolved into a place instead of an essence.
I venture further afield now
and visit my mind for
its changing seasons, its open view.

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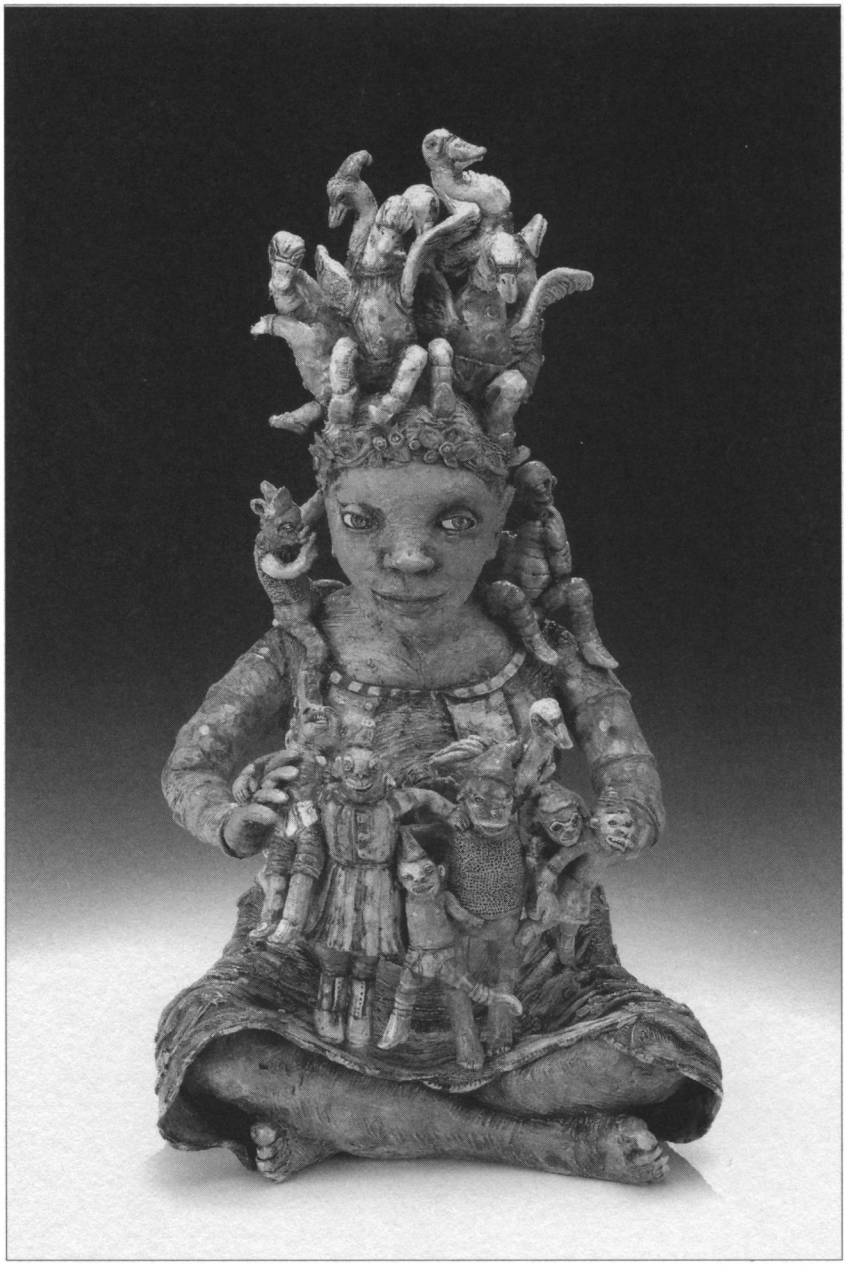

Six Swans; cermaic earthenware

FICTION

Salvation

Laura McCune-Poplin

3

She held the umbrella close to her head, limiting her vision to the circle of stones at her feet. Anna watched her companion's hemline bounce in time to the click of her heels against the cobblestones. Water from Soeur Buckley's shoes flicked upwards, soaking the back of her skirt. They walked past a pharmacy. The neon cross flashed above the closed doors, intermittently tainting the wet sidewalk green. Nearby, somebody was burning cedar in a fireplace. Anna inhaled, holding the smell of smoke and rain in her lungs. Soeur Buckley stopped walking.

"Let's go down this street," she said. She checked the name on the blue sign against the one on the map. "Then we can cut across the park."

Soeur Buckley was always trying to find a new route home. At night she would take a yellow highlighter and color the streets on a map she had bought, which hung on the wall above her bed. Her goal was to have colored every street in the city before she was transferred.

Today's street was narrow and crooked; uninterrupted walls of four-story buildings lined both sides. Water pooled in the road where cobblestones were missing or worn down. In one of the puddles sat a dog, licking raindrops off the face of an old man.

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"Is he dead?" Soeur Buckley asked.

Anna looked for someone who could help, but the street was silent except for the sound of raindrops drumming the nylon above her head. She closed the umbrella. Soeur Buckley held out her hand to the dog and petted his head while Anna knelt next to the body. When Anna put her cheek next to the man's mouth, she could smell his breath before she felt it.

"He's just drunk."

Anna rolled him onto his back while Soeur Buckley held the dog's leash. The puddle had soaked through the clothes on the left side of his body. His raincoat fell to the side and Anna could see a dark patch of urine staining the front of his trousers. Gently, she shook the man's shoulders. Then less gently.

"Monsieur."

The dog growled and Anna looked up at the leash in Soeur Buckley's hand.

"Try again," Soeur Buckley said.

"Pardon, Monsieur."

He moaned softly and touched his forehead. Water dripped off the tip of his elbow. Anna helped him sit up, her grasp squeezing the water out of his sleeve.

"My papers? Where are my papers?" He fumbled with his hands, checking the pockets of his raincoat. He felt a bulge in his chest pocket and pulled out a sopping envelope stuffed with folded squares of paper. He put it back.

"Where is Ilka?"

Soeur Buckley handed him the leash. She helped Anna lift the old man to his feet. He was short and frail looking. His wet clothes clung to his skinny limbs. Rain rolled down the front of his bald head and pooled at the tip of his nose. Anna held his hand and supported his back while Soeur Buckley took his elbow and the leash. He nodded to the left. They started walking.

"Who are you?" the old man asked, squinting through the rain at the black nametag on Anna's coat.

"Soeur Adams," she said.

"You're nuns?" He looked over at Soeur Buckley, mouthing the name on her plaque.

Soeur Buckley smiled. "Missionaries. Les Mormons."

"I don't want anything to do with your church," he said after a mo-

ment. The man wrinkled his eyebrows together. They were full of captured raindrops.

Soeur Buckley laughed, looking at Anna over the top of his head. "Even the drunkards don't like us," she said in English.

"I'm Catholic, non-practicing."

"We know," she replied. "The whole country is Catholic, non-practicing."

"So what are you doing here?" he asked Anna.

"Helping you."

They arrived at a red door at the bottom of one of the four-story buildings. The old man pulled his hand away from Anna's and reached into his pocket. He handed her the wet envelope.

"Take one."

She pulled out a piece of paper.

"Take one for her, too," he said solemnly, pointing to Soeur Buckley.

Anna took another paper and put them in her pocket. Suddenly, the old man leaned back and cupped his hands to his mouth.

"Mireille," he shouted. The loud rasping noise made Soeur Buckley jump. The old man started to fall over, and Anna reached out to steady him. He kept yelling.

"Mireille," Soeur Buckley shouted with him.

The door opened.

"Michel. Where have you been?" A woman with white hair pulled back into a bun, took his arm and helped him inside. "How did you get so wet?" she asked, wiping her hand on her apron.

"I fell." He glanced at the missionaries to see if they would contradict him. They didn't. Soeur Buckley held the leash out to the woman.

"Here's your dog," she said.

The woman took the leash and looked at Michel, waiting for an explanation.

"They're Mormon missionaries," he whispered into her ear.

The woman's eyes narrowed. "We're not interested."

She shook a crooked index finger at Anna and Soeur Buckley and quickly shut the door. The missionaries remained on the doorstep, standing side by side. Anna leaned in closer to examine the cracks in the red paint. The door used to be painted white.

After a minute, Anna stepped back from the door and held out her hand. She looked over at Soeur Buckley and smiled. "It stopped raining."

1

He looked past his reflection in the mirror that lined the wall of the booth. The details of his face disappeared as he focused on the stacks of paper covering his table. He leaned toward the mirror, trying to make out a single word from the rivers of backward letters. Instead, he saw a dark red stain spreading through the stacks. He glanced down at his overturned glass and watched the red wine dissolve columns upon columns of neatly penned words.

Michel stood up and clumsily blotted the folded papers with the cloth napkin from his lap. He left the soiled napkin on top of his ruined work, gathered the rest of his piles and shoved them into an envelope, which he placed in the pocket of his raincoat. He moved to another table.

"Another glass of wine, please."

The garçon brought over a glass and a small silver ashtray. Michel took the bill from the tray and replaced it with a ten-franc coin. He began to write on the back. *Places I've spilled my drink: Café de l'Art, La Fête de Bombage, Brasserie de la Poste, Tonton's Birthday Party–1956, Gare de Lyon . . .*

Michel covered the paper lengthwise. He turned it sideways. He wrote carefully, like a first-grade student learning cursive for the first time, making sure to cross all his "t's," and connecting his "a's" low so they wouldn't be mistaken for "o's." When he finished, he took another paper from the envelope in his pocket and wrote, *Drinks I've spilled: red wine, hot chocolate, cognac, coffee, warm milk, whiskey, mint syrup . . .*

He stopped writing at the bottom of the third column and asked for more wine. He carefully refolded the paper into three equal portions and placed it on the table. Michel leaned back against the booth and wiped the white residue from the corners of his mouth. His fingers smelled like tobacco. He felt the tightness return to his chest like a hand grabbing his heart as it always did when he stopped writing. One day the hand would squeeze so tightly Michel would die, but Michel had almost finished.

"We close early on Sundays," the garçon said, filling his glass halfway while glancing at the clock above the bar.

Michel motioned for him to keep pouring, "My last drink."

The garçon started stacking chairs on the tables in the center of the room. The metal gate in front of the glass door hovered like an eyelid half

closed. Michel stood up to leave. He noticed a piece of paper on the floor and stooped to pick it up, his knees cracking like broken twigs. A shoe print covered half the paper. Michel turned it over, *People I've met in cafés,* and put it with the others in the envelope.

The garçon raised the metal gate and handed Michel a piece of beef. "For the dog," he said, motioning toward the door.

Michel shuffled out the door while patting his raincoat pockets, looking for his pen. *Names of dogs I've owned.* The gate creaked closed behind him as he fed the meat to Ilka.

Ilka, Chipie, Beni, Chiot, Bilou . . .

Ilka's wet nose sniffed his hand looking for more. Michel untied her leash and they stood together under the awning, watching the rain rebound off the cobblestones.

2

The letter slipped out of the Bible while she was dusting. Holding her back, she bent down to retrieve the paper folded in thirds.

Another list, she thought. Michel usually hid his lists in a wooden box under the bed. He always waited until she was in the bath. Through the hollow door, she would hear the box sliding against the linoleum, the rustle of papers as he emptied his coat pockets. Mireille could see the scratches the rusted nail-heads carved into the floor. He never mentioned his box crammed with bulging envelopes. Perhaps he thought she didn't know. Perhaps it was just a game, a contrived intrigue to make life interesting, as though life could be prolonged in the recording of it.

She unfolded the paper in her hand and saw her name in the top left corner, *Chère Mireille.* For a second, she was tempted to read it, but obviously Michel did not intend for her to find the letter until after he died. Mireille never opened the Bible except to enter the names and dates of important family events. For the last fifteen years, the only entries had been deaths. Her husband's would be next. Quickly, she folded the paper and replaced it between the fragile, yellowed pages. She glanced at the clock. Michel would be home soon. She turned the Bible over and stroked the cracked leather cover with the smooth skin of her palms—only the outsides of her hands were wrinkled. Mireille looked inside the front cover and traced four generations of death with her finger. She stopped at the bottom of the page. Here she would write Michel's name. Michel as ances-

tor. No more drinking. No more lists. Just venerated memories half-forgotten.

She replaced the Bible on the bookshelf and continued dusting. She would read the letter when he died. After she cleaned out his clothes, threw away his lists. She would give everything to the Croix Rouge. The older she got, the more she threw away, disgusted by the waste of leaving things behind. When she died, she hoped her existence would fade to nothing more than the ink used to write her name in the Bible next to Michel's.

Mireille pulled back the lace curtain and looked out the window. Rain pattered against the glass trying to get in, succeeding in the corners where the window frame had warped with age. She took the washcloth out of her apron pocket to wipe up the puddle of water pooling on the windowsill. The street below her was empty. She looked as far left as she could without opening the window. No Michel.

In the kitchen, the duck had started to boil over. Perfumed steam permeated the apartment. Mireille turned the heat down on the gas stove and covered the bird to let it simmer. Dinner would be ready.

Mireille shook the crumbs off the tablecloth and set the table for two. The thick vapor of boiled duck filled the kitchen, covering the walls with a thin film of grease and moisture. She opened the window to let out the steam and sat down to wait.

4

The candle flame flickered in the draft from the window, bouncing lilac-scented shadows off the walls. Anna lit a candle every night before going to bed. Its glow colored the insides of her eyelids orange when she said her prayers.

Soeur Buckley stopped reading and slammed the Book of Mormon shut.

"You're keeping that?" she asked, looking at Anna who sat cross-legged on her bed, surrounded by books and small scraps of paper.

Anna nodded. She put down the scissors and started painting circles of rubber cement on the back of the old man's paper. *Animals I have seen in zoos.* She smoothed the list into her journal, rubbing the corners to make sure they stayed down. *Brown bear, dromedary, boa constrictor . . .*

Soeur Buckley laughed to herself and pulled the blanket up under her arms.

"Did you see the look on that lady's face when she found out we were missionaries?" she asked. "If I had a picture of her, that's what I'd glue in my journal." Soeur Buckley leaned back on her pillow and closed her eyes, still smiling.

Anna checked the journal to make sure the glue had dried. *Lion, orangutan, gazelle.* She inclined her head toward the open pages and could see the indentations Michel's pen had pressed into the paper. His handwriting looked deliberate, as though every word had been written to last forever. Anna closed her journal and watched the flame's reflection dancing in the windowpane. *Rhino, giraffe, elephant* . . . She turned off the lamp and knelt next to her bed, placing her folded hands on top of the blanket as she bowed her head. Anna could see his body lying in the puddle when she shut her eyes.

The Province of the Extreme

Jon Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 372 pp.

Reviewed by Stacy Burton, Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Nevada, Reno

Krakauer's success has come as a writer of narrative nonfiction. He is best known for *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster* (New York: Villard,1997). In *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith*, he turns his attention to another "province of the extreme," the point where religious belief turns to fanaticism and violence (xxii).

His project is ambitious: With Mormon fundamentalism as his chief illustration, he seeks to understand why religious extremism flourishes in a skeptical, postmodern society. Using the 1984 Utah murders of Brenda Wright Lafferty and her daughter, Erica, and the trials of her brothers-in-law Ron and Dan Lafferty as a framework, Krakauer ranges across many topics in twenty-six chapters including the beginnings of Mormonism and Mormon polygamy, the Mountain Meadows Massacre, the birth of fundamentalism in the 1880s, the politics of contemporary polygamy from Arizona to British Columbia, and the actions of individual fundamentalists such as Brian David Mitchell. The result is a book that is both insightful and flawed.

At the beginning of Part II, Krakauer cites Wallace Stegner: "It is almost impossible to write fiction about the Mormons, for the reasons that Mormon institutions and Mormon society are so peculiar that they call for constant explanation" (94). Substitute "narrative" for "fiction," and Stegner anticipates precisely the weakness of Krakauer's book. In his drive for narrative coherence, Krakauer too often fails to provide—or perhaps even to understand—a full explanation. He provides snapshots with uneven context, journalistic glimpses rather than thorough analysis. Many stories and much analysis remain before the larger questions that underlie *Under the Banner of Heaven* can be answered. But Krakauer's book provides a striking avenue into topics to which both scholarship on Mormon culture and Mormons have paid little attention.

The book's flaws are obvious to anyone even modestly fluent in things Mormon. There are sloppy errors: Mark E. Peterson (sic) was never president of the LDS Church (75), most Church members do not "make a pilgrimage" to the Hill Cumorah (63), and "FLDS" is inaccurate as a generic reference for all fundamentalists with

roots in Mormonism (5). The minimal notes provide little if any documentation for claims such as the one that "official LDS policy" opposes marriage between whites and blacks (331). In June 2003, just before the book's publication, a lengthy "Church Response to Jon Krakauer's Under the Banner of Heaven" appeared on www.lds.org. The Anchor paper edition, published in June 2004, included a twenty-two-page appendix in which the author answered back. Problems persist, however: Krakauer corrected Petersen's title but still misspells the surname. He slightly modified the line about pilgrimage but still overstates his claim.

Krakauer relies heavily on overstatement, a practice that undermines his serious aspirations without good cause. A few examples of many suffice. The family of Watson Lafferty, a right-wing chiropractor working out of a home office, may have been known locally before the murders, but Krakauer's assertion that the "entire family was admired for its industriousness and probity" (xii) doesn't follow from his own evidence. His characterization of Joseph Smith as a man who "remained perpetually and hopelessly smitten by the comeliest female members of his flock" and "kept falling rapturously in love with women not his wife" (118) draws from the scholarly studies of Smith and polygamy listed in the bibliography but discounts much of their analysis. He claims that ordination to the priesthood confers "inestimable status within the church" yet doesn't explain how this could be so, since all males are eligible (156). Perhaps he does suppose that "nobody" at Brigham Young University "would think of attempting to shave a few precious seconds by treading on the manicured grass," but he's wrong (78).

The book is hampered by Krakauer's failure to define his project more clearly. He opens the "Author's Remarks" at the end of the book by explaining that he narrowed his original subject—"the nature of religious belief"—to "a more manageable scope by examining belief more or less exclusively through the lens of Mormonism." He cites his experiences "in the happy company of Latter-day Saints" and reports that he "grew up with Mormons in Corvallis, Oregon, which had (and has) a robust LDS community" (333). Yet this Mormonism—mainstream Mormon culture of the twentieth century—scarcely appears in the body of the book.

In the first chapter, Krakauer explains that mainstream Mormonism and Mormon fundamentalism both trace their origin to nineteenth-century Mormonism. He then turns to fundamentalism and the nineteenth century, leaving the mainstream largely to one side. Given the scope of his subject and his choice of the Lafferty murders as a framework, this is not surprising. But Krakauer errs in not explaining both the divergence and his own focus more explicitly. This leads to odd readings of mainstream Mormonism, such as his citing a fundamentalist raised in rural Canada to explain the upbringing of an af-

fluent Mormon teenager in Salt Lake City thirty years later (45).

It also contributes to weak generalizations. His statement that "many Mormons regard [Salt Lake City] as a sinful, iniquitous place that's been corrupted by outsiders" might be true of Mormons in smaller communities in the western United States—and of fundamentalists—but urban Mormons from New York and Los Angeles might well disagree (78). "Mormon Country" is larger and more complicated than the small territory on the Utah/Arizona border mapped on the book's endpapers.

These limitations notwithstanding, Krakauer has written a book with notable strengths. Much written about Mormon fundamentalism is apologist or sensationalist: Few insiders tell their stories, few journalists attempt to understand the complicated history, and few scholars have treated the subject in depth. Krakauer takes his subject seriously. He provides a clear, readable account of the convoluted history and lineage of Mormon fundamentalism, tracing familial connections, ideological splintering, and affiliations among groups and loners hundreds of mile apart.

He is at his best with interview materials and anecdotes. In the tradition of the travel writer who seeks to understand an unfamiliar culture yet lacks the language to do so, he has many of his subjects tell their own stories. They are impressive for their immediacy and their juxtaposition of the banal and the extreme. Debbie Palmer recounts an abusive childhood in an isolated polygamist enclave in Canada—and the day she set her house on fire and decided to leave. Krakauer's most reflective informant is DeLoy Bateman, whose story he uses to frame the body of the book. A high school science teacher born into fundamentalism, Bateman had two wives and seventeen children when Rulon Jeffs, head of the Colorado City group, confronted him over "scurrilous rumors." Bateman stood up to Jeffs and "decided to leave the Work, even though I knew it would mean the end of my life as I knew it" (14). It did—and it didn't. Jeffs declared that Bateman's wives and children were forfeit and tried to evict him from his home. Bateman decided he was an atheist who could no longer justify polygamy; he took his children to the Las Vegas Strip to usher in the new millennium and disabuse them of fundamentalist myths about the end of the world. Yet he continues to live in Colorado City, wearing the fundamentalist undergarment even in summer heat: "I try not to wear it, but I just can't seem to leave it off. . . . For some reason not wearing it just doesn't feel right. . . . That ought to tell you something about the power of this religion" (328).

Krakauer asks difficult, perhaps unanswerable questions. They are questions that Mormons and scholarship on Mormonism and Mormons have been reluctant to tackle head on—and questions worth asking. He doesn't always have answers; and when he does readers may well dis-

agree, but asking them is a beginning. Why has fundamentalism survived into the twenty-first century? How do beliefs and practices so literal-minded, so archaic, persist in a cynical postmodern society? Krakauer speculates that mainstream Mormonism's troubled relationship with its nineteenth-century history is part of the problem: The "distinctively ironic component" of the mainstream Church's accommodation to "middle America" and its dismissal of history, he writes, may be that it has allowed fundamentalism "to win adherents from among the most fervent Saints, because there will always be Mormons who yearn to recapture the spirit and all-consuming passion of the founding prophet's vision" (322). Readers will be as disturbed as Krakauer by his conversation with Emmylou Coronado, a shy fundamentalist girl who designs a home for her polygamous future online: "I did it on the Internet, according to the Principle" (325).

Krakauer pays particular attention to the recurring connections between extreme beliefs and extreme action. Most fundamentalists are not violent, of course, and surely some of the violence of the Laffertys, Mitchell, and others can be attributed to paranoid or delusional states. Yet as Krakauer explains in detail, the medical experts who were witnesses at Ron Lafferty's trial disagreed on a diagnosis, and a psychiatrist testified that he was not psychotic but might have narcissistic personality disorder (303). Whatever the mental conditions of these individuals, fundamentalism and its literalism obviously contributed to the forms they took. Do delusional atheists hear God telling them to kill? Are all founders of religions narcissists? Why do some narcissists turn to violence, and others do not? Krakauer raises all of these questions but finds no clear answers.

At the beginning of the book, Krakauer juxtaposes two images: the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, "emblematic of the Mormons as a people: chaste, optimistic, outgoing, dutiful," and Dan Lafferty, a fundamentalist who murdered in the name of God. The contrast, he writes, "is so incongruous as to seem surreal" (4). He thus raises a question that he intermittently sets aside, returns to, and finally cannot escape: How are the stories he tells pertinent for understanding contemporary mainstream Mormonism? Given his decision to leave the mainstream aside, Krakauer is wise not to attempt to answer this question directly. But he invites his readers to do so, and scholars of Mormonism and Mormons will find the invitation difficult to decline.

Most of fundamentalism is anathema to mainstream Mormons, who find it disturbing, aberrant, incomprehensible. It is here that the tragic story of Brenda Wright Lafferty matters. One of the most compelling of Krakauer's interview subjects is her sister, Betty Wright McEntire, who draws upon conversations and journals to tell the story of an outgoing BYU communications major who wanted to become a television news

anchor. Brenda, a mainstream Mormon, who married Allen, the youngest of six Lafferty brothers, was dismayed as she gradually learned of her husband's right-wing beliefs and his brothers' intense fundamentalism. What might otherwise be a typical narrative of marital conflict—his refusal to stand up to his family, her refusal to acquiesce to them—crosses from the ordinary to the extreme when Ron and Dan Lafferty decide that God commands the ritual murder of Brenda and her baby daughter. Krakauer doesn't ask directly whether the culture of mainstream Mormonism compounded the situation, whether someone could have foreseen the brothers' horrific actions, or how such tragedies might be prevented. Betty does. Readers will as well, and they should.

The flaws in *Under the Banner of Heaven* disappoint precisely because of its aspirations. Krakauer makes too many missteps. He also raises difficult questions that bear scrutiny, questions that seldom are asked this compellingly, questions that will persist rather than vanish. For that, his book merits careful reading.

Not a Coveyesque Self-Help Book

Ronald W. Walker, *Qualities That Count: Heber J. Grant as Businessman, Missionary, and Apostle.* Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2004; special issue of *BYU Studies* 43, no. 1; 299 pp. $18.95.

Reviewed by Mark T. Decker, assistant professor, Department of English and Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Stout, in Menomonie

Collections of scholarly articles often display their strengths in their parts rather than in their functioning as a unified whole. After all, the structure of such volumes invites readers to pick and choose and, if read linearly, present multiple repetitions and a narrative that is often, at best, digressive and tangential. Nevertheless, festschrifts and other themed collections continue to be produced by university presses because, in their scattershot way, they meet the needs of specialists needing easy access to research generally related to their topics.

Ronald W. Walker sets himself quite a task, then, in *Qualities That Count: Heber J. Grant as Businessman, Missionary, and Apostle.* Walker, a senior research associate in the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, had access to Grant's papers in the early years of this project. He has published on the sixth president of the Church and his family in venues that range from regional history journals to the *Ensign* to *Dialogue* and *Sunstone. Qualities That Count* is a lightly edited representation of those articles—along with one previously un-

published piece—complete with copious endnotes.

Yet in his introduction, Walker contends that the book functions as a broadly instructive biography of Grant's youth and early days as an apostle and attempts to package a collection of essays written (mostly) for serious students of Mormon history as an object deserving of being "made accessible to a general reader in a single volume" (xiv). Consequently, Walker's collection needs to be reviewed from two perspectives: as a resource for those intellectually interested in Grant and his role in Mormon history and as an improving biography for believing nonspecialists, designed to instruct its readers about obtaining the "qualities that count."

As a collection of essays, *Qualities That Count* has much to recommend it to serious students of Mormon history, presenting its readers with responsible, though distinctly apologetic, assessments of Grant's early life and middle age. The Heber J. Grant that emerges from the pages is more fully human than the Grant that would emerge from a full-scale biography written for the general LDS reader. It is refreshing to read that the man who would one day become the head of the Mormon Church loved to drink beer (52) and read Ingersoll (53) when he was a young man, even though Walker is careful to document the mature Grant's repudiation of his youthful excesses.

The portrait of the Church that Walker gives his readers is also far from hagiographic. For example, in "Grant's Watershed: Succession in the Presidency," the only essay that has not previously appeared in print, Walker gives a well-documented account of the tension in the Quorum of the Twelve during the twenty-one-month period between the death of John Taylor and the ascension of Wilford Woodruff. Readers learn of the bickering that occurred when George Q. Cannon assumed controlling interest in the Church's Bullion, Beck, and Champion silver mine and of Cannon's attempts to cover up the sordid personal life of his son John Q. But the circumspect Walker gives his audience little concrete information here.

This collection, obviously released to coincide with the use of Grant's writings as the manual for Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Society classes in 2004, is most timely in its re-presentation of the financial machinations that Grant was forced to employ to keep both the Church and himself solvent. With Martha Stewart and several CEOs making headlines recently for their financial sins and peccadilloes, it is interesting to read about an apostle who watered his stock in the Utah Sugar Company to raise funds for his mission. Walker also cogently explains how Grant was instrumental in forging ties between Wall Street financiers and the Church, largely through obtaining usurious short-term loans from men like John Claflin. Of course, Walker dismisses such activi-

ties with the not-unjustifiable argument that these were all standard business practices during the Gilded Age, but it is difficult to imagine Grant's actions in these matters cheerily referenced during an elders' quorum lesson.

Indeed, it is easy to wonder how well this book would serve a general LDS readership, unless that audience's tolerance for warts-and-all portrayal has increased markedly. Additionally, the annoyance of the general LDS reader may be heightened because Walker's introduction and the book's packaging promise something other than what is delivered. Despite the self-help subtext implied by the title, the qualities that count are not enumerated, nor do the various chapters help readers understand just what qualities are being presented. Consequently, readers seeking Coveyesque didacticism may become confused by chapters that reveal, for example, that Grant never did manage to learn any Japanese while presiding over the Church's mission in Japan.

This is not to say that a lay reader would not find uplifting material in Walker's book. If *Qualities That Count* resembles a self-help book, it would be the Horatio Alger novels Walker implies that Grant was fond of (82). Usually, Alger's novels featured a plucky poor boy who rises because of his own good character, a little luck, and some timely mentoring from kindly upper-class men. This is one of the narrative strands that *Qualities That Count* intermittently reconstructs, one which will probably mesh well with the worldview of many of the general LDS readers this book reaches.

This narrative belies, however, strong implications in both the book's packaging and in Walker's introduction that the future apostle's qualities came from his early upbringing. According to the back cover, Grant's "single mother, Rachel Ivins Grant, gently fostered the tenacity, industry, and faith that permeated his life." Walker's introduction observes that Rachel was "brimming with social and cultural values that her son would inherit and then later transmit in Church service to the twentieth century" (xv). Yet the creature of nineteenth-century capitalism and nineteenth-century homosocial spaces that Walker so ably recreates owes much of his character development to male mentors, as the essay "Young Heber's Years of Passage" documents. While Rachel Ivins Grant has a chapter dedicated to her, those seeking the tale of a gifted leader who was the product of a plucky single mother will eventually be disappointed.

Yet ultimately, the strongest charge that can be brought against *Qualities That Count* is that it is being mismarketed. Walker's scholarship is sound, his writing is lively, and anyone with a serious interest in Heber J. Grant, the LDS Church, or even the history of the American West in the nineteenth century could benefit from reading this book. It may not, however, make an ideal birthday present for Grandpa Holdfast.

A Motherless Son Sings the Blues

Paul Swenson, *Iced at the Ward, Burned at the Stake* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2003), 82 pp.

Reviewed by Danielle Dubrasky, assistant professor in the Department of English, Southern Utah State University, Cedar City

Last spring I wrote an essay for the March 2004 AML symposium in which I argued that the most effective poets writing from the LDS culture are those who provide a counterweight to the mainstream LDS perspective. Paul Swenson's book *Iced at the Ward, Burned at the Stake* addresses head on the dilemma of a culture that, though in desperate need of counterweights, does everything it can to literally throw them out.

The poems are written in a lyrical voice creating lines that are both evocative and musical. The title poem refers to September 1993, when Lynne Kanavel Whitesides was disfellowshipped and Paul J. Toscano excommunicated. Both Whitesides and Toscano are part of what has been called "the September Six"—a group of people who were disciplined in a variety of ways by the Church for being "dissident." One of the primary conflicts seems to have been views on Mother in Heaven, and concerns about how the Church patriarchy silences the voices of women. Swenson explores these themes in four different sections by presenting an interesting twist on the gender inequity that exists in the Church.

In many poems, Swenson expresses the loss of a Heavenly Mother, of a female deity to whom he can turn; and by extension, he mourns the lack of women's voices in the Church. According to Mormon doctrine, men who righteously hold the priesthood represent Heavenly Father; therefore, are not many devout, intelligent, and compassionate women representations of Heavenly Mother? These poems recognize that the Church is out of balance when those in authority use their "power" to silence the female perspective or limit exploration of feminist doctrine.

As Swenson writes from the point of view of a son searching for an invisible and nameless mother, he gives a new interpretation to the issue of gender inequity in the Church. He expresses the frustration of having limited access to this female deity because of dubious doctrine that keeps her hidden, just as many women have been frustrated by the sexism that can make the Church's power base inaccessible to them. In the poem "Strange Gods" Swenson ends with:

I lust for the veiled god
who will not go to war with her
    children
who will not author famine or floods,
who will not prune the buds of her
    most promising flowers
in some grand Apocalypse. (26)

The tone is one of anger that "the

veiled god" might present a less destructive alternative to the vengeful Old Testament one, yet her views and influence have been silenced.

The third section of the book, entitled "Body and Soul," explores more thoroughly this separation between the speaker and Mother in Heaven. The first poem, "Motherless Child," presents the female deity as wild and elusive and questions if she is present more than we realize but is imperceptible: "When something just outside my memory refracts / a glimmer of her glory, I want to ask, whose child am I?" (42)

The third poem, "White Gardenia," presents the imbalance of gender power as a bishop interviews a young woman preparing for her wedding. The interview seems to be so invasive and inappropriate that it violates her innocent anticipation of her wedding. Her voice is not heard during the interview; it remains silent in her mind as she contrasts her innocent preparations for the wedding with the disturbing tone of the interview.

A poem that attempts to restore gender equity is "The Prophet Debbie," in which a variety of women and girls representing this prophet slip in and out of congregations and concert crowds, unnoticed yet influential, which seems to be the nature of women's spirituality within the Church. The most dramatic of these scenes is one in which a mother has a vision as she is giving birth that "[penetrates] the long dark tunnel of her vagina, / [to see] umbilical cord wrapped around her daughter's neck. / Warned the doctor, who untangled the cord, / saved the child. But she had seen it first, from the inside" (50). The poems ends with this female prophet creating gender balance by introducing the "Sons of the men to the Moon Circle, / and the daughters of women to Iron John" (50).

The final poem of this section, "Exejesus," continues to create a counterweight, presenting Jesus as a man who loves to be in the presence of women, both as a guide and as an equal. He reluctantly boards the boat of the male disciples (57). This image of Jesus as a "women's man" is counter to the LDS culture which encourages male bonding to such a degree that women's viewpoints often become expendable.

If these poems focused exclusively on the perspective of those who are marginalized, then one could argue that they themselves need balancing. But at the end of the collection, Swenson counterbalances the scenes where women are at the mercy of male authority by placing himself at the mercy of women. He does this humorously in "Dog Days of August" with a visit to a female proctologist. In "Brides of the Afternoons" the tone is both ironic and poignant as he deconstructs what has become a Mormon icon—the beautiful bride in her white wedding dress posing for photographs on Temple Square. In a strangely vulnerable way, the brides have all the power; they lead the way, stop traffic, smile at "the rabble" who

stare at them as if they are a type of goddess for that one day. Visual reminders of a temple marriage, they become symbolic of the Mormon pursuit for eternal perfection. The speaker watches from the sidelines, appreciating their loveliness but questioning what the future holds for their perfect beauty. Even as he recognizes the ludicrousness of their symbolism, he can't help but be entranced by them.

My one criticism of these poems is that some were addressed to an inner circle. The names and stories may be familiar to those on the Wastach Front; but to a reader who is quite removed from those circles, the occasional name dropping without a context created an exclusiveness. I also wonder how some of the poems, so specific in their pertinence to Mormonism, would be accessible to a national audience. This is the challenge of any LDS writer—how to convey the unique experience of growing up in a religion that is still so obscure to those on the outside.

Mormonism provides a minuscule part of American religious literary identity. When it does not exist within laughable or perverse stereotypes, the Mormon experience is still a mystery nationwide because there are not yet enough quality writers with national publications who honestly convey the experience of being part of the LDS Church and culture—its complexities, its nuances, its ironies, its hypocrisies, and the transformative power of its truths. It will take writers like Swenson who refuse to approach Mormonism in a facile manner to make this leap.

Yahrzeit

Anita Tanner

(YAR-tzite): from the German, now Yiddish, meaning "year's time" or "anniversary." The anniversary of someone's death.

This morning I light red candles
and set them on the sill,
daring the breeze
through an open window
to tease the flames.

At noon I gather
red rose petals
and drop them
over the creek bridge
where I walk every day.
I watch them
until they float
out of sight.
A few catch
on rocks and stay.

And this afternoon
I buy a bracelet
and give it away.
Someone is wearing
your embrace
around a thin wrist.

Tonight I eat red ribs
with spring asparagus
and slather my tongue
over chocolate-covered
strawberries, letting
the juice run down my chin.

When I turn in
I keep thinking
of deathwork
for those who remain—
and a grief too deep
to write down.

ANITA TANNER, raised on a Wyoming farm, lives in Boise, Idaho. She has always loved writing and reading, and has published a collection of poems, *Where Fields Have Been Planted* (Kearney, Neb.: Morris Publishing, 1999).

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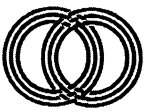

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Janis Mars Wunderlich, born in Akron, Ohio, in 1970, received a BFA from Brigham Young University (1992) and an MFA from the Ohio State University (1994). She has given numerous lectures and workshops throughout North America. Articles by her have appeared in periodicals, including *Ceramics Monthly,* which also featured her art in the December 1999 issue. She is featured in the book *The Best of New Ceramic Art* and the upcoming title *500 Figures in Clay*. She has exhibited worldwide and her work is found in permanent and private collections.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Family Supports (front cover): The mother figure is holding several children. Children are even on her legs, almost like leg braces. They slow her down, but she also enjoys the support and stability they give her.

Family Fight (back cover, right): We call this piece "Family Home Evening." "Explosions" seem to occur when we're trying to have a nice family bonding moment. Those we love the most can take us to the edge.

Bird Brothers (back cover, left) is based on a Grimm's fairy tale, "Twelve Brothers," about loyalty among siblings. It parallels my experience growing up in a family of ten kids.

Dreaming of Children (back cover, below): As a newlywed, I dreamed about and imagined my future children.

In the Garden (p. 66) is inspired by my love of the earth, of gardening, and of the excitement of seeing the "fruits of your labors!" I've made this "garden-gnome" with stacks of fruit and veggie-men and garlic-guys. The gnome's "carrot-top" head is inspired by our family trait—most of us are red-heads.

Parenting Is No Cup of Tea (p. 183) is a teapot that captures the complexities of balancing the roles of artist and mother. Teapots and mothers are about function—accommodating, protective, predictable, soothing. My children cling to me constantly. I understand that children grow up and stop clinging, but parents continue to "wear their children" on the inside . . . in thoughts, hopes, and memories. This teapot has a bunch of kids hanging on the inside, too.

Six Swans (p. 186) is inspired by a Grimm's fairy tale about the power of family.

Dear Friends and Readers:

Within the pages of *Dialogue*, we continue to provide an open forum for Mormon studies. We strive to offer our readers articles reflecting thorough research, peer review, and writing of a high quality. We pride ourselves on helping our readers expand their intellect and enhance their spirit.

This year with the help of our readers' financial support, the Dialogue Foundation embarked on a multi-year program to heighten the visibility of the journal and encourage new research. We launched a program called "New Voices." This is a cash awards program for young writers, aimed at increasing the ranks of young contributors and readers of *Dialogue*. We also sent more than a thousand complimentary issues of *Dialogue* to those who requested sample issues on our newly upgraded website and through a direct mail campaign, introducing the journal to interested Mormon scholars, writers, and thinkers all over the country.

To assist our readers and researchers, a very thorough forty-year index is being finalized by James E. Crooks, librarian at UC-Irvine. A preliminary index can be found presently on our website; the finalized and printed version will be published in 2006. In addition, we hope to provide by year's end free access to all past issues up to the year 2002 in the University of Utah's Marriott Library online collection.

As the year's end approaches, we would like to thank each of you whose support by subscriptions and gifts has made all our progress possible. Because subscriptions do not cover even the basic costs of publishing, we are especially grateful for your tax-deductible contributions. Only through the donations of our loyal readers can we expand our base of satisfied subscribers and keep up with current technology trends.

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Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season.

Molly McLellan Bennion
Chair, Board of Directors

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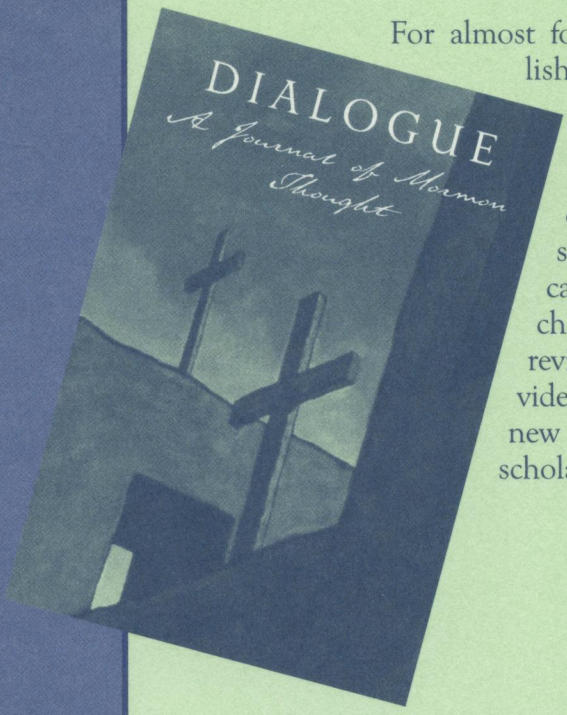

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