DIALOGUE

A Journal of Mormon Thought

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A Journal of Mormon Thought

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

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Contents

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Signature Books Defended	*Gary James Bergera*	v
Ad Hominem	*Robert Garrett*	v
Erotic Literature and the Lord	*James L. Rasmussen*	vii
Sexual Morality Revisited	*Stephen Lamb*	viii

ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

Keywords: Joseph Smith, Language Change, and Theological Innovation, 1829–44	*Jason H. Lindquist*	1
The Psalms	*Richard Clifford*	39
How Many Members Are There Really? Two Censuses and the Meaning of LDS Membership in Chile and Mexico	*David Clark Knowlton*	53
The Maturing of the Oak: The Dynamics of Latter-day Saint Growth in Latin America	*Mark L. Grover*	79
The Making of Grave Community Sin	*Garth N. Jones*	105

PERSONAL VOICES

Religion and Natasha McDonald	*Francine Russell Bennion*	109

FICTION

'Atta Boy	*Kristin Carson*	123
Miracle	*Eric Samuelsen*	151

POETRY

Sorrow and Song	*Mark Bennion*	171
Thousand Springs	*Mark Sheffield Brown*	174
Confession	*Mark Sheffield Brown*	178
Martin in Me	*Paul Swenson*	181

Triptych *Robin Russell* 182

A Spinster Physician Weeps While Speaking Her Sermon on Abstinence: A Sonnet without Rhyme *Lee Robison* 185

El Cordero de Dios *Robert A. Rees* 186

Baptism *Robert A. Rees* 188

REVIEWS

A Stark Contrast
Duwayne Anderson, *Farewell to Eden: Coming to Terms with Mormonism and Science* *Thomas W. Murphy* 189

Murder, with a Side of Philosophy
Paul M. Edwards, *The Angel Acronym* *Michael Austin* 191

"Gender Troubles" and Mormon Women's Voices
Laura L. Bush, *Faithful Transgressions in the American West: Six Twentieth-Century Mormon Women's Autobiographical Acts* *Cecilia Konchar Farr* 194

Sinnamon Twist
Linda Hoffman Kimball, *The Marketing of "Sister B."* *Mary Ellen Robertson* 197

Saving the Germans from Themselves?
Alan Keele, *In Search of the Supernal: Pre-Existence, Eternal Marriage, and Apotheosis in German Literary, Operatic and Cinematic Texts* *Sandy Straubhaar* 200

ABOUT THE ARTIST: *Kathy Wilson*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Signature Books Defended

I'd like to echo the sentiments expressed by John Sillito ("Navigating the Difficult Terrain of the Mormon Experience," 36, no. 3 [Fall 2003]: 266–70) regarding Ronald W. Walker's, David W. Whittaker's, and James B. Allen's brief discussion of Signature Books in their book *Mormon History*.

Never once during my fifteen years as Signature's director of publishing did anyone ever attempt directly or indirectly to dictate a decision to accept or reject a manuscript for publication. The assertion that Signature favors any one person's ideology is simply wrong. I know from attending countless meetings of Signature's editorial board and board of directors that decisions regarding what to accept are governed exclusively by the quality of writing, responsible use of sources, cogency in presentation and organization, contribution to the general intellectual environment, and marketability. To suggest otherwise is to perpetrate a lie.

Gary James Bergera
Salt Lake City, Utah

Hamblin Ad Hominem?

"Reagan's economic policies are absurd; but what should we expect from an actor?" While this impromptu quotation may have been inspired by the recent death of the former president, it is a very good example of a rhetorical method called the *ad hominem*.

The *ad hominem* has today become one of the most frequently used rhetorical arguments employed in discrediting the claims of others. It is my thought that ignorance, as well as its ubiquity, has dulled many to the point that the device has become unrecognizable for what it is: a method used in discrediting the claims of another in which the person rather than his or her argument becomes a point of argumentation. The *ad hominem* is a poor substitute for logical and scholarly argument and criticism.

Having to do with the irrelevancy of the appeal made rather than its falsity is where the *ad hominem* lurks. Reagan was indeed an actor, not an economist, but is that what makes his economic policy absurd? In the above quotation, my imaginary interlocutor's appeal simply criticizes Reagan's occupation, rather than logically and systematically explaining why the economic policy is absurd. While here we have a criticism of one's occupation, other forms of criticism might include one's character, associations, hobbies, motives, preferences, or beliefs.

I mentioned how frequently

this rhetorical device is used, but why? Perhaps the appeal of the *ad hominem* is that it is so very simple to do. It requires little if any effort to compose. One need simply find a point one's audience will consider unfavorable. The simple introduction of such a point goes a long way toward essentially "charming" one's audience to disregard the entire argument or position of one's opponent. Many it seems are seduced and swayed by its power without ever realizing it. It is a tool of the demagogue. Its power lies in its ability to convince the reader or listener that such bad ideas (i.e., those you disagree with) naturally come out of the mouths of bad people.

So what can be the purpose of this lesson in rhetoric? In a recent issue of *Dialogue,* an article featured an irrelevant argument in the form of an *ad hominem.* That article was William J. Hamblin, "There Really Is a God, and He Dwells in the Parietal Lobe of Joseph Smith's Brain," 36, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 79-87. Hamblin's article was composed in response to a previous *Dialogue* article by Robert M. Price, "Prophecy and Palimpsest," 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 67-82. Both articles deal with the origin of the Book of Mormon and whether it was a composition from the imagination of Joseph Smith himself.

Price's argument essentially culminated in the theory that the Book of Mormon was inspired fiction written by Joseph Smith, a conclusion against which Hamblin's article quite convincingly and systematically argues. But where Hamblin missteps is in his conclusion, in which his scholarly and logical argument lapses, to be replaced by the *ad hominem.* Hamblin here simply and facilely attacks Price's beliefs rather than continuing to present additional relevant points. Price is an atheist, a point Hamblin makes expressly clear.

My question is: Why, after such good scholarship in responding to Price, would William Hamblin resort to such irrelevant tactics? True, Price is a self-proclaimed atheist, but what is the point of bringing up his religious beliefs? Hamblin holds that there is a relevant purpose for highlighting Hamblin's atheism—that in essence an atheist is incapable of commenting on or understanding the "ways of God" and is thus ill qualified to comment on the "divine" origin of the Book of Mormon.

As much as Hamblin denies that he is making it sound like Price is a "bad person" because of his atheism, what effect does this observation have upon his predominantly believing Christian

audience? In this respect, Hamblin's comments about Price's atheism suggest really something quite close to the irrelevant argument of my imaginary interlocutor: Price's theory of the origin of the Book of Mormon is absurd, but what should we expect from an atheist?

Robert Garrett
Evanston, Illinois

Erotic Literature and the Lord

I haven't taught the Gospel Doctrine class nearly as long as Molly Bennion has, nor have I researched the Song of Songs as she has ("Temporal Love: Singing the Song of Songs," 36, no. 3 [Fall 2003]: 153–58), but I discovered this year with the help of *Dialogue* and a search on the Church's website that the Lord may read erotic literature.

The description of the lady lover in Solomon's Song 6:10 is quoted in the March 1836 Kirtland Temple dedicatory prayer which Joseph Smith received by revelation (D&C 109:73). There, of course, the description is not erotic but is rather a description of the Church which was to "come forth out of the wilderness of darkness, and shine forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." See also Doctrine and Covenants 5:14 (March 1829) where the Lord refers to "the coming forth of my church out of the wilderness—clear as the moon, and fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," and Doctrine and Covenants 105:31 (June 1834), where the Lord enjoins his (Zion's Camp) army to be sanctified "that it may become fair as the sun, and clear as the moon, and that her banners may be terrible unto all nations."

These uses follow the centuries-old allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs with Christ represented by the male and the Church represented by the female. That interpretation appears in the page headings of my LDS missionary edition of the Bible—perhaps because it was merely "specially bound" for, but not edited by, the Church. These headings have been removed from the 1979 LDS edition and chapter headings without allegorical interpretations being added. In view of the Lord's use of the Song in the Doctrine and Covenants, those LDS readers like Molly Bennion and Wayne Schow ("Sexual Morality Revisited," 37, no. 3 [Fall 2004]: 114–36) may need to acknowledge at least some kind of validity in the allegory.

The 1979 LDS edition also notes that the Joseph Smith Translation manuscript states: "The Songs of Solomon are not inspired writings." This is an issue

of canonization rather than of translation, Article of Faith 8 notwithstanding. Perhaps we should just accept the Lord's familiarity with uninspired erotic arts and emulate Him.

P.S. to Molly Bennion: How did the Song come to be included in the biblical canon anyway?

James L. Rasmussen
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Sexual Morality Revisited

A recent reading of Wayne Schow's article "Sexual Morality Revisited" (37, no. 3 [Fall 2004]: 114–36) reminded me of why I cancelled my one-year subscription to *Dialogue* some fifteen years ago. I have problems with many of Schow's arguments, but I will mention only two here: Schow didn't do his homework regarding Church doctrine on the subject of sex (indeed, he disregarded the issue almost completely in favor of rehashing antiquated notions), and his arguments regarding the possible permissibility of nonmarital sex bespeak a lack of understanding of scriptural and prophetic teachings.

Regarding the nature of sex, I found it interesting that Schow took no effort to evaluate the statements of Church leaders anywhere in his essay. Indeed, he didn't even reference the Church by name until the very end of the article (134). His only mention of a General Authority statement was apocryphal at best and no citation for it was given (135). Schow obviously has problems with how religion has distorted the message of sex and seems wont to accuse the Church right along with the rest of sectarian Christianity for "distortion" and "repressions" (135, 133). While his perspective may accurately reflect the uninformed sentiments of many Church members during the days of his "childhood and youth" (133) and even some today, a perusal of General Authority statements, both past and present, reveals a comprehensive doctrine of sex that includes the elements of edification, unification, joy, love, and validation. (See Jeffrey R. Holland, *Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001], and *A Parent's Guide* [Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 46–49.) I think that if Schow did his homework he would find an LDS view of sex that contains much of the "balance, proportion, and holis[m]" (128) he seeks.

On the subject of nonmarital sex, Schow asserts the existential argument that the outcome of an act determines its morality, not the nature of the act itself; that sexual acts resulting in "positive outcomes" are moral if the contex-

tual and motivational circumstances are right, if everybody feels good, and if nobody gets hurt. But who gets to decide which motives are pure and which outcomes are positive? And who can tell ahead of time what the real outcome of a decision will be, especially when long-term consequences may not be appreciated for weeks or years?

My professional work with hundreds of patients over the past twenty-three years suggests that negative consequences always arise in connection with sexual activity outside marriage. The consequences are frequently long-lasting and multigenerational in nature, are nearly always devastating to innocent spouses and children, and are inevitably destructive to personal integrity and/or the marriage relationship itself. Sexual activity outside marriage cannot be considered acceptable in any circumstance since one cannot accurately predict *a priori* that there will be no negative consequences.

Finally, regardless of what sociological theses might be proffered to the contrary, I believe that the best argument against non-marital sex is that it is always offensive to the Lord. (The scriptural citations are too numerous to mention.) How can the morality of non-marital sex be debated when God has clearly and repeatedly said it is wrong? In this instance, He leaves no wiggle room for personal interpretation, unless one does not believe those scriptural and prophetic pronouncements to be valid. Such an assumption is often the underlying contention in *Dialogue* arguments and is certainly the implied line of reasoning in Schow's article. I think a person will only be confused regarding what is right in sexual areas if he or she chooses to not believe latter-day revelation and prophetic statements.

Stephen Lamb
Salt Lake City, Utah

Keywords: Joseph Smith, Language Change, and Theological Innovation, 1829–44

Jason H. Lindquist

IN A JUNE 1843 PUBLIC MEETING, Joseph Smith was asked why "gathering . . . the people of God" was such an important principle. He responded with this lively bit of wisdom: "A man never has half so much fuss to unlock a door, if he has a key, as though he had not, and had to cut it open with his jack-knife."[1] Smith went on to explain that the "key" to which his statement alluded was temple building: The gathering of Israel was crucial to establishing Zion because it facilitated the construction and use of temples.

JASON H. LINDQUIST is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the English Department at Indiana University's Bloomington campus; his dissertation focuses on the intersection of epistemology and aesthetics in the nineteenth-century travel narrative. This essay began in a research seminar funded by the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History at Brigham Young University in the summer of 1999. The author thanks the institute for its generous funding, the seminar's director, Richard L. Bushman, for his enthusiasm and guidance, and his fellow colleagues for their insight and comments. Special thanks go to J. Spencer Fluhman, Danille C. Lindquist, and *Dialogue*'s anonymous reviewers for their generous and conscientious readings of this essay's various iterations.

1. Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1961), 308. Willard Richards's diary records the statement this way: "never is half so much fuss to unlock a door if you have a key or have not. or have to cut it out with a jack knife." Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon

But what are we to make of Joseph Smith's choice of comparisons? The mental image—turning a key rather than laboriously cutting out the lock—would have been available to any curious listener on hand in Nauvoo that day. But for members of the Church—and, to a lesser degree, Christians of other denominations—"key" would have called up a dense network of literal and theological associations. While contemporary Latter-day Saints have come to equate "keys" primarily with religious authority, early members might have associated the term with at least two distinct concepts beyond the now-conventional sense of priesthood "keys of the kingdom." These include, first, a "key" as an important interpretive principle that can increase individual understanding, and, second, the idea that certain sacred "keywords" could allow the Saints to return to the presence of God.

My approach to studying the use of this important word in early Mormon discourse is threefold: first, I work to recuperate and differentiate some of the now less-familiar senses of the word "keys" as it appears in Joseph Smith's teachings; second, for each use, I evaluate possible precedents or correlates in Smith's linguistic environment; finally, I argue that, even when the Mormon prophet drew on secular or religious meanings available in his culture, his use of "key" was invariably heuristic and transformative. That is, Joseph Smith regularly adopted early nineteenth-century meanings of the word and then modified them—sometimes subtly, sometimes dramatically—to more effectively introduce and explain complex and innovative theological principles. For this reason, in addition to tracing the history of a single word as it moved into Mormon theology, I hope my project will provide some insight into the role of language and linguistic change within that belief system. Specifically, I contend that a striking characteristic of Smith's prophetic[2] gift was his ability to make use of the inherently protean character of language to bring about theological innovation.

This area of inquiry is particularly important because LDS scrip-

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W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1991), 210.

2. "Prophetic" here can be taken two ways: in the literal sense of a human acting as a revelatory mouthpiece for deity, or in the broader sense of a special rhetorical mode characterized by some combination of charismatic, sublime, persuasive, or theologically innovative speech. I consider Joseph Smith's "prophetic speech" to fit both definitions.

ture and revelation often seem to advance two different views of language's capacity to convey truth. On the one hand, some utterances, particularly those spoken by Deity, are considered to be dependable and consistent in their meaning. God can express truth by means of human language: "These words are not of men nor of man, but of me" (D&C 18:34–35); furthermore, this truth-capability *can* carry over into the realm of the human utterance, at least in the case of prophetic speech: "Whether by mine own voice or the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38).

Yet other scriptural utterances imply that human speech and writing reflect humankind's "lost and fallen state" and is therefore fallible (1 Ne. 10:6). In such passages, language itself becomes an important feature of the encumbering web of confusion and weakness that characterizes mortality—part of what causes humans to see the world as if "through a glass, darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). For instance, revelations on missionary work suggest that one's native tongue constitutes ways of knowing to such a degree that differences between languages cannot be permanently circumvented even by the gift of tongues. (1 Corinthians 14 addresses the limitations of this first use.) Rather, each individual must "hear the fullness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language" (D&C 90:11). Elsewhere, Mormon scripture suggests that even God must take the fallibility of human communication into account in composing his utterances. For example, the Lord explains that while "these commandments are of me," they are also "given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding" (D&C 1:24). Syntactic parallelism associates "weakness" and "language," suggesting that, when God crafts revelation, he takes the weakness of the recipient's understanding into account.[3]

Armand L. Mauss expresses the tenet implied in these passages of early Mormon scripture: "Since prophets and religions always arise and

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3. See also D&C 29:32–33: The Lord cannot express the true relationship of the "temporal" to the "spiritual" creation in human terms. The Saints are to think through the sequence of creation using the following conundrum: "First spiritual, secondly temporal, which is the beginning of my work; and again, first temporal, and secondly spiritual, which is the last of my work." But this paradoxical construction is a necessary misrepresentation, since God himself does not think of the creation in temporal terms: "Unto myself my works have no end, neither beginning." He describes his deliberate choice of an inaccurate representa-

are nurtured within a given cultural context, itself evolving, it should not be difficult to understand why even the most original revelations have to be expressed in the idioms of the culture and biography of the revelator."[4] If language is bound up with the traditions and assumptions of a particular people, then study of a given revelation must take into account the linguistic culture in which that statement appeared. For instance, Nephi argues that Isaiah presents serious difficulties to the non-Jewish reader because no people can understand "the things which were spoken unto the Jews . . . save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews" or unless they have "the spirit of prophecy." Because his people are unfamiliar with Jewish tradition, Nephi offers his own supplementary prophecy that will—because of its "plainness"—be easier for the Nephites and all other readers to understand (2 Ne. 25:1-6).

The question of language's stability becomes particularly complex when studying the early Mormon canon, where so many different kinds of verbal and written statements qualify as revelation. That is, while some passages in the Doctrine and Covenants give direct voice to Deity ("Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord" [D&C 27:1]), other revelations are clearly grounded in Joseph Smith's own personal language choices. His letters (D&C 128), his explanations of important concepts (D&C 130), and his offered prayers (D&C 109) are all accepted as inspired discourse.

Yet those revelations that explicitly discuss Joseph Smith's speech and writing often suggest the fallibility of even his language. In 1831, for example, a revelation voiced by the Lord defends Smith's status as God's chosen mouthpiece, even as it acknowledges the limitations of his language: "Your eyes have been upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun. and his language you have known, and his imperfections you have known; and you have sought in your hearts knowledge that you might express beyond

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tion as an effort to "[speak] to you that you may naturally understand." See also 2 Nephi 31:3 (the Lord "[speaks] to men according to their language, unto their understanding") and Ether 12:25 ("when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words").

4. Armand L. Mauss, "Culture, Charisma and Change: Reflections on Temple Worship," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 80.

his language" (D&C 67:5).[5] This nuanced statement confirms Smith's declarations as revelation, even as it validates the Saints' desire to acquire a kind of knowledge that goes "beyond his language." This paradox—that eternal truth lies beyond the fallen idiom in which it must be expressed—is perhaps most poignantly stated in a prayer Joseph Smith included in an 1833 letter to W. W. Phelps: "Oh Lord deliver us in due time from the narrow prison almost as it were total darkness of paper pen and ink and a crooked broken scattered and imperfect language."[6]

This recognition by Mormonism's first prophet that language is "crooked broken scattered and imperfect," together with scriptural indications that a revelation's text cannot always be cleanly separated from the recipients' linguistic limitations, suggests important areas of historical and linguistic inquiry. For instance, how might early audiences, unfamiliar with Mormon theology but steeped in the religious and secular discourses of the early Republic (1776–1861) understand a certain word or phrase? How might already familiar meanings have inflected an audience's understanding of Joseph Smith's instruction? And, over time, what new or hybrid meanings do such words acquire in Mormon discourse? Such questions remind us that Church leaders, early members, and potential converts brought their whole linguistic world with them when they gathered to Zion. An approach to Mormon history that acknowledges both the fallibility of language and its flexibility over time may provide an alternative to the preoccupation with questions of influence that sometimes threatens to render Mormon historical scholarship more polemical than inquiring. I believe it is more profitable to focus on the ways in which available words retain old meanings and accrue new ones in the Mormon

5. The Lord challenges Smith's doubters to produce anything equal to "even the least that is among [his revelations]" (D&C 67:6–7). Explicit parallels are drawn between the verbally ungifted Moses and his more articulate spokesman Aaron with the relationship between Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (D&C 28:2–4; D&C 8:6). See Exodus 4:10, in which Moses calls himself "slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."

6. Joseph Smith, Letter to William W. Phelps, January 11, 1833, in Dean Jessee, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 261–62.

context than to debate whether Joseph Smith did or did not "get" important terms from a particular source.[7]

Tracing the etymology of "key/keys" provides an important test case for such an approach. After all, it is clear that Joseph Smith was not starting from etymological scratch with the term, since a variety of religious and colloquial "keys" would have been familiar to new and potential Mormon converts. In this essay, I identify three important nineteenth-century meanings of "key" and "keys." For each, I trace Smith's adoption, adaptation, and extension of these meanings between 1829 and 1844. I conclude that, during this time, three of Mormonism's most central and innovative doctrines (priesthood authority and structure, access to knowledge about the eternities, and the granting of temple "signs and words") turn on this important linguistic "key."

"The Keys of the Kingdom"

Contemporary Latter-day Saints are perhaps most familiar with "key" and "keys" in terms of priesthood office and authority. In the Mormon record, fully documented instances of the association between "keys" and specific authority occur as early as December 1830, when a revelation tells Joseph Smith: "by the keys which I [Christ] have given shall [Israel] be led, and no more confounded at all" (D&C 35:24–25).[8] Similar connections between "keys" and Church governance can be found in a number of the religious denominations active in the early Republic. At

7. The increased availability of online, full-text resources makes this moment particularly good for such projects, since researchers can rapidly discover how words may or may not have been used before entering Mormon discourse. For instance, Paul Mouritsen, "Secret Combinations and Flaxen Cords," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 64–77, makes astute use of the Making of America Archives at the University of Michigan (http://moa.umdl.umich.edu) and Cornell University (http://moa.cit.cornell.edu/moa) to identify how "secret combination" was used in a wide variety of contexts during the early nineteenth century.

8. D&C 7:7 and D&C 27:8, 12–13, 27 in our current edition mention "keys." These sections also appear in *A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ, Organized according to Law, on the 6th of April 1830* (Zion [Independence, Mo.]: W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833) but without those verses. Section 13 (Joseph and Oliver's ordination to the Aaronic Priesthood), although dated May 1829, did not appear in print until 1842, although Cowdery's account of the same episode, which mentions the "keys of the Gospel of repentance," ap-

the same time, opinions about what authoritative "keys" might actually be or do varied widely. As a result, attitudes toward the word itself were also diverse, ranging from acceptance and frequent use to relative disuse or even outright hostility.

Christ's statement to Peter provided the original rationale for associating "keys" with religious authority structures:

> Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
>
> And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matt. 16:18–19)

With these verses as a guide, Catholic theologians had long argued that the "keys of the kingdom" authorized Church governance and grounded the doctrine of papal succession. In the Catholic tradition, the power of the "keys" is the authority to excommunicate and pardon.[9]

Reinterpreting this passage was central to the origins of Protestantism. Martin Luther, while accepting the concept that the power of the

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peared in *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 1 (October 1834): 13–15. Some scholars take these and other passages (D&C 68:15; D&C 5:6, 13–14, 17), missing from the 1833 Book of Commandments, as evidence that Mormon conceptions of priesthood authority changed significantly between 1829 and 1835. See D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1994), 14–17; Dan Vogel, *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), 110–11, 119; and Wilford C. Wood, *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*, 2 vols. (N.p.: Privately published, 1962), 2:60. For a valuable compilation of textual differences between the 1833 *Book of Commandments* and the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints: Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God . . .* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams & Co., 1835), see Robert J. Woodford, *The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1974).

9. For a review of the interpretation of this passage in medieval Catholicism, see Joseph Ludwig, *Die Primatworte Mt. 16,18.19 in der altkirchlichen exegese* (Münster, Germany: Aschendorffsche Verlag, 1952). Also, see Carl M. Leth, "Balthasar Hubmaier's 'Catholic' Exegesis: Matthew 16:18–19 and the Power of the Keys," *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation*, edited by Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 103–17. More recently, G. H. Joyce, "Power of the Keys," in *The*

"keys" was exercised primarily through excommunication and pardon, rejected lineal succession. Citing Matthew 18:18, in which Christ grants all twelve disciples the power to "bind" on earth and in heaven, Luther concluded that "the keys" were not meant to be held by one man alone but were "given to St. Peter in the stead of the whole Church, and not for his own person."[10]

Over the next several centuries, numerous Protestant denominations followed Luther in arguing that the "keys of the kingdom" were held by the body of the Church. In 1610, for instance, Puritan John Robinson rejected the lineal transfer of authority and the claim that the "keys" are "tied to any office, or order in the church" as a "deep delusion of the antichrist." Instead, keys should be considered synonymous with the "gospel of Christ," which, in turn, was clearly intended as a gift to the whole church: "It therefore followeth, that the keys are given to all and every member alike."[11] In 1644, John Cotton responded to Robinson's broad definition in an unsuccessful attempt to differentiate the function of multiple "keys." Cotton saw danger in theologizing about the term, stating that the "Keyes of the Kingdom. . . being Allegoricall, are therefore somewhat obscure: and holding forth honor and power in the Church, are

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Catholic Encyclopedia, edited by Charles G. Herbermann, 15 vols. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910), 8:632, acknowledges the historical association of the "keys" with the gift of ecclesiastical authority "in its widest scope," a gift "peculiar to St. Peter and his successors in the chief pastorate"; however, Joyce also stresses that the "keys" to "bind" and "loose" refer specifically to the "power to forgive sins." F. A. Sullivan, however, updating the same entry in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by Bernard L. Marthaler, 14 vols. (New York: Thomson/Gale, 2003), 8:162–63, elides the issue of forgiveness entirely, stressing that Christ conferred upon Peter "vicarious authority over His household on earth, that is, over the Church."

10. According to Luther, "If a Christian sins, he shall be rebuked, and if he does not amend his ways, he shall be bound and cast out. . . . This the power of the keys." Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Churches," *Works of Martin Luther* (no translator identified), 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1915–32), 1:373.

11. John Robinson, "Mr. Bernard's Reasons against Separation Discussed," *The Works of John Robinson*, 3 vols (1610; reprinted, Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1851), 2:157. Like Robinson's tract, many of the Puritan documents I cite were frequently republished during the nineteenth century.

therefore controversall."[12] Yet the allegorical and controversial nature of "Keyes" did not deter Cotton from attempting a more precise definition differentiating between keys in general (held by the laity) and the keys of governance (held by the elders). While Robinson's doctrine seemed to authorize how much self-determination individual churches could have, Cotton's goal was to maintain orthodoxy across congregations. The "key of *power* . . . belongeth to the church itself" and is, along with the "*key of knowledge*" (which, for Cotton, was simply another name for "*key of Faith*" mentioned in Luke 11:52), "common to all believers." In contrast, though, the "key of *Authoritie* or *Rule*" belonged exclusively to "the Elders of the Church."[13] By defining these categories, Cotton hoped to retain the shared inheritance of "keys" that had always been fundamental to Protestantism while allowing some degree of authority and hierarchy.

However, Cotton's redefinition of the "keys of the kingdom" was somewhat anomalous in the Puritan tradition. Rather than accepting and elaborating Cotton's fine distinctions, later figures—particularly those writing in the American context—avoided attaching specific functions to specific keys. For instance, in 1712, Richard Mather, father of the eminent Increase Mather, first apologized for even using the term "keys," and then argued that "the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven, *whatsoever they are,* be committed to the whole Church, & not to one Person only."[14] Mather's statement reinforces the distribution of authority crucial to Protestantism

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12. John Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven and Power Thereof, according to the Word of God . . . Tending to Reconcile Some Present Differences about Discipline* (London: M. Simmons for Henry Overson, 1644; reprinted, Boston: Tappan and Dennet, 1843), 19.

13. Cotton concedes that Christ gave "the power of the keys to the Body . . . of the Church," but conferred "the power of retaining or remitting of sins (that is . . . the whole power of the keys) to all the Apostles as well as to Peter" and the Apostles, in turn, "commended the rule and government of every particular Church to the Elders." Ibid., 23–24. He also discusses the "key of *power* or *liberty*" (26), "the *key of Faith*" (29), the "*key of Order*" (29), and the "key of *Authoritie* or *Rule*" (35, 51–52).

14. Mather used the term "keys" only, he said, in hopes that a brief discussion would "avoid confusion." Richard Mather, *An Answer to Two Questions: Question I. Whether does the power of church government belong to all the people, or to the elders alone? Question II. Whether does any church power, or any power of the keys be-*

as far back as Luther, but avoids offering more than a vague sense of what the keys might actually be or do.

Other American denominations were moving even more briskly away from governing "keys" toward a less hierarchical religious structure and rhetoric. For instance, early nineteenth-century pamphlets in which ministers described their own callings often reveal a strong distaste for claims to authority. In 1819, Joseph Tuckerman reminded a newly appointed Unitarian minister and his congregation that no "authority" or "dominion" comes to a minister by virtue of his position; it is wrong to "pretend that we confer any new powers by the acts of ordination."[15] Among Baptists and Quakers, the "pastoral tie" was considered a contractual arrangement between clergy and congregation, a position "diametrically opposed to the doctrine of the Romish church, which regards orders as a holy sacrament, conveying an indelible character, flowing down by regular succession from the apostles."[16]

When "keys of the kingdom" appears in the religious discourse of the early Republic, it is usually derided as a "Romish" error. For instance, Charles Buck's popular Protestant reference work, *A Theological Dictionary* (1818), begins the entry on "keys" with a broad discussion of ecclesiastical power but quickly turns to a lengthy enumeration of alleged Catholic her-

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long to the people? / Written by the Reverend, Mr. Richard Mather, who was for many year an eminent teacher of the church in Dorchester in N.E.; Published by his son, Increase Mather, D.D. (Boston: B. Green, 1712), 22; emphasis mine.

15. Joseph Tuckerman, *A Sermon, Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Samuel Gilman* (Charleston, S.C.: Miller, 1819), 30. A quarter-century later, Henry Denison Kitchel, *Who Gave Thee This Authority?* (Hartford, Conn.: John Paine, 1844), 5–7, argued that "ministerial authority consists in no mysterious prerogative or official virtue, investing its acts with supernatural efficacy."

16. Henry Tuke, *The Principles of Religion, As Professed by the Society of Christians, Called Friends* (New York: Samuel Wood, 1819), 66–67. Among Baptists, Nehemiah Dodge taught that clerical authority rests "with the church to which the person belongs"; the church, in turn, invites a specific preacher to exercise the "grace and gifts" of the keys in a "public manner." Nehemiah Dodge, *Descriptions of Gospel Ministers and Their Internal Call* (Exeter, N.H.: Josiah Richardson, 1819), 7–8. On ideas about authority and Church governance between 1800 and 1820 as they relate to the origins of Mormonism, see David Holland, "Priest, Pastor, and Power: Joseph Smith and the Question of Priesthood," *Restoration Archive Fellows' Papers* (Provo, Utah: JFS Institute Working Papers Series, 1997).

esies. Chief among these was the notion that Peter was the sole recipient of authority to govern: rather, "every faithful minister" holds "the keys."[17] By the 1840s, even denominations like the Episcopal Methodists, which often stressed their ability to trace a line of ordination back to Peter through the Church of England, began to distance themselves from the idea of authoritative, lineal keys.[18]

As this sample suggests, several different streams may have carried the phrase "the keys of the kingdom" into Joseph Smith's linguistic milieu.[19] And of course, the biblical passages that first gave rise to the term would have been available to any diligent student of scripture, since Matthew 16, Isaiah 22:20–23, and Revelation 3:7 also associate the "key of David" with governance. However, use of the word "keys" may have been burdened by association with the oft-assailed Catholic belief in the succession of authority.

It is perhaps not surprising that attitudes toward the concept of "keys" are ambivalent and often contradictory, given the intense debates over authority that characterized religious and political life in the early years of the United States. Nathan O. Hatch has suggested that denominations forming the core of the Second Great Awakening held deeply paradoxical attitudes toward authority—many churches "articulated a profoundly democratic spirit" even as they endeavored to establish and maintain organizational coherence and hierarchy. Hatch, working in the tradition of Max Weber, notes that a strongly egalitarian impulse mani-

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17. Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary Containing Definitions of All Religious Terms . . .*, 5th ed. (Philadelphia: Woodward for Woodward, 1818), 246.

18. Peter Douglass Gorrie, *Episcopal Methodism, As It Was, and Is . . .* (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby and Miller, 1852), 251, wondered whether Methodism should continue to trace ordination through the Roman Catholic Church when even some Catholic clergy questioned the veracity of unbroken lineal descent. For a sketch of Methodist ideas about authority and lineal succession, see Marie Mackey, "Priesthood and Ecclesiastical Structure in Early Nineteenth-Century Methodism and Mormonism," *Restoration Archive Fellows' Papers* (Provo, Utah: Working Papers Series, Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, 1998).

19. Milton V. Backman Jr., "Awakenings in the Burned-over District: New Light on the Historical Setting of the First Vision," *BYU Studies* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1969): 301–20, has shown that many of the denominations discussed here may have been active or influential in upstate New York during Joseph Smith's youth.

fested itself across a wide range of denominations, expressed as a rejection of elitism and rhetorical opposition to authoritarian governance. At the same time, these denominations were themselves often hierarchical in structure, based, for instance, on the exclusive authority of a small number of leaders or even a single individual. Hatch highlights the contradiction in Francis Asbury's Methodism by noting that he "used authoritarian means to build a church that would not be a respecter of persons."[20] Indeed, as the disagreement between John Cotton and Richard Mather shows, differing attitudes about religious authority often existed within the same tradition. This tension may account for a reluctance either to embrace or fully discard the "keys of the kingdom" as a central doctrinal concept. In general, studies of this period by Mormon historians have reached similarly nuanced conclusions, suggesting that both the establishment of democratic governance practices *and* claims to legitimate divine authority were of great interest to denominations active during the Second Great Awakening.[21]

However, none of these early nineteenth-century instances of "keys" predict the central role the word would play in Mormon priesthood theology. If anything, the association of "keys of the kingdom" with Catholic and Episcopal notions of hierarchy and authority would have predicted the opposite, given probable anti-papal sentiment among potential converts. Yet despite its most common association, Joseph Smith made extensive use of the phrase "keys of the kingdom," reinventing the term and transforming it into a foundational concept in Latter-day Saint priesthood theology.

The word "keys" appears only once in the Book of Mormon: Zoram carries the "keys" that allow Nephi to unlock Laban's treasury and retrieve the "plates of brass" that became scripture for Lehi and his descen-

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20. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 9–11. See also Max Weber, *Economy and Society,* edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 20:1121.

21. Mario S. De Pillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1 (Spring 1966): 68–88. Dan Vogel, *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), 97–101, points out that "Seekers" were awaiting a dramatic restoration of religious authority, but his analysis of Seeker statements about authority suggests that the group did not use the word extensively, if at all.

dants (1 Ne. 4:20, 24). Yet latter-day revelation introduces the word early. The three earliest verifiable uses of "keys" imply specific ecclesiastical authority and a purposeful distribution of organizational responsibilities: In April 1829, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery are given "the keys of this gift [translation], which shall bring to light this ministry" (D&C 6:28); in June 1830, the Lord promises that "by the keys which I have given shall [Israel] be led"; and, in the same section, Smith is granted "the keys of the mystery of those things which have been sealed" (D&C 35:24–25, 17–18).[22] Through the granting of discrete "keys," these revelations establish specific avenues through which God can communicate with his chosen people.

These early references recall several uses of "keys of the kingdom" available in the early nineteenth century but do not wholly adopt any of them. Instead, these passages establish a crucial feature of Joseph Smith's usage: They link specific "keys" to discrete responsibilities and authorities; these "keys" are then entrusted to a limited number of persons: some open the way for the exercise of the gift of translation, others authorize Joseph Smith to lead Israel, and still others suggest access to certain "sealed" mysteries. All three of these capabilities, although they rest on priesthood authority, are not automatically conferred upon all recipients of the priesthood—not every elder may translate or lead Israel. In this sense, early revelations set the stage for the later elaboration of a complex system of specific priesthood offices and capabilities, each possessing its own "key" (see D&C 107). The result is a system in which authority is at once hierarchically structured and widely, even democratically, distributed among a diverse array of offices open to an ever-increasing percentage of male Saints. This diversification brings to mind the tentative efforts at differentiating the "keys" undertaken by John Cotton, but far exceeds it in scope and specificity. While this model of priesthood organization developed significantly between 1829 and 1835, it retained the basic trajectory established early on: the increasing expansion, differentiation, and distribution of priesthood capabilities and offices.[23]

The years following these early revelations brought a further distribution of "keys" to a growing group of priesthood holders. In February

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22. I treat in this article only those D&C verses that also appear in the 1833 *Book of Commandments*.

23. As already noted, some scholars argue for significantly less continuity in

1831, Joseph and twelve elders all received "the keys of the church" (D&C 42:69); in 1832, members of the "High Priesthood" and the "lesser Priesthood" received keys and offices within these two priesthoods (D&C 81:1-2; 84:19, 25-26). The full phrase "keys of the kingdom" also entered Mormon prophetic discourse during this period, although the first fully documented appearance, in October 1831, did not make the meaning of the term explicit (D&C 65:2). In the spring of 1832, a revelation to Frederick G. Williams explained that "the keys of the kingdom" belong exclusively to "the Presidency of the High Priesthood" (D&C 81:1-2). Joseph Smith, in his 1832 personal history, links the "Kees of the Kingdom of God" to an "ordinence from on high to preach the Gospel" and to the "confirmation and reception of the high Priesthood."[24] In the next three years, two documents clarified this priesthood structure of keys and offices. A March 1833 revelation specified that the First Presidency holds the "keys of this last kingdom" along with the Prophet, but those keys are to be handled "through [Joseph Smith's] administration" (D&C 90:3, 6-7). Later revelations clarified the keys held by the president of the Twelve (D&C 112:16-17) and the patriarch (D&C 124:91-92). By March 1835, the "keys or authority" of the priesthood meant the "right to offici-

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Mormon priesthood theology during this period: an early dedication to "charismatic" authority, individual spirituality, and prophetic expressiveness that rapidly gave way between 1829 and 1835 to a hierarchical and authoritarian system headed by Joseph Smith. See Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 156; Vogel, *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism*, 53; Gregory A. Prince, *Power from On High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 10-42; and Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, 7. I argue, however, that there are significant continuities during the same period, particularly in the development of the priesthood doctrines, even as I acknowledge the ongoing debate over the date of the conferral of the Melchizedek Priesthood by Peter, James, and John. See Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, 20-25; Vogel, *Religious Seekers*, 101-2; Brian Q. Cannon and BYU Studies Staff, "Priesthood Restoration Documents," *BYU Studies* 35, no. 4 (1995-96), 162-208; and Larry C. Porter, "The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods," *Ensign* 26, no. 12 (December 1996), 30-47.

24. "A History of the Life . . ." in *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, edited by Dean C. Jessee, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 1:3. Jessee dates this history's composition between July 20 and November 27, 1832.

ate" in certain standings, the power to "administer in spiritual things," and the right to "power and authority" over "the offices in the church" (D&C 107:8, 10). Six years later, yet another revelation explained the rationale for this distribution: "The above offices I have given unto you, and the keys thereof, for helps and for governments, for the work of the ministry and the perfecting of my saints" (D&C 124:143).[25]

Thus, the concept of "keys" did not leap fully formed into Latter-day Saint theology. Rather, early Mormon documents suggest a gradual process by which a term that was variously moribund, disputed, or viewed with suspicion in other early American denominations was gradually revived and elaborated. In this sense, the word functioned as a doctrinal heuristic around which Joseph Smith significantly reworked familiar ideas about Church governance and divine authority. Over time, he used the "keys of the kingdom" to reclaim the idea of an earthly church built on a hierarchical priesthood structure with divinely authorized prophets and apostles at its head, but which also distributed that priesthood's powers, rights, and responsibilities.

"The Key of Knowledge"

The first definition I have traced—the right to officiate in a specific priesthood office or duty—dominates contemporary LDS understanding of "keys." However, as historian Jill Mulvay Derr and her associates have pointed out, the ascendancy of this limited definition is a relatively recent development: Only during the last half of the twentieth century did the word come to be "precisely defined by Latter-day Saints, and is now exclusively associated with the right to direct the exercise of priesthood authority. These recent refinements in usage, like earlier revisions and clarifying comments, illustrate church leaders' efforts over the past one hundred and fifty years to define and strengthen administrative channels of priesthood authority."[26] *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism* gives a similar sense of this current, more limited usage by subsuming all discussion of "keys" under the entry, "Keys of the Priesthood." "Keys" are narrowly defined as an

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25. Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of the Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 39–40, similarly review this gradual elaboration of priesthood power.

26. Ibid., 49–50.

ordained male's right to "preside over a priesthood function, quorum, or organizational division of the Church."[27] While this priesthood denotation was certainly one aspect of early Mormon discourse, the current preeminence of "keys" as shorthand for "Keys of the Priesthood" threatens to displace two other important meanings developed by Joseph Smith. The first is the idea that a "key" functions as a tool for interpreting or accessing hidden, mysterious, or obscure knowledge—as a way of "obtaining, in the Prophet's words, 'knowledge and intelligence' from God."[28]

As with "keys of the kingdom," the idea that a key might yield access to greater religious knowledge has several precedents in the verbal universe of the early Republic, though none of these fully anticipate Mormon theological usage. Scriptural sources again provide a starting point. In the New Testament, for example, Christ used "key" in a way not clearly associated with the "keys of the kingdom" when he criticized the scribes and Pharisees: "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Luke 11:50–54). Although the context is lim-

27. Alan K. Parrish, "Keys of the Priesthood," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 2:780. A word-search of recent Church publications supports Parrish's point in principle, although "key" retains a certain degree of ambiguity, even in correlated discourse. For example, Elder Durrell A. Woolsey, "An Eternal Key," *Ensign*, November 1990, 43, refers to "priesthood keys of leadership *and* other keys of presidency" (emphasis mine), as if distinguishing between varieties of priesthood and nonpriesthood governance. The meaning discussed in this section that a "key" is a route to greater spiritual knowledge appears in Thomas S. Monson, "The Key of Faith," *Ensign*, February 1994, 2, in which "faith" functions as "the sacred key needed to unlock the treasure which we so much seek." However, James E. Faust, "The Key of the Knowledge of God," *Ensign*, November 2004, 52, apparently sees a less flexible connection between priesthood and knowledge: "Without the [greater] priesthood there can be no fullness of the knowledge of God." An anonymous reviewer usefully noted that official discourse does not necessarily match the laiety's everyday practice; however, my sense is that most contemporary members associate "key" mostly, if not exclusively, with priesthood authority or office.

28. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 48. The quotation comes from Eliza R. Snow's minutes of the Nauvoo Relief Society meeting, April 28, 1842. See "A Record of the Organization, and Proceedings of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo" (hereafter Relief Society Minutes), Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

ited, "knowledge" obviously serves here as a gateway to spiritual growth, and lack of a "key" can prevent the earnest seeker from "entering in." While John Cotton treated the "key of knowledge" in this passage as a synonym for faith,[29] the note on this passage (52c) from the Joseph Smith Translation in the current (1979) LDS edition of the Bible reads: "the key of knowledge, *the fulness of the scriptures.*" Thus, in Joseph Smith's recasting of this passage, the scribes and Pharisees have withheld accurate knowledge of scriptural texts from the people.

Correlates to this New Testament idea—that access to the right key opens the way to important knowledge—would have been easy to find during Joseph Smith's lifetime. For example, the usage can be seen in the titles of popular exposés claiming to reveal the inner workings of religious, political, or fraternal organizations. In Antonio Gavin's *A Master-Key to Popery: In Five Parts*, the "key" provided was a detailed (and often rather fantastic) description of the activities and rituals of the Catholic clergy.[30] Publications detailing the inner workings of Freemasonry used similar terminology, although not always on the title page. (See below.) Similarly, "key" was often associated with the concept of a cipher or interpretive apparatus. The opening section of *The Royal Standard English Dictionary . . . First American Edition*, published in 1788, contains "A KEY to this WORK" intended to make the dictionary "intelligible to the weakest Capacity" by explaining the "various sounds of the Vowels and Consonants" used therein.[31] This meaning remains familiar today.

A related use, perhaps closer in spirit to that found in Luke, appears in popular religious writings of the early Republic. In 1787, Lawrence Price published a self-help work that proclaimed itself *A Key to Open Heaven's Gate or A Ready Path Way to Lead to Heaven.* Somewhat less dramatic than its title, the text recommends such uncomplicated strategies as

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29. Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom*, 29, 23–24, states that some "keys" should be "common to all believers" and that "the *key of Faith*, is the same which the Lord Jesus calleth the *key of knowledge.*"

30. Antonio Gavin, *A Master-Key to Popery: In Five Parts* (Newport, R.I.: Solomon Southwick, 1773). The *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed. (1989) defines "key" as "that which serves to open up, disclose, or explain what is unknown, mysterious, or obscure; a solution or explanation" and cites the first example from A.D. 897. Retrieved on November 11, 2004, from http://dictionary.oed.com.

31. Perry William, *The Royal Standard English Dictionary . . . First American Edition* (Worcester, Mass.: Isaiah Thomas, 1788), title page.

loving one's neighbor. Once understood and put into practice, "true knowledge and understanding may very well be termed, 'A key to open the gates of heaven.'"[32]

These three related uses suggest a definition of "key" as a piece of information or protocol that reveals hidden knowledge or opens the way to previously inaccessible rewards. However, these uses also suggest a limit to the enlightenment that can be accessed—they posit a one-to-one correspondence between the key and the benefit gained. Like the key to a map or dictionary, *A Master-Key to Popery* or *A Key to Open Heaven's Gate* leave little room for extrapolation, interpretation, transferability, or an increase of the reader's capability or authority. Once the exposé has unfolded its secrets or the self-help strategies have been followed, the usefulness of the "key" has been exhausted. In this sense, the "keys of knowledge" introduced by Joseph Smith differ significantly from these early nineteenth-century meanings. His Nauvoo-period "keys" invariably convey a sense of unfolding individual awareness—an enabling paradigm shift—on the part of the person who makes diligent use of the concept. The possessor is able, through a combination of heavenly intervention and personal effort, to gain increased access to spiritual knowledge and greater power or influence for good.

At least in the beginning, this second sense of the word seems to have emerged together with the first, priesthood-associated meaning. For example, it is a "key" that connects Joseph Smith's priesthood authority with his ability to reveal knowledge: the "greater Priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God" (D&C 84:19). Although the specific kinds of knowledge to be made known are not outlined in this September 1832 revelation, it is the "greater Priesthood" that permits special access to the mysteries. A similarly hybrid usage occurs even earlier in references to the gift of translation: the "key" to the gift of translation is

32. Laurence Price, *A Key to Open Heaven's Gate or A Ready Path Way to Lead to Heaven* (Worcester, Mass.: [Isaiah Thomas], 1787), 4. See also Thomas Boston, *A Key to Heaven; or, A Call to Flee from the Wrath to Come . . .* (Exeter, N.H.: H. Ranlet, 1796) or David Austin, *The Millennium; or the Thousand Years of Prosperity* (Elizabethtown, N.J.: Kollock, 1794), 409–11.

both a specific authority given to Smith and access to a new kind of knowledge (D&C 6:28).[33]

Although revelations such as these evoke the key-as-authority and key-as-route-to-knowledge definitions simultaneously, the two meanings are just as frequently differentiated in early Mormon discourse, particularly as priesthood keys come to be more narrowly associated with specific offices. By the Nauvoo period, the "key[s] of knowledge" introduced to the Saints do not necessarily require direct priesthood authority or office to function once they have been revealed. For example, in January 1843, Smith explained his specific method for interpreting scripture: "I have a Key by which I understand the scriptures—I enquire what was the question which drew out the answer."[34] Although Smith's prophetic calling is the conduit through which this "Key" is revealed, any listener, member or otherwise, might fruitfully employ it.

Furthermore, although this "Key" aids interpretation just as the legend at the front of a dictionary does, Joseph Smith goes beyond a one-to-one equivalency between the "key" and the secret, a mere decoding. Rather, the advice he gives is intended to provoke a fundamental shift in the reader's understanding of the scriptures that might be transferable to other contexts. When considering any passage of scripture, he advises the reader to reflect on the circumstances that may have prompted it, rather than simply interpreting the passage in isolation. In this example, the specific question involved the parable of the prodigal son. Smith began his exegesis by quoting Luke and reminding his listeners that the Pharisees condemned Christ because he "'receiveth sinners,

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33. Others close to the Prophet also manifest mixed usage. For example, Oliver Cowdery lectures those who presume to judge Joseph Smith, "as though they themselves held the keys of the mysteries of heaven, and had searched the archives of the generations of the world." "Letter II," *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 2 (November 1834): 32. W. W. Phelps describes a prophet as one "who held the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and could unlock the door that led to heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and gaze upon what was, and is, and is to come." "Letter No. 9," *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 10 (July 1835): 145. Both are clearly tied to priesthood but vague about the exact nature of that tie.

34. Address, January 23, 1843, Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 161; Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev. 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1902–32; 1967 printing), 5:261.

and eateth with them.' This is the keyword which unlocks the parable of the prodigal son."[35]

This "keyword" differs significantly from that "key" provided by an exposé of Catholicism or Masonry, where the reader passively observes as a secret is disclosed. Rather, Joseph's "keyword" requires the active realignment of an individual's assumptions and approach to a problem: Only then can the listener access formerly mysterious truths about God and his teachings. Furthermore, this mode of learning may be practiced by anyone who learns about the "Key" and is willing to use it. In this sense, such "keys" stressed knowledge that was gained personally rather than being dictated by clergy or even revealed through a prophet. Smith provides the "key," but the individual student must study the parable in its light. During the Nauvoo period, "key" was frequently used in this way: as a piece of information or a technique that could transform the way the Saints saw the world.[36]

Such a recognition of the individual's capacity to acquire knowledge can be seen in another use of "key" during the Nauvoo period. On May 21, 1843, Joseph Smith described three "keys" to help the Saints gain salvation: first, that "Knowledge is the power of Salvation"; second, that the Saints are to "Make [their] calling and Election Sure"; and third, that "it is one thing to be on the mount & hear the excellent voice &c &c. and another to hear the voice declare to you you have a part & lot in the kingdom."[37] Although Smith's meaning is somewhat ambiguous, the statement affirms, on the one hand, that knowledge is intimately connected with salvation (3 Ne. 5:20), and, on the other hand, that each individual must personally seek "Salvation." The intriguing third key reinforces this point by distinguishing between passive recipients of "the excellent voice &c &c" and those whose engagement with revelation gives them "a part & lot in the kingdom." This passage reinforces the

35. Ibid., 161.

36. For example, in 1840 the Saints received "a key: every principle proceeding from God is eternal and any principle which is not eternal is of the devil." In an April 1842 editorial, a key was provided to "try the spirits" and identify those that came from God. In December 1842, "false teachers and imposters" could be detected by this key: they will "[deny] the spirit of prophecy." Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 181, 204, 269. These "keys" do not depend on priesthood office or authority for their application.

37. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 206.

idea that Smith's "key[s] of Knowledge" complement the operations of the priesthood "keys of the kingdom." Where priesthood keys operate in a top-down fashion, distributing revelation and governance through authorized and highly structured channels, "key[s] of knowledge" establish an opposed, but complementary, channel for the acquisition of eternal truth. Each individual is responsible for acquiring or accepting "key(s) of knowledge," then putting them to personal use to come closer to salvation and provide eternal benefit to those around them. Smith revealed this same concept in April 1843: that whatever principle of "knowledge" and "intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection" (D&C 130:18–19).

Statements by other prominent, early Latter-day Saints provide evidence that the connection between a "key of knowledge" and individual spiritual development had caught hold of Smith's audience.[38] Eliza R. Snow's poem, now the text for the popular hymn "O My Father," explains:

> I had learned to call thee Father,
> Thru thy Spirit from on high;
> But, until the key of knowledge
> Was restored, I knew not why.[39]

Here, the "key of knowledge" is the doctrine, apparently taught on several occasions by Joseph Smith, that God the Father has a female counter-

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38. The equivalency between "key" and something that opens the way to the unknown or obscure recurs throughout the nineteenth century. The writings of Orson and Parley Pratt provide two of the most familiar continuities in this regard, since both published theological treatises with titles in which "key" figures prominently. Parley P. Pratt introduces his book with the hope that his work will provide "an introductory key to some of the first principles of the divine science . . . [and] if it serves to open the eyes of any of his fellowmen, on the facts of the past, the present, and the future . . . it will have accomplished the end aimed at by THE AUTHOR," Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855), xiv; similar uses occur in Orson Pratt, *The Key to the Universe* (Liverpool: William Budge, 1879).

39. Eliza R. Snow, "My Father in Heaven," *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 17 (November 15, 1845): 1039.

part.[40] This knowledge of divine parentage, of a Mother in Heaven, affirms Snow's original feeling that "Father" is an appropriate form of address. Like the "key" that will enable readers to better interpret all of Christ's parables, this revealed piece of information can transform paradigms—in this case, Snow's conception of deity. Yet she must also apply her own understanding—her own "reason"—to ratify the implications of this crucial "key of knowledge" as part of her ongoing petition to God for more knowledge. She first poses, then answers, a rhetorical question:

> In the heavens are parents single?
> No, the thought makes reason stare!
> Truth is reason; truth eternal
> Tells me I've a mother there.

Although the "key" revealed by Joseph Smith puts Snow's speaker on the track to greater knowledge, she must confirm and process the key's significance using her own "reason." The uncertainty of the first stanza ("When shall I regain thy presence?" and "Was I nurtured by your side?") is transformed into confident and deeply personal entreaties to her heavenly parents: "Father, Mother, may I meet you / In your royal courts on high?" and "With your mutual approbation / Let me come and dwell with you." This "key" resolves the speaker's crisis of knowledge about the nature of deity and affirm her self-worth as the child of two eternal parents.

The complex relationship between priesthood "keys," which channel revelation, and individuals' use of revealed "key[s] of knowledge" is useful in interpreting another important but sometimes controversial moment in Mormon history: Joseph Smith's address to the Relief Society on April 28, 1842.[41] Smith explained: "This Society is to get instruction thro' the order which God has established—thro' the medium of those appointed to lead—and I now turn the key to you in the name of God and this Society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down

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40. See Linda P. Wilcox, "The Mormon Concept of a Mother in Heaven," in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 65–67.

41. My analysis of this event owes a large debt—both in terms of argument and evidence—to Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 23–58.

from this time."[42] If "keys" are understood to be exclusively associated with the authorized exercise of a priesthood office, the phrase "I now turn the key to you" becomes difficult to interpret. In fact, it seems that, as early as 1855, the Quorum of the Twelve worried that this phrasing might imply that the Prophet had granted the Relief Society some form of priesthood authority. The quorum solved that problem by amending Eliza R. Snow's minutes, changing "I now turn the key to you" to read "I now turn the key in your behalf."[43] Yet, the anxiety about possible misinterpretation expressed in such a change relies on an anachronistically narrow concept of what Joseph Smith meant by using "key" in his address to the Relief Society. Because Joseph Smith was operating with multiple meanings of that word during the Nauvoo period, readings of the phrase "I turn the key to you" should consider how these other meanings may have influenced the reception of his statement.[44] That is, as we have seen, not all of Joseph Smith's "keys" require priesthood office to function. Joseph Fielding Smith clarified in 1958 that not all legitimate forms of religious authority come through the priesthood: "While the sisters have not been given the priesthood, it has not been conferred upon them, that does not mean the Lord has not given unto them authority.

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42. "Relief Society Minutes," 28 April 1842, quoted in ibid., 47. Original spelling preserved.

43. "Relief Society Minutes," April 28, 1842; see Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 49; and *History of the Church*, 4:604–7.

44. That Joseph Smith did not narrowly define the term "keys" as priesthood authority can be seen from other sections of his address to the Relief Society the same day. "He exhorted the sisters always to concentrate their faith and prayers for, and place confidence in those whom God has appointed to honor, whom God has placed at the head to lead–that we should arm them with our prayers–that the keys of the kingdom are about to be given to them, that they may be able to detect every thing false–as well as to the Elders." "Relief Society Minutes," April 28, 1842. This statement is best read as a reference to the long-promised "keys" of discernment to be received in the temple endowment that was introduced to both men and women a few days later on May 4, 1842. See "Keyword as Password" below. According to Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 447 note 80, "Whether, on this occasion, the Prophet was referring to Relief Society or priesthood leaders 'placed at the head to lead' is not clear." The same uncertainty can be seen in Smith's statement: "This society is to get instruction thro' the order which God has established–thro' the medium of those appointed to lead."

Authority and priesthood are two different things."[45] By "turning the key" to the sisters, Joseph Smith may not have conferred the priesthood, but he did grant the "Relief Society the authority to act in all things within the scope of its commission."[46] From my perspective, the 1855 decision to revise Snow's minutes signals the rapidity with which some Nauvoo-period definitions lost ground in Mormon discourse to the single concept of "Priesthood keys."

As Nauvoo documents show, however, "key" could carry both a priesthood meaning (hierarchical channels of instruction and governance) and a "key of knowledge" connotation, suggesting the individual reception and deployment of crucial revealed information. Indeed, it may have been the very flexibility of the term that made it so appealing to Joseph Smith at a time when he was introducing new ideas at a rapid rate. In the end, the temple endowment—the most important of these novel doctrines—linked the two uses of the word. While very limited elements of current Mormon temple worship were introduced in Kirtland in 1836, the full endowment was first introduced in Nauvoo on May 4, 1842, and to a widening circle of Saints from then on. In those ceremonies, an emerging variation on the "key of knowledge" described routes or principles by which one might acquire greater knowledge of the mysteries of heaven. However, its defining feature was an emphasis, not on discrete bits of knowledge or protocols for learning, but on embodied signs or words that functioned as "keys."

"Keyword" as Password

An important revelation that signaled the emergence of this new, radically embodied meaning of "key" related to the nature of heavenly messengers. In February 1843, Joseph Smith explained how to differentiate among three kinds of eternal beings: "When a messenger comes saying he has a message from God, offer him your hand and request him to shake hands with you." The being would respond in one of three ways, his choice signalling "three grand keys whereby you may know whether any administration is from God" (D&C 129:9). On one hand, this revelation provided a simple method for discerning between good and evil. On the

45. Joseph Fielding Smith, quoted in Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 49.

46. Ibid., 48.

other hand, this test goes beyond the merely practical by implying a new system for understanding both the nature of eternal beings and the interaction of the heavenly and earthly spheres. Even more importantly, it allowed each individual Saint to actively participate in the order of heaven by granting any person who knew the method to act as arbiter in the transmission of knowledge from heaven to earth. Anyone could, without the aid of priesthood authority, judge for himself or herself whether "any administration is from God."

Finally, this gesture—offering to shake the hand of an otherworldly visitor—alludes to an element of corporeality and concreteness that is new to the notion of a "key" in Mormon discourse. That is, why would properly recognizing heavenly personages require the physical token of a handshake? In this section, I explore how physical as well as verbal tokens begin to take on increasing importance during the Nauvoo period, a shift signaled, in part, by Joseph Smith's introduction and increasingly frequent use of "keyword" rather than just "key."[47] This change in terminology from "key" to "keyword" implies that individual utterances or physical gestures, like the handshake specified in Doctrine and Covenants 129, can grant the individual who gives the test significant power to find truth. On one hand, the idea that a "key" might serve as a password or shibboleth conforms with the second definition I have sketched, in that use of the "key" promises knowledge, transformed understanding, and even a kind of authority. On the other hand, it also modifies that second definition by lending it specificity and physicality. That is, while the "key to knowledge" is typically an abstract principle or concept, this new kind

47. Smith used "keyword" somewhat ambiguously in describing his method for interpreting parables. "This is the keyword" seems to refer to an entire sentence from the New Testament rather than to just one word ("'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.' This is the keyword which unlocks the parable of the prodigal son.") Elsewhere, the Prophet refers to single "keywords." For example, after acknowledging that he did not yet have prophetic insight into every difficult textual question, he stated in April 1843: "Everything that we have not a keyword to, we will take as it reads." Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 298. In the same address (April 8, 1843), while explicating Revelation 12:9, Smith explained: "[There] is a mistranslation of the word dragon in the second verse": it should be translated "devil" and not "dragon"—"I give this as a key to the elders of Israel." Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 187.

of "grand key" or "keyword" is necessarily embodied—a spoken phrase or physical action.

It was in his public discourses at Nauvoo that Joseph Smith began to explain how certain gestures and utterances might act as "keywords" in opening the way to greater celestial knowledge and in empowering the Saints to enter God's presence. In a sermon on May 1, 1842, Smith defined "the Keys" as "certain signs and words by which false spirits and personages may be detected from true, which cannot be revealed to the Elders till the Temple is completed . . . . The Elders must know them all to be endowed with power."[48] Because the "signs and words" learned in the endowment were both an expression of priesthood authority and a way of literally placing keys to knowledge and salvation in the hands of individual Church members, this new "keys" doctrine brought the hierarchical implications of the "keys of the kingdom" and the democratic implications of the "key[s] of knowledge" into even closer communication.

An important part of explaining distinctively Mormon uses of "the keys of the kingdom" and "the key of knowledge" in this essay has been examining their linguistic context. But in understanding keys as "certain signs or words," such an approach becomes both more challenging and more controversial, entwined as it is with debates about the origins of Mormon temple worship. Scholars have advanced explanations ranging from revelation to wholesale plagiarism. My discussion, however, focuses on ideas about "keywords" that may have been available in the linguistic culture of the early Republic, highlighting Joseph Smith's heuristic use of the term in gradually introducing new doctrines to the Saints.

Few antecedents match precisely the concept of a "key" as a sign or password as it appears in Mormon temple worship. Where potential nineteenth-century sources do exist, it is often difficult to establish a genealogy by which the word may have passed into Joseph Smith's lexicon. For instance, in his extensive inquiry into the relationship between Mormonism and various traditions of vernacular magic extant in the early Republic, D. Michael Quinn suggests that occult and practical magic traditions may have provided material for Joseph Smith's development of temple doctrines with "keyword" coming indirectly from the Jewish Kabbalah, as filtered through popular magic handbooks available during

48. Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 119–20.

the period.[49] In this tradition, the use of passwords to advance through the heavens formed part of an ideal of eternal progress "central to the occult mysteries of the ancient world."[50] Even more important to Quinn's analysis than the Kabbalah as a philosophical underpinning, though, are the intermediate sources through which such concepts may have come to Smith's attention.

On the concept of "keys," Quinn cites Richard Laurence's 1819 translation of the Gnostic text, *Ascent of Isaiah.* While the work does not actually use the word "key," it does state that "those who watched the gate of that heaven, required a passport" from all persons.[51] Another popular handbook of vernacular magic, Francis Barrett's *The Magus* (1801), combined the practice and theory of magic with a Christian theological outlook. "Keys" appears several times in this work, where it invariably implies a route to knowledge rather than a specific password, phrase, or gesture.[52] Another magic handbook, the *Clavicula Salomonis, or Key of Solomon,* combines biblical extrapolation with practical advice on how to perform magic rituals, and allegedly circulated in manuscript form during

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49. For instance, D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View,* 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 229–30, quotes Gershom Scholem's 1946 commentary on the Kaballah, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* rev. ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), 50, which states that, in the Jewish Gnostic tradition, "the soul requires a pass in order to be able to continue its journey without danger: a . . . recital of magical key-words with which he tries to unlock the closed door." See also Lance S. Owens, "Joseph Smith and Kabbalah: The Occult Connection," *Dialogue* 27, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 117–94, as well as William J. Hamblin's critique of Owens, "'Everything Is Everything': Was Joseph Smith Influenced by Kabbalah?" *FARMS Review of Books* 8, no. 2 (1996): 251–325.

50. Quinn, *Early Mormonism,* 229–30. Quinn discounts the connection between Masonry and the endowment because "no Mason at Joseph Smith's time or thereafter defined the central purpose of Masonic rites to be an ascent into heaven." Quoted and critiqued in Michael W. Homer, "'Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry': The Relationship between Freemasonry and Mormonism," *Dialogue* 27, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 106–7.

51. On "passports," see Richard Laurence, trans., *Ascensio Isaiae vatis . . .* (Oxford: University Press, 1819), 132; see also Quinn, *Early Mormonism,* 229–30.

52. For instance, Barrett claims that the proper use of magic can "[serve] as a key to the opening of all the treasures and secrets of the macrocosm, or great world," which seems similar to the "key of knowledge" concept. Francis Barrett,

the early nineteenth century.[53] "Keys" in this work strongly resembles Masonic usage, a question I discuss below.[54] Quinn suggests that these texts served as a source for the Mormon concept of temple keys. Indeed, the Kabbalistic tradition and the popular magic manuals available during the early nineteenth century imply that hidden knowledge can be obtained through a "passport" but fail to establish the strong link between these concepts and the language of "keys" and "keywords" so central to Joseph Smith's concept of eternal progression. Furthermore, direct evidence that Joseph Smith had access to these texts is missing.[55] Regarding the influence of vernacular magic on Joseph Smith's thought, I would

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The Magus, or Celestial Intelligencer; Being a Complete System of Occult Philosophy, 2 vols. (1801; reprint Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1967), 1:13–14. Barrett describes his book as "the Perfection and Key of all that has been written" (2:73).

53. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, xxxvi–xxxvii. It is not clear how widely and in what circles the text was influential.

54. *Clavicula Salomonis* is almost certainly related to the Masonic tradition. Solomon is central to mythic underpinnings of the book: He is introduced as its first owner; the book promises to "open the knowledge and understanding of *magical arts* and sciences" as "a Key openeth a treasure-house." The book is buried with Solomon. His tomb is protected by an angel who allows only the worthiest candidates to read the work. A Babylonian philosopher, Iohé Grevis, discovers Solomon's treasure and is allowed to read Solomon's *Key* after vowing secrecy to the angel. *The Greater Key of Solomon*, edited by L. W. de Laurence, translated by S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers (Chicago: De Laurence Company, 1914), 1–2. This story closely resembles a narrative told in the Royal Arch degree of Masonry. See below.

55. William J. Hamblin is unpersuaded by Quinn's argument of Smith's access to the occult tradition through books or manuscripts. He discards, somewhat peremptorily, the possibility that vernacular modes have significant power to transmit culture, dismissing such forms as part of "a vague and amorphous oral tradition." Hamblin, "That Old Black Magic," *FARMS Review of Books* 12, no. 2 (2000); online version retrieved January 8, 2005, from http://farmsbyu.edu/publications/reviewvolume.php?volume=122number2-2. In "Everything Is Everything," Hamblin similarly critiqued Owens's proposed mechanism of transmission propounded in "Joseph Smith and the Kabbalah." I agree with Hamblin that little evidence exists that the vernacular magic traditions extant in the early Republic retained the degree of philosophic or esoteric detail present in the works Quinn describes; however, I acknowledge the importance of oral culture and modes of transmission at this period. For the Smiths, oral presentation, memori-

add only the following observation to an already heavily researched field: If it is difficult to demonstrate this tradition's influence on Smith, it is perhaps even more difficult to show that the large and increasingly diverse body of Saints in Nauvoo possessed a common background in the Kabbalah or in vernacular magic traditions—or that they viewed such practices with interest or even tolerance. Thus, while some Latter-day Saints may indeed have been familiar with the terms and patterns of vernacular magic, it may be necessary to look elsewhere to find a common linguistic touchstone for the idea of a "keyword" that was widely shared by both Smith and his audience.

Some have argued that the widespread practice of Freemasonry provided just such a common linguistic context within which Joseph Smith could develop new doctrines. That is, in addition to encouraging bonds of brotherhood, participation in "the craft" may have provided a kind of conceptual and linguistic preparation for the endowment. Historians do not hesitate to acknowledge the enthusiastic participation of Nauvoo Mormons in Freemasonry, but the influence of these rituals on the actual structure and wording of the endowment has been hotly disputed.[56] What is clear, however, is that a significant percentage of (male) Saints were familiar with the language of Masonry before they participated in the

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zation, the hearing and preaching of sermons, storytelling, etc., were all powerful conduits for conveying complex ideas. To dismiss nonpublished modes of transmission reifies the notion that written modes are inherently superior to oral modes simply because scholars can more easily reconstruct their genealogy.

56. John Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 248, sees the temple ceremony as evidence of Joseph Smith's "immersion in Freemasonry. . . . The keys to the kingdom were about to be specified, and they were being described in language that implied Masonic meanings." David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), also explores possible connections between Masonry and the endowment. Matthew B. Brown, reviewing Buerger, reverses the direction of influence, arguing that the ceremonies are similar because Masonic ritual retains degenerate elements of the ancient temple ceremony. Brown, "The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship," *Farms Review of Books* 10, no. 1 (1998): 97–131, retrieved January 8, 2005, http://farms.byu.edu/publications/reviewvolume.php?volume=10&number1. Homer, "'Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry,'" 25–47, 75–89, thoroughly summarizes these debates over

endowment. Joseph Smith petitioned for a Masonic lodge in late 1841, and on March 15, 1842, the Nauvoo Lodge was opened. Almost immediately, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon became members. By the end of the Nauvoo period, nearly 1,400 Latter-day Saints belonged to lodges in Illinois and Iowa.[57] Among them were the first five presidents of the Church. Given the gradual introduction of the endowment after May 1842 and before the Nauvoo Temple became ready for use in September 1845, it is clear that most elders would have been exposed to Masonry before they participated in the endowment. Although women were not allowed to participate in Freemasonry, some linguistic evidence suggests that Smith was actively introducing certain Masonic concepts to the Relief Society during this period.[58]

Michael W. Homer has reviewed statements by early Church leaders that demonstrate their respect for the Masonic rites,[59] which were often described as preparation for the endowment. Shortly after the introduction of the endowment, for instance, Heber C. Kimball wrote to Parley P. Pratt: "Thare is a similarity of preast Hood in masonary. . . . Joseph ses Masonary was taken from preasthood but has become degenrated. but menny things are perfect."[60] In 1843, Joseph Fielding even more explicitly explained to a correspondent that "many have joined the Masonic institution. This seems to have been a stepping stone or preparation for something else, the true Origin of Masonry."[61] Brigham Young later noted that when Joseph Smith received a "revelation and command-

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influence and generally provides the most thorough effort to sketch the relationship between Masonry and Mormon temple worship.

57. Homer, "'Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry,'" 26–33.

58. Ibid., 29, sees Joseph Smith's counsel that the Relief Society should "grow up by degrees," as well as his statement that the sisters should be "sufficiently skill'd in Masonry as to keep a secret," as evidence that Smith was introducing Masonic language and principles. Homer also argues that Joseph Smith's reference to Emma as "the Elect Lady" may also allude to Masonic practice, but, as an anonymous reviewer pointed out to me, this phrase has much more likely antecedents in 2 John 1:1, also the likely source for Doctrine and Covenants 25:3.

59. Ibid., 67–89.

60. Heber C. Kimball, Letter to Parley P. Pratt, June 17, 1842, Parley P. Pratt Papers, LDS Church Archives. By "priesthood," Kimball meant the endowment.

61. Letter dated December 22, 1843; quoted in "'They Might Have Known

ment" to restore the endowment, he was also given a "pattern . . . for without a pattern, he could not know what was wanting, having never seen one, and not having experienced its use."[62] The language used by these early Church leaders suggests that they saw participation in Masonry as an important foundation for those about to receive the endowment or working to understand its meaning.

In keeping with my broader thesis, I would like to stress the linguistic and conceptual elements of the preparation Masonry may have offered the Mormon men who participated. As we have seen, Joseph Smith frequently deployed terms and concepts already familiar to his listeners to render new doctrines more readily comprehensible. In Freemasonry, the elders would have reproduced passwords and gestures to advance through the degrees of Masonry. As one scholar has phrased it, "The key was a symbol of secrecy in Freemasonry, and Masonic ritual was filled with the signs, tokens, and handgrips that protected Masonic secrets."[63] These ritual practices, signs, and symbols—crucial to the three basic levels of Freemasonry (Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason)—may have prepared the Saints for analogous concepts introduced during the endowment.

Furthermore, "key" figures in important ways in the four degrees of Masonry that follow Master Mason, especially in the culmination of this

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That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet'—The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding," transcribed and edited by Andrew F. Ehat, *BYU Studies* 19 (Winter 1979): 133–66.

62. Brigham Young, April 6, 1853, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855–86), 2:31. Although this passage does not name Freemasonry, Young later taught that "Solomon built a Temple for the purpose of giving endowments" and hints that the Masons can trace their history "back as far as Solomon." Ibid., 18:303; 11:327–28. Franklin D. Richards referred to "the true Masonry, as we have it in our temples." Quoted in Rudger Clawson, Diary, April 4, 1899, in Stan Larson, ed., *A Ministry of Meetings: The Apostolic Diaries of Rudger Clawson* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1993), 42. See also Homer, "'Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry,'" 25, 67–75. Brown, "The Mysteries of Godliness," cites Benjamin F. Johnson's recollection in his autobiography that Joseph Smith stated: "Freemasonry, as at present, was the apostate endowments, as sectarian religion was the apostate religion."

63. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire*, 248.

series of rites, the Royal Arch degree. While it is not clear that Smith himself completed a degree beyond Master Mason, he and other Nauvoo Freemasons may still have had access to the content of these higher levels.[64] Many Masons considered the Royal Arch degree the most important of the second-tier rites, the "principal of the four degrees conferred by a [Royal Arch] chapter."[65] The narrative of this rite recounts the murder of Hiram Abiff, Masonry's founder, with the resultant loss of the "Master's word"; initiates must then search for this word, "or a key to it."[66] In the sequence of degrees leading up to the Royal Arch, initiates learn the importance of a symbolic "KEY STONE."[67] Other passages in Masonic ritual, while not using "keyword," follow Revelation 2:17 in reiterating the importance of specific words: Initiates are taught that "to him that overcometh will I give . . . a White Stone, and in the Stone a *new*

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64. Homer, "'Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry,'" 33–42, notes the chartering of a Royal Arch Chapter in Springfield, Illinois, in September 1841, the probable exposure of Mormon James Adams to these higher degrees in Illinois, and the wide availability of exposés, including David Bernard, *Light on Masonry: A Collection of All the Most Important Documents on the Subject of Speculative Free Masonry* . . . (Utica, N.Y.: William Williams, 1829); and the Lewiston Committee, LeRoy Convention, *A Revelation of Freemasonry as Published to the World by a Convention of Seceding Masons* (Rochester, N.Y.: Weed and Heron, 1828).

65. William L. Stone, *Letters on Masonry and Anti-Masonry Addressed to the Hon. John Quincy Adams* (1832), 43, quoted in Homer, "'Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry,'" 35.

66. When the initiates find Hiram Abiff's body, they cannot locate anything "but a faint resemblance of the letter G on the left breast." They exclaim, "That is not the Master's word, nor a key to it . . . I fear the Master's word is forever lost!'" William Morgan, *Illustrations of Masonry* ([Rochester, N.Y.]: For the author, 1827), 117–18. In "The Second Part: or A Key to the Higher Degrees of Freemasonry . . .," an anonymous exposé appended to William Morgan, *Morgan's Freemasonry Exposed and Explained; Showing the Origin, History, and Nature of Masonry; Its Effect on the Government* . . . (New York: "Published for the Trade," 1882), 121, the initiate finds a box on Abiff's body and unlocks it. It contains crucial words necessary for advancement to an even higher level of Masonry. For an elaborate 1829 version, see Bernard, *Light on Masonry*, 143.

67. In the Mark-Master rite, first of the four Royal Arch degrees, the initiate is shown "two golden Cherubims, supporting between them a KEY STONE, with a circle of eight letters on it." A scriptural lecture follows, stressing the importance of laying out "a foundation, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Morgan, *Morgan's Freemasonry*, 86–87.

name written, which no man knoweth save him that receiveth it."[68] However, it is difficult to determine whether these higher degrees and their explicit use of "key" were in wide circulation in Nauvoo. Mormon participation can be fully documented only in the first three degrees of Masonry (Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason). Thus, while the three primary degrees of Masonry may indeed have served as a form of conceptual preparation for the endowment, in which specific words and gestures take on new layers of meaning, it is less clear that Masonic ritual made "key" and "keyword" widely available to the Saints. Perhaps more importantly, the use made of the term in Masonry does not fully predict the meaning of "keys" and "keywords" that emerges in the endowment. Instead, it seems to have been Joseph Smith who actively forged the link between the term "keys" and those "certain signs and words" the Saints would encounter in the temple.

The gradual development of this new definition of "keys" was surely aided by the slow introduction of the endowment. On May 4, 1842, the endowment was administered to nine men in the upper rooms of Smith's red brick store. In the following two years, only about ninety men and women received the endowment. It was not available to a wider group of Saints until 1845.[69] However, Smith apparently prepared others by heavily reworking "keys" in his public discourses during this period.

In these sermons, "key" retains elements we have already traced: Joseph Smith continued to teach that the promised introduction of temple "keywords" was possible only through priesthood authority, and that "key" described doctrines or principles that might empower individual Saints to acquire new light and knowledge. Yet Smith gradually attached new specifics to the "key of knowledge." Instead of referring only to priesthood, to learning strategies, or to paradigm shifts, "keys" increasingly referred to "certain signs and words" that would help the Saints avoid de-

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68. Ibid., 90; italics his. See also Avery Allen, *A Ritual of Freemasonry, Illustrated by Numerous Engravings. To Which Is Added a Key to the Phi Beta Kappa, the Orange, and Odd Fellows Societies* (Philadelphia: John Clarke, 1831); Malcolm C. Duncan, *Duncan's Ritual and Monitor of Freemasonry* (New York: McKay Publishing, 1865); George Oliver, *The Antiquities of Freemasonry* (London, 1823); and Lewiston Committee, *A Revelation of Freemasonry*.

69. Homer, "'Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry,'" 33–35; Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 278.

ception.[70] In April 1843, for instance, the white stone (Rev. 2:17) "is given to each of those who come into the celestial kingdom, whereon is a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. The new name is the key word" (D&C 130:10-11). The March 1842 publication of the Book of Abraham "Facsimile No. 2" notes that certain figures represent the "grand Key-words of the Holy Priesthood" (Pearl of Great Price). Both passages allude to and expand upon principles taught during the endowment—that a "new name" can act as a vital "Key-word," that "Key-words" are related to the priesthood, and that such words are essential to progress in the eternities.[71]

Yet by returning an embodied physicality (whether word or gesture) to "key"—an attribute that is, after all, characteristic of the literal meaning of the word—the temple ceremony also binds together the concept of priesthood keys and the "key of knowledge." Although "keys" are embedded in and revealed through a ceremony enabled by the priesthood, "certain signs and words" also grant the individual power both to discern and to act on their own behalf. To avoid discussing an ordinance that Latter-day Saints consider sacred, it may be useful to return to D&C 129 as an example of this kind of "key." In that revelation, a messenger of unknown origin approaches the key-holder, who has both a "key of knowledge" (how to proceed when confronted with a supernatural envoy) and the right to ask the visitor for a "key" (by inviting the messenger to shake hands). Thus, although the original knowledge necessary to act is conveyed through priesthood channels in the form of a revelation, the power to act—the initiative in this encounter between heaven and earth—is retained by the individual. In the same way, the temple ceremony allows women and men to give and receive all the "keys" they need to both initiate and conclude their own progress through the eternities. As Brigham Young explained to the Saints in 1853: "Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk

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70. Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 119-20.

71. *Pearl of Great Price*, 1979 edition, 36-37. This explanation accompanying Facsimile Number 2 continues: one of the governing planets "borrow[s] its light from Kolob through the medium of Kae-e-vanrash, which is the grand Key, or . . . governing power." This usage recalls "key" as both priesthood authority and key of new knowledge.

back into the presence of the father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell."[72] Furthermore, as time passed, the temple endowment's crucial keys were extended to all those worthy to receive them, to women as well as men, thereby surpassing the limitations of Free- masonic rites.

The question of Freemasonry's influence has been controversial, with some historians seeing direct causation, others vigorously rejecting any relationship at all, and others at some point on the spectrum.[73] It is my hope that closer attention to the complex ways in which words like "key" enter Mormon theology—and how they change once there—may provide an alternative to these often contentious debates over the question of influence. After all, early Mormon revelation repeatedly acknowledges that the language of scripture and revelation is necessarily launched into a fallible and contingent network of preexisting meanings and shades of meanings—what Joseph Smith described as the "narrow prison" of a "crooked broken scattered and imperfect" language.[74] For this reason, even when the specific words and phrases of revelation are delivered through the power of the Spirit (D&C 18:34–35), listeners must still fall back, to some degree, on their own limited understandings and existing lexicons. For instance, we can suppose that Joseph Smith had, among other things, the attributes and limitations of language in mind when he made this statement about the power of culture and tradition to inhibit the introduction of new principles: "I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them . . . will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions."[75]

Clearly, Joseph Smith understood how cultural traditions might limit the speed at which new doctrines could be introduced. And yet, I ar-

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72. Brigham Young, April 6, 1863, *Journal of Discourses,* 2:31.

73. Brown, "The Mysteries of Godliness," argues that the full endowment was revealed to Joseph Smith before he encountered Freemasonry.

74. The formal failings of the text of Joseph Smith's letter to William W. Phelps reinforce the fallibility and mutability of language styles—a point sometimes lost when spelling, grammar, and punctuation are standardized.

75. *History of the Church,* 6:18–85.

gue that the same principle may also operate in reverse. That is, Smith regularly found ways to make productive and pedagogic use of the Saints' "traditions" by harnessing words and concepts already available to his listeners and then gradually modifying them in an effort to better explain complex and original—even radical—doctrines. If the Prophet was correct in the Saints' tendency to "fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions," then introducing the endowment ceremony in wholly unfamiliar terms would have been extremely difficult. The deployment of "key" in the discourse about the temple was one strategy that allowed the Saints to understand the endowment as both an extrapolation of already familiar doctrines and the expression of new truths in a new way.

Conclusion

Between 1829 and 1844, Joseph Smith drew on several distinct valences of a relatively common word, even as he gradually stretched and developed these received understandings. First, the often vague or even unpopular notion that the "keys of the kingdom" were connected to the idea of religious authority was gradually transformed into the elaborate system of specific and hierarchically ordered authorities and responsibilities that distinguishes Latter-day Saint priesthood organization. Second, Smith made use of "key" as a cipher or means for proper interpretation, although, again, he did not allow this definition to rest. In Mormonism, true "keys" do not provide simple answers or one-to-one translations; rather, they provoke fundamental and empowering changes in perspective and understanding, enabling individuals and groups to transform how they think about the mysteries of godliness and the order of heaven. In the Relief Society's case, for instance, he turned a "key" to them, allowing "knowledge and intelligence [to] flow down" upon them that enhanced the society's ability to govern itself and oversee its stewardships. Other "key[s] of knowledge" granted to individual Saints increased agency and control over their acquisition of knowledge. Rather than relying on Joseph Smith to instruct them in all things (D&C 58:26), members could apply their own reason to theological problems, as Eliza R. Snow did, or determine on their own whether messengers claiming to come from God were telling the truth.

Joseph Smith's introduction of the endowment connected these first two meanings in unexpected ways. Both by publicly teaching that

specific words and phrases could enable access to truth and by encouraging the brethren to participate in Freemasonry, Joseph Smith prepared the ground for the introduction of "key words" in the temple. The endowment, in turn, gave the Saints "the key words, the signs and tokens," as Brigham Young stated, to "walk back into the presence of the father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels."[76] On one hand, temple worship is predicated on the idea that priesthood keys have been restored and are functioning in their appropriate office and station; furthermore, the temple ceremony is itself an expression of priesthood power. On the other hand, sacred "key words" empower each individual with "all" that is necessary to "walk back into the presence of the father." Effectively, each participant receives the power of life and salvation, if he or she chooses to use it. Thus, temple "keys" bridge what might be seen as two opposed, yet equally fundamental aspects of Mormon theology: the organizational realm of hierarchical priesthood structure and the private theater of individual spiritual action. Individual Saints receive "keys" through priesthood channels but are then free (and obligated by covenant) to use their own agency in deploying them. Crucially, this granting of power extends to women, who, although they are not ordained to priesthood office, are authorized to both give and receive "the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood" in the temple. In this sense, the endowment can be understood as fulfilling Joseph Smith's statement to the Relief Society that "the keys of the kingdom are about to be given to them, that they may be able to detect every thing false—as well as to the Elders."[77]

Finally, I wish to reiterate that the gradual stretching and transformation of the idea of "keys"—from the early elucidation of the function "Priesthood keys" to the eventual introduction of temple "keywords"—represents a doctrinal development that is closely tied to a linguistic development. The meaning of a term that would have been familiar to the Mormon prophet and his audience was gradually transformed by a series of recorded revelations and public addresses, with the result that an old word slowly came to express a dense constellation of doctrines original to Mormonism. By 1844, Latter-day Saint "keys" go well beyond anything one might find in structures of early American church government, at the

76. *Journal of Discourses* 2:31.

77. "Relief Society Minutes," April 28, 1842.

front of a dictionary, or in the practices of Freemasonry. Rather than carving his way into the minds of his adherents with a "jack-knife"—by introducing new concepts in totally foreign terms—Smith found a term that was familiar enough to be recognizable to the Saints but flexible enough to be transformed. By turning a single "key" word, the Mormon prophet was able to ground an elaborate new system of priesthood governance and introduce a new and striking method for how a soul might direct his or her own triumphant passage into the eternities.

The Psalms

Richard J. Clifford

THE PSALMS WERE PRAYED by David and Solomon, Isaiah and Jeremiah, Jesus, Matthew and Paul, Jerome and Augustine, Ibn Ezra and Rashi, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin, and Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa—in short, by Jews and Christians through the ages. To such pray-ers, the psalms were both inspired prayers and a school of prayer, teaching one how to pray. This article describes the history of the psalter, as the psalms are collectively called, the types into which they divide, and the characteristics of their poetry.

The English word "psalm" comes from the Greek and Latin translations of Hebrew *mizmôr*, "accompanied song." The psalter contains 150 psalms arranged in five "books"—Psalms 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, and 107-50. Each concludes with a doxology or praising verse (Pss. 41:13; 72:18-19; 89:52; 106:48; 150:1-6).[1] Many of the psalms within each book have been carefully placed with nearby psalms according to themes and repetition of key words.

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1. There are two different modern systems of numbering verses in English-printed psalters. The most common system is that of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), Revised English Bible (REB), New International Bible (NEB), and Contemporary English Version (CEV), which assigns no verse number to the superscriptions. I use this system. The other, which follows printed Hebrew Bibles, assigns a verse number to the superscriptions (thus is frequently one

Authorship and Date

Like nearly all biblical literature, the psalms are anonymous. About half begin with superscriptions linking the psalm to David and even to incidents in his life (e.g., Psalm 3, "A Psalm of David, when he fled from his son Absalom"), but the references mean only that the psalm is illustrated by David's life, not that David is its author. The reference is a statement of genre rather than authorship, like the traditional attributions of wisdom literature to Solomon and law to Moses. The superscriptions were added at a time when the psalms had been removed from their original temple context, perhaps to make readers more conscious of their personal situations when they prayed the psalm. David, of course, could have written some of them, for he was a musician and poet (1 Sam. 16:18; 2 Sam. 1:17–27); the vast majority of the psalms, however, were written by scribes in the king's employ, who had the responsibility for the temple, as part of their duties.

The psalms do not carry exact dates but a few can be dated to particular periods; for example, those that presume a king (e.g., Ps. 2:6; 18:51; 72:1) were written when the monarchy was a live institution (tenth to sixth centuries B.C.) and laments such as Psalm 137:1 presuppose the exile in Babylon. Containing songs of all periods, the psalter has been called the hymnbook of the second temple (515 B.C. to 70 A.D.).

Original Context: The Temple

Many psalms were originally performed in the temple in Jerusalem, which was the central shrine of the tribes (Pss. 84, 122, 132). The temple was small by modern standards (90' by 30' and ca. 45' in height). It was, literally, a house for God; the people gathered in the surrounding open-air courtyard. God was honored like a great king, some of the elaborate ceremony being performed inside the temple and the rest in the surrounding open-air court where the people could participate. Many of the psalms ultimately originated in the public ceremony.

"Zion" is the name for Jerusalem as a sacred city. Though Yahweh, the God of Israel, could appear and act in other places, it was in Jerusalem

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verse behind NRSV) and sometimes divides verses differently. This system is used by the New American Bible (NAB) and the Jewish Publication Society Version (NJPS). All quotations from the Psalms are my translation.

that he was preeminently present to Israel; only here was Israel "before the Lord." Here the Lord was enthroned upon the cherubim (Pss. 80; 99:1) to "judge" (to govern justly) his people. Zion was also the goal of the three annual feasts of pilgrimage (discussed below). Though the entire universe be threatened, it was the one secure place that could not be shaken or destroyed (Pss. 46:2-3; 48:4-8; 76:3). The "Songs of Zion" (Pss. 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 121, 122) celebrate the city as the site of the victory over primordial enemies, as the residence of the Lord and the Davidic king, and the place where God gives his decrees. In early Judaism, Jews developed the practice of turning toward Jerusalem when they prayed (Dan. 6:10).

The psalms give little indication of the ritual that originally accompanied them, for now they are part of a book designed for readers who no longer take part in the temple ritual. The fact that ritual texts such as Exodus 35-39 and Leviticus 1-16 do not mention songs does not mean that rituals were unaccompanied by singing, for ritual texts are prescriptions for correct performance, not descriptions of the liturgy. In fact, the psalms themselves refer to liturgical actions—feasts (Pss. 65:1-4; 81:3), visits to the temple (Pss. 5:7; 65:4), processions (Pss. 48:12-14; 118:26-27), sacrifices (Pss. 4:5; 107:22; 116:17-18), and priestly benedictions (Pss. 115:14-15; 134:3). Some presume two choirs or a cantor plus choir (Pss. 15, 24, 132, 134). We know that the psalms were not recited silently, for Hebrew verbs of emotion used in them can refer to outward expression as well as inner feeling; "to rejoice" can mean to shout joyously; "to meditate" can mean to recite aloud. Musical instruments are frequently mentioned: the trumpet or ram's horn, the lyre, and the harp. Evidence thus points to noisy and communal performances of the psalms.

The temple liturgy revolved around the three great feasts of the year—Passover and Unleavened Bread in the early spring; Pentecost at the wheat harvest seven weeks later, and Ingathering (also called Booths and Tabernacles or simply "the feast") in the early fall. Each was the occasion for celebrating the bounty of the land and the divinely led history of the people Israel.

The first feast, Passover, commemorated the exodus from Egypt and entry into the Promised Land (Exod. 12-13). Psalms that celebrate the exodus-conquest, such as 105, 114, 135, 136, and 147, could have been sung appropriately during the feast. Psalms 113-18, called in early Judaism "the Great Hallel" (praise), were sung at this time. The second feast, Pentecost (also called Firstfruits and the Feast of Weeks) was associated with the giv-

ing of the law at least by the second century B.C. and perhaps much earlier. Psalms 50 and 81 would have been appropriate at this time because they indict the people for not observing the covenant and law given at Sinai. The third feast was Ingathering or Tabernacles; in the early period, it was also at one time the feast of the New Year, when Israel celebrated the Lord's creation victory over the forces of chaos and which included a celebration of the enthronement of God as king of heaven and earth. An enthronement ceremony would have been good background for acclamations of the Lord's kingship such as Psalms 47, 93, 95–100 and for celebrations of the Lord's world-establishing victory such as Psalms 29, 46, 48, 76, 93, 95–99, and 104.

Not all the psalms were concerned with public events, however. Fully a third are "individual laments," which are pleas to be delivered from a specific threat. Do they reflect a temple ceremony or are they purely literary compositions? Individual thanksgivings such as Psalms 30 and 34, and songs of trust such as Psalms 27:1–6 and 91 might reflect private transactions between a temple official and an individual or family. Perhaps people sought the help of such officials to ritualize a particular sorrow or joy.

Types or Genres of the Psalms

The most efficient way to show new readers how the psalms functioned as prayers is to describe the main types or genres. Purely on the basis of their form, more than eighty psalms fall into one of three types: hymn, individual and community "lament" (petition), and thanksgiving. About thirty more can be grouped together according to their subject as festival songs and liturgies. According to style or tone, other psalms are reckoned songs of trust (e.g., Pss. 23, 91, 121) and wisdom psalms (e.g., Pss. 37, 49, 73). Three psalms have the Torah or law as their subject (Pss. 1, 19, 119).

Hymns

There are about twenty-eight hymns (Pss. 8, 19, 29, 33, 47, 66:1–12, 93, 95–100, 103, 104, 105, 107, 111, 113, 114, 117, 135, 136, and 145-50). The basic structure is extremely simple: a call to worship God, often naming the participants (e.g., "Praise the Lord, all you nations") and sometimes mentioning musical instruments ("Praise him with trumpet voice"). The invitatory verse is often repeated in the final verse.

The body of the poem is normally introduced by the preposition "for, because" (Hebrew *kî*), giving the basis for the praise—usually an act of

God. The German scholar Claus Westermann has pointed out that comparable hymns in Mesopotamia (today Iraq) use "descriptive praise," that is, praising what the god customarily does or is, whereas biblical hymns use "narrative praise,"[2] that is, praising God for doing a particular act. The particular act is often that by which Israel came into being as a people—the exodus from Egypt and entry into Canaan. Psalms refer to this one event from either of two perspectives: by using the language of history ("historic") with human characters prominent (e.g., Ps. 105) or by using the language of "myth" ("suprahistoric") with God portrayed as acting directly in the world rather than through human agency (e.g., Ps. 114). Often the two perspectives are mingled in one psalm (e.g., Pss. 135, 136).

In this type of psalm, the verb "to bless" (Hebrew *bē'rak*) has a different range of meaning than "bless" in English. In the Bible, God blesses human beings and human beings bless God. God's blessing gives to human beings what they need but do not possess—health, wealth, honor, children. But how can human beings bless God who possesses all things? They give the only thing God might lack—recognition by human beings of his unique glory and power. People bless God by acknowledging before others his benefits to them, thus widening the circle of his worshippers.

Individual Lament

"Lament" is the modern term for the genre; it is derived from one characteristic, the complaint. A more apt term is "petition," for the purpose of the genre is to persuade God to rescue the psalmist. Individual petitions include Psalms 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9–10, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27:7–14, 28, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42–43, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71, 86, 88, 102, 109, 120, 130, 139, 140, 141, 142, and 143. Some scholars suggest that the original context of such psalms was a ritual dialogue between a troubled individual and a temple official, like that between Hannah and the priest Eli at the old shrine in Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:9–18). At the end of the dialogue, Eli says to Hannah, "Go in peace and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him" (1 Sam. 1:17), an assurance that enables Hannah to return home in peace. In a similar way, psalmic laments or petitions offered oppressed individuals a

2. Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1981), 30–31.

means of unburdening themselves before receiving authoritative assurances.

The genre has standard elements in a flexible sequence. Each psalm begins with an unadorned *cry to the Lord,* for example, "Help, Lord!" The *complaint* is a description of the problem or danger such as sickness, an unfair legal accusation, the treachery of former friends, or the consequences of sin such as ostracism from the community. Usually there is a *statement of trust,* uttered despite the overwhelming difficulties, for example, "I am not afraid of ten thousands of people / who have set themselves against me all around" (Ps. 3:6). The *prayer* or petition asks for rescue and sometimes also for the downfall of the enemy. Some scholars assume that at some point in the transaction between temple official and penitent, the official (like Eli to Hannah) assured the petitioner that God had heard the plea. Such pleas, being the official's part, would not have been transmitted with the psalm, though they are apparently preserved in some laments (e.g., Pss. 12:5; 60:6–8). Finally comes the statement of praise, which, because of its serenity, is in striking contrast to the unrest of the psalm.

The psalmist pursues a strategy. Each psalm portrays a drama with three actors—the psalmist, the enemies ("the wicked"), and God. The complaint portrays the psalmist as a loyal client of the Lord, who nonetheless suffers assaults from the wicked or from some threat like illness. The psalmist's claim to be just or loyal is not a claim of universal innocence or perfection but only of innocence in this case. The question is thus posed to God: Will you, just God that you are, allow your loyal client to suffer harm from an unjust enemy? Will you not, as vindicator of the poor, come to my aid? The basis of the appeal is not the character of the psalmist, but the character of God: *noblesse oblige* (a French phrase meaning "honor compels me"). The psalm enabled the worshipper to face a major threat and transform it into a situation of trust in God.

Community Lament (or Petition)

The following Psalms are commonly assigned to this genre: 44, 60, 74, 77, 79, 80, 83, 85, 89, 90, 94, 123, and 126. The community complains that the Lord has abandoned them to their enemies. In response, they "remember" before God the event that brought Israel into existence in the hope that God will "reactivate" that event. The foundational event can be described in various ways, for example, transplanting a vine from Egypt (Ps. 80:8; 14) or defeating the sea and installing the people in their

land (Psalm 77). The lament aims to persuade God to act by asking the question: Will you allow another power to destroy what you have created? The genre appeals to God's character rather than to the merit of the community.

In laments, the community remembers (Hebrew *zākar*) God's past action. The verb "to remember" is an important verb in the psalter. It does not mean suddenly to bring to mind what had been forgotten but to bring up a past event and make it present by expressing it in words or gestures. Speaking it in the public liturgy, and perhaps dramatizing it as well, makes the originating event present once more before God and the community. The event is actualized in the liturgy. English translations sometimes obscure this notion of remembering. For example, compare the New Revised Standard Version of Psalm 77:13: "I will meditate on your mighty work, / and muse on your mighty deeds," and the New American Bible rendering, "I will recite all your works; / your exploits I will tell."

Individual Thanksgiving

Psalms in this category include 18, 21, 30, 32, 34, 40:1–11, 92, 108, 111, 116, 118, 138. In a sense, such psalms are a continuation of the individual petition, for they tell of God's response to a lament. They report to the community how God has rescued them from the hands of the wicked. Like the hymn and the individual petition, the thanksgiving psalm is a transaction between an individual and God: You have done me a good turn by rescuing me; now I return the favor by enlarging the circle of your admirers.

The thanksgiving genre also has a characteristic word—to give thanks (Hebrew *hôdû*). It occasionally means "to confess (sin)" but ordinarily is translated into English as "to give thanks." The translation is misleading, however, for there is no exact equivalent in biblical Hebrew to the "thank you" of modern languages. How to give thanks in the Bible can be illustrated by Jacob's wife Leah, whose prayer for a son is finally answered. She responds, "This time I will praise (*'ôdeh*) the Lord" (Gen. 29:35). She praises God before others. The verbs with which "to praise" is semantically paired—to exult, sing, play an instrument—show that giving thanks involves intense emotion.

Other Categories

Other psalms can be classed according to their subject matter as "historical" narratives, festival songs, and liturgies. "Historical" psalms tell

a story rather than narrate history in a modern sense. They are 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136. Modern readers can be overwhelmed by the historical details but presumably ancients would have been familiar enough with the basic outline to note variations on a basic plot. An example is Psalm 78. Despite its length and complexity, its structure guided ancient readers to its meaning. The psalm is constructed around two parallel structures (verses in parentheses):

Introduction (1–11)

Wilderness (12–31)	Egypt to Canaan (40–64)
Gracious act (12–16)	Gracious act (40–55)
Rebellion (17–20)	Rebellion (56–58)
Divine anger and punishment	Divine anger and punishment
(Poisoned manna and quail) (21–31)	(Shiloh's destruction) (59–64)
Divine anger and punishment	Divine anger and punishment
Forgiveness/new beginning (32–39)	Forgiveness/new beginning (65–72)

This pattern of narrative incidents (gracious act of God, rebellion, punishment, and new divine offer) appear in each recital, letting the reader know that God does not allow the people's sin to end his work. The repeated pattern thus shows a single divine purpose at work. The people are invited to praise God's fidelity and to respond positively after the destruction of Shiloh to the new offer: the establishment of Zion and the Davidic king.

Similarly, the forty-five-verse Psalm 105 is shaped by another pattern: how the promise of land was experienced at different phases of Israel's history. Verses 1–6 invite Israel as descendants of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to praise the Lord. Verses 7–11 identify the Lord as the God of the whole world who yet remembers that he promised land to the ancestors. The rest of the poem (vv. 12–45) shows how Israel experienced that promise in different ways before they actually accepted it as a gracious gift—the experience of the protected sojourner (vv. 12–15), a protected prisoner freed to become a teacher (vv. 16–22), a protected but oppressed minority (vv. 23–38), and a protected community in the desert on the way to take possession (vv. 39–45).

Another distinct category is the enthronement psalms, for example,

Psalms 24, 29, 47, 93, and 95–99. The Lord is enthroned as king of heaven and earth. Presumably, the psalms accompanied a liturgical rite. In the opinion of many scholars, Israel celebrated a New Year festival just as the fall rains began to make the earth fertile again. (The Israelite agricultural year had only two seasons: the infertile season of dryness from late April to early September, and the fertile season of moisture from late September to mid-April.) At this time, the Lord would have been enthroned as king and lord of the rains, who defeated cosmic chaos. Enthronement psalms do not, of course, presuppose that the Lord had been previously dethroned any more than the Christian Easter presupposes that Jesus has not been raised from the dead. Rather, the Lord's kingship is renewed and experienced afresh as the world seems to come back to life in the fall after the heat and inertia of summer. Psalm 95, for example, invites Israel to enter the temple precincts and acclaim the Lord as king over the universe, "for he made it." The creation of the world was often imagined as a cosmic conflict in which the Lord defeats chaotic forces.

Related to enthronement psalms are the royal psalms (2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 144:1–11) and the songs of Zion (46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 121, 122). When the divine king was enthroned as king of the world, his delegate on earth, the Davidic king, was also celebrated as the Lord's "son" and anointed, for example, "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill. . . . You are my son; / today I have begotten you" (2:6–7). The quotation links the king to Mount Zion, a traditional name for Jerusalem. The Zion songs celebrate Zion as a towering mountain, the residence of the Most High God, and as a place so secure that enemy kings can only rant helplessly at its base (46:2–3; 48:4–8).

Different from the public nature of the previous categories is the "Song of Trust," which, though a bit vague as a description, is nearest to the individual lament. The genre includes Psalms 11, 16, 23, 27:1–6, 62, 63, 91, 121, 125, and 131. These psalms contain references to such liturgical actions as sacrifices (4:5) and sojourning in the Lord's tent (27:4–6) but these concrete actions have become symbols to express being near God.

Another category is Torah (law or teaching) psalms (1, 19, 119), in which the psalmist rejoices in the divinely inspired written word. That word enables people to live loyal to God amid tribulations and temptations. "Word" or "law" in these texts later came to be identified with the law of Moses that was so prominent a feature of early Judaism, but originally the reference was to God's word in a more general sense.

The last category and vaguest category is that of wisdom psalms, sometimes called "learned psalmography" or noncultic meditations. Psalms 37, 49, 73, 112, and 127 (sometimes others) are usually included in this grouping. They contain stylistic or thematic similarities to wisdom literature (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and, in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox canon, Sirach, and Wisdom of Solomon). Stylistic similarities include phraseology such as "Happy the one . . ." (Ps. 1:1), "better than" sayings (Ps. 37:16), and admonitions (Ps. 49:16). Thematic similarities include contrasts between the two ways (Ps. 49) and preoccupation with retribution (Ps. 73).

Some psalms do not fit these genres and categories or fit more than one. On the whole, however, the psalms are ruled by certain conventions, and the reader's understanding is greatly enhanced by knowing those conventions.

Poetic and Rhetorical Features

The psalms are first and foremost poems and make their statement with poetic logic and beauty. The most distinctive feature of Hebrew poetry is parallelism of lines, for example:

> Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
> wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (51:7)

Scholars give different explanations for this subtle feature. Some see in both the A and the B lines a unity of which each is less than half; the final meaning is released only at the conclusion. Other scholars explain the feature by the catch phrase "A is so, and what's more B." In any event, Hebrew poetry makes its statement dynamically and dialectically.[3]

The poet-authors of the Psalms used other techniques as well. There is no regular rhyme as in English, though the plural ending – *'îm* and pronoun suffixes of nouns and verbs often produce a rhyming sound. Another feature is using an abstract figure as a concrete one; for example:

> For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
> evil will not dwell with you.
> The boastful will not stand before your eyes;

3. It is a remarkable fact that this key feature of Hebrew poetry can be perfectly translated into other languages.

you hate all evildoers. (5:4)

The first two-line verse uses abstract nouns ("wickedness" and "evil") for concrete nouns (wicked and evil persons); the verbs "to delight in" and "to dwell, sojourn" are appropriate for human beings rather than abstract nouns. The second line treats "evil" as "evil persons" for the subject of the verb. The poet has in mind embodied evil. The poetic device of using abstractions as concrete figures is important because the curses (and blessings) that the psalmists wish upon others can be against evil as such rather than against specific human beings.

The Perspective of the Psalter

Israel's neighbors in the ancient Near East also used liturgical poetry. Each temple had rituals and ceremonies using the spoken and sung word in hymns, petitions, and thanksgivings. What made Israel distinctive in that world was its belief in *one* God, invoked as "Yahweh." (At some point in early Judaism, the title "Lord" was substituted out of reverence for the proper name Yahweh and this usage has continued among both Christians and Jews.) Yahweh, the Lord, shaped all and hence is at the center of every psalm.

Monotheism made Israel's worship distinctive. The Lord, all-powerful and all-knowing, did not require human beings' labor and care as other deities did. Genesis 1 puts human beings at the intersection between heaven and earth. They are at once part of creation and the only creatures able to address God in word and music; they are by their nature singers before God. As Claus Westermann has remarked, "Humans are created in such a way that their very existence is intended to be their relationship to God."[4]

Israel's monotheistic faith forbade images, which in ancient religion were an ordinary means of encountering deity. In the biblical perspective, no image could adequately represent the one Lord of *all* the world. In the absence of images, the word has the role of bringing Israel before the Lord. That is why the Psalms are so important.

Representative Psalms

4. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1984), 158.

A good way to understand the psalms is to look at examples of the main types—the hymn, individual lament (petition), and thanksgiving. We will conclude with everyone's favorite, Psalm 23.

The Hymn: Psalm 100, A Psalm of Praise

Raise a shout to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with joyous sound;
enter his presence with a song.
Acknowledge that the Lord is God.
He that made us and we are
his people, the flock he pastures.
Enter his gates with praise,
his courts with acclamation.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.
For the Lord is good;
his steadfastness is eternal,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Many English translations call the poem a "thanksgiving"; but as we have seen, in the Bible to give thanks is to tell what the other person has done for us. Hence, "praise" is the right word. The structure of the hymn is simple: a call to worship, often with the invited party named; the main section gives the basis for the praise (some action of God), which is introduced by the preposition "for."

This hymn invites everyone on earth to enter the temple courts and shout out praise to the Lord and acknowledge him as God and Israel as the people he created. Israel itself is the "deed" God has done. The nations will sense something of God's fidelity and power by looking at the fortunes of his favored people Israel. "For" in v. 5 introduces the basis of the praise: God is generous and his fidelity to Israel knows no interruption.

An example of an *individual lament* is Psalm 3, which is not reprinted here because of its length. As befits urgent need, it begins abruptly ("O Lord") followed by the complaint (2–3). "Many" (repeated three times in two verses) are rising against the psalmist, declaring that their prey has no "help" in God (3). The psalmist quotes the enemies' words to remind God they are not only the psalmist's enemies but God's as well.

In vv. 4–5, the psalmist uses three of the Lord's titles, all of them

concerned with rescue from danger: "shield," "(restorer of) my dignity (or glory)," "lifter of my head." How differently from the enemies does the psalmist see God! Verses 6–7 tell how the psalmist has experienced God as faithful in the past: Praying in the temple always elicits a divine response (5); lying down to sleep always ends with the psalmist waking safely (6). The psalmist therefore does not collapse before "ten thousands," remaining instead the perfect child of God—loyal and expectant of divine mercy and power.

The petition in v. 8 is succinct. "Rise up" alludes to the enemies' rising up in v. 2. "O Lord" reprises the invocations of vv. 2 and 4. "Deliver me" picks up the triliteral root in "help" in v. 3 and "deliverance" in v. 9. The phrase "my God" reverses the enemies' use of "God" in v. 3. The last verse puts entirely in God's hands the timetable and mode of rescue, asking only for blessings upon the psalmist and Israel. Such laments enabled petitioners to express fully and honestly their vulnerability and their faith in God.

An example of a *thanksgiving* is Psalm 32. In essence, a thanksgiving is the report of a rescue to other people (often called "the many" or "you"). Burdened with "guilt," which here is not so much interior anguish as the social consequences of one's foolish behavior, the psalmist declares, "Happy the one whose transgression is removed, / whose sin is forgiven." Verses 3-4 describe past anguish. Verses 5–7 describe the next steps—the psalmist opening up to the Lord and the happy result of being forgiven. The experience of being forgiven is so powerful that the psalmist must share it with others, becoming a teacher (vv. 8–11). The only way to find genuine happiness and joy is to open oneself up to the transforming love of God.

A Song of Trust: Psalm 23, A Song of David

The Lord is my shepherd,
    I shall not be in want.
He lets me graze in green pastures;
    he leads me to still waters.
He satisfies my appetite.
    He leads me along the right path
for the sake of his name.
    Even when I walk in a dark valley,
I do not fear harm,

For you are with me
    your rod and your staff give me courage.
You set a table for me
    while my enemies look on.
You anoint my head with oil,
    my cup is full.
Only goodness and love shall follow me
all the days of my life.
I will dwell in the house of the Lord
    for years to come.

This poem combines in a unique manner the personal experience of being cared for by a loving God with the national experience of the exodus from Egypt and entry into the Promised Land. Psalm 78:52–55 speaks of God guiding Israel through the wilderness to the shrine like a shepherd guiding his flock. It is open both to an intimate and a national reading. "Shepherd" is an ancient and formal term for "king," used especially when the king's care for the poor was being expressed. Here, the psalmist speaks as one of the flock, maintaining the metaphor through v. 4. The shift in v. 5 from third to second person and the mention of "table" signals new imagery, that of a meal hosted by the Lord. The Lord admits the psalmist to a sacred meal; the psalmist's enemies have been judged unworthy of entry because of their wickedness (v. 5) and must remain outside. The rich feast is a harbinger of future favor from the Lord (v. 6).

Conclusion

I hope that the foregoing discussion, though of necessity summary in its nature, has indicated the luster and complexity of the psalter. Although the psalms are unified by recurring patterns of poetic form and meaning, conscientious readers are impressed by the diversity that exists among them. Furthermore, they are masterpieces of devotion. Few other religious texts can match their apt and eloquent expression of praise, gratitude, and supplication. Unquestionably, these brief, evocative poems have enriched, and will continue to enrich, the lives of untold numbers of worshippers.

How Many Members Are There Really? Two Censuses and the Meaning of LDS Membership in Chile and Mexico

David Clark Knowlton

HOW MANY MEMBERS ARE THERE and what does it mean to be a member? The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regularly publishes figures representing Church membership. If nowhere else they appear in the biennial *Deseret News Church Almanac*. These figures are widely cited by the Church, members, scholars, and the press. As a result, it would seem that the question of how many members there are is a relatively simple issue. The other question, what it means to be a member, would seem to be the hard one.

Yet, as we shall see, neither question is either straightforward or simple. Two major countries in Latin America, Mexico and Chile, recently published decennial census numbers that included specific religious identifications. Both countries required their inhabitants to identify their religious membership as part of the regular process of enumerating national populations. In the past, these numbers have been grouped in large categories, such as Catholic, Evangelical, and Other. Many scholars have

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scratched their heads trying to figure out where Latter-day Saints might be classified in that set. In their most recent censuses, however, both Chile and Mexico required people to identify the specific denomination they identified with, and numbers were tabulated accordingly. For the first time, we have an independent set of figures for Church membership in the region that can be compared with the numbers supplied by the Church or explored in their own right for what insights they might give us about the population of Mormons in Latin America.

Mormons in Mexico and Chile

In 2000, Mexico's census reported 205,229 Mormons five years of age and older. (See Table 1.)[1] Yet for December 31, 1999, the LDS Church claimed 846,931.[2] Even if one recognizes that the census figure includes only people five and older while the Church numbers include infants and small children, the difference is astounding and raises numerous questions. These include the question of why Mexico's official census reported only 20–25 percent as many Latter-day Saints as the Church claimed.[3]

In the spring of 2003, Chile published the results of its 2002 census. (See Table 2.) For the last day of 2001, the Church claimed 520,202 members in Chile while the new census identified only 103,735 members age fifteen and older.[4] Again the variance is stunning. After accounting for the difference in ages covered, the census reports about 25 percent the number of Mormons that the Church claims.

In the case of Mexico, it was possible to speak of an isolated instance

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1. Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Geografía, e Informática of Mexico, retrieved August 13, 2003, from www.inegi.gob.mx.

2. *2001–2002 Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2000), 359.

3. Henri Gooren, "Analyzing LDS Growth in Guatemala: Report from a Barrio," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 97–115, argued, prior to the appearance of the census numbers, that he had found a similar discrepancy between official Church membership and effective membership. The census numbers sustain Gooren's argument and indicate its prescience and importance.

4. *Deseret News 2003 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2002), 329; the Chilean numbers are found on the official webpage for the Chilean Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, retrieved on August 13, 2003, from www.ine.cl.

Table 1
Mexican Population by Religion, 2000
Age Five and Older

Group	*Number*
Mexico (total population)	84,794,454
Catholic	74,612,373
Protestants and Evangelicals	4,408,159
Biblical non-Evangelical	1,751,910
Seventh-day Adventists	488,945
LDS Church (Mormons)	205,229
Jehovah's Witnesses	1,058,736

Source: My compilation, based on Mexico's 2000 Census, Sistemas Nacionales de Estadísticas y de Información Geográfica, retrieved June 6, 2004, from www.inegi.gob.mx.

of discrepancy; but now that Chile presents a similar discrepancy, we face a pattern established by two points of data from widely different areas. The discrepancy requires that students of Mormonism think deeply about numbers and the meaning of membership.

Comparison with Other Denominations

As an initial approach to the problem, we might ask how the published numbers of other denominations fare in relationship to the census numbers. In other words, is this solely a discrepancy between LDS numbers and the censuses, or do other groups also show a similar pattern of discrepancies between their internal numeration and the census reports?

In both Mexico and Chile, it is difficult to separate numbers for the broad range of Protestant denominations. However, groups that most scholars of religion within Latin America label as "Para-Christian" or "Eschatological" (i.e., the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh-day Adventists) are tallied separately from the numbers for other non-Catholic Christians in Mexico. In Chile the Seventh-day Adventists are aggregated with the Evangelicals while the Jehovah's Witnesses are separated.

Table 2
Chilean Population by Religion, 2002
Age Fifteen and Older

Group	*Number*
Chile (total population)	11,226,309
Catholics	7,853,428
Evangelicals,	1,699,725
Jehovah's Witnesses	119,455
LDS Church (Mormons)	103,735

Source: My compilation, based on Chile's Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Información Censo 2002, retrieved June 6, 2004, www.ine.cl.

Since both the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-day Adventists accumulate and publish membership figures regularly, it is useful to observe how their figures fare compared with those garnered by the censuses.[5] Interestingly, both denominations are often cited as relatively similar to the LDS Church both in size and in rates of growth around the world.[6]

For 2000 the Adventists claimed a membership of 524,207 in Mexico.[7] The Mexican census reported 488,945 Adventists in the country.[8] The numbers are more than 90 percent the same. Likewise, the census

5. These denominations use different definitions of membership and procedures for acquiring statistics, although they all give importance to the numbers. Here the main issue is with how their numbers, whatever definitions and procedures they use, relate to the census figures. Subsequently, this paper emphasizes the meaning of membership for Latter-day Saints, although similar exploration for the other two groups is merited.

6. See, for example, the statistics for over 4,200 religions and faith groups available August 13, 2003, at Adherents.com, http://www.adherents.com.

7. 138th Annual Statistics Report, General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists. Retrieved August 13, 2003, from http://www.adventist.org/ast/general_statistics.shtml.

8. Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía, e Informática of Mexico, retrieved August 13, 2003 from www.inegi.gob.mx.

claims that 1,057,736 Mexicans self-report as Jehovah's Witnesses.[9] This religious body has been very successful within Mexico, far more successful than the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To compare this number with statistics published by the Watchtower Society is not quite so simple as for the Mormons and Adventists.[10] The Watchtower Society reported two membership figures for 2000: (1) the Peak Number of Witnesses, 542,117; and (2) annual Memorial Attendance, 1,681,880.[11] The first is a quite restricted measure of committed members while the second records both the former and those who do not demonstrate as strong a commitment. In comparison, the Mexican census number is almost double the first figure but almost 63 percent of the latter. In other words, the census numbers fall between the two membership figures given by the Watchtower society in the annual report.

Chile recorded 119,455 Jehovah's Witnesses in its 2002 census.[12] According to the Watchtower Society, Chile in 2002 had 67,909 "active publishers" and 156,704 attendees at the Memorial Meeting.[13] The first number is 57 percent of the census figure, while the second is 131 percent of the census figure. In other words, the Jehovah's Witnesses' Chilean numbers show a similar relationship to the Chilean census as their Mexican numbers do to the Mexican census. The Peak Witnesses figure is about half that of the census number while the Memorial Attendance figure is about 1.3 the size of the census number.

On the one hand, the fact that both the Mormon and Jehovah's

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9. Ibid.

10. To be fair it is seldom simple to compare numbers, particularly when they count different things. The censuses and the various definitions of membership refer to different measures that are of significance to the people establishing the count. As a result, the numbers are not strictly the same. Despite these difficulties, comparison can be fruitful, when performed carefully.

11. 2000 Worldwide Report of Statistics, retrieved July 8, 2001, from http://www.watchtower.org. The "Memorial Attendance" figure represents the number of people who attend the annual celebration of Christ's birth, while the "Peak Witnesses" figure is a restricted category of "practicing members"—i.e., members who actively proselyte.

12. Chile: Instituto Nacional de Estadisticas, Informacion Censo 2002, retrieved August 13, 2003 from www.ine.cl.

13. Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, retrieved on August 11, 2003, from www.watchtower.org/statistics/worldwide_report.htm.

Witness data show similar patterns in the two censuses suggests that the censuses reflect configurations of membership that have to do with the interaction between the religious bodies and Latin American society, rather than just the vagaries of the individual census of each local society. On the other hand, the fact that the census numbers and the membership reported by the Adventists should be more than 90 percent the same suggests that part of the concern has to do with how membership is defined in the different bodies and how those formal, institutional definitions relate to people's identities.

Census and LDS Criteria

While the census asks people to report their personal religious membership, the LDS Church bases its numbers on members of record.[14] This figure includes all people who have been baptized as well as children of record. In comparison, the LDS criteria create a much less restrictive measure than either of the Jehovah's Witnesses' numbers. The Witnesses prefer to report as members only those who are committed enough to regularly witness to others about the Bible—that is, to be members, they must actively "publish." The Witnesses state: "While other religious groups count their membership by occasional or annual attendance, this figure ["peak witnesses"] reflects only those who are actively involved in the public Bible educational work."[15]

In contrast, being blessed as a child or being baptized (that is, accepting a critical boundary ordinance) is the minimum definition required to

14. The various biennial editions of the *Deseret News Church Almanac* that I consulted provide no definition of membership that they use in creating the statistics. Linda A. Charney, "Membership" for the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 2:887, defines membership as stemming from the ritual of baptism, but the actual membership numbers reported in general conference and in the *Almanac*, according to my understanding, include the infants of Mormon parentage who are blessed as well as the numbers of baptized members.

15. Office of Public Information of Jehovah's Witnesses, "Membership and Publishing Statistics," 2004, retrieved August 13, 2003, from http://www.jw-media.org/people/statistics.htm.

be listed to qualify as a member for the Latter-day Saint reports.[16] There is no implication of ongoing commitment or current activity, despite the importance of "activity" for Mormon members.[17]

The census is a very different measure. Instead of being based on the document of an action (e.g., ordinance) performed—something that can be empirically observed and quantified—it is based on an individual's or head of household's claim of identity in response to a census schedule or census worker. When the census asks people to state their religious membership, it asks them to make a public affirmation of current religious identity. This is not the same as asking if they are religiously active. Since the census depends on this self reporting, it can be influenced by several factors widely known by scholars of religion in the area.

First, as a society Latin America is predominantly Catholic in practice and strongly Catholic in its public face. There is still significant social pressure for people to participate in Catholic rites and to claim a Catholic identity. Thus, although an individual might claim to belong to a different religious body at other times or might participate in a non-Catholic religion, on the census or in response to a government official that same individual might claim to be Catholic. He or she might fear the implications of making a public affirmation of membership other than Catholic.

Second, religious identities and their affirmation may well be contextual. What counts according to official documents as a changed state because of some ordinance may not lead to the kind of absolute identity presumed by the religious body. People claim different religious identities in different times and places and to different people. Thus, some people may claim the absolute identity of the institution while others may claim different identities in different circumstances.

Third, the main distinction in Latin America is between Catholics and Evangelicals. Despite the many arguments of Evangelical movements that Mormons and Witnesses, in particular, are not Christian and should

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16. Latter-day Saints do not provide an official definition equivalent to that of the Witnesses in any official source I am aware of, certainly not one as accessible as the Witnesses' website. As a result, for understanding Latter-day Saint numbers, I rely on my native understanding rather than official sources. I do not have that same native grasp of what constitutes "membership" for the Witnesses.

17. Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate Publishing, 2000).

not be confused with Evangelicals, nevertheless in popular practice, people may see little significant difference. As a result, people the Church counts as Mormons may themselves simply claim to be *hermanos*—that is, brothers and sisters. In popular parlance this designation is a synonym of Evangelical. Some practicing Latter-day Saints may have been counted under this label.

Fourth, people often have multiple, simultaneous religious commitments in Latin America. They simply seek what "works" for whatever interests them at the moment. Traditionally, people hold multiple devotions to different Catholic saints. And in these more religiously diverse times, it is not uncommon in Mexico to hear people speak of attending different religious bodies for different ends and different times and places. How this translates into an identity reportable on the census form is an open question.

As a result of these factors, it is difficult to simply read the census numbers as a firm measure of absolute religious identity. Instead they must be taken as an indication of how these and other factors, including those of the formal institutions, came together at the time of the census to create statements of identity that could be quantified.

A Field of Religious Activity

Both the formal LDS and the census numbers have validity for scholarship only as limited measures. Neither fully answers the question of how many real members are there or how many members are there really. These may not be answerable questions, depending as they do on absolute essences rather than the vagaries of social process. Yet the numbers do something important; they help us approach the question of the meaning of membership.

It is likely that the census numbers of Latter-day Saints, given the four factors listed above, reflect a body of strongly committed Latter-day Saints, as one type of person involved with the Mormon Church in Latin America. Nevertheless, neither census numbers nor Mormon membership numbers refer directly to activity or commitment. Since the census requires that people make a positive affirmation of LDS identity, when there are factors that militate in favor of not claiming that identity, publicly affirming that identity indicates some sort of strong commitment. As a result, it is plausible to argue that the census numbers may refer to committed, and hence active, members, whom Douglas Davies would call "the

church within the Church."[18] This church within the Church is like the Jehovah's Witnesses' "Peak Witnesses" category of people who are actively and strongly engaged in prescribed religious behavior. As we have seen, this number of Peak Witnesses is about half of the number of people on the census who claim to be Witnesses. If this difference parallels that in Mormonism, then somewhere between 50 percent and 100 percent of the Mormons who claim that status on the census form the church within the Church and the rest at least have a strong enough commitment to Mormonism to claim the identity on the census forms.

In fact, the relationship between the census numbers and the Church numbers is similar to the fragmentary data on activity rates we have for Latin America.[19] For example, on a trip to Latin America in July and August 2003, I spoke with seven people in four different countries, representing at least four different wards. I asked them for an impression of activity rates for their wards, and the numbers ranged from around 20 to 35 percent.

Using Davies's idea of a church within the Church, I think it useful not to conceive of membership as an absolute, singular identity. Instead it should be understood as something in process and as something in relationship with other identities and other religious activities. With this focus, the twin measures provided by the Church and the censuses lay out a religiously significant field in which this process takes place. They help us get a sense of the size of the field and the relative numbers of people involved at the different ends.[20]

Undoubtedly the Church insists on reporting numbers that reflect only the act of inscription on the rolls of the Church based on an ordinance because it holds that the ordinance changes people categorically. Someone who is a member is not held to be the same as someone who is a nonmember. They are not treated the same. Furthermore, a former member is a third kind of person. This concept must be taken seriously by scholars as part of the Church's understanding of the meaning of membership.

The distinction between "member" and "nonmember," then, estab-

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18. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 4.

19. Tim B. Heaton, "Vital Statistics," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992): 4:1518–36; see also David Stewart, "LDS Growth Today," The Cumorah Project, retrieved August 13, 2003, from www.cumorah.com/report.html#activity.

20. Charney, "Membership," 2:887.

lishes a boundary around a significant religious field within which people of one sort work out their "salvation" and in which different kinds of Church activity are determined. I recently spoke with missionaries serving in the Santiago II Ward in El Alto de La Paz, Bolivia. They said they spend about half their time trying to activate members of the Church and half seeking new members. In the first case, they are working the field we have identified. In the second, they are attempting to bring people into it. Similarly, when members perform home teaching, visit each other, or gossip about each other, and when they speak to their nonmember friends about the gospel or provide them as references to the missionaries, they are performing work which depends on the categories of this boundary separating the field of members (some more active, some less active, and some having left the fold) from that of nonmembers.

Official Church numbers speak to important issues of eschatology. They perform a function within the religious system far beyond that of simple propaganda or of trying to make the Church look good. Instead they define issues that to the Church are matters of sacred significance and eternal weight. They have profound moral importance and implications. They are not simple statistics, but have values far beyond their numerical status. They help define the present and the eternities.

From an external viewpoint, the official Church numbers measure those people who have had at least enough extended contact with the Church to be baptized or who were blessed as children. As a result they provide an idea of the relative impact—of this specific religious sort—the Church has had on a given society, such as Mexico or Chile. This measure can be compared with other measures, and the nature of the impact can be more deeply studied. This is another sense of the meaning of membership.

Still the official Church numbers do not begin to measure the group on which the Church is highly dependent, which Davies calls the church within the Church. According to Davies, these are the highly active, temple-attending Latter-day Saints who provide it with its organizational core.[21] They are the leaders and those who till the field of membership. Without them, this lay Church would cease to function. It is likely that the census numbers come close to representing this smaller but institutionally significant church.

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21. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 4.

Mormon Retention

This smaller church is worth paying attention to in itself. In Mexico, 205,229 persons five years of age and older went out of their way to claim the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as their primary religious identity. This is amazing. It may not sound as stupendous as a membership of almost a million, but it announces a quarter of a million committed souls who made a public admission of their dedication. Such declarations are not lightly made. Nor is it easy to make such strong solidarity with a "dissident" group, as Latter-day Saints and Protestants are called in Mexico, the norm in the region.

Similarly in Chile, 103,735 persons claimed that commitment publicly. This is amazing. Within Chile, as in Mexico, families are raising their children with a primary Latter-day Saint identity. Within both countries, young people are planning on missions, and many are actually serving, within their own country and in other countries. In both countries, a dedicated cadre of returned missionaries occupies positions of leadership. Their numbers may not be as great as had been hoped, but they are substantial nonetheless.

An indication of the importance of these numbers comes from a different country. In Bolivia the 2001 census decided not to ask questions on religion, determining that the information had little political importance. But under insistent pressure from religious groups and other organizations, it agreed instead to perform a nationwide survey on religion. I do not have the data from the full survey at the moment. But Xavier Albó, a prominent Bolivian anthropologist, published a book based on the survey.[22] He does not give us numbers for Mormons in Bolivia, although they apparently are available in the survey. Nevertheless, he does list Mormons as a separate category in his charts on religious retention. Overall his data indicate that the non-Catholic religions retain a significant portion of those who identify on the census as belonging to them, despite how historically recent their growth has been in Latin America. Furthermore, his specific data on people born into a non-Catholic religion are telling. Of those born within a household claiming Mormon membership, 82 percent continued to claim that identity. In comparison, only 48 percent of those born into households claiming no religious identity held

22. Xavier Albó, *Una casa común para todos: iglesias, ecumenismo, y desarrollo en Bolivia* (La Paz, Bolivia: CIPCA, 2002).

to that identity; 68 percent of those born into Holiness households continued, 72.4 percent of those born to the category of undefined non-Catholic continued in that category; 76 percent of those born Adventist remained; 81 percent of those born to families in the historic Protestant denominations continued, while Pentecostalism retained 88.9 percent of its children for their faith as adults.[23]

These numbers are significant. They indicate the strong grip these new Latin American identities have on the next generation. They are able to reproduce themselves and they have social relevance. Of these, Mormonism seems to have one of the strongest claims on its next generation in Bolivia; it is surpassed only by the Pentecostals.[24]

To the degree the Bolivian data may be similar to the situation in Mexico and Chile, they strongly indicate that the census numbers may refer to a group of highly committed individuals and families. Unlike those for whom the four factors listed above apply, those who claim to belong to a different religion than the Catholic mainstream have a single, strong, non-Catholic identity and are willing to announce it publicly to their national officials.

Another point of importance comes from a reading of those leaving their non-Catholic denomination of birth. In all cases where the people making the change were born into households claiming a religious membership, the largest single group became Catholic. In the specific case of Mormons, more than 10 percent became Catholic. An additional 7.6 percent joined Protestant groups that were not Pentecostal, the dominant evangelical movement in Latin America. This speaks to the ongoing importance Catholicism has as a vital, vivid religious system within Latin American society. However, it also speaks to the strength with which Mormon culture and values are transferred from a convert generation to their children in ways that match those of many metropolitan Mormons. The Latter-day Saint spiritual aesthetic is substantially divergent from that of Pentecostalism, for example, and this seems to create people with little interest in Pentecostalism, even though Pentecostalism is without doubt the

23. Ibid., 73, Chart 3.5 C.

24. Albó's data from Bolivia are from one small country. As a result, they are suggestive but not conclusive. Much more work in other regions needs to be done before we can speak conclusively about cross-generational retention.

most important non-Catholic movement in Latin America and probably the fastest-growing, large Christian religious movement on earth.[25]

Albó's observation also supports our thinking that those claiming Mormon identity in the census are probably the highly committed members of the church within the Church. These are the families that are most likely to strongly socialize their children into a Mormon ethos and identity.

Regional Distribution of Mormons in Latin America

Another way of approaching the meaning of membership explores the value this LDS community has in the national societies of Mexico and Chile. A beginning of an approach to this question requires that we explore the spatial distribution of these people who claimed to be Latter-day Saint for the census.[26] Once we have seen how they clump, we can pose the question of relationships to other social, political, religious, and economic processes, since these also are distributed unevenly in national space.[27] Membership takes meaning, not just in reference to the official teachings of the Church, but in conjunction with the local social worlds in which the members live.[28]

Table 3 shows the spatial distribution of Mormons across the regions of large and differentiated space that is Mexico.[29] Despite belonging to the same country, each of these regions has a different ethnic makeup, a different political history, and a different political economy. Since Table 3 also

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25. David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (London: Blackwell, 2001).

26. The censuses provide us a beginning for that task, enabling us to identify a fit between Mormonism and local regions, from which we can intuit a relationship with social processes. Nevertheless, without substantial local ethnographies we can only start the process of exploring this question.

27. William Roseberry, "Understanding Capitalism—Historically, Structurally, Spatially," in *Locating Capitalism in Time and Space: Global Restructuring, Politics, and Identity,* edited by David Nugent (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), 61–79.

28. See Ethan Yorgason's arguments on the importance of geography for Mormonism, particularly in its core region, in his *Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

29. This division into regions follows Felipe Vasquez, *Protestantismo en Xalapa* (Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico: Gobierno del Estado de Veracruz, 1991),

Table 3
Regional Percentages of
Non-Catholic Denominations in Mexico

Region	*Mormons*	*Jehovah's Witnesses*	*Seventh-day Adventists*	*Pentecostals*
North	30	23	9	18
Center North	10	16	6	8
Mexico City	35	28	9	18
Veracruz	10	10	16	18
South	15	23	59	38

Source: My calculations based on Mexico's 2000 Census, Sistemas Nacionales de Estadística y de Información Geográfica, retrieved June 6, 2004, from www.inegi.gob.mx.

shows the distribution of other non-Catholic groups, we can see how the Mormon pattern of spatial distribution compares with those of other religions. It must be noted that these distributions, while dependent on decisions concerning the use of resources by denominational leaders, lead us down the path to understanding how Mormonism finds varying social niches in different communities and how they, in turn, relate to the global Church. Seldom do religions cross all social circumstances equally. Generally there is a better fit with some than with others. That fit then constrains the growth of a religion elsewhere in the same society. In this paper, I shall not establish the specific connections between the regions and the growth pattern of the Church. It is enough to show the pattern, especially since the Mormon pattern is different from that of other religious groups, and to suggest that research be performed into the specific relationships between the regions' social reality and this pattern.

In the 2000 census, the largest block of Mormons lived in or close to greater Mexico City. (See Table 3.) The largest single numbers for Lat-

which compares the results of the 1970 and 1980 censuses for Protestant growth in Mexico.

ter-day Saints came from the Federal District and the state of Mexico. They alone contained more than a fifth of Mexican Mormons. When we add the nearby and highly urbanized states of Hidalgo, Puebla, and Morelos, we get more than a third of the total of Latter-day Saints in Mexico.[30] Mexico City and its environs are perhaps the largest city on earth and the most important economic, cultural, and governmental hub for the country. Thus, it provides an important context for Mormon growth, and Mormons show a distinctive relationship with this region.

It might be argued that it is natural for the Mexico City area to claim such a large percentage of Mormons since it has the largest concentration of population in the country. This region claims some 32 percent of the population of Mexico and 30 percent of the Mormons.[31] Although Mormons are slightly underrepresented in this region, the numbers are not radically dissimilar.

But the unusualness of this geographic relationship is emphasized when we look at the numbers in Table 3 for other religious groups. Mormons stand out for how heavily Mexico City weighs in their national membership. Curiously, this makes the LDS Church somewhat similar to Catholicism (33 percent) and different from the other non-Catholic groups cited. Future work must ask why Mormons are so geographically concentrated in the Mexico City region, as opposed to other areas.

Another important geographical region in Mexico is the northern tier of states along the U.S.-Mexican border. This area is distinctive because of its proximity to the United States and its strong economic, cultural, and political influence. It is an area about which the rest of Mexico feels ambivalence because of that proximity to the Yankees. Here, again, we find almost a third of Mexican Mormons. The relative weight of Latter-day Saints in this zone is far greater than that of any other religion,

30. For convenience, I added Tlaxcala to this region.

31. This number is based on my calculation of numbers obtained from the 2000 Mexican census.

with the exception of the Jehovah's Witnesses, who find almost a quarter of their members here.[32]

It is tempting to try to explain this pattern of the distribution of Mormons—65 percent of all Mexican Latter-day Saints, according to the census—in these two regions with the historical thesis. Mormonism first established itself in the valley of Mexico and the border.[33] So it would be logical to argue that this pattern continues to the present. Nevertheless, these two areas were both significant areas of Protestant growth even before the coming of Mormons.[34] As a result, the historical thesis needs careful exploration but is not adequate to completely explain this pattern of Mormon growth. The relationship between the economic power of these two zones and Mormon growth, in contrast with that of other religious groups, must also be explored.

The next third of Mexico's Mormons is scattered over the central north, the south, and a single state: Veracruz. The state of Veracruz is known for having the historically important port city of the same name, for its oil industry, and for its historically important liberal spirit. Not only is it important for Mormons, but it holds an even greater importance for Pentecostals and Seventh-day Adventists, for whom Veracruz alone is as important or more important numerically as the Mexico City region. In short, Veracruz has been one of the major areas in Mexico for the development of alternative religious identities. At some point, researchers must ask the question of the relationship between this state, its economic structure, and these new religions, including Mormonism. They must also ask, curiously enough, why the LDS Church has not been as successful here as these other groups.

In contrast, the central north region, the most traditional and Catholic of Mexico, claimed a tenth of Latter-day Saints. This area is often considered the heartland of traditional Mexico, and it still maintains a very

32. For example, only 18 percent of Mexico's Catholics are found here, according to my calculations based on census data.

33. F. LaMond Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987), chaps. 1–2.

34. Jean-Pierre Bastian, "Las sociedades protestantes y la oposición a Porfirio Díaz, 1877–1911," in *Protestantes, liberales y francmasones: Sociedades de ideas y modernidad en América Latina, siglo XIX*, edited by Jean Pierre Bastian (Mexico D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993), 132–64.

strong Catholic society that resists the inroads of alternative religious groups, although they are growing on the margins. This is also the area that traditionally sends a large percentage of its population to work in the United States. Other regions are now catching up with it in terms of sending immigrants.

The Mexican south is the most Indian and the most rural portion of the country. Curiously enough, this area, more than any other, demonstrates the peculiarity of the Mormon pattern in Mexico since it is the most strongly non-Catholic region in Mexico. The state of Chiapas claims the honors with only 64 percent of its population claiming to be Catholic. This is very different from the 96 percent Catholics found in the center north state of Guanajuato, the heartland of Mexican independence. The south holds 40 percent of all Mexican Pentecostals (the largest non-Catholic religion in Latin America) and holds almost 60 percent of its Seventh-day Adventists as well as a quarter of its Jehovah's Witnesses. Mormons simply have not done as well in this region as these three other groups. Mormons have something distinctive about them that has led to their growth elsewhere but not in this very rural and Indian area of Mexico.

To understand this pattern better, we can see how Mormons are distributed within the state of Chiapas, since it has the lowest percentage of Catholics in the country. In Chiapas the largest populations of Mormons, as well as the highest relative percentages are found in its largest cities, Tuxtla Gutierrez and Tapachula. These are at the center of two different economic zones, the coast and the inter-mountain depression. They are not in the highlands where the Zapatista rebellion is and where the large and traditional Indian population occurs, nor are they in the colonization zones near the Lacandón jungle, where Protestantism has been much more significant. Together these cities contain 64 percent of the state's Mormons although they only have 19 percent of the state's total population. The urban Mormons are more than three times more important for Chiapas's total LDS population than the cities for the state as a whole. Mormons are strongly overrepresented in the larger, economically dynamic cities of the state.

Because Mormonism is so associated with the cities, it is removed from the social processes that have made Chiapas so heavily Protestant. Mormonism is almost not found in the colonization zones around the Lacandón jungle nor is it found much in the highlands, where Protestant-

ism has been an important factor of popular organization and of dividing traditional Indian communities. Mormonism has also not been a major factor among the agricultural workers in the lowland valleys near the coast. Rather it is primarily an urban organization. Tuxtla Gutierrez, where some 33 percent of the state's Mormons reside, is almost 80 percent Catholic, an extreme difference between it and the state's average. Tapachula, where there are another 31 percent of the state's Mormons is just slightly less Catholic than the state's average, 63.21 percent versus the state's 63.83 percent. This means that Mormonism occupies a very different social association than Protestantism. For some reason, Mormonism seems to be more strongly associated with cities that have higher relative percentages of Catholics than it is with areas of high overall religious change.

Along these lines it is useful to explore the state of Mexico. It surrounds the Distrito Federal, in which the City of Mexico finds its center. Most of the *municipios* (counties) surrounding the Distrito Federal are also heavily urbanized. Yet the state has an important rural population. Peasants from the state of Mexico have been heavily mobilized at various times in Mexico's history, including most recently in resistance to the construction of a new international airport for the City of Mexico on rural land. Furthermore, among these peasants is found one of the earliest areas where Mormonism was established in Mexico.[35] Before the Anglo colonists arrived in Chihuahua in 1885, people from rural communities in central Mexico converted to the Church and formed enduring congregations, whose descendants have been important in the history of the Church in Mexico and among Latinos in Utah.

Some of the communities that held Mormon congregations have been heavily urbanized. For example, Chimalhuacan is now 98 percent urban. From it came the Rivera sisters who were central in the Mexican American community in Utah and whose descendants include many pillars of the Mormon Latino community of Utah. These include a mission president in Mexico who was instrumental in the negotiations for the temple in Mexico City. One of their granddaughters is married to a former vice president of the University of Utah, and their family includes the founders of some of the best-known Mexican restaurants in the Salt Lake Valley. Similarly Ozumba is 75 percent urban and Chalco is 57.4 percent urban. But Atlautla is still 100 percent rural.

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35. Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico*, 40.

Margarito Bautista came from this community. He was an important early leader of the Spanish-speaking congregation in Salt Lake City as well as in central Mexico. He became a key figure in the Third Convention movement which sought to replace Anglo leaders with Mexican figures using the Book of Mormon as a central justification.[36]

Atlautla has the highest relative percentages of its population that is Mormon in this area. Its total population is 21,027, and 1.8 percent (n = 271) persons claimed to be Mormon. Huehuetoca is another rural community with some thirty thousand persons of whom 0.5 percent (n = 176) claim to be Mormon. In short, Mormonism still shows up as statistically visible in these communities after all the years that have passed since it was started there. Such endurance suggests a strong multigenerational commitment. It is also worth noting that, despite the long historical presence of Mormonism in Atlautla, it has not spread much, either within the *municipio* or to surrounding zones. It has become a historical isolate, an enclave. This pattern is extremely curious and requires historical exploration.

Despite the large territory of the state of Mexico with its large rural population, Mormonism, with a very few exceptions, is absent from rural Mexico and has had little influence in the social struggles and challenges of the rural people in the state of Mexico. Instead it is very strongly located in the cities. Not surprisingly, given the overall size of its population, the largest number of Mormons in the state is found in the suburbs of the city of Mexico.

Outside of the rural communities mentioned above, the highest relative percentages of Latter-day Saints are found in the industrial corridor stretching from the boundary of the Distrito Federal northward. In fact, the highest relative percent in the district (0.63 percent in the delegation, a geographic/political division, of Gustavo Adolfo Madero) is adjacent to this corridor.[37] Again this pattern is very different from that of Protestants and other Para-Christian groups. There is something distinctively

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36. Ibid., 132–68. Cf. Jorge Iber, *Hispanics in the Mormon Zion, 1912–1999* (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M Press, 2000).

37. This Mormon zone extends through the *municipios* of Naucalpan, Tlalnepantla, Cuautitlan Izcalli, Coacalco, Ecatepec, and Tultitlan. There are also high rates in the nearby suburb of Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl. In terms of relative percentages, according to my calculations, Coacalco has 0.65 percent, Cuautitlan

Mormon in its membership's relationship with the corridor that concentrates large capitalist industry in Mexico City.

These are still very large neighborhoods, sometimes close to or in excess of a million people. Even though they do not relate cleanly to social economic processes, they give us a sense of how Mormonism relates to urban space. Mormonism seems to have a strongly marked affinity for this industrial corridor, something that is not evident in the other religious groups identified in the Mexican census. In it we find something that is probably critically important for understanding contemporary Mormonism in Latin America, if this same pattern relating Mormonism to cities and to areas of strong capitalist growth holds for other countries.

Mormon Distribution in Chile

It is fortunate, therefore, that the Chilean census provides data allowing us to see if the same pattern holds there, at the opposite extreme of Latin America. (See Table 4.) In Chile the largest single number of members is found in metropolitan Santiago, the largest city in the country. It holds almost 40 percent of the nation's population of Mormons. This is slightly less than the percentage of the national population in greater Santiago and is equivalent to the percentage of the nation's Catholics it contains. But the percentage of Protestants is substantially less.

In part this is because of the historical importance of Protestantism, especially Pentecostalism, in the Biobio region and Araucanía. Pentecostalism began here soon after it did in the United States and has spread from here to many other countries and regions. As a result, the Biobio region claims almost a quarter of the nation's Evangelicals, although it has only 1 percent of the nation's population. If we add Araucanía, we find fully a third of the nation's Evangelicals but only 7.8 percent of the nation's population. Another way of viewing the importance of this pattern is to look at the relative percentage of the region's population claimed by the different religious groups. (See Table 5.) These two regions have a smaller percentage of their population as Catholic

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Izcalli has 0.44 percent, Tlalnepantla has 0.39 percent, Tultitlan has 0.37 percent, Ecatepec has 0.32 percent, Tultepec has 0.28 percent, Cuautitlan has 0.26 percent, and Melchor Ocampo has 0.24 percent. In the district, the delegation of G. A. Madero has 0.63 and Venustiano Carranza 0.34 percent, Tlalpan has 0.32 percent, Azcapotzalco has 0.28 percent, and Iztacalco has 0.25 percent.

Table 4
Denominations as Percentage of Population in Chile

Region	*Catholic*	*Evangelical*	*Jehovah's Witnesses*	*Mormon*
Chile	70	15	01	01
Tarapacá	71	12	20	02
Antofagasta	72	11	19	01
Atacama	76	10	12	01
Coquimbo	82	07	11	01
Valparaíso	75	10	13	01
O'Higgins	80	11	10	01
Maule	76	18	01	01
Biobio	59	28	01	01
Araucanía	64	24	01	01
Los Lagos	71	18	01	01
Aysén	72	15	01	01
Magallanes	80	78	01	01
Metro. Santiago	69	13	01	01

Source: My calculations based on data from Chile's 2002 Census, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Información Censo 2002, retrieved June 6, 2004, from www.ine.cl.

than other regions in the country. In this they are similar to Chiapas in Mexico. Almost 30 percent of Biobio and 24 percent of Araucanía are Evangelical. Both the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons show a different distribution. Neither has equivalent strength in this region. Instead their strength, as a relative percentage of the region's population is elsewhere.

Unfortunately the census does not contain the kind of detail that would allow an analysis for Chiapas similar to the analysis we made for Biobio and Araucanía, so the question of how Mormonism relates to the geographical space of these regions remains to be researched.

Table 5
Percentage of National Denominational Membership for Each Region in Chile

Region	*Total*	*Catholic*	*Evangelical*	*Jehovah's Witnesses*	*Mormon*
Tarapacá	2.8	2.2	2.2	5.3	4.6
Antofagasta	3.2	3.3	2.3	5.8	4.5
Atacama	1.6	1.8	1.1	1.9	2.3
Coquimbo	3.9	4.6	1.9	4.2	3.3
Valparaíso	10.4	11.2	6.6	12.3	12.5
O'Higgins	5.0	5.7	3.8	4.1	3.7
Maule	5.9	6.4	5.8	3.6	3.6
Biobio	1.2	10.2	22.9	8.9	13.1
Araucanía	5.6	5.2	8.9	4.1	3.9
Los Lagos	7.0	7.1	8.3	4.4	6.3
Aysén	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.9
Magallanes	1.0	1.2	0.5	1.0	1.5
Metro. Santiago	40.5	39.8	35.0	44.2	39.7

Source: My calculations based on data from Chile's 2002 Census, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Información Censo 2002, retrieved June 6, 2004, from www.ine.cl.

The next largest concentration of Mormons is found in the Valparaíso region. This is the important port city at which Parley P. Pratt arrived in 1851. However, there again, in terms of relative percentages, the importance of Mormonism for the region is not as great as elsewhere in the country. Mormonism seems to have had its greatest impact on the populations of the extreme north and the extreme south. This pattern is different from that of any other religious group and requires consideration.

One way of approaching this distribution is to note that the north and the extreme south are highly urbanized, like the area of Metropolitan Santiago, while Biobio and Araucanía still maintain substantial rural pop-

Table 6
Religions as Relative Percentages of Comuna Population, 2002, in Chile

Neighborhood	*Catholic*	*Evangelical*	*Jehovah's Witnesses*	*Mormon*
Cerillos	67.6	16.0	1.2	0.9
Cerro Navía	60.9	23.4	1.2	0.9
Conchalí	68.7	12.9	1.3	1.3
Comuna de Santiago	68.67	8.21	0.82	0.7
El Bosque	64.1	17.9	1.1	1.4
Estación Central	72.0	11.8	0.9	0.9
Huechuraba	66.9	15.5	0.9	1.05
Independencia	74.2	8.2	1.3	0.9
La Cisterna	71.1	10.5	1.1	1.4
La Florida	67.6	11.4	1.4	1.0
La Granja	64.6	17.6	1.72	1.0
La Pintana	57.8	12.8	1.3	0.9
La Reina	68.9	6.2	0.8	0.6
Las Condes	75.8	4.4	0.5	0.3
Lo Barnechea	76.1	8.4	0.5	0.4
Lo Espejo	63.0	21.1	1.2	0.9
Lo Prado	66.7	17.0	1.26	0.8
Macul	69.4	10.3	1.2	0.9
Maipú	71.0	11.5	1.2	1.0
Pedro Aguirre Cerda	65.6	16.5	1.0	0.9
PeZalolén	64.9	15.2	1.2	0.8
Providencia	69.9	3.6	0.5	0.4
Pudahuel	65.4	17.5	1.3	0.8
Quilicura	66.4	15.6	1.6	1.1
Quinta Normal	70.3	11.7	1.4	0.8
Recoleta	69.0	13.2	1.2	1.0
Renca	63.3	16.8	1.5	1.0
San Joaquín	66.3	13.0	1.5	0.8
San Miguel	72.2	9.2	1.0	1.0
San Ramón	62.2	19.8	0.15	1.0
Vitacura	77.9	4.4	0.4	0.2
YuZoa	69.0	5.0	0.8	0.4

Source: My calculations based on data from Chile's 2002 Census, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Información Censo 2002, retrieved June 6, 2004, from www.ine.cl.

ulations among whom Protestantism has been important. It may be that Mormonism has dedicated the vast majority of its proselytizing effort to cities, unlike the Protestants but similar to the Jehovah's Witnesses. Nevertheless there may be other factors besides urbanization, that are important in this distribution of Mormons in Chile.

Fortunately Santiago is large enough that we can begin to pose this question by looking at the distribution of Mormons within it. (See Table 6.) We notice that the relative percentage of Mormons in the *comuna* (neighborhood) population is highest within the relatively poor, heavily migrant neighborhoods of El Bosque, La Cisterna, and Conchalí, while it is lowest in the relatively rich neighborhoods of Las Condes, Ñuñoa, Vitacura, and Providencia. Curiously the LDS temple is located in Providencia. However, once again, the Mormon pattern is different from that of other non-Catholic religions. Not only are there far larger numbers of Evangelicals, but they find their largest relative percentages in the *comunas* of Cerro Navía, Lo Espejo, and San Ramón. As just one means of demonstrating the difference between these two sets of areas, we can look at rates of poverty and extreme poverty. The most highly Mormon areas average 10.8 percent poor and 3 percent extremely poor while the Evangelical areas average 18.3 percent poor and 5 percent extremely poor. The rates of extreme poverty for the most highly Mormon areas would be substantially lower were it not for the neighborhood of El Bosque whose rates are as high as the highest in the Evangelical category.

As a result, it might be useful to make another comparison using literacy rates. The areas that are most highly Latter-day Saint have an average illiteracy rate of 1.7 while those that are Evangelical have a rate of 4. It appears therefore that Mormons are found in greater numbers in areas that are less poor and more literate. This observation is consonant with what was found for Mexico, although the specific relationship with industrial production and Mormonism would have to be explored for Chile.[38] Still one must wonder which kinds of people in these various neighborhoods are becoming Mormon and how their membership relates to conditions of poverty or wealth.

Nevertheless, we have seen that the censuses demonstrate a different

38. Evangelicals and Mormons have different patterns of distribution within Mexico City, and the poorest areas have higher relative percentages of Evangelicals than of Mormons.

pattern of distribution for Latter-day Saints and other religious groups. This fact suggests a fruitful avenue of future research to adequately understand the meaning of Mormon membership within the context of Latin America.

A Strong Faith in Latin America

Another way of making sense of these numbers, by way of conclusion, is to report some observations from a six-week visit I made to Latin America in July and August 2003. On fast Sunday in August 2003, the pulpit in the chapel of the Santiago II Ward never stood vacant. The chapel looked full, with close to two hundred persons present. One after another, the people came forward, often in entire family groups, to witness they knew the Church was "true," that the "canonical books"—the standard works—were "true," and that Gordon B. Hinckley was a prophet of God. They located these statements in terms of vignettes from their lives. One of the most powerful moments came when a quiet, young man with a firm, square face and a shock of unruly black hair stood in his rumpled suit to announce that he had reached the end of his mission and would be returning to his home in the valley of Cochabamba. He spoke of the impact that two years of missionary service had had on him, a former engineering student at the university, and how much he cared for the members of this ward and his companion, a young man from Chile with a quick smile, and how much he would miss each and every one of the members.

Fast meeting came first, and priesthood and Relief Society classes, with the rumbling of stomachs, came last. Outside the chapel, the zone's market, with food vendors and merchants of many other goods, spread to encompass the white building with its spire. Yet inside, the elders' quorum met with more than twenty persons present, mostly young returned missionaries; in the high priests quorum, ten mostly older men discussed the teachings of John Taylor. In short, Santiago II is a solid ward with a strong group of committed members.

A month earlier, I had been in Cusco, Peru, for a similarly well-attended fast and testimony meeting where the microphone was never left silent and where the chapel felt full. It is safe to say that, although official numbers are high and activity rates relatively low, there is still a large and strong cadre of Latter-day Saints in Latin America who live Mormon lives filled with experiences intelligible to Latter-day Saints throughout the

Church. These people are passing their faith and their identity to their children. But at the same time that their faith is Mormon, it connects with Latin American concerns and has strong local, contextual meanings.

In Chile, I am told, wards and stakes are being consolidated in the face of low numbers. To borrow from the scriptures, "many are called but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). Nevertheless, when one sums up those who appear to be chosen, they are no longer few; they become many and mighty. These appear to be the people who told the census takers in Mexico and Chile that they were Latter-day Saints. They are the church within the Church and play an important role in the two fields identified by official Church figures—those of nonmembers and those of members. They share the gospel with the former and attempt to activate and fellowship the latter. In sum, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is strong and growing in Latin America.

The Maturing of the Oak: The Dynamics of LDS Growth in Latin America

Mark L. Grover

IN 1926 JUST BEFORE LEAVING ARGENTINA after a six-month mission and few baptisms, Elder Melvin J. Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles drew on natural images to suggest the future growth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in South America: "The work of the Lord will grow slowly for a time here just as an oak grows slowly from an acorn. It will not shoot up in a day as does the sunflower that grows quickly and then dies. But thousands will join the Church. It will be divided into more than one mission and will be one of the strongest in the Church. . . . The South American Mission will be a power in the Church."[1]

That prophecy has seen partial fulfillment during the past seventy-five years. From 1925 through the 1960s, the Church struggled with limited growth. However, in the past forty years, the Church in Latin America went from less than 1 percent (.72) of the entire Church to almost 37 percent by January 1, 2004. On the same date, Church membership in Latin America was 69 percent of the total Church outside of the United States and Canada. Apostle Ballard's prediction that South Amer-

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1. Quoted in Bryant S. Hinckley, *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1949), 100.

ica would be "a power in the Church" is surely in the process of being fulfilled. The increase in membership in Latin America in the last half of the twentieth century is one of the most momentous events in the Church's history. Without it, the LDS Church would be very different.

This article provides an overview of the Church's growth and development in Latin America, including some suggestions about why the Church was late in coming to Latin America, why early growth was slow, and when and why expansion in numbers did occur. LDS growth in this region is part of a much larger reformation of religious belief and practice in Latin America and also a result of changes that occurred within the Church itself. Although I strongly affirm the spiritual and prophetic aspects of the Church's development, most of this analysis is descriptive and informational in nature.[2]

Beginning

To suggest that the early leaders of the Church regarded the world's Catholic countries with frustration would be a considerable understatement. Whenever missionaries went to the Latin countries, they always confronted the same phenomenon: a close relationship between the government and the Catholic Church. The by-product of that relationship was secular protection of the Catholic Church's status with restrictions on any type of non-Catholic religious activities. Lorenzo Snow found this dynamic in Italy in 1850 as did Parley P. Pratt during his mission to Chile in 1851. In Chile non-Catholic services could be legally conducted only by an immigrant population who brought their religion with them; and any type of proselytizing activity, including the seemingly innocent distribution of Bibles, was punishable by time in prison. The nineteenth-century decision of LDS Church leaders to concentrate missionary work in the Protestant countries of Western Europe was an obvious consequence of a distinctive church/state relationship in Latin America and southern Eu-

2. For spiritual aspects of this history, see my "Miracle of the Rose and the Oak in Latin America," in *Out of Obscurity: The Church in the Twentieth Century* (no editor listed) (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 138–50, and my BYU Devotional address, "One Convert at a Time" in *Brigham Young University 2001–2002 Speeches* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2002), 79–87.

rope. The LDS Church went to Catholic countries only when those restrictions were reduced or lifted.[3]

Three theological beliefs greatly influenced the LDS Church's introduction and evolution in Latin America. First was the admonition to take the gospel to the entire earth as Christ commanded his apostles just prior to his final descent, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The modifiers "all" and "every" suggest the comprehensive character that missionary work would assume. The second belief was the revelation Joseph Smith received in October 1830 to send missionaries "into the wilderness among the Lamanites" (D&C 32:2)—meaning the descendants of the Book of Mormon peoples, identified as the indigenous population of the Americas. The promise that this population would "blossom as a rose" (D&C 49:24) suggested significant success among the descendants of Lehi. The commandment to do missionary work with this population was often on the minds of the Church leaders. Until the 1960s, most of the focus of this missionary work has been on Native Americans in the United States. However, Church leaders always recognized that Latin America also had a large population of Indians.[4] The only question was exactly when the Church would expand into Latin America.

Combined with that belief, but occasionally seen as a modifying belief, was the concept of the gathering of the descendants of Israel, more specifically the tribe of Ephraim. The foundation of the doctrine was fundamental in the teachings of Joseph Smith, but non-LDS ideas significantly influenced its interpretation from the turn of the century until the 1950s. Some Church leaders embraced the ideas of two secular move-

3. Michael W. Homer, "The Italian Mission, 1850–1867," *Sunstone* 7 (May/June 1982): 16–21; A. Delbert Palmer and Mark L. Grover, "Hoping to Establish a Presence: Parley P. Pratt's 1851 Mission to Chile," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 4 (1999): 115–38.

4. See especially Spencer W. Kimball's addresses. Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977), 360–63. The best academic study is Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Concept of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), esp. chaps. 3, 4, and 5. Chapter 4 discusses the change in emphasis (pp. 114–57).

ments called British Israelism and Anglo-Saxon Triumphalism.[5] Though there are numerous aspects of these movements, the one generally accepted by some Church leaders was the belief that the population of northern Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom, had a high percentage of the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, especially Ephraim. Consequently, Church leaders explained early missionary success in England and northern Europe, combined with the failure of missionary work in Southern Europe and Latin America, as the presence or absence of Ephraimites in the two regions.[6] This modification in the concept of the gathering helped to explain the downturn in Church growth during the early twentieth century: Most of the gathering had already occurred and missionaries must seek those few remaining Ephraimites scattered through the world. When they had been gathered, just before the second coming, then Lehi's descendants would accept the gospel.[7]

Thus, the introduction of the Church into Latin America was influenced by these three doctrines, but more secular reasons also played a role. Brigham Young first sent missionaries into Mexico in 1875 for two reasons, most urgently to find a place where U.S. Mormons, under pressure from the government over polygamy, could settle. The second reason was to establish the Church in Mexico among the indigenous population.

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5. An example of that acceptance can be seen in Antony W. Ivins's address, *Conference Report*, October 1926, 17–19. Ivins, first counselor in the First Presidency, used the ideas of these secular movements to support the LDS doctrine of the gathering.

6See Armand L. Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim: Traditional Mormon Conceptions of Lineage and Race," *Journal of Mormon History* 25 (Spring 1999): 131–73; Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*; and, more generally, Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

7. W. Grant Bangerter described his mission to Brazil in the early 1940s in just this way: "We thought that the blood of Israel meant blond, European people, and that we wouldn't expect too much success among Latin peoples because they probably didn't have the proper lineage. So under these conditions we weren't too serious about the great overall purpose of missionary work in the Church. And according to our vision, so was our success. We had very little of either." William Grant Bangerter, Oral History, interviewed by Gordon Irving, Salt Lake City, 1976–77, 7, James H. Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives).

By 1885, Mormon colonies had been established in the northern states of Chihuahua and Sonora; in 1879, a small branch was organized in Mexico City. The Church has remained a continuing presence in Mexico, though it experienced serious struggles for many years due to political unrest and internal schism.[8]

The Church's introduction into Argentina in 1925 was strongly influenced by the concept of gathering Ephraim's descendants. Interested in sending missionaries to South America, President Heber J. Grant approved Andrew Jenson's vacation trip throughout the continent in 1923 and asked him to recommend where missionaries should be sent. Jenson, then assistant Church historian, strongly believed in the literal gathering concept and enthusiastically recommended that the Church go to Argentina, "which was so different to all the other South American Republics which I had visited so far. Buenos Aires is very much like the large cities of Europe, the customs and habits having been copied from European conditions."[9] He was less impressed with the rest of Latin America, especially countries with a large Indian or African population. In 1925 when a group of German members immigrated to Buenos Aires and wrote to the First Presidency asking for missionaries, Apostle Melvin J. Ballard and Seventies Rey L. Pratt and Rulon S. Wells were sent to open missionary work in Argentina. They arrived on December 6, 1925; but by April 1926, missionaries had moved their efforts from the small German group to the much larger Spanish and Italian-speaking population.

Reinhold Stoof, a German convert who had immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1923 and did not speak Spanish or Italian, was appointed president of the South American Mission in May 1926 and took up residence in Buenos Aires in June 1926. He believed that he had been called to work with German immigrants. In 1928 he realized that the German-speaking population in Argentina was small and dispersed, so he sent missionaries to southern Brazil where large numbers of German immigrants were gathered in colonies. The language of the Church in Brazil remained German until the early 1940s when govern-

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8. F. LaMond Tullis, *Mormonism in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987), chaps. 3–6.

9. Andrew Jenson, *Autobiography of Andrew Jenson, Assistant Historian of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), 569; see also Andrew Jenson, *Conference Report*, April 1923, 78–81.

mental policy forbade the use of non-Portuguese languages in public meetings, and the mission slowly and painfully converted to a Portuguese-speaking mission.[10]

The influence of the "blood of Ephraim" concept remained so strong, however, that Stoof spent part of his mission report in April general conference in 1936 explaining his theory that some of the lost ten tribes went south and settled in Italy and Spain at the fall of the Roman empire: "There may be some who think that the ideal field of labor in which to find the scattered blood of Israel is in the northern countries. For them it may be a consolation to know that a few centuries after Christ's birth tribes from the north invaded Spain and Italy, and it may be that their remnants are the ones who today follow the voice of the Good Shepherd."[11] Such a belief justified teaching Spaniards, Italians, and their descendants in Argentina.

The next period of expansion in Latin America occurred immediately after World War II when missionaries were sent into neighboring Uruguay, Paraguay, and Guatemala, partly because American members were living in these countries. Frederick S. Williams, an early missionary and former mission president in Argentina, had also lived in Uruguay and, in August 1946, suggested sending missionaries to President George Albert Smith. Smith called Williams as the first mission president in 1947. That same year missionaries were sent to Guatemala, partly because of the influence of John O'Donnal, a Mormon working for the U.S. government. By 1960, missionaries had also commenced work in Peru and Chile.[12]

Nineteen-sixty-one was a pivotal year in the history of the Church in Latin America, particularly in South America. As part of a limited pilot program under David O. McKay to have General Authorities live away

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10. Mark L. Grover, "The Mormon Church and German Immigrants in Southern Brazil: Religion and Language," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Lateinamerikas* (Koln, Germany: Bohlau Verlag Wien, 1989), 295-308.

11. Reinhold Stoof, *Conference Reports*, April 1936, 87.

12. Frederick S. Williams and Frederick G. Williams, *From Acorn to Oak Tree: A Personal History of the Establishment and First Quarter Century Development of the South American Missions* (Fullerton, Calif.: Et Cetera Graphics, 1987); John Forres O'Donnal, *Pioneer in Guatemala: The Personal History of John Forres O'Donnal* (Yorba Linda, Calif.: Shumway Family History Services, 1997).

from Salt Lake City, A. Theodore Tuttle, newly called to the First Council of the Seventy, moved to Montevideo, Uruguay, with oversight for the six missions of South America, much as a General Authority had traditionally overseen all of the European missions, even though each region had its own mission. Part of Tuttle's plan was to expand the Church throughout the rest of South America, this time focusing on the hitherto neglected natives. Shortly after he left South America in 1965, missionaries had opened the work in all of Spanish-speaking South America. By 1966, the Church had opened missions throughout all of Latin America with the exception of small countries whose population had a high percentage of African descent: French Guiana, Guyana, and Surinam.

The priesthood revelation in June 1978 was another landmark event. By 1980, missionaries were working on the major islands of the Caribbean and the small Afro-nations of South America: the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinadad, and Tobago. Except for Haiti and the Dominican Republic, their success rate was much below the rest of Latin America.

Growth and Development

Since 1960 the Church's numerical growth in Latin America has been phenomenal. By the end of 2002, the total membership of the Church was four million (compared to 45,578 when Tuttle went to Uruguay).[13] A comparison with the rest of the world shows the importance of that growth on the Church as a whole. Of the ten countries with the largest LDS memberships, seven are Latin American; of the top twenty countries, thirteen are in Latin America. What has happened in the last three decades might be considered the beginning of the Latin Americanization of a Church that had been almost exclusively a U.S./northern European church. Because of the large number of members in the United States, North America will continue as the Church's center for a long time, but its international component has become primarily Latin American. If we project growth based on past patterns, within fifteen years (by 2020), the Church in Latin America will hold more than 50 percent of Church members. (See Table 1.)

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13. I derived these statistics from the annual Church almanacs published since the 1970s, e.g., *Deseret Morning News 2005 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2004); earlier statistics were provided by the LDS Church Archives.

Table 1
Projected Growth, 2000–20

Year	*Latin America*	*Church*	*Latin American Percentage of the Church*
2000	4,020,710	11,068,861	36.32
2005	5,200,112	13,119,342	39.64
2010	6,725,471	15,549,670	43.25
2015	8,698,265	18,430,210	47.20
2020	11,249,743	21,844,364	51.50

The Church's expansion in Latin America has been fairly consistent since the 1960s, with three periods of particularly significant growth. Two of them were during the mid-sixties and mid-seventies, but the most significant was the six years between 1984 and 1990, during which the Latin American percentage of the Church more than doubled.

Most Latin American countries were affected by these patterns, but the most significant growth has been in Mexico, Brazil, and Chile. In Mexico, growth occurred through the seventies but accelerated in 1984. Though the expansion slowed in the mid-1990s, it has continued to be strong to the present. Growth in Brazil has been consistent but also accelerated in 1984 and has continued at a high rate to the present. The average percentage of growth in Brazil (15 percent) between 1993 and 2003 was higher than in Mexico (7 percent). If these rates of growth continue, the number of members in Brazil will surpass Mexico about 2005–06. (See Figure 1.) Argentina and Uruguay, which had similar numbers of members through the 1970s, did not experience a similar 1984 surge.

What happened in 1984? An important factor for 1983–88 was that democratic governments replaced military dictatorships (Argentina, 1983; Brazil, 1985; Uruguay, 1985; Chile, 1988), precipitating major economic and social changes. Perhaps more important were psychological changes deriving from the reintroduction of political freedom. The political changes were monumental and without precedent in Latin America, particularly in Brazil and Chile.

Internally, the LDS Church made one of its most significant organizational changes of the century on June 24, 1984, with the creation of

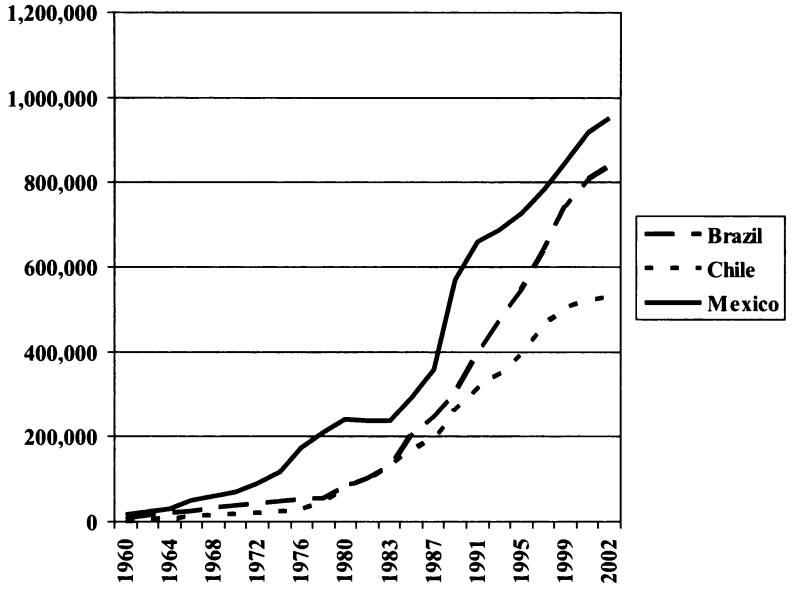

Figure 1. Church Population in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, 1960–2002.

thirteen geographical areas, each presided over by an area presidency made up of three General Authorities. This decentralization had numerous effects. The three areas created in Latin America meant that nine General Authorities became residents, coordinating and overseeing missionary work. One result of this attention was a significant increase in convert baptisms.[14]

What does the future hold? Brazil and Mexico will probably continue to experience significant growth, primarily because of the large base populations. Brazil (172,672,339) and Mexico (100,483,613) are significantly larger in general population and in numbers of Mormons than other countries of Latin America. Even so, the Church in Brazil is still only .5 of 1 percent of the total population and Mexico is just under 1 per-

14. *Deseret News Church Almanac 2004*, 574–79; Kahlile B. Mehr, "Area Supervision: Administration of the Worldwide Church, 1960–2000," *Journal of Mormon History* 27 (Spring 2000): 192–214.

cent. The only large country in Latin America with a Mormon population larger than 1 percent is Peru.

Furthermore, the general current direction of Church membership is downward, especially in Latin America. (See Figure 2.) This slow-down can be attributed directly to the concerns of President Gordon B. Hinckley and other Church leaders over the low retention rates accompanying elevated baptismal rates. For example, the percentage of growth in Chile dropped from 8.69 percent in 1997 to 1.49 percent in 2002. Visiting Chile in April 1999, President Hinckley delivered a powerful message to missionaries to focus on retention as well as the numbers of baptisms. "The days are past—the days are gone—the days are no longer here when we will baptize hundreds of thousands of people in Chile and then they will drift away from the Church. . . . When you begin to count those who are not active, you are almost driven to tears over the terrible losses we have suffered in this nation. . . . Now, I am sure you have understood my message. I have stated it as plainly as I know how."[15] As a result, missionaries began to concentrate on reactivation and retention, and the number of baptisms fell. In 2002 when Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve was made area president in Chile, attention on retention was accompanied with a consolidation of missions, stakes, and wards. Still, it is important to recognize that, while the rate of growth in Latin America has dropped, it has remained steady across the Church in general at about 2.5 percent a year.

Small vs. Large Countries

Why do Latin America's smaller countries show a higher percentage of members compared to the general population than the larger countries? The most important factor in baptismal rates is the number of missionaries in each country.[16] Although modified by other considerations, the correlation between growth and number of missionaries is almost always direct. The number of missionaries per country has not been published since the 1970s, so I am unable to adequately test that theory, but we do know the number of missions per country.

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15. President Hinckley's address excerpted in "Special Mission Conference," April 25, 1999; photocopy in my possession.

16. Gary Shepherd and Gordon Shepherd, *Mormon Passage: A Missionary Chronicle* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 10.

Hypothesizing about 150 missionaries per mission allows for a general estimate of the number of missionaries per country. The results show that the larger countries have the smallest number of missionaries per capita. For example, Chile in 2001 had eight missions, giving it an estimated 1,200 missionaries or one missionary per 11,808 Chileans. If Brazil had a similar proportion of missions in relation to its population (it actually has one missionary per 44,275 Brazilians), it would have had ninety-seven missions. As of January 2005, it has twenty-six. The countries with the highest percentage of Mormons also have the highest ratio of missionaries per population.

Explaining Growth

Determining the reason for LDS growth in Latin America is a challenge, explained in a variety of ways.[17] Probably any explanation that relies on a single cause is too simple. LDS growth in Latin America results from several variables, both positive and negative, whose effects yield social, political, and psychological adjustments that, in turn, conduce to religious change. Those changes have been mirrored by internal changes within the Church that attract potential religious converts. I will very briefly suggest several secular occurrences that enhance LDS growth in Latin America. It is important to recognize that I am speaking generally and that there will always be exceptions and variations from this picture.

Though the entire world has experienced phenomenal economic and social changes during the past fifty years, few other regions of the world have experienced the level of change as Latin America. At the end of World War II, Latin America still had important feudal and rural elements, its political system largely traditional and patrimonial, its economy based on exporting raw goods. With industrialization and the modernization of farming came serious disruptions in rural social structures that resulted in major population shifts from the country to the cities. Europe and America experienced similar changes but absorbed them with less disruption than Latin America.

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17. See David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford, Eng.: B. Blackwell, 1990); David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Brian H. Smith, *Religious Politics in Latin America, Pentecostal vs. Catholic* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998).

The migrant population in cities formed large poor neighborhoods or slums. With time, education, and capital, the migrants could improve their lives and move into more traditional housing. However, the incoming migrants were so numerous that, even though the slums were transitional, they continued to grow.[18] In their rural setting, these migrants had been connected to traditional social and religious structures, which provided jobs, food, medicine, etc., though often very meagerly. When these people needed help, they had family, a patron, and a church which provided support. In the cities, traditional support systems no longer existed for the most part, and they were often alone, without patrons and extended family. Struggling in the new environment just to get jobs, food, and the basic necessities of life, they regularly turned to organizations that were willing to give assistance, friendship, and spiritual support. Such organizations were often evangelical churches that thrived in the growing neighborhoods.[19]

The LDS Church historically has had limited success with this migrant population.[20] The Church's success derives from a psychological transformation in society that only begins with the migrant. Historically, most traditional societies, especially Catholic countries, have had such strong connections between religion and culture that cultural identification is also a religious identification. When people say they are Brazilian, for example, they also imply that they are Catholic. Not being a Catholic would be tantamount to rejecting one's Brazilian-ness. In this cultural environment, changing religion involves more drastic changes than accepting a different set of religious beliefs. It means rejecting one's family, country, and past. The common statement, "I was born a Catholic and will die a Catholic," should be heard more as a cultural statement than as a declaration of religious beliefs. Those who leave the Catholic Church

18. For this process and the growth of non-Catholic religions in Latin America, see Emílio Willems, *Followers of the New Faith: Culture Change and the Rise of Protestantism in Brazil and Chile* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967).

19. Christian Lalive d'Epinay, *El refugio de las masas: Estudio sociológico del protestantismo chileno* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial del Pacifico, 1968).

20. Henri Paul Pierre Gooren, *Rich among the Poor: Church, Firm, and Household among Small-Scale Entrepreneurs in Guatemala City* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Thela Thesis, 1999), 153–59.

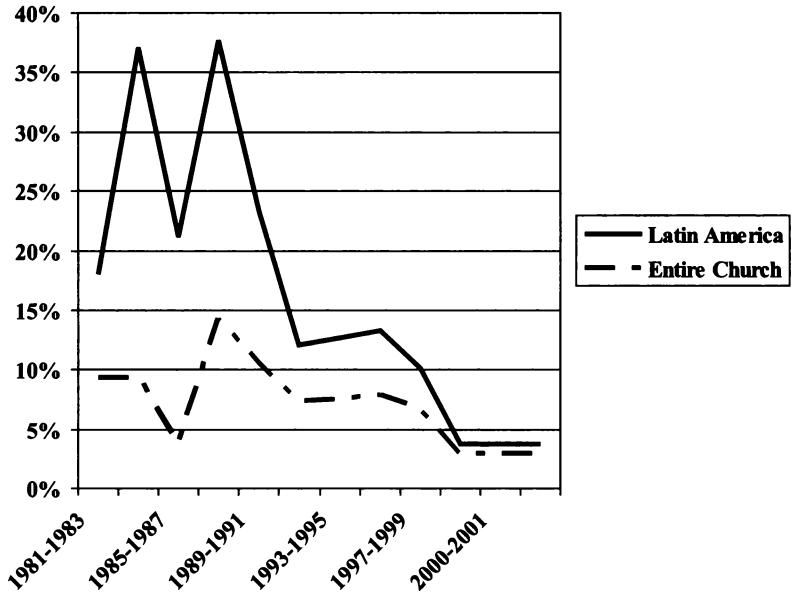

Figure 2. Decline in Growth in Latin America Compared to Entire Church, 1981–2002.

are widely considered to be rejecting a history connected as much to nationality and culture as to religious beliefs.[21]

What has happened in Latin America over the past thirty-five years is the separation of religion from culture and nationality. A change in religion is now more acceptable, an alteration of attitude that began with the migrants to the large urban areas but has expanded to the rest of the society. In an environment that allows the rejection of traditional economic and social practices, the religious foundation that was part of the past and that supported the past becomes less important. When a Latin American seeks to fulfill his or her spiritual needs, the pressure to look to traditional

21. David Lehmann, *Struggle for the Spirit: Religious Transformation and Popular Culture in Brazil and Latin America* (Cambridge, Mass: Polity Press, 1996); Cecília Loreto Mariz, *Coping with Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base [sic] Communities in Brazil* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

sources is lessened because the relationship between traditional religion and society is less compatible.[22]

I do not wish to overemphasize this separation. The relationship of the Catholic Church and Latin American culture is still strongly felt, and Latin American society contains formidable cultural pressures for its members to remain Catholic. However, in most of Latin America, the fact that between 20 and 30 percent of the people over the past twenty-five years no longer consider themselves Catholic is a remarkable indication of a major psychological shift.[23]

Furthermore, though economic, social, and psychological changes help explain Latin America's changing religious environment, it is important not to overemphasize secular reasons. For the most part, people make religious decisions, not to meet social or economic needs, but for spiritual reasons. The struggles of life, both secular and spiritual, create a need for contact with and help from a divine source. That desire encourages the search for spiritual assistance. Social disruption creates a larger pool of people susceptible to religious change, but disruption per se does not mean that religious change will occur. All people, regardless of economic class, experience times when they need spiritual assistance; and if they do not find that help in their current institutions and relationships, they may seek it elsewhere. The fastest growing alternative religions in Latin America have a greater emphasis on connection with God than the Catholic Church.[24]

The result of this history in Latin America is a large pool of people susceptible to religious change in a society in which change has been become acceptable and even, in some cases, encouraged. This circumstance alone, however, does not automatically mean LDS growth, for the Church faces significant competition, primarily from Evangelical churches. The competitive religious environment of Latin America today could easily be

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22. Edward L. Cleary, "Introduction," in *Power, Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America,* edited by Edward L. Cleary and Hannah Stewart-Gambino (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997): 4–5.

23. Phillip Berryman, *Religion in the Megacity: Catholic and Protestant Portraits from Latin America* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1996), 2–3.

24. Sidney M. Greenfield and André Droogers, eds., *Reinventing Religions: Syncretism and Transformation in Africa and the Americas* (Lanham, Md.: Pwoman and Littlefield, 2001).

Table 2
Percentages of Protestant and LDS Growth in Latin America, 1990–2000

Country	*Protestant*	*LDS*	*Difference*
Paraguay	98	268	170
Haiti	51	97	46
Brazil	35	68	33
El Salvador	79	112	33
Chile	37	62	25
Dominican Republic	69	93	24
Bolivia	66	68	2
Argentina	65	64	-1
Puerto Rico	38	37	-1
Honduras	120	118	-2
Costa Rica	70	64	-6
Peru	88	76	-12
Uruguay	43	29	-14
Mexico	58	34	-24
Guatemala	71	39	-32
Colombia	94	52	-42
Venezuela	137	70	-67
Latin America	55	63	8

compared to the competitive religious environment in which Joseph Smith found himself in nineteenth-century New York. In Latin America these religious groups are varied and active. Small churches assemble in the newly growing poor neighborhoods, and crowds of more than 100,000 attend religious revival meetings in soccer stadiums. Though the LDS Church participates in this religious change, it is not even close to being the largest or fastest growing.

Tracking the growth in religions is difficult because of the lack of statistical information on many churches. Some claims of massive growth of religions are not supported by data. It is obvious that alternative religions

are growing in both numbers of religions and converts, but determining exact figures is difficult. Only one publication, *Operation World*, available in book form or on CD, has attempted to keep track of religious growth around the world.[25] Despite questions regarding its accuracy, its figures are probably closer to what is happening than any other available body of statistics. The biggest challenge is that change is happening so fast that there is no way of keeping up. Because Evangelical churches can form at will, hundreds of churches in Latin America are not included in this collection of data.

To gain an appreciation of how the LDS Church compares with other religions, I randomly selected 180 non-Catholic churches in Latin America listed in *Operation World* and examined growth between 1990 and 2000, then compared their growth to that of the LDS Church. During that decade, these 180 churches grew 55 percent while the LDS Church grew 63 percent, just 8 percentage points higher. (See Table 2.) The LDS Church had, for example, about the same percentage of growth as the selected religions in Argentina but experienced much higher growth in Paraguay. The lowest percentage of growth of non-Catholic churches in Latin America was in Brazil, but it was still a 35 percent growth over the ten years studied. The LDS Church in Brazil grew almost twice as fast.

I then selected from this sample two churches that scholars often group together: the Jehovah Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists. The LDS Church grew more slowly than the Jehovah Witnesses but higher than the Seventh-day Adventists. These comparisons show that, even though the LDS Church is growing rapidly in Latin America, its growth resembles that of other non-Catholic churches in the region.

Changes in the LDS Church

The key to understanding LDS growth in Latin America is that internal changes have coincided with external social transformations. As an obvious example, between 1960 and 1980, LDS growth in Brazil, which has a large, racially diverse and racially mixed population, was steady. After 1980, growth took a sharp turn upward, not because of social and po-

25. Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World: When We Pray God Works Handbook*, 21st Century ed. (Exeter, Eng.: Paternoster Publishing, 2001). See http://www.gmi.org.

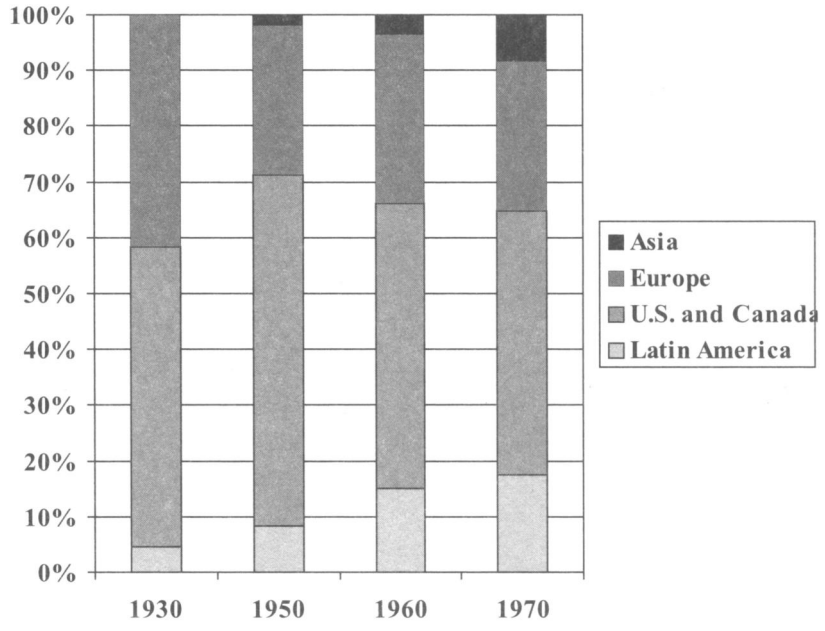

Figure 3. Missionary Distribution Worldwide, 1930–70

litical changes in Brazil, but because the priesthood revelation of 1978 tripled the proselyting pool in Brazil. Prior to 1978, the priesthood ban for blacks meant that missionaries proselytized primarily in the south among Europeans and not among the millions of Brazilians who were racially mixed. Very large cities in the north did not have missionaries until after 1980.[26]

Another very significant event happened a decade earlier, altering the concept of what the Church was to be internationally: the headquarters emphasis on establishing local stakes and temples. The purpose of nineteenth-century missionary work was to baptize converts who would then gather to Utah, thus strengthening the center by drawing from the periphery. In some respects, mission-field wards and branches were always

26. Mark L. Grover, "The Mormon Priesthood Revelation and the São Paulo Brazil Temple," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23 (Spring 1990): 39–53.

viewed as temporary and transitional. Even after the Church began to discourage immigration to Utah around the turn of the twentieth century, many members continued to believe that the international Church should not be the same as the Church in "Zion."[27] This indecisiveness continued into the 1950s for several reasons, including the two world wars. Apostle David O. McKay in his 1920–21 tour of world missions and his presidency over the European Mission (1922–24) had a vision of a strong international church, but it did not come to fruition until after he became Church president in April 1951.[28]

Although missionaries' primary responsibility has been to proselytize, historically they have been involved in many other activities. Until the late 1950s, missionaries in Latin America participated in all of the activities and responsibilities of the Church organizations. The positive result was that the branches and districts functioned well in terms of activities and record-keeping since the missionaries had time to devote to them. Another positive result was that the missionaries learned how to function in Church leadership positions. However, these organizational responsibilities reduced the amount of time available for proselytizing, resulting in comparatively slow growth.[29]

A less positive result was that local members, especially men, sometimes experienced delays in becoming involved in leadership positions. It often took months before men were ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood and generally much more than a year to be ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood. Most of the time, members served as assistants to the missionaries, having positions of limited responsibilities.[30] This pattern was generally deemed necessary because of a feeling that new members did not have the experience or training to function well in administrative positions. The result was that American missionaries returned to the United

27. Mark L. Grover, "Mormonism in Brazil: Religion and Dependency in Latin America" (Ph.D diss., Indiana University, 1985), 75.

28. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2d. ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 563–91.

29. Grover, "Mormonism in Brazil," 75.

30. Mexico was an exception to this practice, because American missionaries were forced out of the country several times between 1913 and 1934, and local members had to be given administrative responsibility.

States with valuable leadership experience but the Church in Latin America remained small and its leadership weak.[31]

By the late 1950s and early 1960s under President McKay, the concept had shifted to that of a well-developed international Church with stable organizations. Mission presidents began to focus both on increasing missionaries' proselytizing time and training members in leadership practices. Most missions had goals for replacing missionaries in branch organizations with members, with the goal of creating stakes, possible only by increased baptisms and properly trained local leaders. In Latin America the result was significant growth in all countries. Branches and districts soon became wards and stakes and a cycle of growth began. The number of missions expanded; and by the 1980s, the organization of the Church in Latin America began to mirror in most ways the Church in Utah, with beautiful chapels, functioning organizations under local leadership, and the construction of temples.[32]

A second important internal factor that affected LDS growth in Latin America was the number of missionaries. In 1950 only 8 percent of all missionaries went to Latin America, resulting in proportionally slow growth. (See Figure 3.)

The example of Uruguay, a small country, is instructive. Formal missionary work began in 1947 when Frederick S. Williams was called as mission president. He sent missionaries throughout the country and established branches in all of the major cities. Uruguay's capital, Montevideo, had more than 40 percent of the population. The rest of the country was rural, dotted with small cities with populations of about 30,000 or less. Williams sent four to six missionaries into these small cities, creating a significant Mormon presence.

By comparison, in Brazil before the 1980s, missionaries were seldom stationed in cities smaller than 100,000. The LDS presence in Uruguay became important just in terms of numbers of missionaries. For many years, the number of missionaries in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay was approximately the same (100–30). For several years, Brazil actually had fewer missionaries than Uruguay, resulting in a similar number of baptisms for the three countries. (See Figure 4.) The total number of mem-

31. Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico,* 207–11.

32. Donald Q. Cannon and Richard O. Cowan, *Unto Every Nation: Gospel Light Reaches Every Land* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 284–301.

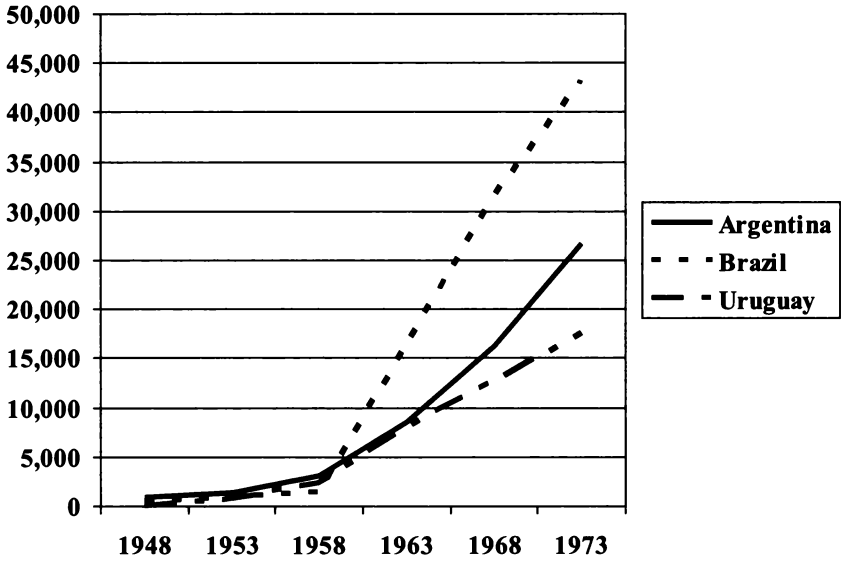

Figure 4. Membership in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, 1948–1973.

bers did not begin to differ significantly until additional missions were introduced into Brazil (1959) and Argentina (1962), doubling the number of missionaries in those countries.[33]

To show the size of the missionary force in Uruguay, I compared missionary numbers in 1960 with the general population of three other countries. In 1960 the United States had a population of 180 million; Brazil, almost 72 million; Argentina, over 20 million; and Uruguay, 2,531,000. Uruguay had 151 missionaries. If the number of missionaries compared to the general population had been the same for Argentina, Brazil, and the United States, the missionary force would have shown this profile: Argentina (actually 152) would have had 1,230 missionaries; Brazil (actually 273) would have had 4,277; and the United States (actually 3,751) would have had 10,779. The result was that, in a country culturally similar to Argentina, the percentage of baptized members of the Church is the second

33. Nestor Curbelo, *Historia de los Santos de los Últimos Días en Uruguay: Relatos de pioneros* (Montevideo, Uruguay: Imprimex, 2002), 184.

highest in terms of percentage of Mormons to general population in all of Latin America. Obviously, the most important cause of LDS growth in a country is the number of missionaries.

In short, LDS growth in Latin America is the result of both internal changes in the Church and external factors in Latin America. Social and economic changes, which lessen traditional religious and social controls, create a large pool of potential members. At this point, the Spirit touches those potential members so that they seek out or accept the message of the missionaries.

Retention

Among the challenges related to LDS growth anywhere in the world is retention, an issue that non-LDS scholars of religion have discussed for many years. David Stoll, in the first significant study of non-Catholic religions in Latin America, wondered about the difference between the LDS Church's published numbers and those who were actually attending meetings. He suggested: "But their phenomenal growth statistics are said to be inflated by competition between Mormon dioceses (called 'stakes') and pressures to meet quotas."[34] Other scholars have not been so kind. I have attended academic meetings in which scholars have suggested outright fraud by the Church in the reporting of statistics. To be fair, these scholars do not appreciate how LDS statistics are collected. The reality is, however, that the number of baptized members in Latin America and those who are active participants differ significantly. It is not possible to determine the exact percentage of active members in a country because attendance statistics are not available. But it is obvious that many converts remain on the Church's rolls even after they no longer consider themselves to be Mormons.[35]

The LDS Church determines membership differently from most other religions in Latin America because it counts all baptized members

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34. David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 105.

35. Retention is a serious problem for the Church. The most comprehensive study of the challenge is David Stewart, "LDS Church Growth Today," retrieved January 2005 from http://www.cumorah.com/report.html. See David Clark Knowlton, "How Many Members Are There Really?" in this issue, which compares national census data (including self-reports of religious affiliation in Chile and Mexico) with official Church records.

who have not been removed from the rolls of the Church, regardless of their level of activity or feeling about the Church. Formal disaffiliation (and name removal) is comparatively difficult and therefore comparatively rare. Members whose whereabouts are unknown are still counted as members of the Church. Naturally, their membership records cannot be assigned to a ward or branch but they are placed in a "Lost Address File" and are still counted as members. I completely agree with the philosophy behind this policy: that the Church still considers itself responsible for finding and fellowshipping these people and/or welcoming them upon their spontaneous return to the Church, even years later; but it does create a mismatch between the records and actual participants. Most other Latin American religions do not have a sophisticated international system of counting; their statistics are generated locally by pastors who identify those who are baptized, attend meetings, or have in some way indicated their preference to be connected to the local units.

Here is a personal example of problems of statistical computation. I know a family in which all five children were baptized members of the LDS Church while in their youth. Four of the children stopped attending as teenagers, married non-LDS partners, were baptized into other churches, and raised their children outside Mormonism. They still occasionally get home teacher visits. Only one has requested that his name be removed. The other three, when approached, asked that their names stay on the rolls. Consequently, in terms of statistics, these three are counted twice, both as LDS members and also in the denominations in which they were subsequently baptized and in which they are currently active. Such are the complications of collecting religious statistics.

A second important point is the difficulty of conversion and religious migration. Baptism is an episode that occurs in a few minutes and does not always mean conversion, which may require scores or even hundreds of changes of attitude, behaviors, beliefs, and understandings. Such a process is frequently long and difficult. It is not unusual for such a conversion to take many years, or even a lifetime. I served my mission in Brazil more than thirty-five years ago and have watched my friends there endeavor to remain in the Church. Many strong members have remained active; but others have experienced an occasional excommunication, sometimes followed by a rebaptism, but sometimes not; joined other churches, lapsed into inactivity, become active again, and so on. Even during periods of inactivity, however, most seem to have positive feelings toward the

Church. Most of the time they have considered themselves to be Latter-day Saints. A statistical map of what happens after baptism will show that a certain percentage never attend, some attend for a few weeks or until the missionary who baptized them leaves, some leave after a year, and some remain active. Those who have become inactive often return to activity for a variety of reasons. This pattern of leaving and returning is normal for first-generation members.[36]

Becoming a dedicated member of the Church is a difficult process in Latin America. In the nineteenth century, becoming a Mormon meant physically leaving your home, family, culture, and often country to join with members of the Church from throughout the world, all of whom had gone through the same experiences. Though the pioneer experience was difficult, remaining active in the Church was easier once the convert was in an environment of mostly members. In contrast, converts now join and stay in the same environment, continuing to interact with family and coworkers (some of whom responded antagonistically to the baptism decision) and dealing with lifestyle choices and habits, not all of which are conducive to Church activity. It is difficult to make these changes even when the convert has a strong spiritual commitment, to say nothing of when that commitment is weak.

Third, what is happening in the LDS Church is not unusual. Major churches in Latin America have low attendance, and new converts to evangelicalism often do not stay. In fact, researchers have found that a significant percentage of people do not stop by changing religion once but go on to a third or more, searching for one that satisfies.[37] Nor is Latin America significantly different from other places in the world. The levels of retention and meeting attendance for Mormons in Europe appears to be at about the same level as it is in Latin America; there are just fewer joining the Church. Many countries in Asia have similar problems with retention.[38]

Retention continues to be a problem in Utah as well.In the past twenty-five years, my family and I have lived in three different Utah wards; attendance is still not much higher than 50 percent among a population descended from pioneers and living where home teachers, family pressure,

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36. Stewart, "LDS Church Growth Today."
37. Cleary, "Introduction," 9–10.
38. Stewart, "LDS Church Growth Today."

sometimes employment requirements, and social persuasion all encourage church attendance. According to my stake president several years ago, convert retention rates in Utah were surprisingly similar to those in Latin America. Many variables are involved, but the bottom line is that conversion to a new religion and continued activity in the Church are not easy.

Spiritual Conversion

Although this paper has focused on statistics and description, it is important to recognize the role of the Spirit in what is happening in Latin America. Most faithful members join the Church because of sacred and life-changing experiences. Here are two examples.

Life was good for Irma Conde, a young lady from Rocha, Uruguay, when she became engaged to a son of one of the wealthier families in the town. Her mother began receiving lessons from the LDS missionaries, but Irma was determined that she would not become involved with a strange new sect. To keep peace in the family, however, finally she yielded to her mother's insistence that she attend a meeting. Her initial impressions were negative: "The hymns they sang, I didn't like; the things they taught, I didn't understand." She was, however, impressed with the way the members treated her and felt comfortable after the meeting was over. She accepted a copy of the Book of Mormon, believing she would never read it. "I felt I had entered into an unfamiliar and strange world. I didn't want to think in that way. I didn't want to feel those things. I didn't want religion. I didn't want to know anything about the Church."[39]

At her mother's insistence, she sat in on the missionaries' lessons. One day when the missionaries were planning to visit, she became ill. While her mother had the lesson, they asked Irma to read the Book of Mormon. Without really understanding why, she agreed to do so and discovered that she could not put it down. She read while she ate. When she got tired, she would sleep a little, then continue reading. She was in the book of Alma when the Spirit touched her: "I turned off the light, sat up in my bed, and realized this book could not have been written by a man. It had to be true. I knew nothing about the promise at the end of the book. I had no idea how the Spirit manifested itself. What I felt was something so

39. Irma Conde, Oral History, interviewed by Nestor Curbelo, July 4, 2002, Rocha, Uruguay; photocopy of typescript in my possession, translation mine.

intense. It was not just a warm feeling in my chest. It was a feeling that enveloped my entire body. From that time forth I knew it was true and I also knew that I would become a member of the Church."

She was baptized, and her engagement ended as a result, but she has remained faithful. She came to the Church with skepticism and distrust but, after reading the Book of Mormon, was moved to accept its message and the Church.

A second example, also from Uruguay, shows how the spirit of the Lord can touch the hearts even of very young converts. At age four, Rosalina Goitiño Ramírez began attending Primary in the Florida Branch with neighbors. Touched by the experience, she began attending other LDS meetings. She has a vivid memory of those early years, especially one experience. Arriving early for church one Sunday, she sat down next to a missionary, Elder Dale E. Miller, currently a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy. The sun was coming through the window behind him, streaming brightly over his blond hair and seemingly setting it afire. A feeling of comfort and joy settled over this child, which she later recognized as the Spirit. The image of Elder Miller and those feelings of comfort remain vividly with her.[40]

Rosalina went to Primary for the next four years, often alone. She learned to pray and received answers to her childhood prayers. At a very early age, she knew the reality and love of her Father in Heaven. Acceptance and affection from Church members supplemented her testimony. Her friends were not only children her own age but adults who communicated love and respect. While she was still young, her parents divorced, but she found support and help from the members. When she turned eight and asked to be baptized, her father refused to give permission. She waited a full year before he relented. Then her mother forbade her to attend meetings. Again, she persisted in her desires until her mother relented. When she was able to return, the members of the branch extended even greater love.

The Church provided her with the teachings and strength to combat what was happening at home. She learned that she "could be in a bad place and not be bad," at home, school, or with friends. She accepted the teachings on dress and conduct from her leaders that helped her to main-

40. Rosalina Goitaño Ramirez, Oral History, Interviewed by Mark L. Grover, July 20, 2002, Buenos Aires, Uruguay.

tain high moral standards while friends both in and outside the Church were struggling. When a young man who was investigating the Church asked her to be his girlfriend, she responded that she would date only Church members. After his baptism, they became closer; but when he began talking about marriage, she informed him that she would marry only a returned missionary. This young man, Nestor Curbelo, served in the North Argentine Mission. They married after his return and moved to Buenos Aires where he eventually became the director of the Church's Seminary and Institutes of Religion in that city.

Their four daughters and son who are of age have married in the temple and are presently active in the Church. Two of Rosalina's siblings and her mother joined the Church. She has held almost every position a woman can hold in the Church and actively supported her husband during ten years of service as a stake president. The testimony she gained at the tender age of four has resulted in a family being raised faithfully in the Church.

Conclusion

I conclude as I began—with a prophecy. President Gordon B. Hinckley, speaking at a regional conference in Venezuela on August 3, 1999, stated: "Where there are now hundreds of thousands, there will be millions and our people will be recognized for the goodness of their lives and they will be respected and honored and upheld. We shall build meeting houses, more and more of them to accommodate their needs, and we shall build temples in which they may receive their sacred ordinances and extend those blessings to those who have gone beyond the veil of death."[41]

What has happened in Latin America during the past fifty years is just the beginning of the Church's growth and development in Latin America.

41. Quoted in "Pres. Hinckley Urges More Missionary Effort in Venezuela," *Church News*, August 14, 1999, 3.

The Making of Grave Community Sin

Garth N. Jones

FEW ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN *DIALOGUE* so disturbed my intellectual comfort as Dr. Bradley Walker's three-part series on the deplorable condition of Latin American Saints.[1] For some three decades, I lived off and on in Third World poverty-stricken societies. I have witnessed worlds of Dante-like horrors. Poor people stink with acrid odors of rotting flesh and oozing fecal matter. Small cuts and insect bites readily become festering sores and painful boils. Hair lice can never be adequately controlled. Women groom each others' heads with fine tooth combs and eat the lice. Many of the poor try to be clean, but their practices are unhygienic, with cow urine and dung used to plaster walls and ceilings. Potable water is scarce. Poor people bathe and wash their clothes in canals also used as sewers. Under such unsanitary conditions, insect and rodent populations flourish. Besides incessant torment, these vermin bring terrible diseases. Malaria and cholera are especially prevalent.

Poverty-stricken societies produce children in amazing numbers.

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1. Brad Walker, "Spreading Zion Southward, Part I: Improving Efficiency and Equity in the Allocation of Church Welfare Resources," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 91–110; "Spreading Zion Southward, Part II: Sharing Loaves and Fishes," 36, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 33–47; and "First, Mothers and Children: A Postscript to 'Moving Zion Southward, Parts I and II,'" 36, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 217–24.

Ironically, this is nature's means for survival. Scientific studies reveal that malnutrition (starvation) serves as an aphrodisiac.[2] Women particularly pay a high cost in shorter lives. My studies of the early-1970s population in India showed that, in certain regions, women averaged nine births with five to seven children dying by age five. Eighty-five percent of those women died by age thirty-eight.[3]

Living in but not as part of these societies, I have struggled in prayer to maintain my sense of humanity. Those unfortunate individuals with goiter-swollen necks and faces, deformed and stunted bodies, scattered and limited minds, are really human beings. I coped with the massiveness of this human suffering by building physical and mental walls and maintaining a strong gate-keeping function. I became selectively blind to my terrible environment, seeing only what I wanted to see and suppressing my sense of guilt when I had a full stomach.

I was persistent in my intellectual studies on development and steadfast as a Cold War warrior. I realized that my future, along with that of my country, required that massive poverty be alleviated, if not eradicated. I became skeptical of the small, piecemeal activities such as drilling village water wells, which did not result in increased productivity. Too often the technology, simple as it might be, was abandoned. The wells just deterio-

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2. I first became aware of this phenomenon when I was working for the Rockefeller Population Council in early 1973. Demographers have long known of the correlation between increased fertility and malnutrition. See Department of Economic and Special Affairs, *Human Fertility and National Development: A Challenge to Science and Technology* (New York: United Nations, 1971), esp. chap. 3, "Biological and Health Aspects of Fertility and Fertility Control." See also John Bongaarts and Mead Cair, "Demographic Response to Famine," in *Famine*, edited by Kevin M. Cahill (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1982), chap. 5.

3. In my U.N. studies, I approached abortion in health terms. Poverty-stricken women die young as a consequence of malnutrition and excessive births. Over 50 percent of their children die before age five. If abortion is considered a contraceptive measure and measured by death ratios, it prolongs the lives of both mothers and children. The terrible choice is that some die in order for others to live. Often pushed aside is the fact that birth control is an expensive proposition, beyond the resources of poor women. Their only option is abortion, which too often is performed under deplorable conditions. For these reasons, I accepted abortion as a valid option; but in ethical and religious terms, my research findings were troubling. I was dealing with kill ratios.

rated until they were unusable, and the people returned to the sewer ditches and polluted streams for water.

Sound development required massive socio-economic transformation, with the institution of fundamental legal institutions and a fresh cultural perspective on becoming progress-prone. In other words, progress must be conceived in holistic or macro terms. Tapping human ingenuity was essential. It was not enough to teach a person how to fish. Success in alleviating poverty also required the opportunity to fish, the tools with which to fish, and the social, legal, and economic infrastructure in which fishing can exist as a profitable industry. In spite of what economists write, the critical aspect is not the market, but a culture where individuals can dream and achieve.

My thinking is heavily influenced by the nineteenth-century Mormon experience.[4] Mormons never accepted the notion of the social gospel as exemplified in the mission of the Salvation Army. Building viable communities was the driving force in Mormonism—a force that continues to this day—and not providing social welfare, which is frowned upon. Building viable communities is very much a local matter, and external intervention must be judiciously administered. Machiavelli observed that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.[5] With such study and reflection, I was able to face the poverty-stricken Third World without an undue feeling of guilt and shame because of my affluent blessings.

However, in reading Walker's article, which was almost like an exposé, my emotional security dissolved into intellectual discomfort. What of my personal moral agency regarding these unfortunate Mormons? Those individuals are my brothers and sisters. They are captured in living hells; and if something is not done, soon they will perish. Walker's open-

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4. See Garth N. Jones, "'Acres of Diamonds': Studies of Development Administration and the Mormon Experience," in *Portraits of Human Behavior and Performance: The Human Factor in Development,* edited by Sanyo B.S.K. Adijibolosoo (New York: Lanham University Press of America, 2001): 279–80; Garth N. Jones, review of Garth L. Mangum and Bruce N. Blumell, *The Mormon War on Poverty: A History of the LDS Welfare, 1830–1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), *Journal of Mormon History* 12 (Spring 1994): 179–83.

5. Paraphrased from Allan Gilbert, trans., *Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1965), 1:26.

ing description of "a frail and thin forty-three-year-old mother of twelve . . . dying with tuberculosis" vividly illustrates this point. In his final piece, Walker carefully estimates that more than 100,000 children and 50,000 mothers desperately need medical and related assistance. Within the next five years, most of these individuals will die unless substantial help is given.

How can affluent Mormons in good faith live with this emerging holocaust?

Walker offers constructive proposals to aid these Mormons. Nevertheless, I believe that much more must be done. I become angry when I see the excessive-consumption lifestyle on the Wasatch Front—big houses, motorboats, recreational vehicles, cruise trips, three or more televisions, and so on.

Quite innocently, Mormon missionaries have given to Third World unfortunates the American dream. They have brought hope to otherwise hopeless lives. Let it never become false hope. These new converts must be carefully guided to success, just like those nineteenth-century pioneer settlement companies that went into the wilderness to build their enduring, self-sufficient Zions.

With each poverty-stricken Third World baptism, there comes heavy institutional responsibility, which can only be met with massive individual sacrifice of North American Saints. Using Abraham Lincoln's analogy, the Mormon house divided between the extreme poor and the extreme rich cannot stand. It is not just, for example, that the Church allocates $500 million dollars to higher education in the United States but only a few hundred thousand dollars to Latin American converts.

Several million Mormons are trapped in corrosive poverty, their promised humanity wasting away. Massive community sin is now in the making. The pain and sorrow of that forty-three-year-old tubercular mother of twelve must not go unnoticed. She is our sister in the faith. By covenant and obedience to the Lord, wagons of plenty must roll out in great numbers in a mighty cause and rescue. The days of "piecemeal" humanitarian assistance are long over. Much more needs to be done. Until then, Dr. Walker has written much that is useful. Action on his proposals should be taken now.

PERSONAL VOICES

Religion and Natasha McDonald

Francine Russell Bennion

> I AM NATASHA MCDONALD. THIS IS MY MOM AND DAD. I HAVE CEREBRAL PALSY. I THINK AND FEEL LIKE YOU DO BUT THE PART OF MY BRAIN THAT CONTROLS MY PHYSICAL SELF WAS DAMAGED WHEN I WAS BORN. MY VOICE IS A COMPUTER VOICE. I CAN PRODUCE WORDS MYSELF.

THIS IS THE INTRODUCTION Natasha activated by repeatedly pressing the right side of her head against a switch when I interviewed her with a professional videographer in July 2004 in her home in Alberta where I grew up and had returned for a visit. Twenty-four years old and completely dependent on others for all physical care, Natasha weighed sixty-seven pounds.

Later in the interview, I ask, "How do you expect Heavenly Father to be when you meet him again?" She thinks, adjusts her computer screen, activates the switch nine times, her face serious, then increasingly happy, arms askew, then spread wide, and answers "LOVING."

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With this essay, *Dialogue* begins a series of pieces about the relationship between persons with disabilities and the LDS church. Please see the call for papers in this issue.

And later, "If you had to describe your Dad in one word, what would it be?" She breaks into glee, directs the computer switch through another nine steps, laughing in her own way throughout the process, and answers, "CRAZY!"

No one has expected this answer, not her parents, not the professional videographer, not I; and we are all laughing together.

The computer software with which Natasha writes and speaks is called MINSPEAK, meaning "minimum-effort speech." It is designed to require the least possible amount of physical effort, based on the idea of hieroglyphics in which one picture can be used to represent many ideas. For example, a shark could mean fish, teeth, gray, water, danger, big, fast, mean, wild, strong, etc. MINSPEAK is a language of categorization, association, and sometimes sound-alikes.

One day Natasha wanted to say "orangutan." She had been at a zoo, and while she was looking at an orangutan, it came up, pressed its face against the glass wall separating them, and stayed there, staring at Natasha who was staring at it. To say "orangutan," Natasha first needs to activate the icon ZEBRA, because all animals are represented by that icon. To activate the icon, Natasha pushes her switch to start a search. Each quadrant of the 128-icon keyboard is highlighted in turn till Natasha signals when the right one is reached. Then each line in the quadrant is highlighted, then each icon in the right line. With the three selections, she chooses the icon ZEBRA.

Next, she must go through the same three steps, highlighting and choosing, to identify the icon for the sub-category "wild animals", which again is ZEBRA. Finally, she goes through the same three steps to identify the particular icon that she has chosen to represent, in this particular context, ORANGUTAN.

To say, "I don't know," Natasha first chooses an icon for SENTENCE, then an icon for THINK, then an icon with a knotted rope, KNOT. The computer translates SENTENCE THINK KNOT into "I don't know."

Natasha must take nine steps to produce any single word or simple sentence. Because the system includes thousands of choices of categories and icons, including customized ones specifically for Natasha that have been recorded in a three-inch binder with Susan's help, sometimes only Susan can translate the full meaning of a word or sentence from Natasha.

"But she can spell with the alphabet, so why doesn't she just use it in-

stead of icons?" I wonder. "Spelling out words would give her more flexibility and fluidity."

But using letters on a standard computer keyboard to spell a five-letter word, or a sentence like "I don't know", would require more steps and, therefore, significantly more energy. I tried spelling out "IDONTKNOW" on my own computer keyboard as though I were Natasha highlighting and choosing from only the letter lines and keys, with no punctuation or spacing. I would need to push my head against the switch eighteen times, twice the number and therefore twice the energy Minspeak requires.

Natasha's cumbersome computer speech frees her from silence and isolation but also prevents the ease and complexity of language most of us enjoy. Her process requires a period of silence interrupted only by computer beeps before she responds to a question.

For the first fifteen minutes of her life, Natasha did not breathe. The lack of oxygen destroyed brain cells for intentional control of her body but did not destroy major autonomic processes or capacity for thought and emotion. In Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, in 1979, her teenaged parents were not yet married and not prepared to take care of any baby—but especially this baby—so her grandmother took her.

With severe athetoid cerebral palsy caused by the brain damage at birth, Natasha would be completely dependent on other persons all her life. She would never roll over, sit without support, walk, talk, control elimination, or eat solid food. She would control only some face and head muscles, could respond to stress or express emotion only with facial expressions and altered range and tempo of body activity. Though alert and eager to learn, and loving play and humor, she would have no freedom to explore, experiment, or question in ways that most children do. She needed instruction to discover spatial relationships, identify cause and effect, learn how to swallow blender-mixed food, and identify a comfortable position.

When Natasha was more than a year old, my niece Marsha Edmunds, an occupational therapist, was assigned to go to the home and help Natasha discover her abilities. Marsha found Natasha so joyous in learning and playing that Marsha invited her own sister, Susan McDonald, to come and meet Natasha. Susan fell in love with her.

"Why? How did you know her, if she couldn't move or speak?" I ask. "How could you fall in love with her?"

"We saw the light in her eyes," answers Susan. "Look," pointing at a

picture of young Natasha. "Who could resist?" Susan and Marsha saw Natasha through Natasha's eyes.

Susan and her husband George had three children: Laura-Lynne, aged nine, David, seven, and Chantelle, six. One evening when the family had just arrived home from a camping trip, Marsha came by: Natasha's grandmother had a health problem and could no longer care for Natasha. Would Susan and George like to adopt her? If so, they needed to go to the grandmother's home that night.

"I don't know," Susan hesitated, "if I could really love someone else's child as much as I love my own." "Yes, you'll be able to," said George, and it was so. They went to see Natasha and, the next morning, brought her home. Laura-Lynne had been praying for a little sister and thought Natasha was an answer to her prayer.

Natasha was twenty-two months old. Before they officially adopted her, Susan and George took Natasha to the Diagnostic, Assessment, and Treatment Center in Calgary (the DAT). Professionals there advised them not to go through with the adoption. "She'll never be anything but a vegetable," they said, knowing the enormity of the task of caring for her but perhaps not knowing what Susan and George and their family would give to it.

They took Natasha home and adopted her.

She and the other McDonald children gladly bonded with each other. Susan recalls one occasion when the family ate at a fast food restaurant, and people stared at Natasha. Laura-Lynne, David, and Chantelle pointedly stared right back at them.

A photo shows little Natasha, grinning with delight, perched securely on George's shoulders and backpack and leaning her head against his on a family hike. On bicycle trips, Natasha rolled along in a bike trailer behind George. Securely wrapped in a pulk, an adaptation of the traditional Lapland pulka pulled by a reindeer, Natasha went skimming across the snow pulled by George or one of her siblings as they skied. Natasha loved family music: Laura-Lynne's viola, David's cello, Chantelle's violin, Susan's piano, George's singing. While Susan fixed meals, Natasha in her wheelchair was with her in the kitchen where, after Natasha mastered her computer, Susan taught her to ask questions, for questions had not come naturally or easily to Natasha.

When the strain of lifting Natasha began affecting Susan's back, David and George knocked out a wall in their small home between Natasha's bedroom and the bathroom. They installed a ceiling track and pulley with

a sling that could go under Natasha for moving her from bed to bathtub, and then to a fold-up changing table they had made and installed at Susan's hip level. In a junkyard they found a long bathtub in which Natasha could lie. They installed it and the plumbing on a platform so that Susan could bathe Natasha at hip level. They took out a wall between the living room and kitchen to make wheelchair movement easier, and the house more pleasant and light.

An aide, Darlene, is now with Natasha a few hours on weekdays to visit, watch Natasha's favorite TV show with her, play games, and engage in various other activities. Natasha's favorite game is "Memory," at which she is very good. She likes videos, especially, according to George, "chick flicks," romances in which a woman gets what Natasha wants.

Natasha can read but, even with support, cannot hold her head still enough long enough to do it without strain and great fatigue, so every day Susan reads to her.

"What kinds of books?" I ask.

"Every kind," says Susan. In June it was a mystery, in July a novel, Lloyd C. Douglas's *The Robe.*

Natasha's health is now fragile. She cannot handle heat or cold. Two years ago, doctors said she would not survive a nine-month bout with, among other illnesses, flu, pneumonia, a bowel blockage and consequent surgery, hip displacement and tight hamstrings and consequent surgery, asthma that made breathing difficult, severe reflux exacerbated by Natasha's swallowing problems, and long heavy pain. Susan spent months "sleeping" in her hospital room.

Reflux became such a problem that Natasha now receives only liquid nutrition, throughout much of the day and night, through a tube from a backpack to a permanent opening in her abdomen. This nutritional system is working well. Natasha herself chose tube-feeding over regular blender food (including her favorites: pizza and ice cream). Because timing the feedings is essential to controlling the reflux, Susan gets up at midnight to start a feeding, then is up to check Natasha two or three times a night.

And Natasha, like Susan, thinks, and feels.

As is customary for disabled children in Alberta, Natasha started school at age four so she would have two years of kindergarten before grade one. David and Chantelle were in a school near by, and sometimes in good weather they pushed Natasha home in her wheelchair. One such

day when they got home, David told his mother that they had met a grade three classmate of Chantelle's on the street.

"Oooh," he said, "is that your *sister?* Is she *retarded?*"

"No," shot back Chantelle, "but *you* are. She has ears, too, you know."

Natasha still calls Chantelle her best friend.

Natasha entered a regular grade one class with a government-provided aide and an Apple IIe computer with special software and an on/off switch Natasha could operate with her head, but she did not yet have a computer voice. Teaching and learning proceeded as usual for the rest of the class, but Natasha had never spoken and could not copy, imitate, converse, or use a letter or number except by translating it into computer language she did not yet know. The aide helped, but the process was slow.

At the end of grade one, Natasha had not completed learning the alphabet. Susan met with the teacher and told her Natasha would need another year of first grade to finish learning her letters.

"What's the point?" said the teacher. "She'll never learn them anyway."

But she did. In grade two she was producing short sentences with her computer. The first, to Susan, was, "I LOVE YOU."

Another, about her brother whose endless teasing she liked, was, "DAVID CRAZY."

In grade seven she got a computer voice and for the first time could answer a question vocally if the asker were willing to wait through the cumbersome computer process and try to understand her abbreviated response.

One junior high school educator was perplexed about how to assess Natasha's learning, because she could not take the usual exams.

"Assessment isn't the point of her education," said Susan. "We just want her to learn all she can."

When I asked Natasha what she thinks is the purpose of life, her reply was "GROW." She did not say, "To be tested."

In high school she got an electric wheelchair and, for the first time, once strapped in, could move herself. While Natasha was learning to "drive" the chair, George and Susan took her out in the driveway to practice maneuvering it with her head switch. Cloth in hand, David was there, proudly polishing the final coat of finish on the old car he and George had spent months lovingly restoring. After practicing a little, Natasha

took aim at the beautiful shiny classic car and rammed straight into the bumper at full speed. Finally an active teaser like her beloved brother, she laughed and laughed. So did everyone else, except David.

When she finished high school at age twenty, Natasha wrote a short valedictory address. Here are a few sentences from an edited copy of her computer talk:

> My favorite part of school was that I learned lots. The next best part was getting to know my teachers and aides. . . .
>
> In high school I drove my electric wheel chair. My favorite subject was psychology.
>
> The things I learned that are most helpful to me are writing and reading. These will help me in working toward my second goal which is to become a writer. My first goal is to get healthy.
>
> I am happy when I am with my family and friends and when I go to church. I also especially like walking, singing, and flowers.
>
> I think the most important part of life is to learn. I am very excited to be able to continue to do this in college with Ronda's help.

Although Natasha attended one or two classes per semester with her aide for a couple of years, Natasha found college unmanageable.

Now Natasha is invited back into public schools to help students and teachers recognize persons like themselves in disabled bodies. She introduces herself and answers questions with her computer voice. At the end of an hour last May, a fifth grade student said, "Natasha, I didn't know you'd be so *cool!*"

Natasha has experienced most LDS activities and rituals, including meetings, activities, baptism, temple endowment, and work for the dead. Some adaptations have been necessary. For example, because Natasha has never been able to swallow solid food, sacrament bread is only a small crumb or two, and water a touch on her lips.

I asked Susan if Natasha was afraid to be put under water when she was baptized.

"No," said Susan, "because her father did it. She trusts her father."

When she was eleven, in a Primary talk about "What I Am Thankful For," Natasha named family members and friends, her teddy bear, telephone, cookie monster book, doll, bed, and more significantly, "TALK FRIENDS," and most significantly, "NATASHA ME," and "MY COME ME." With follow-up questions, Susan was able to translate this as, "I am thankful I came to earth as ME."

During Natasha's teens, Susan taught her seminary lessons at home.

One day she found Natasha teaching her doll Jennifer, as she often did with what she was learning at school.

"What are you teaching about?" Susan asked.

Natasha answered, "LEARNING ABOUT SCRIPTURE BEHOLD I WILL GIVE YOU GREAT JOY THAT ME AND MY HOUSE WE WILL SERVE LORD."

Another day when Susan found Natasha teaching seminary to Jennifer, the lesson was:

> GETTING KNOW JESUS
> LOVING NICE
> WEARING WHITE CLOTHES
> LIVE WITH HEAVENLY FATHER
> BORN DECEMBER 25
> KEEP COMMANDMENTS
> KEEP SUNDAY HOLY
> I WAS NEED A PLACE TO LIVE
> I WAS SICK TAKE CARE

Here are some excerpts from an October 2000 dialogue between Natasha and her parents about Natasha's temple experiences. The first time she had gone to the temple was at age three to be sealed to her family. Natasha did not remember this first visit.

> "How old were you the next time you went to the temple?"
> FOURTEEN
> "Why did you go?"
> YOUNG WOMEN'S BAPTISMS FOR THE DEAD
> "Why did you do this?"
> THEY CAN'T DO IT THEMSELVES
> "How did it make you feel to do this?"
> GREAT
> "How many times were you able to go?"
> THREE OR FOUR
> "Is there anything special you remember about your endowment?"
> FAMILY THERE
> "How did you get around in the temple?"
> DAVID AND DAD [There are steps between rooms in the

Cardston Alberta Temple. Natasha and her bulky wheelchair had to be lifted up them.]

"Why was it important to you to take out your endowment?"

HEAVENLY FATHER WANT US TO RETURN

"Have you gone to the temple since then?"

YES

"Why?"

WORK FOR THE DEAD

"Why does work have to be done for the dead?"

SO THEY CAN BE WITH HEAVENLY FATHER AGAIN

At this point, Susan thought the conversation was over, but Natasha was excitedly writing something else: "CHANTELLE HAD WEDDING IN TEMPLE." This was very special to Natasha because the wedding was four months after she was endowed, and she was able to attend.

When the bishop recently asked Natasha to bear her testimony during a talk he was giving at a joint priesthood and Relief Society meeting, this is what she wrote, one sentence a day over a two-week period, with no help:

THANK YOU EVERYONE HELP ME GET BETTER.
HEAVENLY FATHER IS LOVING.
HOLY GHOST LISTENS TO PEOPLE.
JESUS DIED FOR US.
HEAVENLY FATHER MAKE US FEEL BETTER.
HEAVENLY FATHER GIVE US FRIEND.
HEAVENLY FATHER GIVE US WONDERFUL SISTERS AND BROTHERS.
JESUS LET US CELEBRATE HIS BIRTHDAY.
HEAVENLY FATHER TEACH US HOW PRAY.
JESUS TAUGHT US HOW LOVE.
JESUS TEACH US HOW GIVE.

When Susan asked Natasha some questions I had mailed for her, Natasha was so excited that she answered them all at one sitting, then added more responses and wanted more questions. Here are some of them:

When you pray to Heavenly Father, what do you pray about?

HEALTHY, GOOD FAMILY

How does Heavenly Father make you feel better?

MEDICINE [With follow-up responses, she explained that God helps people know how to make it.]

What do you think is the most important thing people can give to each other?

LOVE

What do you think is the purpose of life?

GROW

What is the hardest thing about life?

SICK

What is the best thing about life?

FAMILY

What do you want to do in heaven?

TALK, FALL IN LOVE, WORK, FAMILY [meaning a husband and children of her own]

Is there anyone you feel sorry for?

JOY

Why?

SHE HASN'T LOVE

Why do you think Jesus died?

LOVE US [Not justice, mercy, blood sacrifice, or atonement. Just love.]

When do you feel closest to God?

SICK

Why?

HELP

Is there anything you wish were different than it is?

FAMILY [of her own]

I asked Natasha what she likes best at church. After thinking for a while, she slowly activated the computer and replied, "I DON'T KNOW."

I asked if she could tell me one thing she likes about church. Her answer was "FRIENDS."

There was a period, Susan says, when Natasha was lonely, "dying for friends." Susan arranged for a girl from church to come over to visit and, in time, others also, taking care that Natasha not be a charity case and the visits not be gold-star-earning service projects but just plain acts of friend-

ship. Natasha gained friends and delights in visits with them. (There is little joy in being at best an object of kind, tolerant pity. Natasha yearned for *friends* and knows one when she sees one.)

When the ward chapel was being remodeled, two men thought, "If we cut off the bench by the organ, Natasha can sit in her wheelchair next to the organ while her mother plays for choir practice and sacrament meeting." They got permission and did cut off the bench for Natasha.

George sings in the choir and Susan is the accompanist. They began taking Natasha with them in her wheelchair in the van. Natasha loved the choir and loves "singing" hymns with the congregation. At choir practice, she began making noises as the choir sang: Susan says she "Let it all out" and "sang" though without controllable pitch, melody, or rhythm. Choir members and director smiled, and some told Natasha what a happy thing it is to have her making music with them. Natasha understands that she remains silent during performances. In the medieval Catholic Church, only unison singing was allowed—no diversity of voices, no harmonies from diverse pitches. I prefer the harmony in Natasha's ward.

Natasha's computer is too cumbersome to be taken to church. She does not verbalize questions there or make comments. Some teachers would consider her the perfect listener, attentive and silent.

Unless they ask Natasha later, no one knows what she thinks of a teacher, a talk, or an idea. If she does have a question or new idea, she can think about it but her disabilities prevent her from searching the scriptures, wandering into a library or bookstore, scanning the internet, or exploring the idea with diverse persons. Her computer language makes quick dialogue impossible.

Utterly dependent upon her family for life and language, Natasha has also been dependent on them for religious experience, if indeed religion can be considered a category separate from all else in the McDonald family.

"Susan," I asked one day, "you didn't grow up with seminary or regular church meetings. As a child and teenager, how did you develop your understanding of the religious concepts you've taught Natasha?"

"By watching my parents," said Susan. "Both of them."

A relative has asked what I think Natasha's I.Q. might be, a question impossible to answer. "I.Q." is an arbitrary measurement of selected skills representing norms for a specific group. Neither Natasha's remarkable memory nor her thinking skills could be demonstrated on standard I.Q. tests that require verbal ease and the capacity to copy or rearrange pat-

terns. To assess her intelligence would require finding 10,000 persons like her to create a standardized test, and what would be the point anyway?

More productive questions might be, "How can Natasha and I know each other and enjoy each other? What do we have in common? How are we different? What might we give to each other?" Such questions might be explored by talking to Natasha as to any person ("she has *ears*, you know"), and seeing through her eyes, and listening to her even if it requires more time, patience, and attention than is usual in casual conversation. It might mean asking follow-up questions rather than hurrying to talk over her or answer the questions for her. This may take practice.

When I called Susan to ask whether she and Natasha would participate in preparing for this discussion, we agreed that she should talk it over with Natasha, which she did.

"Natasha wants to know what the purpose is," she said, "and so do I. We agreed that if it is to glorify someone, no, but if it is to help anyone understand that the disabled are persons like themselves, we will do anything we can."

Experience with Natasha, Susan, and Aunt Marsha has evoked for me many considerations, some of which I'd like to suggest here:

1. According to Deuteronomy, for at least two reasons Natasha could not have joined the religious community in ancient Israel: she is an illegitimate child, and her body is frightfully flawed beyond the norm. There is a third reason not included in Deuteronomy: Anciently she would not have survived her birth, not breathed a breath, not been deemed worth saving. Among many peoples of scarcity, resources are not "wasted" upon so needy a person. But in our own time and place, medical personnel do all they can to enhance the life of a Natasha, and the Alberta government does all it can afford. Shall religious persons today do less?

2. Our church says that little children do not need baptism or other rituals, because they are not accountable and do not comprehend profound solemnities. Should we say, then, that rituals don't matter to Natasha—she is as a child who cannot sin or comprehend?

Her one-word categorical answers and helpless body do not make Natasha a twenty-four-year-old child.

What has she gained from the rituals, and what would she miss without them? They have given her a sense of formalized community with the living and dead, as well as with God, which is especially precious to one who has known isolation and loneliness. Rituals have affirmed for her

transcendent reality beyond present experience. She feels she has made necessary preparation for heaven where she can move, talk, and marry. She has helped others who could not act for themselves. In rituals she has done what is right and good, which matters to her, and she has made her family happy, which matters greatly to her. Most especially, she considers herself a normal person and would not understand why she could not be baptized and endowed like everyone else.

3. Persons have questioned for millennia why an all-powerful benevolent God allows unearned suffering, loss, or disability, and many have written contradictory conclusions as though they come either from God or from irrefutable logic based on unquestioned assumptions. In the dark of the night, with excruciating muscle spasms, or struggling to breathe or swallow, or laboring to express herself in language like and different from that of those around her, Natasha might have believed in a distant God, unapproachable without an intermediary, a God judging her for the very limitations he is inflicting upon her, but instead she knows, as I do, a God who is a helper and close comforter as we struggle to grow with a degree of agency on a globe with inherent material laws, among fellow humans who also have much growing to do.

4. Lenin called religion the opiate of the people, and often it is so. But opium dulls not only pain but also the soul. Natasha's religion enlivens her.

5. When my husband Bob came out of anesthesia from open-heart surgery, all yellow, puffy, tongue hanging out, tubes down his throat and in his nose and arms, unable to move or talk, he motioned to the nurse for pen and paper, and wrote, "Life is good." At age eleven in her Primary talk about what she is thankful for, Natasha said, "MY COME ME" ("I am thankful I came to earth as me.") When low functioning autistic Tito Mukhopadhyay was asked, "Would you like to be normal?" he scrawled in rough but legible script, "Why should I be Dick and not Tito?" [1]

6. I'm remembering a comment of John Gardner, a now-retired BYU physics professor who said to me one evening long ago, "I've been pondering how to be the best Mormon I can, and think it might be by being the best physicist I can." Can George and David's hip-high changing table, ceiling trolley, and platform tub, and Susan's use of them to keep

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1. Madhusree Mukerjee, "A Transparent Enigma," *Scientific American* 290 (June 2004): 49.

Natasha clean and comfortable, be separated from their religion? Can Natasha's doctors, or inventors of medicines, tubes, surgical instruments, computers, wheels under her chair, or legislators who enable the handicapped be separated from the history of western religion? Can religion ever be a separate category, even for atheists?

7. For millennia, many have said that only fear of detection and punishment, or hope of reward, deters able persons from the evil they would otherwise do. I do not believe this. Have they never known persons in whom fear of punishment and hope of arbitrary reward are absent, people who move on love, or on what is quite simply a good thing to do?

FICTION

'Atta Boy

Kristen Carson

LATHAM RUNYON WONDERED WHAT TIME he ought to close his window. It was going to be a tongue-hanger today. But for now, the morning was still dewy and bearable.

He pulled his half-glasses up to his nose. It might help him feel more like buckling down to work, because all he really wanted to do was sit in the kitchen with the phone on his lap.

He could imagine the questions Ada would ask if she found him. Question number one would be: *You know that phone won't ring like that, don't you? Wall phones have to stay on the wall to work.*

Yeah, yeah. Still, the urge to clutch that phone, somehow, some way, had him bolting from his chair every time the cicadas started a new chorus outside his window. Their hums sounded just like a phone line taking its breath before a big, healthy, household-interrupting jangle.

Question number two would be: *Who are you expecting to call?*

That one he could not answer, because this was too big, too sacred to speak out loud.

He checked his watch. He wondered what time Elder Sperry's plane would land at Philadelphia International. It'd have to be early, with all there was to do today.

The rumors had flown for months. Wylie Siltman was about to grip the stake center pulpit for the last time. He'd signed his share of temple recommends, hurried away from the dinner table for his share of stake meetings, sent out his share of missionaries.

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God was giving Wylie Siltman a rest.

That was why Elder Sperry flew into Philly today, to choose a man to replace Wylie Siltman.

Well, Elder Sperry wouldn't choose the man. God would. Latham Runyon knew how these things worked. Elder Sperry's job was to come and stand among the men of the stake, waiting for God to point out the right fellow.

And for weeks now, every time Latham passed Erval in the church hallway, every time he went over to Erval's house, his good buddy joked with him, "Watch out, Latham. You're next."

"Don't plan a vacation this year. They're comin' for ya."

"Suits on sale at Penney's, my wife tells me. Better get yourself a good Wylie-Siltman one."

"Wylie's is looking kind of worn," Latham had told him.

"Yes, well, think how yours will look if you don't start out new."

And Latham hated to make too much of this, but somewhere deep down, he felt that the Lord Himself had swept His eye over this sandy spit of land and looked straight at Latham Runyon.

So, even though Latham wanted to sit in the kitchen and hold the phone, he made himself sit at his desk. He looked straight through his half glasses at the paper rolled into his Selectric. He pretended he had urgent work to do, even if it wasn't all that urgent. The chapter manuscript wasn't due for months yet. November 15, 1976, said the contract. And here it was, only August. But this was as good a time as any.

He could hear Ada stacking up the clean plates from the dishwasher. He could also hear Kate asking for the car. She said she'd have it back by something o'clock.

All those distractions echoing down the hallway. Now he remembered why he always worked in his campus office, deep in the History Department.

But if he went there, how could he hear the call when it came?

He sat back, smoothing down the bristles of his salt-and-pepper hair. The breeze blowing through the curtains carried the zing-zing-scring of Haffner's circular saw next door. Latham didn't know what Pete Haffner was working on over there, but he'd been at it every Saturday for a month now.

Latham himself had been banned from those weekend-homeowner projects. Actually, he kind of liked them. He just didn't know how, once

the gutters were hung, they ended up slanted the wrong way. And then the patio door never opened right once he'd fixed it. The last straw was the tree. Was he supposed to know that when you cut a tree, you planned which way you wanted it to fall?

Ada wouldn't even let him fix the fence it fell on. She pled—no, she insisted, in that sing-songy, nodding-forward way of hers—that he stick to what he knew best. "You just write your *ar*ticles, correct your students' *pa-pers,* and leave the *handymanning* to somebody *else.*"

Like Pete. Whose noise was another reason Latham worked on campus on Saturdays.

Except for today.

Today he worked at home. Where he could hear the phone when it rang. Where he could get to that phone in seconds. He couldn't waste a minute of their time, because he knew they had a pretty full day on their hands.

This eye-of-God feeling came to him one day as he looked up at the door of his cramped office and saw young Divens. Latham had put down his turkey sandwich and invited Divens in. He had taken off his half-glasses and clamped the bows in his teeth as the student talked about the problems on page four of his second draft.

And as he handed the paper back to the boy and shook his hand and sent him on his way, and picked up the turkey sandwich again, it just hit him: What he had just done was like old Wylie, welcoming a young missionary home, shaking his hand, sending him out into the world to find a wife and build a life. And he had a vision of himself, rising from the desk in Wylie's orange-carpeted office.

Latham didn't know where this picture of himself came from. It just popped up, like a swimmer from the depths.

And he didn't know whether the picture had *significance,* you know, because not all his pop-ups did. He wouldn't want them to, particularly the ones about crossing the railroad tracks just as the train appeared out of nowhere. Or the ones where he found himself kissing some woman that wasn't Ada.

So when Erval sat beside him in Sunday School and looked over the many red underlinings in Lat's scriptures and winked, "Careful there. Those are the scriptures of a future stake president," Latham could not help but wonder if this vision of himself sitting behind Wylie Siltman's

broad, imposing desk, this vision that came out of nowhere, did not have *significance* after all.

It matched a feeling of portent. Something was about to happen to him. This feeling came to him lately, like a tap on the shoulder, just before he'd wake up. It came to him when the afternoon sun hit the quad outside his office. Usually he'd look out the window and think of the Snickers bar waiting for him down in the basement vending machines. But lately, he just sat there rubbing his four o'clock shadow and feeling that God had his eye on Latham Runyon. God was telling Latham Runyon to be ready for the thing that was about to happen to him.

It was no use running from the eye of God. Where could you go? Why would you want to get away from God, who saw something in you that he liked? Who whispered your name to the soul of Elder Sperry, who sat on an airplane somewhere above the earth, snapping his briefcase shut just as he was about to land?

At that, Latham looked at his watch. 8:42. Drive time to the stake center was two hours. How much gas did he have in the tank? How much time to shower, shave, and be on his way? Twenty minutes?

But why wait? They hadn't a minute to waste today.

Latham pushed the off button on his Selectric and rolled his chair away from the desk.

* * *

The shampooey water ran down his face. He rubbed his head hard to hurry it along. Then there were suds trailing down his back, slow as an elevator at rush hour. He danced in the spray to hurry them, too. Here he was, sealed away from the world, away from that phone that he just knew was ringing for him right now. Somebody should invent a cordless phone, he thought, to untether him from the one in the kitchen.

When he finally turned the water off and reached for the towel, he had a comforting thought: If he missed the call, they would try him again. Wylie would. Wylie knew Latham and liked him.

Now Latham was a realistic man. He knew how these things worked. Wylie would hand Elder Sperry a long list of names—and Latham knew the names on that list didn't just land there willy-nilly, like crumbs on a couch cushion. No. Somebody had to think of your name and put it on there.

And Wylie would think of Latham, because Wylie often pulled

Latham aside in the hallways to quip about their common problems. "How are things down at Boxford State?" he'd say.

"Longer meetings, tougher tenure, and students that can't spell," Latham would tell him. "And how's it going up at the big U?"

"Three more years and they give me my rocking chair," Wylie'd laugh.

Yep, Wylie'd remember Latham Runyon and put his name down.

Then Elder Sperry would call in every man on that list; and while he distracted you with friendly small talk, he sized you up stealthily, trying to feel whether God's finger was pointing right at you.

Now Latham stood before the steam-clouded mirror. He squirted shaving cream into his hand and swabbed it over his face.

It was not the best face, to be sure. He imagined how it would look to those sitting beside him in conference tomorrow. There he'd be, his arms folded as he sat on a hard metal chair way at the back of the gym, looking for all the world like Joe Mormon, with the standard white shirt, the standard wing tips, the standard bald spot, and the standard case of scriptures with a sagging, broken spine.

The young fathers nearby would look at him and think, *I hope I don't become that in twenty years.* Their young wives would study his pocked cheeks and try to imagine just how bad the teenage acne had been. And teenage girls would decide that he was, no doubt, ten times cornier than their own dads.

He was esteemed as naught, even in his own family. Watching him narrowly as he dozed, they would sit ready to jab him hard at the first hint of a snore.

Then, when his name echoed forth from the pulpit and he stood up, his seat-neighbors would look up from their chairs, surprised. They would kick themselves mentally for not taking note of him sooner, for not recognizing his eminence.

His children would look up. *Our dad? God wants our dad?*

His wife would bow her head humbly and compose a few eloquent remarks, in case they summoned wives to speak.

And as he walked up to take his new place, people would look up from their seats, squinting at him. And when he reached the stand, Elder Sperry would smile, remembering: *Oh, yes, him. The one that likes Great Biographies, just like me.* Elder Sperry would shake his hand, motion him toward his very own theater-style seat, a far cry from the metal chairs at the

back. Elder Sperry would make him say a few words at the pulpit, where Latham could look down on all those surprised people, who were still taking it in that Latham Runyon was their new stake president.

He could see Ada putting it in the Christmas letter. He could see far-away friends opening the envelope and sitting down in shock when they got to the paragraph about the last stake conference.

People around here would have a new respect for him. He would wear that patina of authority, the one that made people hush a little when he walked down the church hallway. They would part, opening the way. They would listen to his speeches, sure that he had something great and wise to say. They would want to look righteous and dutiful and have no food stuck in their teeth when they met him and he held out his large dry hand to shake their small clammy ones.

And with that, he wiped the last bits of shaving cream from the front of his ears. He hung his towel behind the door and marched to his underwear drawer.

Someone knocked at the door. "Lat? You in there?" Ada poked her head in. She looked him up and down with one raised eyebrow. "You have a phone call."

He grabbed her hand and pulled her close. "Do I, now? Who's it from?"

He kissed her and she pulled away, giggling. "I *think* I'd better take a message."

"No, wait!" He jerked open the drawer, pulled out his underwear and scrambled in, hopping across the floor.

But she was gone.

Picking up the shirt he had discarded across the bed, he buttoned it so rapidly, his fingers felt scraped and raw. With one last zip of his fly, he flew out the bedroom door and to the top of the stairs. He was just ready to come down when his wife stared up at him from the bottom.

"That was Lois Kilby."

"What did she want?"

"She didn't say. She just asked for you."

Latham had a dark feeling about this. He trudged back to his room and sat on his bed. It probably had to do with the emergency room. He didn't have time to run off to emergency rooms today.

See, other men got nice families to home teach, the kind whose houses smelled of Sunday pot roast and fresh-baked rolls, the kind where

the mother neatly folded her apron and beamed over her whole brood as they gathered for the official monthly visit.

But no, they assigned Latham to people like the Kilbys, with a waifish, undernourished mom who flipped light switches as if she expected that small act to burn down their trailer.

Other men got families with scrubbed children, who answered your questions about how school was going.

But Latham got the Kilbys, whose sons walked, wordless and sullen, through the living room, regarding him like a big, greasy engine block ruining their mother's couch.

Other men got families with fathers that figured their taxes in long-form and fixed their roofs *before* they leaked.

But no, Latham got James Rutherford Kilby, nonmember husband of Lois Kilby.

And on that day they handed him the Kilbys' address on a little piece of paper, Latham Runyon girded up his courage and set out to pay his respects to the head of the Kilby household. He wound his way through Pine Meadows, dodging the stares of children out on their bicycles, of young men leaning into their open car hoods. Peering at the numbers tacked on the trailer prows, he finally found No. 44 and faced two men, sprawled in lawn chairs beside the puny metal steps that led to the front door.

Latham had swallowed hard as he got out of his car. He looked at the scrawny blond man. He looked at the beefy one with the shiny forehead and the lumberjack beard. He looked at the cans of Schlitz on a rusted metal table between them.

"I'm looking for James Rutherford Kilby," he said, fighting down a crackle in his voice.

The big bearded one looked at the scrawny one. "Ruthe'ferd?" He shook, seized by a big, sinus-clearing snicker. "That yer real name, Rut? *Ruthe'ferd?*"

"Shut up, Mugly." The blond one scooted forward in his chair.

* * *

Rut was good for three things in this life: He could guzzle beer, he could tinker with his candy-red Honda, and he could . . . well, Lois Kilby turned up pregnant last year—surprise!—and out came Rut's first daughter.

In truth, it was the ugliest baby Latham had ever seen, with jowls

roomy enough to store softballs. But he chucked her little double-chin anyway because God had sent him over to be nice to the Kilbys.

Maybe God thought Latham, of all the men at church, might understand Rut Kilby best. After all, Latham too had spawned his own surprise offspring. It happened about ten years ago. Ada had barely sent the youngest of their two daughters off to first grade when she got the news and wept all weekend.

And Latham had once owned a noisy little Yamaha back in the summer after graduation, although Ada and grad school convinced him to give it up.

And Latham had tossed back a beer or two himself, back in his pre-Mormon frat-boy days. Perhaps God knew that Latham would not only pity Rut's soul, but his tastebuds, too, for if there ever was a lawnmower beer, Schlitz was it.

It was a peculiar friendship. Home teaching always was. Normal friendship grew like a pot belly, fed on things too good to pass up. Like with Erval. Latham and his good buddy Erv sat for hours, asking each other questions like, "If God is omniscient, then how can we be free to act?" Or, "Were the fishes and the loaves invented on the spot, or were they matter borrowed from somewhere else in the universe?"

"Uh-oh," their kids would say. "The dads are playing Stump the Rabbi again."

With Erval, there was a give-and-take. I borrow your ladder, you borrow my book. Memorial Day at your house, Fourth of July at mine.

But with the Kilbys, it was just give and give and give. Call people who don't call back. Care about people who don't care back, not even about themselves.

And now, today, when Latham prayed nothing would come between him and his phone-that-might-ring, the Kilbys rose up before him, needing . . . well, who knows what they might be needing? It could be anything from baby aspirin to bail money.

This was a test. He knew it. God was watching him. God was saying, *Why should I give you the big jobs if you won't do the small ones?*

And with that, Latham Runyon got up from the bed and clumped down to the kitchen phone.

He lifted the black handset and stuck his finger in the first hole.

He paused a moment, just to feel the phone vibes. Anything coming through on this line? Anything quivering with portent?

Was God still watching?

Probably. He swung the dial around and put his finger in the next hole.

When he had dialed all the numbers, he leaned back against the counter and watched the second hand on the clock over the fridge.

Busy signal. Latham dropped the receiver into its cradle, quickly before the busy tone snickered, "Just kidding!" and Lois Kilby's tired and breathy little voice suddenly said hello.

He heard the back door close. In came Ada, shuffling new mail in her hands. "Get hold of the Kilbys?" she said.

"Couldn't get through." He tried hard to look sorry about it.

He walked back to his desk, settled into the chair and wiggled his fingers over his Selectric keyboard, waiting for the next sentence to clack out.

But nothing came.

And no wonder. It had been a hard morning for a thinking man. Interruptions, distractions—how was he ever going to get this textbook chapter written?

He sat back in his chair. The window before him revealed, beyond the crew-cut edges of the shrubbery, a world lazing its way to lunchtime. The tall oaks across the street waved as if unimpressed by the breeze that pushed against them. A piece of white fuzz, bobbing along like a tiny visiting spaceship, rode that same breeze past the crab-apple branches.

He swiveled in his chair. He looked across his broad desk. Beyond the messy part, with the pencil can and the stapler and the yellow legal pad awaiting his jottings, it looked not much different than Wylie Siltman's desk. Latham could almost see somebody like young Divens, sitting across from him, with his pretty fiancée, eagerly awaiting his wise, stake-presidential advice.

"Now, when Sister Runyon and I got married . . ."

He sees Divens reach over to the arm of his sweetheart's chair and squeeze her hand.

Pressing his templed fingers against his chin, he looks straight into Divens's eyes and carries on: "Sister Runyon and I made the decision that we'd have a weekly date, without fail."

Divens and Sweetheart look into each other's eyes. A shy smile spreads across her face.

Latham goes on. "It doesn't have to be . . ."

Just then, Ada burst through the office door. "Well, look what came

today!" she said, plunking herself down in the spare chair. She straightened out the folds of the letter in her hand.

Latham quickly put away his templed fingers and his wise face. He grabbed the folder on his desk and lifted his reading glasses up to his nose.

"Do you remember my old roommate Helen?" said Ada.

"Mmm." Latham frowned at the folder as if pinning down a thought blown wild by the gust of Ada's interruption.

"They're coming here!" She squinted down at the letter, mumbling its handwritten words: "'Baltimore . . . Washington D.C. . . . seeing the sights. Philadelphia around the ninth. Love to get together. . . .' But of course! What day is the 9th?" She got up and squinted at the calendar on Latham's wall. "That's a Thursday. I don't see why not. I'm sure we could go out to dinner or something. What do you think, Lat?"

Latham looked up from his folder. "A Thursday?" His mind raced. But what if the call came today? His life could change in a minute. Suddenly, that calendar would overflow with meetings and church visits.

And weren't all the stake presidency meetings on Thursday nights? How could he tell his own new high council, "Sorry. Can't be there. Friends in from out of town." Obscure friends. People he barely remembered and whom, if he never dined with again, he would not miss.

"Latham? That Thursday looks good to me. Shall I call her?"

He looked at the calendar again. Why couldn't that call have come already? How much patience could God wring from a man who only wanted to know what was about to happen to him?

He looked at Ada. "I don't know."

"What? Why don't you know?"

"I'm not sure what I've got going then."

"But there's nothing on your calendar here."

Latham peered at it over his half glasses. He might need a bigger calendar. He might even need a big spiral-bound date book like his wife's.

She gave him The Look. Oh, but he knew why all her little piano students faithfully practiced their lessons! Under Mrs. Runyon's Look, one's intestines shifted around like cats in a burlap bag.

"Latham, don't you like Helen and Bob?"

"I like them fine."

"Then what's your problem going to dinner with them on the 9th?"

"Nothing! I just don't know if I can or not. Now, I've got work to do, Ada."

She stared, the letter hanging from her hand. Then she left the room.

He turned back to his typewriter.

But he couldn't work.

He rose up out of his chair. He stepped into the hall and opened the front door. Then he burst out of the house and into the August heat of the day.

It could be the last great thinking walk of his life, if that call came today. He circled the block, plucking a leaf or two off the neighbors' hedges, staring back at small dogs yapping from behind picket fences. He nodded to men pushing lawnmowers, to women standing before their flower beds with their hands on their hips, to Pete Haffner, standing in a little pile of sawdust, peering up through his safety goggles.

He returned with arcs of sweat seeping through his shirt. And in the cool murmur of his house, as he approached his study, he glanced down the hall where his wife stood in the kitchen.

"Lois Kilby called again," she said.

"Did she say what the problem was?"

"Something about water on the kitchen floor."

Latham frowned. That should be simple. Let Rut crawl under his own kitchen sink. If the Kilby pipes were foredoomed to ruin, better by Rut than Latham.

Ada stood at his study door. "Are you going to see what you can do to help the Kilbys?"

"I don't know, Ada."

There was The Look again. He forged on, in spite of it. "I don't know if I will have time to get to it today," he said.

"What is this 'I don't know' business? How can a man not know his day is free when there's nothing on his calendar here to say it isn't?"

Latham sat back in his chair and studied the visible will working itself across his wife's face. The last thing he needed right now was a wife glaring at him, her dark eyebrows raised in puzzlement, her arms folded in a way that said, *"You're not the man I thought you were."* The last thing he needed was a wife who could say so to Elder Sperry.

Latham sat there, squeezed between that big, empty space on his calendar and the nagging little secret that ate at him like a chigger under his belt.

He would have to tell her that secret.

"Come on in, Ada," he said, motioning her to the spare chair. "Shut the door."

She looked at him, puzzled. She pushed the doorknob until it clicked. She sat in the chair. He could see the wheels in her head working, guessing. *Dread disease? Pink slip? Midlife urge to chuck it all?* She studied his eyes like a doctor checking pupil dilation.

He went on. "I could get called today. Elder Sperry is in town, you know. Interviewing for the new stake president. I have a feeling I could be called in."

By now, her jaw hung open. She looked as if she remembered something from far away and long ago, something like faint warning bells he had set off back in their dating days, warning bells she should have heeded, warning bells that, at this moment, clanged like fire alarms. She looked away at the far wall, rose slowly from her chair and reached for the doorknob. Looking back at him one last time, she opened the door and left the room.

Latham stared at his typewriter. *She needs some time, that's all. Let her get used to the idea.*

Just as he finished a new paragraph, she poked her head in the doorway again. "What kind of people are they calling in for interviews?" she asked.

"Oh, bishops. High councilors."

"But you haven't been any of those."

Latham's hands froze over the keyboard. "Gosh darn it, Ada! I've got work to do!"

She disappeared.

So, it was going to be one of those days, was it? His woman thought he was a fool? And this was the woman he depended on and loved, in spite of having to part curtains of her drying hosiery in the bathroom?

If he was a fool, then what of all those premonitions? He hadn't asked for them to wake him up at four in the morning, to sneak up on him as he leaned over to tie his shoes, to breathe down his neck as he stood before his bookshelf, fingering the spines until he found the book he wanted. What was he to make of thoughts that whispered to him, *Maybe you shouldn't start an article right now because you won't get to finish it very soon.*

Huh? Where did all this come from?

Why would his mind play tricks on him like that? Why would God send premonitions that were useless and cruel, actually? Why would Erval

see greatness in him that wasn't really there? Why would they call only bishops and high councilors and not him? If God wanted him, He could bypass a little protocol. Was anything impossible for God?

Ada appeared in his doorway again. "Lois Kilby's on the phone."

Latham slunk to the kitchen, despairing. Elder Sperry would never get through to him today. He held the phone to his ear. Sister Kilby's thin little voice came over the line. "Could you please come and have a look at where this water's comin' from?" she pleaded.

Latham hung up the phone with the frown of a man who just learned his car was $3,000 sicker than he thought. "I don't know why I should worry myself about the water on Rut Kilby's kitchen floor when Rut himself isn't home to worry about it."

"Oh?" said Ada. "Where is Rut?"

"Off to Mugly's. She says they're barbecuing a billy goat."

Ada's eyebrow shot up. "People do that?"

Latham nodded his head slowly. Nothing Rut did surprised him anymore. "And Lois can't get him there because Mugly's phone is cut off again. Oh, what's the use of all this? I go out there every month and they stand on their little trailer steps and they look so sincere and tell me, 'We're planning to come to church next Sunday. Sure thing. Oh, yes, we'll see you there.' And Sunday rolls around and where are the Kilbys? Sitting in the row next to us? Sitting in any row at all?"

"Coming in late?"

"Hah! They're too shiftless to even come late! And there I am, the chump that believed their promises for the 473rd time."

"How much water are we talking about here? Where's it coming from?"

"I didn't ask. I didn't think. Why would I? I'm Mr. Oops, remember? I'm the husband that doesn't know an elbow joint from an elbow ache. I'm the guy you've told," he imitated her high voice, "'Please, Lat, don't patch that nail hole.'"

"Okay, maybe these people deserve you. They make promises they don't keep, so God gives them a home teacher who can't help them." She beamed over her own logic.

He looked at her miserably. Then he lapsed into her voice again. "'Please, Lat, let's just call somebody who knows what they're doing.'"

"That's it!" She snapped her fingers. "Why don't you call Erval, Mr. Fix-It himself. He'll know how to help the Kilbys."

Latham just stared at the phone. Would it ever ring for him today? Would it ever ring and not be the Kilbys?

"Never mind," said Ada. "I'll call myself. I've got to ask Ruthalin something anyway."

Latham unfolded himself from the kitchen chair. He shuffled into the living room, fell back into his La-Z-Boy and stared at the ceiling. By now, he couldn't even remember what Elder Sperry looked like, even though he had seen the man's picture dozens of times.

"Uh-huh. . . . Really?" said Ada, in the other room. "I see. Well, yes, I know, uh-huh."

She poked her head into the living room. Holding her hand over the receiver, she whispered, "Guess what Erval's been doing today? Waiting by the phone just in case Elder Sperry calls!"

Latham sat up in shock. They couldn't want Erval! What about his own premonitions? What about Erval kidding him that "it's gonna be you, Latham. You watch out"? After good buddy Erv's gentle kidding, Latham couldn't take it if he had to watch Erval walk up to the stand tomorrow, grip the pulpit, and pause to take control of his emotions. He couldn't take it, watching all of Erval's ten kids troop into the small room to see their dad set apart. Why, the room wouldn't hold them all. That was one reason to reject Erval right there!

But what if it was Erval? Who would Elder Sperry and God like better? Didn't DeVere W. Sperry have something like ten kids himself? Yes, Latham had seen the picture in the magazine, published when the man first ascended to his position: the wife with her new perm; the handsome older sons in their blazers; the thirteen-year-old son trying to change a smirk into a smile: the older daughters, their souls aged from washing loads of dishes and braiding many, many heads of hair; and the youngest daughter, her hand resting on her father's knee, her smile revealing a corn row of baby teeth.

Somehow the photo looked so right, so General Authority. So much like Erval's family photo, with its fresh-scrubbed, frame-filling look.

That would impress Elder Sperry. Not that he'd see the picture, but he'd hear about all those kids. It'd come out in the interview. "Ten? Why your wife's got her ticket to the celestial kingdom for sure!" he'd tell Erval.

And Erval'd get the job, because he was so right for it. He'd get the job, all because of his wife's willingness to be pregnant for 64 percent of their sum total married life, so far.

And what had Latham's own wife done to distinguish him? Well, after two kids, she had told him it was fine for him to have his premonitions of six children, but he wasn't the one throwing up here.

But now he saw that he'd been had. His phone hadn't rung yet. It might be ringing at Erval's house now.

No. Wait.

It couldn't be. His wife was tying up Erval's line just now, talking to Erval's wife. "Yes, the store in Spelterville said they sell it, but not in bulk."

Suddenly, Latham's mouth stretched into a villainous grin. He'd make sure Erval never got that call. He'd drag him out to Rut Kilby's house where Elder Sperry could never find him.

He rose up from the chair and walked to the phone. He twisted the pushpins in the bulletin board while Ada finished talking to Erval's wife.

Then he took the phone. He composed his face. He cleared his throat. He licked his lips. "Hello, old buddy," he said. "Whatcha up to today?"

* * *

The deed was done. The phone cord hung there, swinging a little until it came to a rest.

Deception left him limp, famished. He opened the fridge. He took out a plate from the cupboard and began to build a sandwich. As he layered the lettuce over the meat, he felt his wife behind him, puttering over the mail on the table. She was awfully silent back there.

"Well, go ahead. Say it." He spackled brown mustard over his bread. "Go ahead and tell me that every fool between here and the Delaware River is waiting by his phone today. And I'm just one of them, right?" He turned to look at her. She pressed her lips together. She had words there, he knew it, but she held them back like driftwood against a dam.

"Every guy with a temple recommend and a white shirt ran out and got a haircut, in anticipation of sitting in front of Elder Sperry today, right?"

"You did the haircut, too?"

What? She hadn't noticed the white walls he'd been wearing for two days now? Yes, he did the haircut! And took his white shirt into the cleaners. Heavy starch, please. He took it himself because he didn't want to tip her off. This was too big, too sacred.

Too stupid.

He tossed the knife into the kitchen sink, letting it clatter violently.

He sat down with his sandwich. It was altogether too quiet in here. "Well, say something, will ya?"

She pulled out the chair and sat across from him, looking at her folded hands. "Well, I *do* have a little *theory* about this," she said, rubbing at her knuckles.

He put the sandwich down and shoved his tongue against the bread stuck on the roof of his mouth. He wasn't sure he wanted to hear it. He looked at the bulletin board, the fridge magnets, the cupboard handles, anywhere but at her, afraid of what she might think of him right now.

That didn't stop her. "I'm thinking there must be an *awful* lot of men out there that want an 'atta-boy from God."

"Humph."

He stood and put his plate in the sink.

He plucked the car keys off the hook.

He trudged out to his Impala, opened the door, and sat on the hot seat.

An 'atta-boy from God, my eye.

He backed out of the driveway.

He didn't need any 'atta-boy. Maybe some other fool out there did, but not him.

Maybe the guy that counted the money at church needed one. He was the one who stayed long after everybody else went home, and balanced the accounts down to the last penny, and never embezzled any of it.

Or maybe the Scoutmaster, the guy that dodged the misaimed arrows of inexperienced little archers, and rubbed down bad cases of poison ivy, and gave the hot dog off his roasting stick to some kid who dropped his own into the ashes.

Or maybe the church custodian, the guy that shined the glass on the door for the seventy-ninth time that week, complaining that nobody listens when he tells them to push the door open by the handle, not the glass.

Yes, it was true Latham wished God would notice that, every time they assigned him to home teach, they gave him the bush route, sending him out to find the folks that didn't want to be found.

But that didn't mean he needed an 'atta-boy.

No, just because he wished God noticed how he knocked himself

out to be nice to Rut, even following him out to Mugly's house to look at his pet rabbits, that still didn't mean he needed an 'atta-boy. But since we were on the subject, didn't God know how tough it was to stand in a rabbit hutch on a hot day in July, willing yourself not to faint dead away and end up with your face lying in the packed dirt, just inches from the rabbit raisins?

Didn't he wish God noticed him bringing M&Ms to Rut's teenage sons? Or swallowing the sour taste in his mouth every time Lois held her baby out for his admiration? Or listening to the Kilbys promise, for the 473rd time, that they really would come to church next Sunday?

Nobody knew what Latham had to put up with! But God knew. And couldn't God just let everybody else know by having Elder Sperry call him today?

Latham guessed not. Not when so many other chumps with raw haircuts were bugging Him about it, too.

And he swerved in to the Pine Meadows trailer court.

* * *

Erval was there already, tucked under the sink, his hammer-looped pants and his work boots sticking out. Yep, tucked into a tight little place where Elder Sperry could never find him.

And he was singing. At the top of his lungs. "Whut shall we dooo with the drunken sailorrr, whut shall we dooo . . " His work boots gripped the vinyl floor as his tools clanked and his flashlight beam jiggled and his lips whistled all the parts where he didn't know the words.

What was it about Erval, always singing like a goof, as he worked? He sang when they fixed widows' roofs. He sang in the van on the way to the temple. He sang at the cannery. With his mouth open and his face all sincere, it was, actually, less like singing and more like yawning *waaay* too loud.

And furthermore, what did Erv, the Mormon farmboy from landlocked sagebrush, know about drunken sailors?

No matter. Erval was the kind of guy God liked best, because Erval sang while he worked, like people in Disney movies. And Erval hurried out here. And Erval could torque a wrench. He knew what to do about things. He could help people.

All Latham could do was profess. Now if Latham had been trained in a nice, practical, close-to-the-earth subject, like Wylie Siltman and his

chicken genetics, then he would be as useful as Erval. But no, he professed history, which meant idleness and reading stacks of books, books with possibly dangerous ideas.

Yep, Erval was the kind of guy God would invite up for a weekend at his lake cottage. As for Latham, God would merely wave in the hallway and say, "How's it goin'?"

Just now Erval scooted out from under the sink. "Well, hello there, Lat!" He ran his hand through the last-stand hairs at the top of his head. He considered the piece of pipe in his hand. "I thought the joint was just loose, but the pipe's eaten away." He looked at Lois. "Your husband's gonna need to get some new pipe."

"I wonder if Rut's coming home soon," said Lois Kilby. She picked up the phone, then stopped in mid-dial. "I keep forgetting. Mugly's phone is cut off."

Latham stood there, watching her hold the phone to her little caved-in chest. Suddenly he knew that if God had wanted Erval, he could've tracked him down, all the way out here to the Kilbys' house.

And if God had wanted Latham, he could have done the same thing. All those hours wasted, sitting by the phone. He had failed to see the beauty of being found here. Why, if the phone had rung for him while he sat in Rut Kilby's kitchen, the whole room would have waited in suspense while he answered. They would have seen his face blanch and his pulse race and his posture straighten. Had somebody died? Been in a terrible accident?

And he would've hung up the phone and said, "I'm sorry. I've got to go now. Erval, will you be all right, finishing up here?"

"Is something wrong?" Lois Kilby would've said as he reached for the keys in his pocket.

And he would've smiled warmly, his kindly leader's smile. His Considered One, maybe even Chosen One smile. And she would've known when he walked away that something indeed had happened, something that elevated him off the ground and made him special and he was *her* home teacher and she and Rut really would show up at church next Sunday, just to see what had happened to *their* home teacher.

Except that nothing *would* happen to their home teacher, because God liked Erval better.

"Well, what do we do now?" said Erval as Lois left to fetch the crying baby at the back of the trailer.

"We hope Rut gets back here and buys some new pipe for his sink."

"But when? We can't leave Sister Kilby without water."

Oh, yeah. God liked Erval best. But Latham couldn't stand him.

"I guess we better run to the hardware store for some pipe," said Erval.

We? Latham looked at Erv, at the sweat beads on his brow, at his twisted tuft of hair. The last thing he wanted was to go anywhere with Erval Feldsted. Latham would just stay right here where . . .

He looked around him.

. . . where three greasy griddles poked up out of the sink and spots of ketchup scum stuck to the Formica table and the newly wakened baby rubbed her eyes and glared at him and—

Oh, never mind! He'd go to the store with Erval!

But he didn't want to.

He didn't want to listen to Erval talk about tubing and flux and goose-eggs gotten under other sinks. He didn't want to trail him down the aisles of True Value like a seven-year-old following Daddy, scared of getting lost. How could anybody lose Erval? His whistling betrayed his every move.

On the way back to Pine Meadows, Erval pointed up the street. "Tell you what! Let's stop for a root beer float."

Latham Runyon peered through the heat waves rising up from the asphalt. He saw the Tastee Freez sign blinking up ahead.

"Don't bother," he spat out.

Erval looked at him, whistled notes dropping like shot birds.

"Let's just get this over with, okay?" said Latham.

"Ohhh-kaay." The Tastee Freez passed by, and Texaco station and the Aqua-Marine Boats. Erval slapped the steering wheel. "It is gettin' kinda late, isn't it? I sure let the day get away from me, sittin' by the phone, waitin' for that call. You know how it is, dontcha?"

"Oh-ho-ho, not me! You'd have to be *crazy* to want that job."

* * *

They rode back to 44 Pine Meadows in blessed, non-whistling silence. They tromped up the steps. They laid the new pipe on the sticky table.

Lois Kilby appeared with her baby on her hip.

"Won't be long now and you'll be all fixed up," Erval chirped. "Wellll, look who's here!" He bent down to the baby. "Is dat a good thumb

you got dere? Do you like dat thumb? Yeah? Yeah?" And he smiled and rubbed the barely blond baldness of her head, loving that baby even though it was the ugliest baby on earth.

That was the last straw.

Latham slapped Erval on the back, a mighty, body-staggering blow. "Gotta go, old buddy! Good luck."

As he stomped down the trailer steps, he shook off his brittle smile. He kicked Erval's tire. He drove out of Pine Meadows, fast, with the speed bumps clacking his teeth together, hard.

When he reached the main road, he turned for the woods instead of town. Something about the woods felt snug and private; and as he guided the car around the curves, he waited to feel hidden.

All week, he had felt the eye of God upon him. He had felt on display. He had felt spoken to. *Be ready for the thing that is about to happen to you.*

Right. *Sure.* The eye of God was upon him, all right. And it was *amused.*

He could see God telling his friends, "You wouldn't believe how these conferences light a fire under the unlikeliest fellows. It's like they all want to be an Elder Sperry."

Well, yeah, who wouldn't? The Elder Sperrys were so fun, so off-the-cuff with their sermonizing because they knew their scriptures well and they injected real personality into the characters.

And you knew God liked the Elder Sperrys of this world. Why else would an Elder Sperry have been called to travel the planet, doing God's work?

And when he landed at your pulpit and he spoke in his fun, off-the-cuff way and his eyes swept the room and looked right at yours for a moment, you felt you had made a special connection with this man that God liked. Oh, how you would love to play Stump the Rabbi with an Elder Sperry! And you knew he would love to play it with you too, because when he caught your eye a second time, that connection told you that you could be like him, that you had what it took, that he detected it when he smiled in your direction.

And remember! He hadn't always been an Elder Sperry. He had once been a man like yourself and some other elder had flown into town and turned Brother Sperry into President Sperry. It happens to the least among us. It could happen to you.

So you did the kinds of things the Elder Sperrys did. You wore a white shirt without fail. You did your home teaching every month, even if they stuck you with the bush route. You underlined stuff in your scriptures and made notes in the margins. Then you gave really good talks at church, flipping your scriptures willy-nilly, as ideas came to you on the spot, because you knew them so well. That's what you did so that you too might be an Elder Sperry someday. It could happen. It really could. You had the goods. You felt it.

And so did everybody else.

Latham sped along the pavement, under the arching trees that blocked the waning sun. Something about the road looked familiar. Wasn't this the way to Mugly's place? Yeah. Backbone Road.

He came to a cut in the woods. There it was, Mugly's grubby white house back there. Crawling to a stop, he rolled down his window and sniffed.

The tang of campfire rode in the air. A wisp of smoke rose behind the house. He wondered: What does barbecued billy goat taste like?

Not that he *really* wanted to find out. He eased off the brake and reached for the window handle. Looking down at the next bend in the road, he put the car in gear.

Then he heard the dog barking.

It appeared from around the corner, a loping thing, yellow as a sweat stain. It moved like the Secret Service, spotting a gleam of gunmetal.

Latham gripped the window handle, pumping hard, rolling up as the dog ran down the rutted dirt apron surrounding Mugly's house.

"Gyp! Gyp! Shut up!" Rut, straddled across his Honda, rolled around the corner.

Latham fumbled for the gear shift. He could still get away, unrecognized, he was sure.

Rut squinted down the drive at Latham's car. "Get back here!" he called to the dog, following, staring.

Latham watched him come closer, paralyzed.

"Oh! It's you!" Rut's smile uncovered his spacey teeth. He looked down at the dog. "Stop that, Gyp! Get back there! Well," he rested his hand on the roof of the car, "what are you doin' all the way out here? Come on in! Don't be a stranger!" He waved heartily toward the plume of smoke in the back.

Latham's stomach fell to the floorboards. But he turned for Mugly's

dirt yard. He heard the hootings of the forest through the window that he never quite got closed up.

Mugly, sprawled in a lawn chair, tossed a branch in his hands and leaned forward to poke the coals. And there, above the glowing ash, hung the goat, trussed up by its legs on a surprisingly sturdy-looking spit, considering who built it.

Rut was as busy as a picnic committee, setting up another lawn chair beside the campfire. "What have you got for the man to drink?" he asked Mugly.

Mugly leaned over the arm of his chair, the aluminum squeaking and groaning. Digging through a small cooler, he pulled out a can of Schlitz. It hung there from his paw, dewy and dripping.

"He can't have that," Rut stage-whispered. "He's from church! What else ya got?"

"How the hell would I know?" Mugly, scowling, dropped the can back into the ice and settled back in his chair.

Rut sprang away to the house.

Latham sat down, his chair tilting on the uneven ground. He looked at the clearing around him, at the dog curled up now in a bed of dried pine needles, surveying all with a blinking alligator watchfulness. He looked at Mugly, twirling that stick, scowling at the carcass before him.

He swallowed. "Did the goat do something bad?"

Mugly slowly rolled the stick in his hand, staring into the flames. "He ate my tombstone," he finally said. And he poked the stick into the side of the goat. Pink juices dribbled out, falling to the fire below with a hiss and a cloud of steam.

Latham pulled at his shirt where it stuck to his skin. He'd welcome a little breeze right now, but the tall pines guarded the air here, keeping it all rabbit-hutchy and close.

Mugly looked him up and down. "What're you out here for, anyway?"

"Uh, I was just at Rut's house, fixing his sink."

"You? Fixing his?"

"Well, not me really, but my . . ."

Mugly snorted. "That's Rut all right. Useless as tits on a boar."

Latham heard the slap of the screen door behind him. "Look what I found!" Rut held a can of Coke aloft. "'Course, it's still warm." He held it out to Latham.

Great. Another thing he didn't drink. Maybe Rut's wife was one of those caffeine-as-long-as-it's-cold Mormons, but Latham had kicked the habit right after joining.

He took the can. Not knowing what else to do with it, he rolled it between his hands.

"Here, let me stick that in the ice for ya." Rut shoved the Coke into the cooler. He stood up, thumbs in his belt loops. "How much longer, Mug?"

"Five minutes less than the last time you asked."

"Oh, I'm goin' for a ride. Hey!" He looked at Latham. "Why don't you come along? Be near midnight, I guess, before old Bill here is cooked."

Mugly spat, insulted.

Latham gaped at Rut. No way was he going to stay around here 'til midnight, or eat any of that goat, or—he glanced under Rut's lawn chair and counted the empty cans.

Three.

—or get on that bike with the grinning Rut. "Nah," he held up his hand.

"Oh, what's the matter? You don't like bikes?"

"On the contrary. I had one once."

"Well!" Rut looked him up and down. "Well, be my guest." His arm swept across his bike. "Take her around the block."

Latham climbed on. He kicked the starter and the bike roared to life. Rut nodded, impressed with his home teacher's bike-man prowess.

Latham rolled on down the dirt. He wobbled toward the road, nosed the tire onto the pavement, picked up speed. *Around the block,* indeed. How about all the way into town? And then, how about not coming back? He saw himself roaring up his own street, cutting the motor a block from his house, rolling the bike quietly into his garage. He saw Rut, waiting, mystified out in the woods, hot-wiring Latham's own Impala when he caught on. (*Be my guest. Take her around the block. Anything. Just let me out of here.)*

Or maybe Rut would catch him before he got out of the woods. Then he and Mugly would handle it all themselves. Oh, Latham had a good idea what the two of them would do to anything that "ate their tombstone," whatever that meant. Rut and Mugly had probably seen *Deliverance.* Heck, they might've inspired it.

Yep, this had better be the end of the block. Latham swung the bike around in a wing of gravel and turned back.

But as the fat little front tire rolled over the patch veins in the pavement, as the faded center lines whizzed past, something old in Latham Runyon woke up. How long had it been since he felt the breeze on his face? Why didn't he do this more often? This must be what other men felt like, men who spent their weekends in duck blinds, on trout streams, in speed-boat races.

And why did he never get a chance to feel like other men? He was part of the White Shirt Army, that's why. The Stump the Rabbi crowd. His weekends were all booked up, slinging applesauce at the cannery, riding in the van to the temple, fixing widows' roofs (or, at least, looking busy beside the real fixers).

Back at the clearing, he gunned the bike and rolled up beside the campfire. Rut rose from his chair, shaking a bottle of ketchup. "Hey, there. I thought you'd come back through the woods. There's a way around, you know." He reached into the cooler. "It's ready now." He handed Latham the can of Coke.

Latham held it, cold and dewy, in his hands. As a dribble of sweat ran, tickling, down his back, he felt the can's evil caffeine rays taunting him. He sat in his chair, bracing against the slope.

Rut nodded toward the can. "At least old Bill here didn't get all the groceries, right, Mug? But he sure made a bad habit of it."

"That he did," Mugly grunted.

"How many times you suppose he broke into your kitchen, Mug?"

"Too many, that's how many. And this time he broke off the doorknob."

"Aw hell, what do you care? Now it matches the rest of the house."

Mugly glared from under the doughy wrinkles across his forehead. "He ate my tombstone, that's what I care."

"Oh, it was just an ol' pizza. You can get another one."

"Uh-uh! It was the last one at the Quikmart."

Latham wiped his hand from the shine on his forehead down over the late-day stubble on his chin.

Mugly arose from his chair with a mighty man-of-the-woods groan. He unsheathed a knife hanging on his belt and cut a hunk of goat-flesh. "Looks all right to me." He poked the knifed meat into his mouth, then sawed away another piece.

Another thread of sweat bathed Latham, in front this time, sliding until trapped by the hairs above his navel. He yanked at his stuck shirt, fanning himself. He tugged at his collar.

Rut shook the ketchup bottle and squirted it along the summit of the trussed-up animal. He took the next chunk of speared meat from Mugly, swirled it in the dripping ketchup and held it out to Latham. "Eat up."

Latham took the knife. Pepperoni-flavored perhaps? No, old Bill here was probably murdered too soon for that. "I've never had goat before." He stuck it in his mouth.

"Me neither."

"Yep."

"What's the weirdest thing you ever ate?" said Rut.

"Muskrat," said Mugly.

"I had shark once," said Rut.

Latham chewed up, swallowed. "Mexican food," he said.

They stared at him.

"On the Mexican side of the border." He pointed south.

Rut frowned. "Yeah, but what was it?"

"Beats me. But it was weird."

"Hear, hear!" They raised their cans.

And Latham Runyon raised his can, his sealed-up virgin can of Coke, and clinked it with theirs. It felt good in his hand. Very good. Very different from his body, which felt like he'd dressed in rubber gloves straight from the cannery. And he held that can aloft and aloof while they took a swig from theirs.

And he remembered how, all these years, he'd carefully avoided the Bad Red Can at the department picnics, even at his own family reunions. He'd always reached for the 7-Up, even though it tasted like gum just before the flavor wears off. And all for what?

So he could sit before an Elder Sperry someday, wearing his white shirt, carrying his worn and well-underlined scriptures, and claim that his lips had never touched the bad stuff. Or even the half-bad stuff.

He looked at his watch. 4:38. Surely Elder Sperry had his man by now. And that man, whoever he was, wouldn't have time for years hence to sit in the woods like this. He wouldn't even have time to look at a picture of the woods.

Well, too bad for him.

Latham gripped the can firmly. He pulled the tab. He poured the cold brown brew down his throat.

And he sat in the woods, laughing at Old Bill stories as Old Bill disappeared, chunk by chunk.

"So dumb," said Rut, "he couldn't sleep on a hill without rolling down it."

"Ugly, too."

"I wouldn't talk ugly if I was you. Have another bite, Runyon. And then I'll show ya that very hill. You'll see what a . . . Hey, Mugly, where'd my bike go? Oh, there it is. Come on, I'll take ya."

Latham counted the empty cans under Rut's chair.

Five.

"I don't think so."

"You don' wanna . . . ?"

"Just tell me how to get there."

Rut grinned. He slapped Latham Runyon on the back. Down the road thataway, he said. Left at the chain between the posts. Latham nodded amiably, already losing track of the swoops and swerves of Rut's hands. Yeah, yeah, something about the fence line, and going right at the fork in the path.

Latham gunned the motor. He lifted his legs from the ground and rested his feet on the little pegs. He looked back at Rut Kilby and grinned.

And as he roared away, it seemed to him that this was the best he had ever gotten along with Rut Kilby and yet the wildest, most removed from the White Shirt Army he had ever strayed. He knew what might happen next. Some sort of genuine buddyship would blossom, despite Latham not trying hard anymore. And then Rut Kilby would make good on his threat to darken the church doorway.

And Latham could see his own reward: God calling him aside in heaven and saying, "Thank you for saving the soul of James Rutherford Kilby. As a token of my appreciation, I'd like to invite you and Rut to a little picnic."

And Latham would say, "You and Rut go on without me."

That's right. Latham Runyon didn't need an 'atta-boy from God.

He guided the bike behind the chained post. Trees sailed past. Low branches snapped him on the forehead. Gnarled roots bumped under the front tire. And the wind sheared his face and dried his smiling teeth as the fence posts whizzed past.

At the fork in the path, he frowned. Right? Left? Oh, what did it matter? He'd find his way back to Camp Deliverance.

He hung a left.

He rode along, where greenery crept over the trail and the lush mayflower leaves reached across for their neighbors and the tips of baby boulders humped out of the soil.

He loved the speed, the feel of his loafers resting in the notches where the big boys tucked their leather boots. He wanted leather boots with mean square toes. He wanted to grow a beard. He wanted to wear a plaid shirt to church tomorrow, to say "bullcrap" in front of Erval.

He loved the noise. Still grinning, his forehead warm with a low-grade rebellion, he racked the gears till they rang out through the woods. And he sailed on.

He did not see the stump.

It had once been the base of a mighty chestnut. Broad enough to air out a sleeping bag, it sat behind the fronds of a proud little sapling. It sat there, flat, with weathered edges, waiting.

And when Latham Runyon blasted through the proud little sapling and met the stump and left the bike and whirled through the air and widened his eyes just like Evel Knievel when he knows he won't make the landing ramp, the stump swore that it heard Latham Runyon cry out, "Dear God! Help meeeee!"

* * *

He was a small man, salt-and-pepper hair, close-cut. He rose up from his metal chair just seconds after Elder Sperry called his name.

Latham Runyon adjusted his cast-bound arm and turned his head—well, not far; it still hurt too much—and watched the man walk up to the stand and grip the pulpit and struggle for words.

And Latham looked across the room. He saw Erval's upturned, awe-struck face, one in a sea of upturned, awe-struck faces, all of them wondering why they had not noticed the man before, why they had not studied him long enough to detect the secret burden he carried up until Elder Sperry called his name. All of them, wondering what this man had that they lacked.

And Latham looked at the man. There were plenty of things this man didn't have. No scrapes on the side of his face, for one thing. No sling cradling his arm. No bruises.

And Latham felt the eye of God, before it turned away to rest on the man at the pulpit. That man would need His help, looking after the likes of Latham Runyon.

FICTION

Miracle

Eric Samuelsen

LUCILLE WENTWORTH SAT IN HER RECLINER working on her cross-stitch, watching Judy and Ray hold hands, sitting across from her on the couch. It was late, past one; they'd talked for hours, the conversation flowing around Lucille like the river around rocks that time she'd gone white water rafting with her nephew Verl and his wife. She was content with it, she thought, it was all right with her. She wasn't going to raise any objections.

"When was that, Mom? Do you remember?"

Judy, trying to involve her in the conversation again. That was the worst part of a third-wheel night like this one: their attempts to be mannerly. It wasn't anything more than manners, she knew. Still, Lucille would be civil, too.

"Sometime in July, I expect," she said, trying for a cheerful tone. "Not long after the Fourth."

That was her role tonight and, like as not, forever—to confirm dates and times of day, to stamp approval, to validate. A court recorder still, she thought, as though miracles didn't happen if not verified by the proper authority. The whole thing was really built on miracles, to listen to them.

Miracles, count 'em up—the extra pork chop, Brother Foxworth's lesson, a lawnmower on the fritz, a stick of jerky in a trucker's jacket. Now it was late and they were still at it, listing all the signs and strange wonders in the heavens. Everything that proved it was meant to be. Well, just look

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at 'em, Judy and Ray on the sofa with the afghan behind him. She wondered if the afghan still stank from when Ray had barfed on it. Another secret they'd kept, Lucille and Ray. One more thing Judy didn't know about her intended. Didn't appear to matter. Couldn't nothing break that feeling they had—blessed, like God had kissed them both on the forehead.

Lucille didn't trust it. She had more than just suspicions, that was for sure. She was willing enough to go along with their exclamations of hardwon belief and amazement, but she didn't feel much sharing in it. Miracles come from faith, and Lucille had no faith in this one. But things had happened and couldn't be easily explained. Their presence, holding hands (holding hands, holding hands!) was proof of something or other; and whatever it was, it wasn't Lucille's job to break the spell. But a real miracle wouldn't be so risky. A real miracle wouldn't feel so wrong.

"When was that, Mom? What was the day?"

She knew right well what the day was they were talking about; she knew it practically to the minute. The first time she ever laid eyes on Ray was about 1:15 in the afternoon of July 8. Her years as a court stenographer gave her a good head for facts. Seven months ago to the day, a Sunday morning and the hottest day of the year, there he'd been, in the lobby of the Twenty-eighth Ward chapel. In he walked, his gray hair plastered against his scalp, tattered corduroys held up by clothesline hanging over his shoulders like suspenders, laces in just one of his battered Adidas, a red kerchief around his neck, a backpack dangling off one shoulder, a thin sleeping bag rolled up and slopping out each end of the pack. Not very tall, stoop shouldered, at least three days' worth of stubble, and reeking of cheap beer and pee. He had a piece of cardboard with "Los Vegas" misspelled on it in magic marker, and he was holding a trucker's cap in front of him, standing uncertainly by the door. A bum, in fact. Just a bum.

Lucille had been raised to value neatness and hard work and independence; and while she was willing enough to write out a check for ten bucks and give it to the deacons every fourth Sunday, that was about as much charity as she had in her. She might look at this sort of vagabond, and wonder how he had come to such a pass, and shudder at the thought. But there were shelters for such people; she was overtaxed to support those shelters, and a bowl of hot stew and a hard bench to sleep on could be found there. She drove past men like him all the time, standing by the K-Mart parking lot or by the interstate on-ramp. She'd toss him the loose change in her purse if she was stopped at a light when she saw him, then

wonder if she'd really helped, or if she'd just given him money to buy cheap booze or drugs, make his problems worse.

Thirty-four years since Mick had died, rolling over his pickup trying to make it home through a snow storm, and she hadn't noticed the world standing in line to give her a hand up. She hadn't missed a day's work 'til she retired four years ago, starting with every lousy job available to respectable women, waitress, teacher's aid, filing and typing, flagging cars on construction sites. Nights, she'd gone back to school, and gotten her stenographer's license, and became recorder of the Third Circuit Court, put in her thirty years on the job. And she'd made the mortgage payment on time every month, kept food on the table and clothes on Judy's back, and every now and then, managed a treat—a trip to Baskin-Robbins or a matinee at the movies, when they could find one that wasn't filth through and through. But she knew how thin the ice had been beneath her, how little it would have taken for her to break through and drown. That was her job—to record human misery and foolishness, the consequences of bad choices, and their final legal disposition.

Recesses, she and the bailiffs used to wonder what would become of the defendants afterwards and speculate regarding what chance they might have to turn their lives around. Often enough, they wouldn't even have to speculate—they saw more than their share of repeat offenders. She hated scandals on TV—Watergate or Clarence Thomas or Oliver North—not for the reasons Judy hated them, not because they showed the decline of the world into Last Days' levels of immorality. No, what she saw were faces of folks about to lose their jobs; what she saw beckoning was homelessness. It was the one thought with the power to keep her awake nights.

It was silly, she knew—the idea of Haldeman or Nixon or Tenet or Kenneth Lay bumming quarters on the street. Judy had laughed at her once when she had expressed such a sentiment. "Clarence Thomas, homeless," she'd crowed. "He's a big-name attorney. He'll find work if they turn him down." And Lucille had laughed too; she supposed she was just being silly. But she'd seen enough doctors and lawyers and successful businessmen brought low in her time to know what was possible. Drink or drugs or sex scandal or money problems—any life could be wrecked. You had to be on your guard.

All those years, it had just been the two of them, Lucille and Judy, her daughter just nine when Mick died. After Judy's birth, the five miscar-

riages, one right after another, had felt like blows, God down on her for something undefined. After the last miscarriage, she'd stopped going to church entirely. And then Mick had rolled the pickup, and suddenly she'd understood God's infinite mercy, why he'd sent her only the one child, all she could have managed to support by herself. And she hadn't missed church a single Sunday since.

And then Judy had turned sixteen, and her late-night job cleaning the fourplex in Orem, sweeping up popcorn and mopping up sticky Coke syrup after the movie-goers left, had eased things considerably. And Judy had graduated, and Lucille had felt guilty about her grades, low B's and high C's, not good enough for most colleges even if they could have afforded a good one, caused, Lucille thought, by too many late nights working and not enough sleep. Judy had gone two years to Snow and gotten her associate's, and then come back home and gone to secretarial school. Dropped out after two semesters and it turned out she was dyslexic, something the high school or Snow could have discovered if anyone there had cared to look for it. And then Judy had dropped by the Albertson's supermarket to pick up eggs and bread, and seen an ad, and applied, and they'd hired her. And after two years as a bagger, one as a checker, she'd taken advantage of an apprenticeship program they were offering and gotten training as a butcher. And she'd been in the meat department ever since.

And that had been their lives, the years turning mother and daughter into friends, a butcher and a court recorder sharing a home, more roommates than blood relations, companions, sharing bills and chores and conversation, their lives centered on Church callings and their cats and visiting teaching and rented movies and gardening. They'd settled. Lucille turned seventy, Judy forty-three.

And then, that Sunday, there he'd stood, in their chapel. A bum, in their nice chapel. All Lucille's fears (not so irrational: butchers did get fired, pension funds got embezzled, homes were foreclosed) made flesh, her deepest anxieties shuffling uneasily in the foyer. Mostly, Lucille hoped someone would have the guts to make him leave. Not easy to do, but that's why men had the priesthood.

In time, probably someone would have; Twenty-eighth Ward, in those days before Brandon Fisher became bishop, was not a ward noted for its friendliness. Any other Sunday of the year, Ray would have been—very nicely—sent on his way. Maybe given a ride to the shelter in the back of Mark Hughes's pickup. Or maybe just given directions there.

Except that that particular Sunday, Cyril Foxworth had taught the lesson in Sunday School on loving your neighbors and Christian charity. And as always when Brother Foxworth talked, Lucille sat on the front row with all the other widows, paying rapturous attention.

So that was the first miracle, that Brother Foxworth taught that week when he wasn't the regular teacher, that the commonplaces and clichés of the lesson were transmitted, not through the medium of Brother Kerr's wearisome intellectualizing, but through Brother Foxworth's courtly charisma. He was actually a poor teacher, some said—couldn't stick to the subject, much given to long rambling stories, spent three weeks covering five verses. None of that mattered, not to Lucille, nor, she suspected, to Clarice Bowman or Verna Lundquist or any of her other friends in Relief Society. His prophetic white shock of hair, his dancing blue eyes under imposing eyebrows, his impish wit, and above all his richly modulated baritone invested his every word with authority and charm. "Charity never faileth," he'd intoned, savoring every word, "charity suffereth long," and he looked soulfully over them all, walking slowly past the classroom making eye contact right down the front row. And so, an hour later, Lucille Wentworth actually found herself thinking about walking up to the bum in the lobby and inviting him to join them, her and Judy, for dinner.

Thinking about it only, of course. Except, as she stood there thinking, Judy came up to her, a little late as usual; her Primary class always went over. And without Lucille saying a word about anything, Judy had, right out of the blue, asked, "Is there someone we could invite for dinner, do you think?"

Turned out she'd thawed three pork chops by mistake that morning and had been sitting all through church wondering what to do about it. Judy knew well enough that pork doesn't keep in hot weather, and they weren't the kind to let it go to waste, a good pork loin cut. Be best if they shared it with someone, she said. One extra pork chop, then, that was what had prompted her, that and Brother Foxworth's lingering spell. But still, she could hardly believe she had done it, afterwards.

"Be honored if you'd share supper with us," she'd said to the bum in the foyer. His clothes were cleaner than she expected; she remembered that detail.

He'd looked startled by her abruptness. "'Preciate it. I really do."

"All right, then," she'd said, and pointed out their blue Impala. And

drove home, saw the curtain flicker over to Springfell's that said Ada had noticed and would be passing the word.

A bum, for dinner, just like that. And that was the second miracle, the extra pork chop, something out of character for them both, Lucille inviting and Judy careless with meat.

Miracle number three, Lucille learned of in the car on the way home. The bum sat self-consciously in the back, the window rolled down despite the heat (he knew he stank, Lucille thought, impressed that he would think to spare them). He asked where he was, what town; he really didn't know. He was actually heading to Las Vegas, he said, when the trucker who'd picked him up suddenly pulled over and kicked him out of the cab. "No idea why," he said, "but I'm much obliged. Just pure chance I ended up here, in this town, but I thank the Lord for it."

Lucille figured he was lying and it turned out later he was. He told 'em about a week later. He hadn't eaten in two days; and as he sat in the truck, dizzy he was so starved, he'd looked over and seen a stick of beef jerky sticking out of the trucker's denim jacket. He'd sat for thirty miles thinking about it, wondering how he could get his hands on it and get the package open without the trucker noticing. He never stole, never, he told them (which Lucille figured for another lie), but this morning he was getting desperate. And you never knew, did you, what the Lord led you to do, the way temptations could be blessings? He'd finally waited until the trucker was occupied signaling to pass and filched the jerky quick as you please. And the trucker had seen it out of the corner of his eye and had gotten furious, which Ray told them, he didn't blame him for. And kicked him out then and there. Just pulled over and let him out, right off the 800 North exit, not three blocks from the Twenty-eighth Ward chapel.

It had taken three miracles just to get him in the door. It took a fourth to keep him there past dinner. Lucille had no intention of it, none whatever. She was pretty mad at herself just feeding him—a first for her and a bad precedent, she figured. But he washed up before eating and did a thorough job of it; that made an impression. And he stood humbly until asked to sit, and sat politely until asked to say grace, and prayed willingly enough, though to Jesus, like a Protestant. It was at dinner that they learned his name and heard the first of his life history.

Ray Ames was his name, from Biloxi, Mississippi. His father, a journeyman welder, his mother, active Pentecostal. Graduated from high school in 1964, and had been lucky enough with his grades to join the Air

Force right immediately, avoided the draft and the jungles of Vietnam. Instead, had spent the war refueling B-52s from a base in South Korea. Got out of the service with training in aircraft maintenance and a Korean bride, and settled down in Atlanta, airport services.

It had worked out well for him, he said, for nearly ten years. He'd told them about his marriage, his life as a respectable citizen. He and Soon Yi hadn't spoken much, but that had been all right; she'd been a good wife, kept the home neat as a pin and spoke when spoken to. Only his mother couldn't stand her and that had led to some tensions, he'd said. He and Soon Yi had had two children, a boy and a girl—they'd be in their late twenties, he said, but he hadn't heard from them in ages. They were back in Korea with their mother, he'd said. The marriage had broken up on account of his drinking, about the time he'd lost his job. He'd liked to bend an elbow with the boys, back in the service, he said, and got into the habit of hitting a bar on his way home from work. And when he did get home, the lack of conversation would like to drive him crazy. So he'd turn on the TV and pop open a beer, and that became his life. Then they'd gotten a federal contract at the airport, and he'd failed a urine test and gotten fired. And it was about then that Soon Yi had left him.

He'd worked a bunch of jobs, he said, enough to keep the house and send a monthly check to Korea. Asked what kind of work he'd done, Ray said landscaping, and some construction, oil changes at a Jiffy-Lube, some six years at Sears, doing maintenance—sewing machines and lawn mowers and such. (Lawn mower repair, he'd said, without any particular emphasis, but that had led to the fourth miracle, the fourth major coincidence and the one that had led to Lucille offering Ray a night's lodging in the spare room in the back.) And then he'd fallen one month behind on the mortgage, and gone on a bender, and fallen a second month behind, and from then on things just went downhill for him.

He'd moved in with his sister in Knoxville, he said, when he'd finally lost the house. Lived there for three years, until her husband came into his room one night and told him he'd best be moving on. He didn't blame him neither, Ray told 'em, what with four kids in a three-bedroom and a freeloading brother-in-law to boot. Then Ray had started his wanderin', he said. Just hitchin' one coast to the other.

Lucille had seen his kind in her years in the system and could fill in the court record herself. Arrests for vagrancy and public intoxication, petty theft and shoplifting; probably a sheet full of misdemeanors. She

wasn't too far wrong, it turned out later, though that first night he said he'd quit drinking and had never been arrested in his life. But from the way he said it, he clearly didn't expect to be believed; and as he finished his supper, he'd said, with a hang-dog expression, that he thanked them kindly for the meal, but he'd best be moving on.

And Lucille would have let him, except for that lawnmower business. It nagged her all through supper, from the time he first mentioned it. The coincidence of it all. Again. Because, it just happened that week that Lucille's lawnmower—a Sears and Roebuck, sure enough—was on the fritz. Judy'd had to pull the starting cord harder and harder to start it for months, and finally it had given out altogether. And as Ray Ames finished his supper and his life story, mopped up the last of the mushroom gravy with his bread and polished off his lemonade, Lucille had looked him over more carefully, considering it. He was clean now and looked peaceable enough. She'd seen no signs of temper or fury from him and not much spirit either. Just a quiet little man, hair a little thinning, hands a little shaky and couldn't meet your eye, but more beaten looking than dangerous. If he could fix the lawnmower, she thought, she'd offer him a night's lodging.

They put him up in the back bedroom, Judy staring wonderingly at her mother as she got the clean sheets from the closet. Lucille couldn't quite believe it either. Making the bed, she kept seeing the newspaper headlines: "Mother-Daughter Murdered by Vagrant." Kicking herself for being so trusting of a total stranger. And no sooner had she finished with the guest room, but she'd talked herself out of it, and went into the living room to tell Ray she'd changed her mind, and he'd have to be going. Figuring she'd soften the blow with a twenty.

But then she saw him there, sitting on the sofa so peaceable, sitting right next to Judy. And Lucille took a good hard look at the both of them, at him sittin' there by her daughter. Her first thought was that she and Judy probably weren't in much physical danger; Judy was half a head taller than Ray and had broader shoulders. But that really wasn't why Lucille changed her mind again, not why she couldn't bring herself to get rid of him. There he was, a man, sitting on the sofa with Judy. Judy, with her thick ankles and thinning hair, Judy with that moustache that electrolysis just hadn't done much to get rid of, Judy with the constant skin problems they just hadn't been able to afford a dermatologist for, made worse now from working around meat fat all day. Judy, who'd had maybe one date

her whole entire life. The stack of Harlequins under her bed that she didn't think Lucille knew about. The Single Adult dances she'd gone to with Cassie Paine, up until Cassie met Hank Sauer, and then Judy had quit completely. There Judy was, sitting, comfortably chatting, with a man, on the sofa, in her living room. Lucille had thought at that moment that maybe, just maybe, there were such things as miracles, the way she felt at that moment, watching her daughter on the sofa with a man. Or at least a feeling she was willing, at that moment, to trust enough to take a chance on getting raped and murdered.

Not that Lucille didn't lock her bedroom door pretty carefully that night and insist that Judy do the same. Or wake up with a start at every little noise in the house. She had a fitful night of it, knowing he was just down the hall, a complete stranger and a bum to boot. She'd given in to impulse one time too many, she told herself. It ends today. She'd tell him after lunch; get him to fix the lawnmower in the morning and overpay him for the job. And then, finally, send him on his way.

She could have sworn she hadn't slept all night but then was startled awake by the sound of water running. Her first thought was panicky—he was in her shower!—but then she realized it was Judy, and that too was surprising. Working with meat, Judy usually showered after work. Lucille got up to see about breakfast—oatmeal or cream of wheat, she figured. But Judy had gotten sausage out to thaw the night before and had set a package of Pillsbury biscuits on the counter. She couldn't have made it plainer, what she wanted to eat; and so Lucille went along, made the good sausage gravy, and a pitcher of orange juice and added a fresh grapefruit each. And watched carefully as Ray and Judy ate together in companionable silence. Judy looked good, for her, clean and fresh—she'd even gone to some trouble over her makeup, usually something she didn't bother with most days. And Ray had spruced himself up a bit, had shaved, and brushed his teeth and washed his face, and slicked back his hair.

If anything, Lucille probably scrutinized him too closely. He caught her looking at him, and stared down at his food, embarrassed. "I'da showered," he said. "Shoulda. Prolly a bit on the ripe side, I know. Smelled the sausage cooking, and couldn't help wantin' to eat first."

"It's okay," said Judy. "You don't smell bad."

"I prolly do," said Ray. "Been awhile for me."

"You can shower after you fix the lawnmower," said Lucille. "Be all sweaty anyhow."

"That's right," said Ray. "It can wait." He looked over at the biscuit pan. "Do you mind if I . . ."

"Help yourself," said Lucille.

Ray took another biscuit, added a ladleful of gravy. "I can't tell you how good this tastes."

After breakfast, he helped clear the table, and he loaded his own dishes into the dishwasher. Judy left for work; and Lucille, against her better judgment, found herself making small talk with the man while she washed the skillet—chit-chat about the weather, and what sorts of flowers should go in the planter on the front porch. Wondering all the while if she was out of her mind, measuring how quick she could get to the meat cleaver on the counter, if it came to that. And just when the conversation ran out of steam, Ray stood up and came over to the kitchen window.

"Let's take a look at that lawnmower," he said. "It's in that shed out back?"

While he worked on the mower, Lucille found herself at odds and ends. There was always housework to be done, of course, but she'd done the major house cleaning on Saturday, habit from her working years, and now just had a bit of vacuuming, was all. She knew the neighborhood gossips would be clacking over him; she was half-tempted to dial Ada Springfell's number, just to hear the busy signal. She wanted to keep an eye on him herself and kept busy looking for chores in the kitchen. But she also didn't want to spy (or be seen spying, which was much the same thing) and so spent her time flitting back and forth between the kitchen and the living room, unable to settle on any project. It was positively a relief when he came to the door, wiping his hands on his slacks.

"Looks like you've got a bad spark-plug wire," he said. "I've cleaned her good, and lubed her, and sharpened the blade, but she still won't start without the part. If you got a Sears in town, I could get her running good."

"Just let me get my purse," said Lucille, and hurried into her room to change.

Driving into town, she found herself again looking at him, lights and intersections. He sat quietly, hands folded in his lap, looking out the window at the town. It was the closest look she'd gotten at him yet, the sun as bright as it was in the car, and him sitting so near. She could see a jagged scar on the side of his neck, a couple of inches long. His arm was covered with bug bites and the pinky finger on his left hand looked broken. He was so quiet, just sitting there, and she didn't want to intrude. But it

seemed unnatural not to talk, somehow, unneighborly and borderline rude.

"What's it like?" she asked finally.

He looked quickly back at her, a bit twitchy still, a kind of nervous politeness. "How do you mean?"

"Your life, I mean. On the streets and all. Movin' around. What's it like?"

"It's not very comfortable," he replied, "not for someone my age." He shifted in his seat—she could see his hands were still a bit trembly. "Feel like I've been stiff and sore my whole life long."

She left it at that. She knew what he meant; at seventy-one, even a good night in her own bed left her back stiff half the time. He was younger by some twenty years, but she could see the same stiffness, the careful way he got out of the car, the slow, ambling walk, just a touch of a limp. They went into the store together; he found the part quickly and waited politely for her to make the purchase. And even had the courtesy to hold the door for her back at the car.

Still, she absolutely would send him away after lunch; she'd decided, she'd made up her mind. She could feel bad for him, she could see signs of a hard life and feel pity, she could see him with Judy and feel stirrings of hope, she could think that there but for the grace of God and so on, but it still didn't matter. He wasn't her problem. She'd put him up for two days and didn't regret it. Bad things could have happened and hadn't, and for that she was grateful. But she could still see him on his way. And she would. After lunch.

But then, the whole afternoon, after he got the mower running again, he didn't come back in. First he mowed the lawn, and did a good thorough job of it, raked up the mulch and bagged it. He edged by the driveway and trimmed by the fence. He found a couple of dry patches and watered them carefully. Spent a good hour in the shed before putting away the mower, cleaning and organizing; and when he came back in, it was to ask her what to do with some of the junk he'd found out there. And then, an hour later, when he came back in, it was to ask if she had a hedge trimmer. She couldn't hardly send him away while he was working. It could even be, she thought, that he knew that, and knew, or sensed maybe, that it was best to keep occupied, but it also didn't matter. She didn't have it in her to send him on while he was working on her lawn. Her resolve remained unchanged, of course. Anyway, I'll tell him before supper. Or at

least afterwards. Or, so he wouldn't have to travel at night, the next morning. But then he was gone. She was not backing down, no matter what. He was leaving, that was certain.

He came back in around four. His shirt had come unbuttoned, and his undershirt was sticking to him from sweat, she noticed. She noticed again the air of skittish politeness, the difficulty he had looking at her, as he asked if she would mind if he took that shower now. She showed him where they kept the towels, assured him they wouldn't mind if he used the shampoo. Then, acting on impulse yet again—she seemed almost governed by impulse these days—she said abruptly, "Why don't you leave your clothes out in the hall? I'll put in a load."

"I've got a change in my backpack."

"I'll give them a wash too, while I'm at it," Lucille said.

"It ain't necessary," he said. "I just got to the laundry a week ago, place outside Laramie."

"It's no trouble," said Lucille. "I'd just as soon run a full load. Never know when you'll next be at a laundromat with spare change."

"It's an unpleasant job," he said, "washing a man's dirty underwear."

"I don't mind it," replied Lucille, wondering just how bad it could be. "Meanwhile, Judy's got these overalls she uses for painting should fit you. I'll toss 'em in."

"I'm grateful," he said, and went into the spare room, came out with an armful of laundry.

As she washed it, she couldn't help but check it over. Sure enough, the laundry was filthy, showed all the signs of a man with bowel problems who sometimes lacked the means to wipe properly. Something else, too, looked like dried blood mixed with the stool. She soaked it all good with Spray n' Wash, and once she heard the shower stop, got the load started. He came out of the shower, looking suitably abashed in Judy's overalls, which practically hung off his hips, looking so thin and worn-out, Lucille again took pity.

"Take a rest on the sofa," she said. "You've worked hard all day. Judy'll be home soon, and we'll have supper in an hour or so."

By the time Judy came home, he was curled up on the sofa, snoring softly. Judy came in real quiet and handed Lucille the meat wrapped in white paper she brought home every night from work.

"T-bones," she said. "Figured we could get some potatoes baking, maybe barbecue."

"I'll get going on the potatoes," said Lucille, astonished. Judy didn't bring home steak more'n four times a year.

"And I got French-fried onions," said Judy. "Thought we could do that green bean casserole you like."

Lucille looked at her daughter's impassive face. There was something going on, it was getting obvious, and she figured it could only be the one thing. It worried her, made her wish she'd sent Ray packing right after lunch. There was no place for Ray in their lives, she thought. She was not about to make a home for him. And yet the house was as much Judy's as hers.

"He's a bum," she said quietly. "A bum off the streets, who we took pity on. We know nothing about him beyond that."

"I know that," said Judy. "I know what he is."

That was better. That was more like it. Lucille hadn't known quite what answer to expect—that's how thrown off she was by all this. The T-bones for supper, Judy in makeup that morning at the breakfast table—it was all out of character. But now, Judy's reasonableness was reassuring. She still had her feet on the ground.

"So you won't mind," said Lucille, "when I send him on his way in the morning?"

Judy looked at her sharply. "Why?" she asked.

"Why?" The question seemed preposterous. "On account of we have to. He can't stay here."

"Why not?" asked Judy again. "How come we can't just leave things the way they are? Him in the spare room and all."

It was literally a new thought to Lucille Wentworth that late afternoon, staggering, new. There were things you didn't do, that was all, not park in handicapped or use expired coupons to shop with or wear patterned tops with plaid slacks or not keep your lawn mowed or turn away costumed kids at Halloween. Automatic things you did or didn't do, that the Ada Springfells of the world kept track of and required an accounting for if you were neglectful, not that Lucille minded much what that crabby old gossip thought. Two single women of a certain age didn't invite a bum to live with them. It just didn't happen.

And yet, as they talked about it in whispers out there in the kitchen, Judy's point of view came to seem almost reasonable. It wasn't costing

them much to keep Ray there. They could hardly call him dangerous—a skinny old fellow like him. They had the spare room handy for him; and he'd shown, for at least one day, willingness to help out around the house. They could help a fellow down on his luck, help him get back on his feet, and without much fuss for them. There was no particular reason to send him away, and lots of good that could come from keeping him. Explained that way, it began to seem almost Christian, almost like a right kind of thing, however much wrongness it felt all wrapped up with.

"Plus," said Lucille, not wanting to be pushy but thinking it ought to get brought up, "he's a fellow. A man."

"That's so," said Judy impassively. "It likely doesn't mean a lot. Right now, it means nothing at all." And then she looked her mother straight in the face, and Lucille would never forget that look, a look on her daughter's face she'd never seen before, loneliness and pride, shyness and fierceness combined. "But I like him. He seems nice. I don't want him called a bum any more."

"Well, homeless, anyway," said Lucille. Her own stubbornness wouldn't allow her to back down completely.

"Not any longer," said Judy, and it was settled.

They explained it to Ray that night at the supper table. They told him they wanted to have a talk, and Lucille noted his reaction, like all the perps she'd seen in court about to have judgment passed, a "nothing good could come of this" look, grayness and sweaty resignation. But he did perk right up when the news turned out good.

"Well," he said, pleased as punch to look at him. "Well. I'll try to make myself useful."

"You'll want to be looking for work," Lucille said, it coming out sharper than she'd intended. "We won't charge you rent for that back room there right off. When you've got a job, we'll talk terms."

"That's fair," said Ray solemnly. "That's only right."

"Meanwhile, you're welcome," said Judy, reproachfully friendly. "Let's not spoil things right off, talking money when we've just made friends." And with that it was settled.

They settled into a routine right off, like he'd been living there for years. Every morning, they'd share breakfast, and then Judy would head off to work. Ray would do some fix-it chores in the morning, then Lucille would drive him in to the employment office. He figured out the bus system pretty quick and was able to make it to job interviews, grab himself

some lunch with the five Judy gave him before she left. Lucille would stay home, catch up on housework and the ongoing cases on *Court TV*—she couldn't abide soaps or game shows, though she did have a lingering weakness for Sally Jessy Raphael. Evenings, they'd sit in the living room and chat, maybe watch some TV or rent a movie or pass the time playing Scrabble or Yahtzee.

The rest of the week passed like that. Sunday, Ray put on the suit Judy'd found for him at DI, and sat solemnly with them through the whole block of meetings, all three hours. In Sunday School, when Brother Kerr asked newcomers to stand up and introduce themselves, Lucille kept it simple: "This is our friend, Ray Ames, who's staying with us for the time being." That was all that needed saying, she figured; and when Clarice Bowman and Verna Lundquist came up to her after Relief Society full of questions, she put 'em off, saying "Ray's an old friend. We're just helping him through a rough patch." Ada Springfell, she avoided altogether.

By Wednesday of the next week, Ray had a job. LaRue's, a new place in town that sold reconditioned vacuum cleaners and sewing machines and blenders, needed a part-time repairman. They gave Ray a week's trial. Ten to two, five days a week was all, and they didn't pay much above minimum wage, but it was enough, a start, and a job that had the promise of working into full-time down the road. Ray insisted that he pay for his keep, and Judy and Lucille, after some negotiating between them, agreed to charge him fifty bucks a week.

Not all at once, never one whole evening devoted to it, but a story or a detail or an off-hand remark at a time, Ray told them about being homeless, what it was like. Always kept pretty calm, too, no big sobbing scenes like you'd see folks do in movies, weeping on a psychiatrist's couch, but also not quite conversational. There'd be a kind of tension in him; you could see it in his shoulders. Or he'd look at his hands, play with the rubber band from the evening paper. Telling them what his life had been before.

He told them how you could call a pizza place and order a delivery for some address picked at random from the phone book; the restaurant would call before attempting delivery, and often as not, the pizza would end up in their dumpster at the end of the night in pretty good shape, sometimes even still in the box. McDonald's was bad that way; you hardly ever could find a decent meal from their dumpster. He told how to hitch a ride. Off-ramps were okay for panhandling, but on-ramps were useless for

travel or charity. And you were better off thumbing rides from crummy looking cars or pickups with a single driver, male. Semis wouldn't pull over for you, but you could sometimes get a ride if you approached the driver just right at a truck stop. He talked about the whole alphabet soup of agencies you could get help from—local, state, and federal—and how you could tell just looking at your case worker how much you were likely to get from her, just the way she'd part her hair sometimes, or how she'd wear her glasses.

When they got to know him a little better, the stories became shabbier—truer, Lucille thought, and a good thing, showing he trusts us. He told about how you could get a Coke machine to give you a free pop sometimes, if you kicked it just right, and about how you always wanted to take a shower and get your clothes washed first if you planned to shoplift, otherwise they'd watch you too close. He told about getting busted for vagrancy, and how it wasn't so bad, getting your three squares and a bed with a mattress, and how some places they'd fine you for it, which made all kinds of sense, fining homeless beggars for vagrancy. You never paid the fine, he said, even when the alternative was a road crew. He didn't mind chopping weeds or picking up litter, when at the end of it was a hot meal. And one evening, they watched a movie set in a prison, one about an innocent banker who escaped out through the sewage system.

It was Ray's choice; he must have had a need to talk about things that night, Lucille figured. And afterwards in the semi-dark, Ray told them about jail. It was true, he said, how you had to be careful in the lock-up shower. You had to try to stay away from groups of two or three showering together. They'd gang up, one to hold you face down on the shower floor and one to spread your butt cheeks apart and one to take his pleasure. All the while, Ray's voice a soft buzz in the semi-darkness from back in the corner of the couch with the floor lamp turned off. And Lucille remembered the blood she'd seen on his underwear, and something else too; how Judy had caught him buying Kotex at the store and thought it was weird, kind of an unbelievably personal sort of thing to give a girl you really hardly knew.

A tough evening for all of them, that night Ray told about the guys in the shower. As far as Judy knew, that was the turning point; it was that evening she kept referring to as the time it all started to happen, when he trusted them enough to tell something so awful. It made sense to her that after that night, he would begin to look around him more, start to really

listen to Judy's attempts to explain the Church to him, and be willing to take the missionary lessons. Began to look at her differently as well, begin to appreciate her better qualities. After that night Judy noted a kind of courtliness in his behavior, an extra politeness and courtesy, quite the Southern gentleman in fact, though really he was always polite. The evening threesomes became more of a twosome, with Lucille not exactly shut out, but definitely moving out toward the conversational outskirts. Ray and Judy took in a movie now and again, and some evenings they'd leave Lucille to her TV and go out for ice cream. And Ray always paid, said Judy, insisted on it, though Judy made eight times the money he took home from LaRue's.

One night, Lucille came home from homemaking meeting—she still couldn't bring herself to call it "enrichment"—Judy hadn't wanted to go, Lucille noted sourly—and coming up the walk, looking in the window, saw the two of them kissing on the sofa. She stood outside and watched for a moment. There it was, Ray and Judy kissing. Lucille stood there, knowing what was going to happen. It wouldn't be long, she thought. There'd be a proposal from Ray, and a wedding to plan. Forty-three years old, Judy was still just young enough that grandchildren weren't completely impossible.

If I could be sure, Lucille thought, if I could be sure that this was really what it looked like, what Judy certainly thought it was, I'd be easy in my mind. She'd deed the house over to them, move out and get a condo, or move in with Verna Lundquist the way Verna'd been hinting at. Lucille and Judy were comfortable together; it would hurt to lose her. Ray and Judy's increasing closeness already hurt, the third-wheel evenings and conversations and games. But she was seventy-one. Judy deserved better than a spinster life alone with her mom. If only Ray was for real, Lucille could take him supplanting her. But Lucille knew things that Judy didn't.

Two days before the breakthrough, two days before he'd told them the shower story, he hadn't gotten up in the morning. He was probably just under the weather, Lucille had told Judy at breakfast. He had the sniffles last night, you recall. Judy had nodded, accepted it, told her mom to call her if Ray needed for her to bring home some Sudafed from work. "He doesn't go to work before ten," Lucille had said. "I'll get him up in time, drive him in if I need to. Let the poor man have his rest."

She'd gone down the hall to his room. She could smell it, acrid sweet—she remembered it so well from the times she'd done night

court—coming through the door. Heard some thrashing around and knew what it was.

She'd opened the door, and there he was, the room a shambles, vomit all over the bed and the floor and in his hair and down his chest. An empty bottle of Absolut vodka on the floor. Ray half off the bed, legs tangled up in the sheets, trying, half-conscious, to get his foot free.

She'd called him in sick at LaRue's; that was the first thing. She'd saved his job for him, wondering all the time if it was worth it. She'd gotten him up, standing, weaving, on his feet, stupid rictus smile on his face, eyes shifting around. She'd gotten him into the shower and turned it on cold, stood by the tub and gave him a shove every time he tried to get out, even knocked him off his feet a couple times, he was so far gone, stripped him naked while he stood there cussing at her, using words she'd figured she'd never hear again when she retired from the court system. She took his clothes, dripping wet but with the worst of the vomit off, and got the sheets and pillow case and started a load in the washing machine. She made him stand naked in the shower while she took care of the room, went in once and saw he'd barfed in there too and she'd had to clean that up. She got in the car and drove down to Smith's, avoiding Albertson's where she might run into Judy, wondering if he'd still be there when she got back but figuring he probably wasn't in shape to go anywhere else. She'd bought some instant coffee for the first time in her life, and rented one of their carpet cleaning machines, and bought some strong Lysol spray and a bottle of Pinesol.

When she got home, he was still in the bathroom, wet and naked, shaking and pale, sitting on the edge of the tub. She got him some clean clothes from his room, and told him to get dressed, wait for her in the kitchen, got him some coffee. She cleaned up his room best she could, made one pile for the washing machine and another pile to throw out, and ran the carpet cleaner over the carpet. Scrubbed the walls with the Pinesol. He'd wet the bed too, and it took her awhile to wrestle the mattress off the bed, scrubbed the wet spots with the Pinesol, propped it up against the wall to dry off. Sprayed the room with Lysol, the bathroom too. Then went out to the kitchen. Ray sat at the table, sick and pale and shaky, couldn't meet her eyes. It took both hands to hold the coffee mug. She sat across the table from him, smacked the vodka bottle on the table between them.

"Ray," she said to him, "we need to have us a talk."

"I know," he said, so low she could hardly hear it. "I know." He couldn't finish, bowed his head, tears dripping down, the very picture of drunken self-pity, and how often had she seen that in her days?

"We don't have time for that," she said impatiently. "I don't want to hear it. I don't feel sorry for you. Why should you get to feel sorry for yourself?"

"You don't know," he said. "You don't know what I've been through."

She shook her head. "I'm not interested in excuses, Ray," she told him. "Don't have time for 'em."

He didn't seem to know what to say. He shook his head, kept making these little sideways glances at the bottle, took another sip of coffee. "I don't know," he said.

She bored in. "I want to know what you're going to do. Head back down the highway? Like you want to?"

"I want to stay here," he said.

"Which do you want more?" she asked, knowing he'd tell her what she wanted to hear, wondering if he even knew.

And so he said all the right things that morning in her kitchen, made all the right promises. They agreed not to tell Judy, keep the whole thing their secret. He made the most solemn oaths that he'd never drink again, not even a beer, not even Nyquil for a cold. He was done with it, he said, totally, completely, once and for all. She picked up the phone and made a couple of phone calls to old friends in the system, found out where AA met and when. Turned out they had an afternoon meeting, and she drove him down to it, picked him up after. Got his room back in shape by the time Judy came home, and listened while Ray told her at dinner all about his nasty cold, but how he felt a lot better now, thanks. And then watched Ray at the bus stop as he went to work the next morning.

And now it had been four months, and now Ray and Judy were engaged, and now they sat in the living room, making plans and recounting miracles. A couple. Ray's baptism was scheduled for a week from then, the wedding the week following. The bishop was thrilled for them and would do the wedding in the chapel and let them have the cultural hall for a reception afterwards, and Verna Lundquist was making a wedding dress for Judy and only charging her for the material, and Clarice Bowman said she'd bake and decorate the cake—she'd taken a class. And even Ada Springfell had said she was happy for them, forcing pleasantries through

tight lips like it hurt. Judy was even talking about kids—she'd been to the doctor and he'd said it was risky, but she still could, if they hurried. Ray was full-time now at LaRue's, and with a nice raise. Lucille sat, and watched them, and did her needlepoint and wondered. Judy knew by now that Ray was an alcoholic—she went with him to AA meetings and had gotten involved in Al-Anon, though his complete sobriety since meeting her was part of their shared story, myth shaping into legend. And, for now, at least, the plan was that Lucille would continue to be with them, that they'd remain a threesome in the house. Lucille agreed to give them the master bedroom; she'd take Ray's old room, she said. It was comfortable enough for her.

It had happened twice more, two more falls off the wagon, two more bouts of six-pack flu Judy didn't know about. All the amusing terms for it—"getting a buzz on, two sheets to the wind, hair of the dog that bit me"—humorous terms for episodes of betrayal and weakness and defeat. And promises, and vows to do better. Promises that were sincere enough at the time he made them, Lucille thought. Basically, Ray was doing okay. Only three times in three months—it was real progress, basically, considering where he'd come from and what he'd been. And Judy still didn't know—there's a real miracle for you, Lucille thought sourly. What Judy figured was that Ray was susceptible to sudden bouts of illness, hardly surprising considering his years on the street, and that a day's rest made him much better. Lucille was not about to tell her different. Though it was gonna be hard to hide when the two of them shared a bedroom.

But he'd quit for good by then; he'd told her so himself. And maybe that was true, too, like all the other miracles. Maybe this is what salvation looked like, small steps forward and back, not a sudden leap to some place new. Maybe it's like God giving you a jump-start every now and then, when you need one, knowing your battery's still faulty, but getting you away from there to a place where you can take care of it.

She was willing to believe that anyway, she thought. Willing to help shape the story the way Judy believed it. She could take being supplanted, if what replaced her was real and good. She was content with it, she thought. It was all right with her. Maybe it was possible. Maybe Judy's belief in the whole Ray story and the whole Ray miracle would be enough to sustain it. But looking at Judy, her daughter, sitting there with Ray, her fiancé, reminded Lucille once again just how high the stakes were, and just how much she was gambling.

Sorrow and Song

Mark Bennion

Sariah

That morning you came to me
I saw the lamp arising in your beard,
a flash of solder and fire
wisping in your robes and hair

dreams full in your mouth like *jamid*
and your gait uneven on the hardest soil.
I thought I knew what you were about to say,
how sweat and sand would become our clothing,

how silt and thirst would cut
amidst the walking and walking, how we'd
migrate like dunes, carrying the memory
of limestone, rain, and bazaars.

How you said, Jerusalem will burn
until the ash pits rise like mountains
and remnants will be carried away like wood:
that celebratory yet somber look

stung in your eye, your frame shaking
at your own obedience. Together
we swung and fell in this desert refuge,
witnessed our sons turn to tempests,

hunts, lies. The belief that our names,
perhaps, were stamped to tribal codes;
we, the outlaws of Manasseh, plodding past
Aqaba, finding meat in *wadis*, our flocks

as lost as we were, but submitting
still to the crisping, wilderness sun. How
God chose us to leave when Jeremiah,
Ezekiel, and Habakkuk stayed behind,

left to time's or the dungeon's swifter,
less fruitful fate. Eight years later we knew
the scorpions, the serpents, the vultures
hovering about; we understood the *ruah*,

the deadening of salt, the trap-catch between
Jewish pearls and promised land, the
flair of an oasis and the heat stroke
of even the smallest mirage.

Such vassals we were to exile and need,
to passion flourishing in this barren
landscape. The new beginning of sons—
our concluding harvest—the lengthening of days

bound to the sea's endlessness, the energy
of something greener, something more
bountiful and destructive, something more
miraculous than Moses' call

to the Red Sea. Forgive me, Lehi,
for my complaint and hardness.
I thought I saw the end
as you believed in our beginning.

Praise me, Lehi, for my denial
and acceptance, for my quiet confidence
in a goat-haired tent. You confessed
the vision as I believed the implication

of leaving shekels, pulse, and friendship
for the tough yet merciful cup of prophecy,
the line given to us in our journey
through this burnt offering, unexpected life.

MARK BENNION graduated with an MFA from the University of Montana's Creative Writing Program. Since 2000 he has taught writing and literature courses at BYU–Idaho. He and his wife, Kristine Karen Rios, are the parents of two daughters, Elena and Karen.

jamid (Arabic): a hard round food containing goat's cheese, grass, and various herbs.

wadis (Arabic): usually dry river beds, except during the rainy season.

ruah (Hebrew): wind, intellect, or spirit.

Thousand Springs

Mark Sheffield Brown

It snowed yesterday for a moment
but it was an idea
that didn't catch on –

whiteness,
a blanket for our sins –

not for us,
I'm afraid.

Those blank clouds stood
back today though
and ringed
the city,

and the sun came out
to talk with car hoods
and window glass.

It's almost evening now
and there is just a gold line
between two gray sheets
in the west–

that space between two bodies
not truly together.

Even the lowest things cast a shadow
at this hour
and sun has blood in its light;
embers crawl over
everything,
and trees electrify
into momentary torches.

I stare west
at that gold stitch,
and hope the clouds don't shift
too soon.

*

In the direction of that light
is Thousand Springs,
its various waters.

Like chandeliers, like teeth, like gutters, like wells,
they appear
straight from unlikely rock.

Under yesterday's snow,
the canyon was a field
of dark eyes and mouths,
black, braided ropes
running down walls,

uncovered, untouched.

The stones wore mantillas,
fall gardens became
white hives,

but the water kept coming
up, black and cold.

It is this steadiness that I love,
this blackness.

I love darkness's refusal
to be covered,
its simple persistence, how we can sometimes
make a comfortable bed
in its chilly teeth

Even in snow,
even under light,

we are a mapped canyon:
dark spots amid the white.

*

The sun shorts out,
fire in the trees turns dull,
disappears.

Clouds move in,
and night comes
to lay blankets across fields,
to fill streets
and hide
the space between bridges
and the water below.

North of us,
the Lost River bows its head
under the sand,

works its way
ten feet at a time
east.

That water emerges
in a thousand ways.
comes up
beautiful and black
to mingle with white snow
and light.

Confession

Mark Sheffield Brown

The trees wear
copper-lit skin tonight.
Spread out and still in the cold,
they look like slender Kenyans
holding up thousands of hands,

stars in their palms.
I don't pray
to trees—

otherwise,
I would press my cheek to the nearest
elm on this walk,
and take the bark's wide-tooth
bite into my skin
as reproof
for not coming sooner.

When I whispered my sins
into waiting, wooden
ears, my steaming
breath would soak
under gray skin.

Someone would walk by and
see me, arms around a tree,
tears dripping from
my face, whispering
crazy, repeating,
O, *forgive me, forgive me,*

and he would join me, arms around
the copper-colored giant,
and let
his dark things run
out like a pack of ashen dogs.

Together we pray to this tree,
its branches neither reaching up nor
hanging over,
its skin cold and orange, rough
against us as we hold tight—

More would join us.

Seeing two crazy men whispering
to a campus tree on a January night
moves people

and before midnight a small crowd
would circle the tree, breath
rising
in little ghost shapes disappearing
into the tree's palms.

We would sit in a circle,
hold hands,
and touch each other's chapped faces,
knowing every bad thing the other
has done
and love him still
in that way you can love
a stranger
in the middle of the night.

Finally, eyes dry and stinging,
we would begin to leave.
Work tomorrow.
My husband wondering,
My kids.
It's cold.

Leaving last,
I would look into the tree's bones
filled with stars and black,
and listen,
and wait.

MARK SHEFFIELD BROWN teaches English at the College of Southern Idaho, and lives in Twin Falls with his wife and two daughters. He earned an MFA from Boise State University and his poems have appeared in *Ethos*, *The New Zoo Poetry Review*, *Perspective*, *Firebush*, and *Meridian Magazine*.

Martin in Me

Paul Swenson

Three times I take his words into my mouth
and make them thunder from my tongue.
His final speech will not remain unsung in me.

My students' faces leak a trace of anomie.
A few have questions in their eyes;
confusion clouds the skies of history.

No longer young that April night–Memphis
1968–he saw the Promised Land, but knew
he couldn't enter through hate's veil that cloaked the city.

I know somehow that only when it's dark enough,
you see the stars, he said. *Something is happening*
in our world–masses of people rising up.

He asked those Memphis ministers to risk
their lives for garbage men. *The issue is injustice.*
We're going to march again; we've got to march again.

We don't need bricks or bottles. He spoke of Lincoln,
Christ, and Aristotle, but said we could not stop there.
In this world, *it's nonviolence or nonexistence.*

Within the week, a bigot's bullet laid him down.
His cry remains the same: *We will be free.* I speak
his words and feel the Martin in me.

PAUL SWENSON's debut poetry collection, *Iced at the Ward, Burned at the Stake and Other Poems,* was published by Signature Books in 2003. His second collection, *In Sleep and Other Poems,* is seeking a publisher.

Triptych–History of the Church

Robin Russell

Panel I[*]

I feel grace descend like whiskey-scented
oil poured over me in the upper room on
my way to heaven. I dance in the heat of
a fire, like ghosts following Sitting Bull
to their deaths, pounding the earth as
I whirl, feeling the scent move out through
my veins, pulled by the dance into my feet
and fingers and loins, the beating gyre
burning my bones and blood back into the
earth, spinning faster, dizzy with peace
and the nearness of understanding. One
voice sings like a cry thrown out across
the crush of the world, like the weeping
question of Enoch, or Adam, or Samuel,
and the sun turns to snow whiter than
noon-day. And in that glow I rest,
healed and glistening, warm fatigue where
once arose the aroma of belief and the
coryphée of hope. And then, as it will, in
the dénouement of grace, the dance winds
down, becomes a shuffle, and the twirling
scent dissipates in the gnawing whisper
that is only wind. And I wonder where
have we come to in these many years?
And where is here? Is this the place, a
desert beyond what is known? Now, do
we move without the stillness, caught in
the rhythm of our own shouts, unable to
hear the song cast across our sight like a
fleeing bird or an unanswered child? And
in the hammering silence I make out no reply,
just a kneeling, drunken man unable to rise,
his lolling head turning the world back and
forth, his yawping gasp a cry that spins us
back and starts the scratching dance anew.

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[*]Panel I appeared previously as "History of the Church–Part One," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2000):14.

Panel II

In the dry places, the chafing, fevered wind
cleaves our desert hearts and hardscrabble
eyes in desiccated, crackling vision, the
gnawing revelation a jagged sacrament
which does not come softly, but breaks
off, the hard intolerant, and you feel every
edge of its strength, every point, every
angle of its creviced power along your
seal-skin smoothness, its trilled blades of
bloody belief rough, as the razored lips
of its certain promise slice fair-skinned
ardent flesh, the puckered aching slit
unhealed, a blanched crimson stigmatum
leached and pulsing and pliant, puffed
and slowly throbbing, a seeping scar of
withered intent. In a dirty windblown
doorway, a single unsheltered bulb pours
a triangle of yellowed light downward like
new revelation, and we turn, slowly, its
shimmering witness calling, ancient water
whispers, rise, take up thy bed, and walk,
and in the distance, a sleeping form, Jacob
or maybe Joseph, becomes a dusty rider
who gathers the reins and mounts the saddled
and lathered back of history, turns slowly and
fades into the purling furnace of a lustrous,
rippling judgment, another voiceless wail
scratched across the sky. The earth rolls upon
her wings, and the sun gives his light by day,
and the moon gives her light by night, and the
stars also give their light, as they roll upon their
wings in their glory, in the midst of the power of
God while darkness licks at the edges of our lives.

Panel III

He will say, if you bring forth what is in
you, it will give you life. But if you do not
bring forth what is in you, you will die.
Grief soaks your blood dry, your prayers
fly up, tied on flagged horns, hemal signifiers
of queasy righteous intent. In the afternoon
silence, all motion and sound beat to
submission by the anviled heat, your hard-
straining retches sob into the bright air,
the stench of them an oozing soundless
splash, decaying sight across the lengths
of time and all eternity, chained, fiery
laughter soaking your dead filament eyes.
In a cracking secret motion, you bend, lift
a now-useless leg to a knee-lodged angle,
stretched up pant cuffs showing bleached
hairless skin like a shark's belly in the kiln
fire of noon-day, and you brush your shoe,
the tips of your soiled fingers marking
flesh-carved canals across your patterned
brogues, three graceful, lingering swipes
upon the world that compass its lives, its
violence and horror, the vengeance and
apathy of endless generations, screaming
Bosch figures now just dust, brushed off,
amerced and wiped clean from your polished
helpless anger so you can rest once again,
spent, vacant senescence restored to your
austere, keening fullness, the forgotten
commandment withering in the searing
glare. And when he asks you where you
are from, say we have descended from light.
And when he asks you who you are, tell him,
we are its children. And if he asks what is the
sign by which he can know that you do not lie,
tell him, it is motion and rest. Motion and rest.

ROBIN RUSSELL received a B.A. in philosophy from Brigham Young University. He currently lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, while writing poetry and publishing the website ethelophilosophos.com.

A Spinster Physician Weeps While Speaking Her Sermon on Abstinence:

A Sonnet without Rhyme

Lee Robison

In her fiftieth year and all these other
smug and satisfied people's children
gaping faces from the pews like ripe pears
and what can she say—a professional woman,
her seed emptying month by long month,
as she counsels the dying ways to live with dying,
knowing in a clinical way that she too
lives toward this end (however ephemeral)—
and, recalling that boy of her youth and desire
checked,
absolutely,
so sure that rewards
would come—here and in heaven—yet sensing
the vital urgency of molecules teaching her

desire to replenish God's pasture,
and so her voice wavers as it pitches to preach.

LEE ROBISON works for the Indian Health Service, a federal agency headquartered in Rockville, Maryland. He lives with his wife and best friend, Kathy, in Poolesville, Maryland. They have three children, Melani, Dru, and Samantha.

El Cordero de Dios

Robert A. Rees

Driving from Hollister to Santa Cruz late morning, I
stop at San Juan Bautista to grab a sandwich.
All the signs point toward the Mission, so I keep driving.
Brown-skinned Mexican kids swirl around the plaza
and in and out of the Mission corridors. In the gift shop
I buy a $2 candle to carry to the chapel. The pious saleswoman
says it will burn for two and a half days.
By the bank of candles, a small boy kneels, crosses himself
quickly, and then runs on to play tag with his friends.

I light my candle. Not a very Mormon thing, but I want to
add mine to the small flames delaying darkness. More kids
come in, wander idly around. One girl dips her hand
in the large baptismal bowl, crosses herself,
and goes out the side door into enormous sunlight.

When the church empties I kneel and pray—for
these Catholics and their dead saints, for the crippled woman
begging coins by the Mission entrance, for the missionaries and
General Authorities, and all those in trouble and danger.

The swish of a priest's robe over worn terracotta tiles
opens my eyes—across the dark chapel six reredos
with backlit statues of saints, among them,
St. John the Baptist, a shepherd standing over

the Lamb of God—who takes away the sins of the world,
no matter how thick and dark, how gnarled and pocked.
I kneel again, asking forgiveness for dark deeds, and darker thoughts.

Later in the garden, everything reminds me of El Cordero de Dios—
the twisted olive trees his sorrows, these dark red roses his blood,
a multitude of bright yellow day lilies his rising. At the garden's center
a gigantic prickly pear, its heart-shaped pads teeming
with melon-colored, trumpet-shaped flowers
sounding the world's abundant glory.

Outside in the plaza the kids still chase one another,
their indifferent teachers gossiping in small clusters.
Inside, my candle burns on.

Baptism

Robert A. Rees

The old man bent and balding
is lowered into the water.
At that small moment of burial
he remembers his mother, thinks
of that time before memory when,
laboring him out of her saline womb,
she held him new against the world.
Now as he rises, rills steaming
from his gray head and beard,
he turns to the baptizer and embraces
him fiercely. All the darkness between
remains buried in the font. Later
it will flow through drains, pipes, and culverts
into the great ocean where salt washes
all things new.

ROBERT A. REES, past editor of *Dialogue* (1971–76), has taught literature at the University of Wisconsin, UCLA, and UC Santa Cruz; he was also a Fulbright Professor of American Literature at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania (1995–96). He has published poems in *West/Word, Sunstone, Dialogue, Onthebus, Wasatch Review, BYU Studies,* and *Harvest: Contemporary Mormon Poems* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989).

REVIEWS

A Stark Contrast

Duwayne R. Anderson, *Farewell to Eden: Coming to Terms with Mormonism and Science* (Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2003), 348 pp., appendices, index

Reviewed by Thomas W. Murphy, chair of the Anthropology Department, Edmonds Community College, Lynnwood, Washington

Duwayne R. Anderson, a highly accomplished and acclaimed physicist specializing in fiber optics, offers readers a thorough examination of the role of science in his disillusionment from Mormonism. The book provides compelling evidence that Latter-day Saint scriptures and prophetic teachings fail to coincide with scientific findings in physics, astronomy, geology, biology, and archaeology. Anderson's extensive use of proof texts, while valuable as a reference to others struggling with conflicts between LDS teachings and science, is frequently ahistorical, lacking sufficient attention to the evolution, diversity, and nuances of Mormon thought.

His book begins with a self-reflective chapter examining the marginalization of a scientist in his family. He describes his mission to British Columbia, study of physics at BYU, marriage, Church leadership positions, the "cracks" that started to develop in his testimony after reading the Bible cover to cover, and his own marginalization as he compared LDS claims with the findings of science. It is followed by a detailed and accessible discussion of the assumptions, method, limitations, and possibilities of science. The next five chapters identify a litany of challenges to common Latter-day Saint beliefs from quantum mechanics, chaos theory, astronomy, geology, biology, and archaeology. The eighth chapter, perhaps one of the most interesting to social scientists, uses statistics from the U.S. Department of Education and National Science Foundation to soundly refute the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*'s claim that Utah had led the nation in the proportion of university graduates to earn a doctoral degree in science. The final chapter returns to personal reflections, concluding: "Joseph Smith was a storyteller of extraordinary talent and means, with a unique ability to observe ordinary things, and spin them into wondrous tales" (313). The book also includes four appendices, the most intriguing of which is a statistical analysis of month dates in the Book of Mormon illustrating that the scripture's author "had a tendency to pick days in the first week of the month" (336).

The book is filled with several arguments that many readers will find thought-provoking and challenging. Anderson provides a list of eight fundamen-

tal problems with a belief in a literal global flood, offers a refutation of intelligent design, identifies problems with the absolute and relative time scales of creation in the books of Moses and Abraham, questions the coherency and plausibility of a belief in a finite God, challenges Joseph Smith's placement of the Garden of Eden in Missouri, uses the text of the Book of Mormon to dismiss apologists' claims to have found an Arabian river of Lehi, and contends that chiastic structures that are purported to be Hebraic underpinnings of some passages in the Book of Mormon are relatively common and "actually more consistent with the idea of a 19th century author who was familiar with the Bible, than with the story as described in the *Book of Mormon* itself" (282).

Anderson offers a formidable challenge to advocates of a limited geographic setting for the Book of Mormon in Central America. His approach is to examine the big picture, considering factors often ignored by scholars at the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS). He contrasts events as depicted in Latter-day Saint scripture (including the Book of Abraham and Book of Moses) and the writings of Joseph Fielding Smith with those found in the archaeological record at approximately the same time. For example, he contends that the Mesoamerican Early Hunters Period (13,000 to 7,000 BCE) coincides with the expectation that "the Earth was near Kolob, Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, and there was no death in the world." In the archaeological record, the Late Formative (Pre-Classic) Period (300 BCE to 250 C.E.) was a time of social revolution, the building of cultural centers, and the rise of a class system rather than the utopian society portrayed after Jesus's visit in the Book of Mormon (255–56). The following summary illustrates more of the incongruence apparent in a macroperspective:

> Ancient American archaeology spans a broader range of history than just that described in the *Book of Mormon*. It also spans such historical events in Mormon theology as the splitting of the continents, the Tower of Babel, and the universal Flood. As we have already seen from previous chapters, the universal flood and splitting of continents (just a few thousand years ago in LDS theology) are myth, and are not found at all in the geological record. This is further supported by the observation from archaeology that, during the time when Mormon doctrine tells us the world only spoke one language (prior to the Tower of Babel) there were many languages in the Americas alone. And during the time when Mormon doctrine tells us the world was submerged by a universal flood, the ancient Americans were going about their lives, completely unhindered by the destruction such an event would have caused, had it really occurred. And during the time Mormon doctrine says the Earth was all one land mass, the ancient Americans were living in isolation from the rest of the world, cut off by two great oceans; the Pacific and the Atlantic. (259)

While Anderson has provided much to occupy Latter-day Saint apologists

and to provoke thought among scriptural literalists, the value of his work to the scholarly and non-LDS community is limited by his ahistoricism and excessive use of proof texts. This approach, regrettably, should be quite familiar to those whose knowledge of the gospel derives primarily from their favorite passages of scripture, quotations from prophets, sacrament meeting talks, and the instruction of the Church Education System. Yet Anderson's expectation of seamless coherence and logical consistency between twenty-first century science and statements in scripture and by Latter-day prophets, regardless of time and place of origin, is unrealistic. Obviously, Latter-day "doctrine" does not meet Anderson's expectation, but neither would the doctrines of any other religious organization. Anderson's portrait reflects the organizational myth of an eternal, unchanging gospel, but fails to capture the fluidity, creativity, and dynamism of Mormon culture.

Anderson shows that Mormons should not expect science and scripture to reveal the same everlasting truths. Yet he fails to move beyond this realization. In fact, like many apologists at FARMS, Anderson confuses the claims of scripture and prophecy with those of science and history. In this respect, he reproduces the very problem he identifies. As long as Mormons and ex-Mormons continue to conflate revelation with science and history, then Mormonism will continue to be plagued with a conflict between science and religion, so ably and accessibly outlined in this new book by Anderson.

Murder, with a Side of Philosophy

Paul M. Edwards, *The Angel Acronym* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2003), 250 pp.

Reviewed by Michael Austin, dean of Graduate Studies, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, West Virginia, and an avid reader of Mormon mysteries

Paul Edwards's first mystery novel, *The Angel Acronym*, is not exactly a religious novel, but it is a novel in which the characters spend a great deal of time talking about religion. And the religion that everybody is talking about is the Community of Christ, the religious organization known formerly (and in the novel) as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Nearly all of the characters—including the murder victim, the perpetrator, and the wise-cracking amateur sleuth—are employees of the RLDS Temple School in Independence, Missouri, and the culture of the Church and its bureaucracy pervades nearly every aspect of the novel.

The main character and crime-solver in the novel is Toom Taggart, director of the RLDS Education Department and, like Edwards himself, a philosopher by

training and lifetime academic. Taggart moves uneasily in the religious organization for which he works, none of whose essential characteristics are unique to one particular religion. Within this organization, faith always trumps scholarship, orthodoxy always trumps individuality, and obedience always trumps everything. Perhaps the best thing about *The Angel Acronym* is simply watching the scholarly, individualistic Taggart negotiate through an ecclesiastical hierarchy that seems to value neither scholarship nor individuality.

As Taggart navigates through the twin mazes of religious orthodoxy and bureaucratic inefficiency, he encounters—as the main character in a murder mystery must—a murder. The motive for the dastardly deed is actually set up in the novel's preface, which goes to Palmyra, New York, in 1829 to set up a conspiracy. In this preface, Abner Cole (a real historical figure) and two fictional accomplices alter the opening pages of the Book of Mormon to introduce an acronym of "Angel Moroni" in the first letters of the opening eleven paragraphs. They also forge letters between Joseph and Hyrum Smith indicating that the entire Book of Mormon is an attempt to defraud the people of Palmyra. Cole dies prematurely, however, and the documents never surface. But when the chief archivist of the RLDS Church uncovers them, unaware that they are forgeries, and wants to publish the results, someone in the Church murders him to prevent them coming to light.

A plot in which a Mormon character commits murder to cover up an embarrassing historical document is not an innovation in the contemporary mystery genre. Ever since Mark Hofmann made such murders eerily plausible, a dozen or so mysteries have been published with a similar plot device—including David Everson's *False Profits* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), the only other mystery that I am aware of that has an RLDS/Community of Christ setting. But *The Angel Acronym* is very different than any of these novels because it is set so firmly within the religious structure. Its main character, like its author, is a genuine insider with a commitment to the community rather than an outside observer being baffled by "those crazy Mormons."

Taggart's inside observations about the Church structure make *The Angel Acronym* an extremely compelling book. As the squarest of pegs at Church headquarters, Taggart must, in the course of a single day, dodge unreasonable requests from the Brethren, fend off a modern-day Porter Rockwell figure who tries to prevent him from asking questions about the murdered man, defend the importance of honest inquiry to a Church historian who believes in suppressing uncomfortable truths, and attempt to get a cup of coffee from a waiter who doesn't think that a man in his position should have it.

The extended philosophical discussions that Taggart has with other characters are both a significant strength and a minor weakness in the novel. Through these discussions, Taggart explores the nature of religious institutions, the difference between "faith" and "belief," the role of historical truth in an

epistemological context governed by faith, and the role of socialization in religious decision making. Consider the following thoughts from Taggart about the consequences of taking a life, even justifiably, in war:

> Contingency killing unlocks the bonds of civilized behavior. It's the crack in the veneer of respectability. It's the exposure of human behavior. It says that the concept of humanity is primarily a lie. Before it happens, before a life is taken, a person doesn't believe that he or she could be a killer. At least, probably not. The killer is not you or me. At least, it's not who you consider when you consider yourself. . . .
>
> What I am trying to say is that before you kill someone you don't see yourself as someone who would kill. Afterwards, you know there's nothing you wouldn't do. There's nothing more important to you, no reason powerful enough, no emotion deep enough, to prevent you—if that's your decision—from taking a life. The process works on you. Sooner or later it abolishes the sense that there's something special about human life, that there's something special about us. . . .
>
> It's not something for which one can turn to a creator and be forgiven. What I am talking about is knowledge. Knowledge is lived, not forgiven. (199)

This is an excellent philosophical observation, deeply existential in its nature and reminiscent of key passages in Camus and Dostoyevsky. It is also an excellent theological point that has profound implications for our understanding of the meaning of the Garden of Eden and of original sin. However (and here is the weakness that I alluded to earlier), deep thoughts about religion, no matter how satisfying, do not always produce believable dialogue or compelling plot devices in mystery novels. The practical use to which Taggart puts the above observation—looking for the murderer only among those who served in Vietnam—is difficult to support given the fact that most murderers are not veterans. Though the observation is itself both sound and useful, it must be wrenched beyond the limits of soundness and utility to be converted into a "clue."

Generally, *The Angel Acronym* does an excellent job of raising important questions about the relationship of religious institutions to their own histories and about the stifling effect of orthodoxy upon genuine historical inquiry. It does a somewhat less excellent job of presenting a compelling murder mystery in which a clever detective solves a difficult crime. Few readers will be surprised by either the murderer or the motive, nor will they be particularly impressed with the steps that the detective takes to come to what is actually a very obvious conclusion. The flaw is by no means fatal; Toom Taggart is a compelling character, and Edwards is an extremely insightful and gifted writer. His insights into the Community of Christ, and to religious culture in general, are profound and wide-ranging. A number of indications in the book (including its final words, ". . . to be continued") suggest that Toom Taggart will be back. I, for one, will be here waiting.

"Gender Troubles" and Mormon Women's Voices

Laura L. Bush, *Faithful Transgressions in the American West: Six Twentieth-Century Mormon Women's Autobiographical Acts* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2004), 264 pp.

Reviewed by Cecilia Konchar Farr, Associate Professor of English, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota

"Faithful transgression," a concept developed by Laura L. Bush in this thought-provoking study of Mormon women's autobiographies, is a concept worth keeping. It's not "loyal opposition" because it doesn't openly or politically oppose; faithful transgressions are the quiet, personal choices of women's lives, their attempts to construct unique selves in the face of an overwhelmingly patriarchal and hierarchical religious culture. As Bush explains, "I use the phrase 'faithful transgression' to describe moments in the text when each writer, explicitly or implicitly, commits herself in writing to trust her own ideas and authority over official religious authority while also conceiving of and depicting herself to be a 'faithful' member of the church." *Faithful Transgressions* gently and generously explores the ambiguities, for both its author and her subjects, of being Mormon in the increasingly feminist world of twentieth-century America.

The variations on this theme, which Bush explores in six autobiographies, make for fascinating reading. Though each of the texts Bush examines is unique, she finds connections among them in a paradigm of Mormon autobiography modeled on Joseph Smith's First Vision narrative, a paradigm that includes five key conventions: first, the women autobiographers testify and witness religious "truth"; second they explain LDS doctrine and, as women, claim the authority to do so; third, they assert a place for themselves in Mormon culture and history; fourth, they defend Mormonism against a perceived antagonism from non-Mormons; and finally, they aim to address this audience of antagonists outside of mainstream Mormonism. Though this paradigm falls short of accounting for some of the more intriguing aspects of Mormon women's autobiography, it serves as a fine starting point for Bush's rhetorical study of the construction of narrative in conversation with a dominant religious culture.

The six works she deals with are Mary Ann Hafen, *Recollections of a Handcart Pioneer of 1860: A Woman's Life on the Mormon Frontier* (1938; rpt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Annie Clark Tanner, *A Mormon Mother,* edited by Obert C. Tanner (1941; 3rd ed., Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983); Juanita Brooks, *Quicksand and Cactus: A Memoir of the Southern Mormon Frontier* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1992); Wynetta Willis Martin, *Black Mormon Tells Her Story* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes Publishing, 1972); Terry Tempest Wil-

liams, *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991); and Phyllis Barber, *How I Got Cultured: A Nevada Memoir* (1992; rpt., Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1994).

The paradigm works best for the autobiographies of Mary Ann Hafen and Annie Clark Tanner, and these two chapters are Bush's tightest and most analytically concise. But their neatness is also their shortcoming, based as it is on a simple opposition that Bush problematizes elsewhere. Hafen's transgressions, for example, are hardly transgressive, even for her time. As she reveals a level of discomfort with polygamy and what it means for women, she does so in the language of motherhood and claims an authority in that role not unusual for late Victorian women who accepted the principle of separate spheres. Likewise constructing herself as *A Mormon Mother* and finding authority in that role, Annie Clark Tanner builds a critique of polygamy that is more biting and more famous than Hafen's. Yet even as she finds the Mormon doctrine of polygamy flawed, she never lets it affect her feeling for the religion generally or her place in it. Her "courageous transgression" is her unequivocal condemnation of polygamy, which outside of Mormonism, would hardly seem a searing critique, but which, in the context of a culture committed to hierarchy and black and white thinking, was a serious transgression indeed.

To accept the concept of faithful transgression, then, Bush must locate these narratives securely in this culture of dichotomous thinking, where right and wrong are clear concepts and transgressions are easily identifiable. Because she finds this context in the Mormon culture of the Intermountain West, Bush sometimes conflates the commitment to Mormonism to a commitment to community, family, or tradition, rather than to faith or doctrine; and her view of dissent is colored by a sense of authoritarian oppression that most readers will not be able to perceive in the same way Western Mormon readers will, although Jon Krakauer deftly captures its outlines in his recent *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 2003).

For me, an East Coast Mormon (and, I confess, a faithful transgressor), the truly "faithful" transgressions in Bush's text are not so easily contained. Bush's examination of the autobiographies of Juanita Brooks and Terry Tempest Williams make for the most appealing reading, as a result, because these autobiographies are especially multifaceted and slippery, not easily pinned to a paradigm. These writers find a commitment to Mormonism not just by default, culturally, or in reaction to powerful authority, but in many ways by complex, contradictory choice. The line between in and out that many Mormon dissenters have been mapping at great personal cost at least since *Sunstone* and *Dialogue* were founded more than thirty years ago finds nuanced illustration in these two chapters, sometimes despite the author's attempts to clearly delineate it.

Juanita Brooks's dissent, like Phyllis Barber's in a later chapter, is in challeng-

ing authority generally, while maintaining identification with her Mormon community and claiming its faith. As Bush points out, Brooks "constructed her identity from childhood as a person committed to telling the truth and willing to question authority when circumstances merited it" (80). Readers both inside and outside Mormonism will be familiar with her history of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and many will understand the cultural risk she took in writing it. But her insistence on maintaining a Mormon identity—of, in fact, locating that identity in the desire to find and tell the truth—is a concept of Mormonism that appeals even as it fails to hold up in her case. In my experience in Mormon culture, Brooks is figured inevitably as "fallen away" from Mormonism, even hostile to it. What constitutes Mormon identity, then, and who polices its parameters? Can Brooks claim Mormonism as an identity, and on what ground can she stake that claim?

Likewise, Terry Tempest Williams's figuring of herself as Mormon, as a "radical soul in a conservative religion" (146), is hard to maintain in the context of her many transgressions of orthodoxy in *Refuge,* her autobiographical text. Though Williams has arguably had more influence on the self-construction of young reflective Mormons than anyone but Eugene England, among most Mormons she would not generally be considered "one of us" and would certainly never have been selected as the representative of Mormonism to the outside world that she became with this book. The book, too, strains against the confines of Mormon autobiography as Bush defines it, but one could hardly put together a study of Mormon women's autobiography without discussing the critically acclaimed *Refuge.* Bush's paradigm becomes most revealing, then, in its failure to account for the two most literary and widely respected of the autobiographies she studies, those by Brooks and Williams. Are these, then, Mormon autobiographies?

This is where Bush's book fails to live up to the promise of its more thorny questions. Though she has clearly done her homework, especially in her intricate theoretical introduction where she reviews the work of contemporary autobiographical theorists, she does not follow through on the implications of their insights. Rather than locate these autobiographical texts in the contemporary discussion of identity formation or constructed subjectivity, Bush chooses to position herself unproblematically within gendered Mormon constructs of identity. She asserts the naiveté of her texts, claiming that her six autobiographical writers believe in a unity in their life experiences, a wholeness they can impart truthfully to their readers in a language they control. The assumption here (that the only autobiographies postmodern theories apply to are unconventional ones) keeps Bush from developing the best questions she poses. Gertrude Stein and Roland Barthes are not the only writers who construct identity, who attempt to create a subject in language or a developing self in community, who can't control the in-

stabilities in their texts, and who can't predict the ways that readers will re-construct them.

In the end, Bush argues that her authors construct texts intentionally in conversation with Mormonism, patriarchal culture, gender expectations, truth, and, above all, authority, not with selfhood or language. Bush's interest, then, is rhetorical, lying more with the construction of narrative than the construction of identity, a fine approach, but one that leaves the most captivating questions of the evolving genre of autobiography unexplored. Scratch the surface of these narratives, and Bush finds, not a postmodern autobiographical subject in construction, but a modernist self, a fully realized person who stands up to authority to name herself someone apart from the obedient body of Mormonism.

With one notable exception. Wynetta Willis Martin's *Black Mormon Tells Her Story* is problematic on so many levels that I find it to be Bush's most courageous chapter for the academic transgressions she commits with her own assumptions. In this, her longest chapter, Bush lets the text do work that its author cannot claim. As a result, "the real story of racism in the Mormon Church inevitably leaks out" (135) as Martin writes what is essentially an apologia for that racism. Here language and identity escape the autobiographer's grasp, and Bush allows that the text can do work that the intentional author could never have intended.

Full disclosure: I know Laura Bush. I like Laura Bush. In graduate school fifteen years ago, I was impressed with her seriousness and her formidable intellect. I see that seriousness and intellect still at work in *Faithful Transgressions.* Despite its few flaws—the unexplored theoretical promise of its genre, the places where it reads like an unreconstructed dissertation—it is an important book. It works from a (largely unstated) premise that the tensions revealed in faithful transgressions can be breached, that Mormonism, as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich famously claimed, is more flexible and feminism larger than we have imagined. It takes Mormon women and the all-too-often silent choices of their lives seriously. This book allows Bush to construct a larger model of Mormon narrative and identity than Mormon culture has yet produced, a model many women, even faithful transgressors, can live with.

Sinnamon Twist

Linda Hoffman Kimball, *The Marketing of "Sister B"* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 160 pp.

Reviewed by Mary Ellen Robertson, Claremont Graduate School M.A. in women's studies in religion

Mild-mannered Mormon housewife uses her background in chemistry and family science to whip up a batch of tantalizing cinnamon fragrance as a last-minute party favor for a visiting teaching luncheon. Little did Donna Brooks realize how quickly her creation would propel her out of Rottingham, Massachusetts, and into the spotlight.

Donna's concoction captures the attention of a New York-based marketer attending the luncheon with a former roommate. Lucy Hobbes believes the cinnamon-scented oil has potential and urges Donna to "talk business" with her later. After a dinner meeting with Lucy and promoter Gloria Hewett, Donna signs on; and her new contacts set the marketing machine in motion.

Donna has a substantial cheering section—populated by her devoted and supportive husband, Hank, her mercurial teenage daughter Stephanie, mischief-making sons Simon, Nate, and Ben, and her ever-present best friend from the ward, Margo Cabot. Also along for the ride: Donna's new visiting teaching companion, Juliet Benton; Big Apple marketing's photographer Lois Wheaton; and the sonorous stake public affairs representative, Meredith Monson, who encourages Donna to use her entrepreneurial opportunities to promote the Church.

Although the marketing process seems straightforward, Donna is in for a few surprises. She signs contracts without reading the fine print and is shocked to discover what Gloria has in mind for the print advertising: barely clad models pushing her fragrance now dubbed *Sinnamon*. Donna pitches a fit and enlists the help of a lawyer recommended by Sister Monson. Inspired by Donna's impassioned reaction, Gloria suggests they use *her* in the ad campaign. While Donna can't change the name of the product, her wholesome image and spunk are certainly a more palatable alternative than what the New York folks had in mind.

Donna's inner "lioness" surfaces again at her first photo shoot. Makeup artists and hair stylists revamp her homespun appearance, but her wardrobe becomes an issue when the snooty wardrobe designer insists Donna strip on the spot and put on the outfit he's picked out:

> "Look—Rico, is it?" Donna said in a steely, no-nonsense tone. "You're going to have to leave now if you want me to try these on."
>
> Rico looked dumbfounded. "Get over it, honey," he said. "I'm not here for my jollies. There's not time to tiptoe around."
>
> "You listen to me, honey," Donna barked back. "No way am I going to drop my trousers in front of you." She could feel her lioness surging. "There is some stuff about my clothing that you wouldn't get, and I'm not in a mood to go into it with you. You can forget the tank top, too. Get me something with sleeves."
>
> "Unacceptable," said Rico fiercely.
>
> "Unacceptable or not, I *do not* wear tank tops and I am not going to

> discuss it with *you.*" . . . When it comes to privacy and clothing—and garments—she was not going to be bullied by some little tyrant. (54–55)

Though Donna feels a little guilty for dispatching Rico harshly, she also feels appreciated for her lioness-like ability to stand up for herself. It's an attribute that serves her well during the frenzied pre-Christmas marketing campaign for Sinnamon. As the pace increases, so do the stressors. Donna wonders whether the time spent away from her family is worth the rewards of bringing her product—evocative of home and hearth—to the masses.

Even when the cost to her orderly, predictable life seems perilously high, Donna faces her challenges with a sometimes-ferocious grace. Sinnamon gives her a wild ride for a few months; then Donna is altogether happy to step back into the normalcy of after-school snacks, managing her brood, and keeping household entropy in check. Even the task of cooking dinner for the family takes on unanticipated allure when compared to her hectic cross-country promotional tour.

Donna's handlers recognize and capitalize on her "Everywoman" qualities. It's part of what sells. Yet there are moments when Donna's lack of finesse shines through the veneer. Though she can be strong, Donna also vacillates and second-guesses herself—and is especially sensitive to the criticisms coming from members of her ward and negative feedback from her own children. It's strange that Donna can take on the New York publicity machine and emerge victorious again and again, yet she deflates so completely over her teenage daughter's assessment of her appearance. She seems to take to heart Stephanie's comment: "When it comes to image, Mom, you can't trust your own instincts!" (34–35)

Donna also abdicates responsibility for knowing the contents of the contracts she's signed and tunes out when her lawyer tries to explain the details to her. She bounces between "what do I know about this" green and feeling as if she can easily navigate the public sphere. She is talented and accomplished and has dimension to her life, so where does the tendency to recoil from her own abilities come from? Perhaps this bothers me because I can relate to it a little *too* well.

Donna's world is populated with some colorful characters. The people in Donna's ward are probably the most recognizable of the "types." There is a Mormon couple transplanted to the East Coast for graduate school; the wife frets about putting her daughter in preschool (the horror!) and counts down the days until she can move back to her beloved Pocatello. Donna has a crusty, inactive woman on her visiting teaching route and her companion is a single woman with a Ph.D. (As Donna notes, Ph.D. and single woman are often synonymous in Mormon culture.)

Meredith Monson, the stake public relations director, proves a delicious foil and a perpetual fly in the ointment of Donna's adventures. Sister Monson has something of a Jane Austen tang to her—she's the boorish guest oblivious to the myriad ways she transgresses social and even spiritual proprieties. Every time she

weighs in, she chides Donna for neglecting to mention missionary work or food storage during her latest public appearance for Sinnamon. Sister Monson's relentless criticism under the guise of "helping" someone less savvy about public relations and the Outside World quickly becomes patronizing and evokes another appearance of Donna's lioness—and deservedly so.

At one point, Donna muses: "Is Sinnamon my product, or because I'm Mormon, am I supposed to be marketing the gospel along with it? If I decide to 'let my light so shine' and all that, do I have to screw in the public-image light bulb that Sister Monson wants? The one that says we don't throw spit wads at bishops or get tattoos? Or is it my own kind of light bulb that laughs and likes to think that God might be laughing with me?" (86)

While the story does touch on some weightier matters—such as identity issues and the obligations of Mormons in the spotlight—it generally stays out of heavy-handed, moralizing territory. It's a fun read and lends credibility to the idea that we peculiar people can poke fun at ourselves and survive a good-natured ribbing. And we may yet have Erma Bombecks of our own.

Saving the Germans from Themselves?

Alan Keele, *In Search of the Supernal: Pre-Existence, Eternal Marriage, and Apotheosis in German Literary, Operatic and Cinematic Texts* (Münster, Germany: Agenda Verlag, 2003), 347 pp.

Reviewed by Sandy Straubhaar, Germanic Studies Department, University of Texas at Austin

This engaging labor-of-love book is a pleasure to read even if one does not always agree with its arguments. In it, BYU German professor Alan Keele mines German literature and drama for what he calls the supernal: specifically, for narratives that echo LDS concepts of preexistence, eternal marriage and apotheosis—with some attention paid as well to a subgroup of related themes, including the hero-journey, metanoia (or repentance), the temple, and human community.

As Keele points out in his foreword, Germans have a particularly resonant history with these sorts of ideas, having produced a literary and philosophical tradition in which such ongoing leitmotifs are numerous. But, as he also notes, the concept of a divine potential in the human species posits also a diabolical potential: single-minded obsession with one's potential godhood can trigger a downward spiral into diabolical acts of hubris, as the history of Germany through the mid-twentieth century shows only too clearly. Keele puts it this way: "No national culture has fostered a richer tradition of supernal idealism than

the German, persistently proclaiming and celebrating the divinity and perfectability of the human race, only to discredit itself so damnably in the grim reality of its own history" (10).

I found the first sections of the book, devoted to the "Angel" films of Wim Wenders (*Der Himmel über Berlin*, 1987; *In weiter Ferne, so nah!*, 1993) to be the best, as well as the most accessible. Keele recounts the narratives of both films (released in the United States as *Wings of Desire* and *Far Away, So Close!*) engagingly, in a manner likely to send the reader out to the video store with the idea of replaying passages to see how Keele's interpretations match with one's own. These are movies, after all, where audience mileage can vary widely. Why, for instance, do Wenders's films sometimes incorporate unmistakably Nazi-tainted vocabulary and symbolism? Keele argues (as others also have) that scriptwriters Peter Handke and Wim Wenders did this deliberately, intending to purge and rehabilitate, thus making transcendental themes safe for Germans again. Keele traces the themes of the films through Wenders and Handke back to Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies* (1923; coincidentally also translated by Keele, with Leslie Norris [Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1993]). In doing this he utilizes at all times, as elsewhere throughout the book, an overtly Mormon view of cosmos, time, and God.

It is, in fact, Keele's openly stated intent to address a bifurcated audience, one including both LDS readers and academic Germanists, that strikes me as particularly bold about this book, as well as thoughtfully executed. Where some LDS writers have a hard time separating themselves from LDS-specific vocabulary, Keele knows the trap and avoids it; he is fully bilingual in more than one way. Only a few odd words stood out for me, but one was *supernal*, which is not a common word in any vocabulary of today; if one googles for it, one gets not only the Mormon hymn "The Day Dawn Is Breaking," but also various websites for Gothic clothing and music, as well as links to the American pulp fantasists Clark Ashton Smith and H. P. Lovecraft—coincidentally, contemporaries of Rilke but hardly his tribal brothers.

After the Wenders sections, Keele looks at Mozart's opera *Die Zauberflöte* (1791); Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805); the Grail-quest story of Parzivâl, the wise fool, both in its medieval (ca. 1210) and its nineteenth-century Wagnerian (1882) incarnations; and two operas by Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss, *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911) and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1919). In all of these, he finds the transcendental themes he seeks: progression, partnership (Tamino with Pamina, Parzivâl with Condwiramours, and so forth), sin and salvation, and community; and he backs up his discoveries with text. While these sections also made for intriguing reading, I was not as convinced as I was in the Wenders sections; but that does not mean that I think that these themes are not present in these works. Rather, I suspect that, like worst nightmares and favorite music, those narratives that strike us as most cosmic or transcendental are highly various and that they

vary as widely among us Mormons as they do throughout the human species at large.

For instance, I can't go where Keele goes with *Rosenkavalier,* although it is clear that he is far more familiar with it than I am. *Der Rosenkavalier* strikes me as the kind of thing that might happen if you let Oscar Wilde loose in Ruritania after a late night's reading of *Dangerous Liaisons;* I just can't get cosmic about it. *Die Frau ohne Schatten,* similarly, seems to me to hover generically somewhere between Strindberg's *Dream Play* (1901) and Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* (1909). All of these are illustrious, mythic-archetypical-folkloric narratives to be sure, but I would not pick any of them as a master narrative for my own life's Jungian (or Campbellian) quest. And for a peace-making reconciliation of the Parzivâl story with reference to both (medieval poet) Wolfram and Wagner, my personal choice would be the remarkable modern novel *The Grail of Hearts* (1992) by New York Jewish stockbroker Susan Shwartz.

My failures to see what Alan Keele sees in some of the works he examines may stem from within, just as C. S. Lewis's "Uncle Andrew" in *The Magician's Nephew* hears only roaring when Aslan sings, or just as his dwarfs in *The Last Battle* are convinced they are eating cabbage leaves, old turnips, and water from a donkey trough when in fact they are seated in front of a rich feast. Or it may just be (I hope) that one's life's resonant narratives are an entirely individual matter, at best individually sought out. For instance, one of mine from undergraduate days in Keele's department at BYU was Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802), with its mostly unpartnered hero. Since I seemed to myself unlikely to find a life partner when I first read Novalis, the (unattainable) quest for the Blue Flower seemed a perfect image: more or less solitary "eternal progression" (in LDS terms), without a specific point of arrival. I liked it immensely. Another, from outside Germanophone literature but certainly written with a knowledge of much of it, was the *Book of the New Sun* tetralogy (1980–83) by Chicago-based Catholic engineer Gene Wolfe.

And in fact, perhaps the one thing that I have enjoyed above all else, in reading Alan Keele's book, is the incentive that it excites: to revisit the narratives that have afforded its readers their most transcendental (or supernal) insights—even if those narratives do not match the narratives that Keele himself has chosen to examine.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kathy Wilson is the owner and manager of Sego Gallery and Framing Center in Salt Lake City. Her paintings featured on the cover of this issue, *Tulips* and *Aspens at Fish Lake*, were done in watercolor. She feels she does her best work with watercolors although she paints with a variety of media, including oils and acrylics.

A native of Salt Lake City, Kathy began her career as a landscape painter when Mary Kimball Johnson, her art teacher at Lincoln Junior High, gave her an expensive watercolor brush as a graduation present. She enjoys painting nature, where she experiences a deep spirituality. She told *Salt Lake* magazine that she believes the key to landscape painting is to be aware of nature. "There's so much to see, yet few people take the time to look, much less to visualize. The spirit of the land doesn't reveal itself to those unwilling to give themselves to it." Her creative landscape extends to the human landscape and includes the state of mind that infuses her paintings—carefully observing how we connect and relate.

Kathy has five children and seven grandchildren with whom she associates closely. She has served on the boards of non-profit organizations, including The Children's Center in Salt Lake City and the Sunstone Foundation. She has supported the local Tibetan community with projects in Utah and India and helped organize Utah Bolivian Partners to raise funds for the Children's Mental Health Center in La Paz. She is also active in programs aimed at alleviating poverty, being involved with Results, a citizen lobby that addresses the issues of the poor, and with Microcredit, a program of extending small loans to extremely poor people for the purpose of creating life-sustaining projects.

CALL FOR PAPERS ON INTERNATIONAL MORMONISM

During 2005 and 2006, *Dialogue* expects to publish a series of articles on the Mormon experience and identity outside the usual Anglo-American cultural realm.

Guest edited by Ethan Yorgason, this series will feature articles on a variety of topics from the perspective of various scholarly disciplines, including history, literature, and the social sciences. Each paper may focus in depth upon a particular cultural setting or offer cross-cultural comparisons among two or more settings.

As the Church continues to grow, cultural-geographic distinctions promise to assume greater significance in both doctrine and practice. We would therefore welcome papers that examine the following questions.

What are some of these possible distinctions?

How might the Church respond to an impetus toward varieties of Mormonism?

How do these distinctive varieties of Mormonism contribute to the relationship of Mormonism to the host society/culture?

We are also interested in the interpretations given Mormon history by both members and nonmembers within cultures beyond the Anglo-American sphere. Articles could also treat the level of historical "literacy" among Church members, the aspects of Church history that are best and least well known, the purposes to which historical knowledge is put, and the relationship between Mormon history and Mormon identity.

Submissions

Manuscripts for this series will be welcome until January 1, 2006. In formatting and documentation, submissions should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (15th ed.). Electronic submissions are preferred and should be sent as attachments in MS Word or WordPerfect to yorgasoe@byuh.edu. Please provide mailing address and phone number. Paper copies, if unavoidable, may be sent in triplicate to Ethan Yorgason, BYU-Hawaii, Box 1970, Laie, HI 96762. Manuscripts should be sent as soon as possible up to the deadline. Address queries to Yorgason at (808) 293-3617; fax: (808) 293-3888. For *Dialogue's* publication policy, please see http://www.dialoguejournal.com/.

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on the Prospects and Problems of Persons with Disabilities among the Latter-day Saints

What relationships do the disabled negotiate with both the institutional Church and the Mormon folk? *Dialogue* invites responses to this question, which, as a member of our editorial board has observed, "has many interesting implications: from our definitions of personhood; to our views of connections between pre-earthly estate to the present and the afterlife; to the everyday struggles of 'enduring to the end.'"

To initiate this proposal, *Dialogue* sponsored two sessions on the disabled at the Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium of 2004. An essay from one of these sessions, treating the faith of a young woman severely disabled by cerebral palsy, appears in this issue. We will publish other accepted submissions in later issues.

Authors are particularly invited to submit articles and essays addressing aspects of these questions:

- Given that persons with disabilities and their caretakers are often sensitive, what terminology is appropriate?
- What different problems face the physically disabled and the mentally impaired?
- What are the theological implications of persons with disabilities? What are the moral implications?
- What programs and social services for persons with disabilities does the Church provide? Which seem successful and which less so? What is missing?
- What attitudes do Mormon folk show toward persons with disabilities?
- What is being done to improve the lot of persons with disabilities among the Mormons? What more could be done?

Submissions

Send articles and essays to the *Dialogue* Submissions Office. In formatting and documentation, submissions should follow the 15th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Electronic submissions are preferred. Send attachments in Word or WordPerfect to dialoguemss@aol.com. Please provide mailing address and phone number. Submissions may also be made in printed copy. Mail three copies to *Dialogue* Submissions Office, 704 228th Ave. NE, #723, Sammamish, WA 98074. Phone: (425) 898-9562. For *Dialogue's* publication policy, please see www.dialoguejournal.com.

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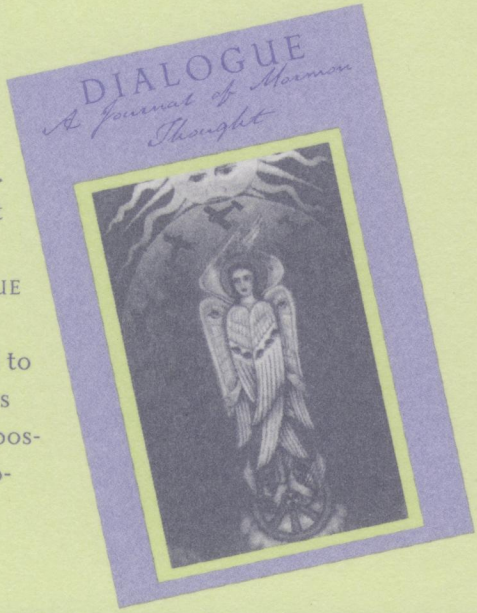

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