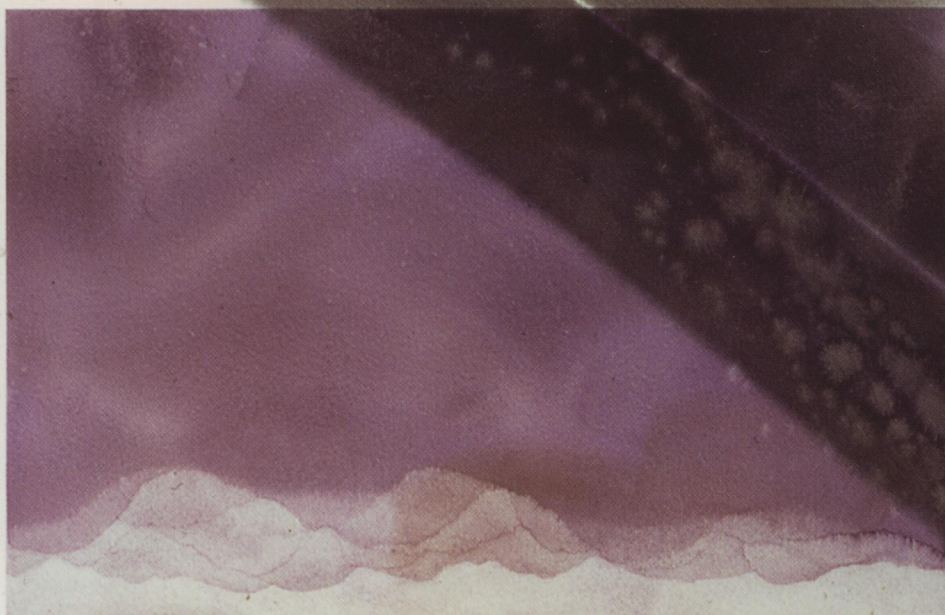


DIALOGUE

A Journal of Mormon Thought



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DIALOGUE

A Journal of Mormon Thought

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Haitian Mormons

May I add some thoughts to Jennifer Huss Basquiat's fine article ("Embodied Mormonism: Performance, Vodou, and the LDS Faith in Haiti," 37, no. 4 [Winter 2004]: 1–34)?

My own experience was more recent (2000–02), more rural (her focus was Port-au-Prince and the upscale, by Haitian standards, Pétionville Ward), and more involved with organizational matters. My impressions do not counter hers. Indeed, they broaden the scope and deepen the implications of what she has stated so well.

Basquiat mentioned the visionary inclinations of the Haitians she interviewed. They have no problem with Joseph Smith and the First Vision. They themselves receive such manifestations or know someone right around the corner who does, and these personal manifestations play fast and loose with doctrinal purity. She mentions their "casting historical Mormon figures (including the present prophet) in an ancestor's role." They thus have a profound respect for authority figures—I would add, at a distance, and with a disdain for established hierarchies and procedures. They have adopted their own "definitional ceremonies" to which they have added,

since Basquiat's study, the temple in the Dominican Republic. I found a widespread fondness for the temple but for reasons that might startle mainline Mormons. The appeal is based on the love of secrecy, ritual, the feeling of being initiated into the mysteries. Basquiat could have a field day exploring this area, especially in light of her emphasis on Vodou.

You can imagine me, armed with my *Handbook of Instructions*, marching onto this playground. It was an administrative nightmare. But stepping back a bit, I came to realize that what I was witnessing was the Church of the New Testament or, if you will, the early days of the Restoration. In both cases, the challenge was to institutionalize an ideal, to channel the revelatory spirit into an organizational framework; in short, to reconcile the blinding vision with the need for survival.

The early Christian Church made the accommodation by adopting Greek philosophy and Roman organization and thus establishing doctrinal orthodoxy and its enforcing procedures (clergy and sacramental constraints). The Christianity inherited by the West, whether Catholic or Protestant, built upon this approach.

Now, however, traditional west-

ern Christendom is in decline. The new centers arise in warmer climes, including Africa, the seat, we should remind ourselves, of the earliest expansion of the faith.

All of which brings me back to this article, my experience in Haiti, and a previous stint in East Africa. I think we have not yet begun to realize the implications of our boast of a “world-wide” Church. The interface of the Church with Haiti or, to a much greater extent, Africa, will not leave either party unchanged. What we are witnessing in these parts of the world is a throwback to an earlier age when the Saints were accustomed to a much more free-flowing spirit, did not see efficiency as the highest of organizational values, focused on ritualistic and charismatic aspects of the faith as unifying factors, and found doctrinal purity a sometime thing.

A forbidding future? Maybe. But it will liven up the landscape.

Gary Huxford
Monmouth, Oregon

Folklore Rebutted

In “From Captain Kidd’s Treasure Ghost to the Angel Moroni: Changing *Dramatis Personae* in Early Mormonism,” 36, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 17–42, Ronald Huggins attacks Joseph Smith by claiming that a “money-digger’s yarn” was transformed into “restoration history.”

Huggins believes that “careful study” allows one “to trace the story’s development from its earlier to its later version” (19, 22).

Huggins’s work, however, hardly qualifies as a “careful study.” He seems to be unaware, for example, of Mark Ashurst-McGee’s definitive article “Moroni: Angel or Treasure Guardian?” *Mormon Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (2001): 39–75.

Ashurst-McGee argues that the issue “requires an application of the basic standards of source criticism and good history”: (1) First-hand accounts take precedence over secondhand accounts; (2) Sources composed closer to the time of the event take precedence over sources composed later on (48).

Applying these standards, Ashurst-McGee analyzes primary sources in chronological order. Huggins, in contrast, ignores these standards and misses key documents. A prime example is the Willard Chase affidavit. Huggins claims that Chase’s account of the plates—featuring black clothes, a black horse, a disappearing book, and a toad that turns into a spirit—preserves “the earliest version of the story” (22). Only later, Huggins argues, did Joseph speak of revelation and an angel.

The Chase document, however, fails both of Ashurst-McGee's tests. First, it is not a firsthand account. Rather than hearing of the plates directly from Joseph, Chase heard of them from the Prophet's father. Even if he recalled the conversation accurately, his secondhand version at best represents the view of Joseph Sr. Second, multiple sources were composed before Chase's 1833 statement. A careful study should look first at the early firsthand witnesses and second at the early written sources.

Firsthand accounts—in the order these individuals spoke with Joseph Smith—include the following:

1–2. Lucy Mack Smith's 1844–45 history and William Smith's 1883 reminiscence. The Smiths heard of the plates from Joseph on September 22 or 23, 1823. Lucy wrote that Joseph was contemplating religious questions, that a bright light entered the room, and that Joseph "looked up and saw an angel of the Lord" (Lavina Fielding Anderson, *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001], 335). According to William, "[Joseph] told us how the angel appeared to him, . . . and that the angel had also given him a short account of the inhabitants who formerly resided upon this continent" (Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Docu-*

ments, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998–2003], 1:496).

3. Lorenzo Saunders's 1884 interview. Saunders said that Joseph told him about the revelation, the plates, and the angel "in the summer before Alvin died" (EMD, 2:159). Saunders thus pinpoints his conversation with Joseph as falling between the first visit of Moroni on September 22, 1823, and Alvin's death on November 19, 1823.

4–5. Joseph Knight's reminiscence, ca. 1835–47, and Joseph Knight Jr.'s 1862 history. The Knights heard the story from Joseph Smith in November of 1826. Joseph said Joseph Smith had been visited by a personage who instructed him to do the will of God in order to obtain the plates (EMD, 4:15). According to Joseph Jr., the Prophet "had seen a vision, that a personage had appeared to him and told him <where> there was a gold book of ancient date buried, and if he would follow the directions of the Angel he could get it" (EMD, 4:71).

Accounts emphasizing a treasure guardian came later. Benjamin Saunders reported in 1884 that he had heard Joseph say, "there was something down near the box that looked like a toad that rose up into a man which for-

bid him to take the plates" (EMD, 2:137). This conversation took place in 1827, shortly after Joseph obtained the plates. Similarly, Joseph and Hiel Lewis, who talked to Joseph in the spring of 1828—and recorded their version in 1879—said Joseph told of a dream where he saw a man with a long beard, "who appeared like a Spaniard" and whose throat was "cut from ear to ear, and the blood streaming down" (EMD, 4:304).

While all of these individuals claimed to have heard Joseph's story between 1823 and 1828, no documents have survived from that crucial period. The earliest sources include the following:

1. Jesse Smith's letter of June 26, 1829. In the first known written record of the plates, Jesse Smith, Joseph Sr.'s hostile older brother, mentioned disapprovingly that Joseph Jr. had written "that the angel of the Lord has revealed to him the hidden treasures of wisdom & knowledge, even divine revelation" (EMD, 1:552).

2. Lucius Fenn's letter of February 12, 1830. In the earliest account by someone not associated with Mormonism, Lucius Fenn wrote that "there has been a bible found by 3 men but a short distance from us . . . an angel appeared to these 3 men and told them that there was a bible concealed in such a place and

if one of them would go to that place he would find it" (EMD, 5:268).

3. Rev. Diedrich Willers's letter of June 18, 1830. Willers, a local minister, reported that Joseph Smith "claimed that the angel of the Lord had appeared and made known to him that . . . there were golden plates hidden in the earth on which was written the fate of a Jewish prophet's family" (EMD, 5:272).

Newspapers also provide valuable information, but here again Huggins mismanages the sources. He quotes an 1831 statement from Abner Cole, editor of the *Palmyra Reflector*, that "it is well known that Jo Smith never pretended to have any communion with angels, until a long period after the pretended finding of his book" (EMD, 2:246, emphasis Cole's). Cole's claim supports Huggins's thesis, but a systematic look at the earliest newspaper accounts shows something else:

1. *Wayne Sentinel*, June 26, 1829, the first-known newspaper account of the Book of Mormon: "Much speculation has existed, concerning a pretended discovery, through superhuman means, of an ancient record, of a religious and a divine nature and origin, written in ancient characters, impossible to be interpreted by any

to whom the special gift has not been imparted by inspiration" (EMD, 2:218–19).

2. *Palmyra Freeman*, ca. August 1829: "[Golden Bible] proselytes give the following account of it. In the fall of 1827, a person by the name of *Joseph Smith* . . . reported that he had been visited in a dream by the spirit of the Almighty and informed that in a certain hill in that town, was deposited this Golden Bible, containing an ancient record of a divine nature and origin" (EMD, 2:221).

3. *The Reflector*, Palmyra, January 2, 1830, Abner Cole's first extensive treatment of Joseph Smith: "We do not intend at this time, to discuss the merits or demerits of this work. . . . The *Book*, when it shall come before the public, must stand or fall according to the whims and fancies of its readers. . . . we cannot discover any thing *reasonable*. . . . As to its religious character, we have as yet no means of determining. . . ." (EMD, 2:231–34).

Huggins fails to mention that Cole radically changed his tune *after* Joseph Smith demanded that Cole stop illegally printing excerpts from the Book of Mormon. Before the confrontation with Joseph, Cole took a wait-and-see attitude—afterwards, he ridiculed Joseph with his "Book of Pukei" parody and claims about treasure dig-

ging and "Walters the Magician" (*Reflector*, June 12, 1830; EMD, 2:231–34).

The pattern is clear: the earliest witnesses, including the Smiths and the Knights, emphasized the religious aspects of Joseph's story. Accounts emphasizing "Captain Kidd" elements, from Saunders and the Lewis brothers, were later developments. Likewise, the first personal mentions of the Book of Mormon, from the likes of Jesse Smith and Lucius Fenn, set the story in a religious context, while later accounts from people such as Abram Benton and James Gordon Bennett focused on Joseph's "magic power" and treasure seeking transformed into a "religious plot" (EMD, 4:96; 3:282).

Finally, newspaper accounts from 1829 on consistently emphasized an ancient record of a "divine nature," with Cole's 1830 "Book of Pukei" being the main exception. In fact, the first mention of Kidd's treasure in an article about Mormonism refers not to Joseph Smith but to a Rochester money digger coincidentally named Smith (*The Gem*, May 15, 1830; EMD, 3:271–73). In a major *faux pas*, Huggins mistakenly claims that this account describes Joseph Smith or one of his brothers (40).

Certainly, all accounts—both

hostile and friendly to Joseph—deserve careful study. Some witnesses apparently conflate one or more of Joseph's visions. Also, even friendly sources include such details as a disappearing book (Joseph Knight Sr.) and a shock that prevented Joseph from retrieving the plates (Oliver Cowdery). Rather than showing that Joseph concocted his story, however, such retellings simply show that he described an experience that included both "religious" and "folk culture" elements. This should not be surprising because, as Ronald W. Walker has pointed out, Joseph grew up in a world that blended "human-kind's deep myths and Christian

ideas" ("The Persisting Idea of American Treasure Hunting," *BYU Studies* 24, no. 4 [1984]: 452). This culture, so different from the technological world we inhabit, also demands serious study by anyone attempting to understand Joseph Smith. The pattern revealed, however, is quite opposite to the one proposed by Huggins: early witnesses described an angel who appeared in a religious context, but, as Ashurst-McGee puts it, later witnesses "defrocked" Moroni by focusing on Captain Kidd's treasure.

Larry Morris
Salt Lake City, Utah

Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841–44

Gary James Bergera

We hardly dared speak of it [i.e., plural marriage during Joseph Smith's lifetime]. The very walls had ears. We spoke of it only in whispers. —Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Smith Young, 1898

Of course there was things manifestly that the church was not to know—that they were not to reveal to the church, or were not to be revealed to the church. —Wilford Woodruff, 1892

FROM JOSEPH SMITH'S FIRST DOCUMENTED plural marriage in 1841 until his death more than three years later, some twenty-eight men and 106 women (as civil and plural wives) entered the prophet's order of celestial matrimony.¹ Given the secrecy surrounding Smith's controversial (and illegal) practice, the exact number of these earliest polygamists may never be

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1. This number counts Marinda N. Johnson Hyde and Mary Ann Frost Stearns Pratt once each. It does not include the deceased civil wives of John E.

known. However, enough information in the form of diaries, letters, autobiographies, reminiscences, affidavits, statements, and family histories has accumulated since the early 1840s—coupled with reasonable inferences and educated guesses—to enable a compelling, albeit tentative, identification.²

Based on the most convincing data presently available,³ the following men either definitely or probably married additional wives with Joseph Smith's permission prior to his death on June 27, 1844: James Adams, Ezra T. Benson, Reynolds Cahoon, William Clayton, Joseph W. Coolidge, Howard Egan, William Felshaw, William D. Huntington, Orson Hyde, Joseph A. Kelting, Heber C. Kimball, Vinson Knight, Isaac Morley, Joseph Bates Noble, John E. Page, Parley P. Pratt, Willard Richards, Hyrum Smith, John Smith, Joseph Smith, William Smith, Erastus Snow, John Taylor, Theodore Turley, Lyman Wight, Edwin D. Woolley, Brigham Young, and Lorenzo Dow Young. While the evidence in a few cases (i.e., Coolidge, Felshaw, Kelting, Page, and Wight) for an early plural marriage is circumstantial and conjectural, these twenty-eight men and

Page, Parley P. Pratt, Hyrum Smith, and Brigham Young, nor the husbands of women also married plurally to Joseph Smith, nor the men and women involved in John C. Bennett's unauthorized system of polygamy.

2. In early 1994, George D. Smith published the results of his investigations into early plural marriage: "Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841–1846: A Preliminary Demographic Report," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 37 (Spring 1994): 1–72. Smith's analysis included a comprehensive appendix entitled "Nauvoo Polygamous Families" which listed every known—as of 1994—early plural husband and wife sealed with Joseph Smith's (and later Brigham Young's) approval, together with dates of birth, marriage, sealing, age at sealing, and total family size prior to mid-1844, from mid-1844 to 1846, and from 1846 on. My essay revisits Smith's ground-breaking identifications.

3. In addition to the biographical and historical sources cited throughout this essay, the following two references were particularly invaluable: the individual and group genealogical records searchable at www.familysearch.org and the information assembled in Susan Easton Black's multi-volume *Membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1848* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, Religious Studies Center, 1984–88). Despite their occasional errors, both works are essential sources. Unless otherwise indicated, all genealogical information for the men and women here treated comes from these two compilations.

their wives comprise the most likely candidates for membership in Joseph Smith's inner circle of plural marriage participants.⁴ (Biographical details not covered in the body of this essay may be found in the appendix.)

For Joseph Smith, a marriage that survived death had to be performed by an officiator authorized to employ the sealing power of God's restored priesthood authority. Marriages sanctioned, or "sealed," in this manner were termed eternal marriages. The highest state, or order, of eternal marriage was celestial, or plural, marriage. Only after the abandonment of plural marriage did the terms "celestial" and "eternal" marriage become interchangeable in LDS parlance. Plural marriages could be for time only, in which case the husband acted as his wife's terrestrial caretaker; for eternity only, in which the wife became her husband's "eternal possession" after death only; or for time and eternity, in which case the wife or wives were joined—or sealed—to their husband, both in this life and the next. The majority—though not all—of Mormon plural marriages were for time and eternity.⁵

4. Although I have elsewhere speculated that George J. Adams (1811–80) and William Henry Harrison Sagers (1815–86) also married polygamously during Smith's lifetime, I now believe they should be excluded. In 1843, Adams was summoned to LDS headquarters to answer charges of adultery. He admitted to a sexual encounter and was forgiven. Rumors surfaced soon afterward that he had taken a plural wife, but this cannot be corroborated. Still, it is likely that Adams was at least introduced to Smith's teachings on the subject. Following Smith's death, Adams joined William Smith (Joseph's younger brother) and Samuel Brannan in advocating and practicing polygamy without the approval of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. As a result, he was excommunicated in 1845. Sagers was linked sexually to his sister-in-law, Phebe Madison, in late 1843, but she married civilly shortly before he was tried for adultery and forgiven. While Joseph Smith subsequently explained plural marriage to Sagers and others, there is no evidence that Sagers contracted an officially sanctioned plural marriage prior to Smith's death.

5. For helpful introductions to Mormon plural marriage, see Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989); Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); and Louis J. Kern, *An Ordered Love: Sex Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Utopias—The Shakers*,

Mormon plural marriage featured a strong patriarchal orientation.⁶ Viewed as a portion of the faithful husband's "privileges" and "possessions," plural wives comprised an integral element in Joseph Smith's celestial marital economy. Smith "often referred to the feelings that should exist between husband and wives," remembered one of his plural wives, saying

that they, his wives, should be his bosom companions, the nearest and dearest objects on earth in every sense of the word. He said men must beware how they treat their wives. They were given them for a holy purpose that the myriads of spirits waiting for tabernacles might have pure and healthy bodies. He also said many would awake in the morning of the resurrection sadly disappointed; for they, by transgression, would have neither wives nor children, for they surely would be taken from them, and given to those who should prove themselves worthy. Again he said, a woman would have her choice; this was a privilege that could not be denied her.⁷

Many—but not all—of the men and especially women entering into Joseph Smith's order of plural marriage did so primarily as a show of loyalty, obedience, and sacrifice to Smith, coupled with Smith's assurance that blessings unimaginable awaited them. For Smith, plural marriage represented the pinnacle of his theology of exaltation: the husband as king and priest, surrounded by queens and priestesses eternally procreating spirit children. As these spirit offspring enter mortality, they, by their obedience, accrue both to themselves, through their own children, and to their eternal parents additional glory, power, and exaltation—the entire process of exaltation cycling forever worlds without end.

Evidence

This section compiles the evidence for each pre-martyrdom plural marriage in alphabetical order by the husband's surname.

the Mormons, and the Oneida Community (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

6. B. Carmon Hardy, "Lords of Creation, Polygamy, the Abrahamic Household, and Mormon Patriarchy," *Journal of Mormon History* 20 (Spring 1994): 119-52.

7. Lucy Walker Smith Kimball, quoted in Lyman Omer Littlefield, *Reminiscences of Latter-day Saints* (Logan: Utah Journal Co., Printers, 1888), 45-46.

That **James Adams** married Roxena Higby Repsher (also Repshire) as a plural wife was attested to by Repsher on October 13, 1869. According to Repsher: “On the eleventh day of July A.D. 1843 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married to James Adams for time and all eternity, (James Adams already having one wife ^living^) by President Joseph Smith.”⁸ Roxena had previously married Daniel Mayhope Repsher (born 1804) on February 22, 1821; however, she had apparently separated from Repsher by the time of her marriage to Adams. The exact state of Roxena’s separation is unclear, and evidently not everyone agreed, at least initially, with her decision. Nearly a year earlier on August 31, 1842, Joseph Smith had told members of Nauvoo’s all-female Relief Society: “sis[ter]. Repshar had long since been advised to return to her husband—has been ascertain’d by good evidence that she left her husband without cause—that he is a moral man and a gentleman—she has got into a way of having revelations, but not the rev[elations]. of God—if she will go home we will pray for her, but if not our prayers will do no good.”⁹ Roxena and Daniel did not reconcile, and Daniel married Hannah Walton (born 1826) in the Nauvoo Temple on January 24, 1846. There is no evidence that either of James Adams’s marriages was repeated in the Nauvoo Temple.

Ezra T. Benson’s early plural marriage to his civil wife’s younger sister is attested to in two 1869 affidavits. In the first, dated September 6, 1869, his civil wife, Pamela Andrus, testified: “On the nineteenth day of November A.D. 1843 She was married or sealed to Ezra T Benson for time and all eternity by Hyrum Smith in the presence of Adeline B. Andrus her

8. Repsher’s statement is found among the many affidavits on “Celestial Marriage” that Joseph F. Smith collected in 1869-70 in two record books (hereafter Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books) housed in Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives). The affidavits in these two books are not arranged in any particular order. They also occasionally contain duplicates. Some of these documents, along with later statements, were published in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (1905; reprint., Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1970), 67ff. Carets (^) indicate text added interlinearly in the original document.

9. Nauvoo Relief Society, Minutes, August 31, 1842, in *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Press, [December 2002]): 1:19.

sister, which was done in the City of Nauvoo County of Hancock, State of Illinois, and further, on the twenty seventh day of April A.D. 1844 at the same place She was present and witnessed the marrying or sealing of her sister Adeline to her Husband E[zra]. T. Benson by President Hyrum Smith.”¹⁰ In the second, dated September 5, 1869, his first plural wife, Adeline Andrus, stipulated: “On the Twenty-seventh day of April, A.D. 1844 in the City of Nauvoo, county of Hancock State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed to Ezra T. Benson, for time and all eternity, (he already having one wife,) by President Hyrum Smith; in the Presence of Pamela A. Benson, and also that her sister, Pamela, was Sealed to E[zra]. T. Benson Nov[ember]. 1843.”¹¹

Evidence for **Reynolds Cahoon’s** early plural marriage apparently exists only in Cahoon family history. Stella Cahoon Shurtleff and Brent Farrington Cahoon, comps. and eds., *Reynolds Cahoon and His Stalwart Sons* (n.p., 1960), 78, and Mary L. S. Putnam and Lila Cahoon, eds. and comps., *Reynolds Cahoon: His Roots and Branches* (Bountiful, Utah: Family History Publishers, 1993), v, 65, 78, both report Cahoon’s plural marriage to Lucina Roberts Johnson, a widow, sometime in late 1841 or early 1842. Lucina had married Peter Henry Johnson (born 1801) on November 24, 1824. She had six children before Peter died in 1838. Lucina evidently bore Cahoon a daughter, named Lucina Johnson Cahoon, about 1843, who died shortly after birth.

William Clayton’s early plural marriages are among the best documented. Clayton’s 1874 affidavit¹² and James B. Allen’s biography, *Trials of Discipleship: The Story of William Clayton, a Mormon* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 188–220 (republished as *No Toil Nor Labor Fear: The Story of William Clayton* [Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002], 185–218), detail both the challenges of life in Nauvoo polygamy as well as Clayton’s marriages, first to Ruth Moon in 1836 and then to her younger sister, Margaret Moon, as a plural wife in 1843. Prior to Jo-

10. Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

11. Ibid. See also John Henry Evans and Minnie Egan Anderson, *Ezra T. Benson: Pioneer, Statesman, Saint* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1947), 63, 65, 355–56; and Donald Benson Alder and Elsie L. Alder, comps., *The Benson Family* (Salt Lake City: Ezra T. Benson Genealogical Society, Inc., 1979), 38, 54.

12. William Clayton, “Affidavit,” February 16, 1874, holograph, LDS Church Archives.

seph Smith's death, Clayton also unsuccessfully courted Mary Aspin (born 1815) and Sarah Ann Booth (born 1826) as plural wives. Clayton's daily first-person account of early Mormon plural marriage is found in George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1991, 1995), 93–197.

Though secondhand, the evidence for **Joseph W. Coolidge's** early plural marriage seems persuasive. According to a conversation between Coolidge and Joseph F. Smith recorded in Smith's diary on August 28, 1870: "Joseph Smith had sealed more than one wife to Jos[eph]. W. Coolidge, and he [i.e., Coolidge] 'knew' as he said, what he spoke. I record this as the testimony of a man who has not been with the Church for more than 20 years."¹³ Coolidge had married Elizabeth Buchanan civilly in 1834. If Joseph F. Smith's report is correct (i.e., that Joseph Smith sealed more than one wife to Coolidge), Coolidge's first plural marriage was probably to Elizabeth's younger sister, Mary Ann Buchanan, sometime before Joseph Smith's death on June 27, 1844. Coolidge and his families did not join the main body of the Saints for their move west in 1846–47.

Howard Egan's early plural marriage is better documented. Sometime early in 1844, Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith's older brother, reportedly told John D. Lee that Egan had been "sealed to Mrs. [Catherine Reese] Clawson, and that their marriage was a most holy one; that it was in accordance with a *revelation* that the Prophet had recently received direct from God. He then explained to me fully the doctrines of polygamy, and wherein it was permitted, and why it was right."¹⁴ Reese had married Zephaniah Clawson (born 1798) on January 8, 1824. They had six children before Clawson died about 1839.

In 1869, Mary Ellen Kimball, a plural wife of Heber C. Kimball, added that "She was present, and a witness to the marriage or Sealing of Catherine Clawson to Howard Egan, (who already had one wife) by Hyrum Smith, Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

13. Joseph F. Smith, Diary, August 28, 1878, in *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Press, [December 2002]): 1:26.

14. John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled, or the Life and Confessions of John D. Lee* (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1877), 288.

Saints.”¹⁵ Mormon apostle George A. Smith, writing to Joseph Smith III in 1869, corroborated this early plural marriage.¹⁶ Tamson Parshley, Egan’s civil wife, remained with him throughout his life; Catherine Reese divorced him in 1852.

The evidence for **William Felshaw**’s early plural marriage is compelling but circumstantial. The only known sources for his plural marriage to Charlotte Walters (born 1824) on July 28, 1843, are his family genealogical records (at www.familysearch.org) and Susan Black’s *Membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, s.v. “Felshaw, William.” In apparent corroboration of his and Walters’s marriage, however, Charlotte gave birth to their first daughter, Katherine, on January 25, 1845, suggesting that conception occurred in May 1844; and when Charlotte was endowed in the Nauvoo Temple on February 3, 1846, she was identified explicitly as “Charlotte Felshaw”—both of which imply an early marriage to Felshaw.

William D. Huntington’s early plural marriage is also best attested to in his and his family’s genealogical records (at www.familysearch.org) and in Black, *Membership*, s.v. “Huntington, William Dresser.” Huntington married Caroline Clark civilly in 1839 and three and a half years later was sealed to her younger sister, Harriet Clark. William was the brother of two of Joseph Smith’s plural wives, Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs and Presendia Lathrop Huntington Buell. Another brother, Dimick Huntington, introduced his sisters to Smith’s teachings on polygamy and performed their plural marriage ceremonies. It is interesting that William, the younger of the two brothers, not Dimick, entered Smith’s order of plural marriage during Smith’s lifetime.

The primary evidence for **Orson Hyde**’s two early plural marriages is found in an 1869 affidavit and in the autobiography of one of his wives.¹⁷ On September 15, 1869, Hyde testified:

I, Orson Hyde, do hereby certify and declare according to my best rec-

15. Mary Ellen Kimball, Affidavit, August 6, 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

16. George A. Smith, Letter to Joseph Smith III, October 9, 1869, Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronology of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), October 9, 1869, LDS Church Archives.

17. See also the genealogical information in Myrtle Stevens Hyde, *Orson Hyde: The Olive Branch of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Agreka Books, 2000), 496–99.

ollection, that on the 4th day of Sept[ember] I was married to Miss Marinda N. Johnson, In Kirtland Ohio, in the Year of our Lord 1834. And in the Month of Feb[ruary] or March, I was married to Miss Martha R. Browitt, by Joseph Smith the Martyred Prophet and by him She was Sealed to me for time, and for all Eternity, in Nauvoo Ill[inois]. And in the month of April of the same year 1843, I was married by the same person to Mss. Mary Ann Price, and by him she was Sealed to me for time and for all Eternity, in Nauvoo Ill[inois] while the woman to whom I was first married was yet living and gave her cordial consent to both transactions and was personally present to witness the ceremony's.¹⁸

Mary Ann Price Hyde recorded in her memoirs, apparently in the 1880s:

On the return of Orson Hyde from his mission to Palestine [on December 7, 1842] he carried letters of introduction to me and invited me to visit his wife. I was there met by Joseph Smith, the Prophet, who, after an interesting conversation introduced the subject of plural marriage and endeavoured to teach me that principle. I resisted it with every argument I could command for, with my traditions, it was most repulsive to my feelings and rendered me very unhappy as I could not reconcile it with the purity of the gospel of Christ. Mr. Hyde took me home in a carriage and asked me what I thought of it and if I would consent to enter his family? I replied that I could not think of it for a moment.

Thus it rested for awhile and Mr. Hyde married another young lady [i.e., Martha R. Browett].¹⁹ In the mean time I was trying to learn the character of the leading men, for I sincerely hoped they were men of God. But, in my mind, plurality of wives was a serious question.

I soon learned to my satisfaction, that Mr. Orson Hyde was a conscientious, upright[,] and noble man and became his third wife. Mrs. [Marinda Nancy] Hyde had two sweet little girls and I soon learned to love them and their dear mother who in the Spring of 1842 [sic, 1843] received me into her house as her husband's wife. Sealed to him by Joseph the Prophet in her presence.²⁰

Orson Hyde and Marinda Nancy Johnson's marriage is one of at least two cases in which Joseph Smith evidently married as a plural wife the civil wife of one of his apostles. (The other may be Parley P. Pratt's

18. Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books. Myrtle Stevens Hyde, *Orson Hyde*, 498, dates Hyde's marriage to Price as July 20, 1843.

19. Browett and Hyde divorced ca. 1850.

20. Mary Ann Price Hyde, "Autobiography," holograph, n.d., not paginated, LDS Church Archives.

wife, Mary Ann Frost Stearns.) Johnson and Smith's marriage is treated in Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 228–44. Though two separate sealing dates have been proposed for Joseph and Marinda's plural marriage—April 1842 and May 1843—the earlier date is probably the more correct. It is the date found in Smith's personal diary, though recorded later, and is in keeping with Smith's practice of marrying married or widowed women during this period of time. Marinda's May 1, 1869, affidavit reporting a May 1843 sealing to Smith probably refers to a resealing.²¹

Marinda was never sealed to Hyde during Smith's lifetime, and Hyde received his second anointing on January 25, 1844, alone. During Smith's lifetime, only two other men, Orson Pratt and Parley P. Pratt, received their second anointings without their wives. The second anointing was the highest ordinance in Smith's temple-related theology during which wives were anointed as queens and priestesses to their husbands, and husbands as kings and priests to God; the second anointing thus functioned as a de facto "marriage" sealing. Although after Smith's death, Marinda was evidently sealed to Hyde, an occurrence Todd Compton terms "extremely anomalous,"²² it is not entirely clear if she was also anointed to him, although given their sealing, she probably was. In 1870, Marinda and Orson divorced, Marinda counting herself as Smith's—not Hyde's—eternal companion.

Like Coolidge's, the evidence for **Joseph A. Kelting's** early plural marriage is inferential—perhaps because like Coolidge, Kelting did not remain with the LDS Church for long after Joseph Smith's death.²³ Kelting married Elizabeth Ann Martin in 1832. Then, according to an affidavit he signed on March 1, 1894:

Calling at the home of the prophet one day, early in the spring of 1844, on some business or other not now remembered, the prophet invited me into a room up stairs in his house, called the mansion. After we entered the room he locked the door and then asked me if I had heard the rumors connecting him with polygamy. I told him I had. He then began a

21. Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

22. Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 243.

23. Unlike Coolidge, Kelting was excommunicated from the LDS Church January 6, 1849. See the entry for this date in Pottawattamie High Council Minutes, typed excerpts in my possession, original in LDS Church Archives.

defense of the doctrine by referring to the Old Testament. I told him I did not want to hear that, as I could read it for myself. He claimed to be a prophet—I believed him to be a prophet—and I wanted to know what he had to say about it. He expressed some doubts as to how I might receive it, and wanted to know what stand I would take if I should not believe what he had to say about it. I then pledged him my word that whether I believed his revelation or not, I would not betray him. He then informed me that he had received a revelation from God, which taught the correctness of the doctrine of a plurality of wives, and commanding him to obey it. He acknowledged to having married several wives. I told him that was alright. He said he would like a further pledge from me that I would not betray him. I asked him if he wanted me to accept the principle by marrying a plural wife. He answered yes. A short time after this I married two wives in that order of marriage.²⁴

In a second affidavit, dated September 11, 1903, Kelting reported:

I first knew Joseph Smith, the Prophet, in Ohio. I once called upon him afterwards at his residence in Nauvoo, Illinois, and told him I wanted a private interview. We walked up stairs together. His wife, Emma, was down stairs, and he did not wish her to hear what we were going to talk about.

We went into the front room, and he locked the door. I told him it was mooted about that he was teaching plural marriage, and asked him the question, "Are you mootting plural marriage?"

His answer was, "cannot answer you, as you are both a lawyer and sheriff of Hancock County, and it might militate against you as an officer as well as against us."

I said, "Joseph, whatever you tell me as your friend is safe; I came here to find this out, and I assure you upon the *square* (and we were both Masons) it shall never injure you in any shape."

"I did moot plural marriage," said the Prophet.

"Did you have a revelation to teach this?" I asked.

"I did," he answered.

"Have you more than one wife sealed to you by this authority," I asked.

"I have," said he.

After giving me this information, he referred me to Brigham Young if I wanted any more on this subject, Brigham seeming to be the man he trusted most with this matter, and was putting him to the front.

24. Joseph A. Kelting, quoted in B. H. Roberts, *Succession in the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Publishing Co., 1900), 119–20; original affidavit in LDS Church Archives.

The Prophet assured me that the revelation was as authoritative and binding as any revelation given through him up to that time; and, in fact, that it was paramount to all the rest.²⁵

Kelting's use of "a short time" in the first affidavit suggests that he married polygamously prior to Smith's death. As Kelting received both his wife, Elizabeth, and Minerva O. Woods through the veil in the Nauvoo Temple when all three received their endowments on December 24, 1845, and all were sealed less than a month later on January 20, 1846, I speculate that Kelting may have married Woods sometime before the end of June 1844.

Like William Clayton's, Joseph Smith's, and Brigham Young's, **Heber C. Kimball's** plural marriages have received the most scholarly attention. Stanley B. Kimball's biography, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 307–16, treats the topic in detail. In addition, Heber Kimball's first plural wife, Sarah Peak Noon, testified on September 7, 1869: "President Joseph Smith personally taught her the doctrine of a plurality of wives, and that on the [blank] day of [blank] A.D. 1842 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois She was married or Sealed for time and all eternity to Heber C. Kimball by President Joseph Smith in the presence of President Brigham Young."²⁶ Sometime in October or November 1842, Peak gave birth to her and Kimball's son, Adelmon (sometimes Adelbert).²⁷

Heber's experience with plural marriage reveals much of Joseph Smith's approach and method of instruction. "Brother Heber," Smith announced probably sometime before the close of 1841, "I want you to give Vilate [Murray Kimball, Kimball's civil wife] to me to be my wife." "Dumb-founded," Kimball fell into a dark funk for several days. Finally, after pouring out his soul in prayer to God, he asked Vilate to accompany him to Smith's residence. After being ushered into a private room, Kimball turned to Smith and, pointing to Vilate, said, "Brother Joseph, here is Vilate." Smith, according to Kimball, "wept like a child" and im-

25. Joseph Kelting, Affidavit, September 11, 1903, LDS Church Archives.

26. Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

27. Adelmon died five or six months later during the week of April 18–24, 1843. See *The Wasp*, April 26, 1843, 3; information courtesy H. Michael Marquardt.

mediately sealed the faithful couple “for time and all eternity,” saying, “Brother Heber, take her, and the Lord will give you a hundredfold.”²⁸

Throughout this episode, Vilate was evidently unaware of her husband’s situation, for Smith also instructed Kimball at or around this same time to marry plurally without telling Vilate, a caution that would have been unnecessary if Vilate knew of Smith’s doctrine.²⁹ Heber agreed but grew conflicted about the subterfuge. Vilate eventually asked what was troubling him; and when Kimball explained his predicament, they settled on two elderly sisters who, they felt, “would cause [Vilate] little, if any, unhappiness.”³⁰ According to Lorenzo Snow, another early apostle and later LDS Church president, when Joseph Smith learned of Kimball’s intention, he vetoed the plan, declaring that the “arrangement is of the devil you go and get you a young wife one you can take to your bosom and love and raise children by.”³¹

Smith then “commanded” Kimball to marry thirty-one-year-old Sarah Noon, whose husband had apparently deserted her. In fact, Kimball’s grandson noted, “Heber was told by Joseph that if he did not do this he would lose his Apostleship and be damned.”³² “I can say,” Heber confided to Vilate, “I never suffered more in all the day[s] of my life than since

28. James Lawson (Kimball’s son-in-law), Statement, in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 2d ed. (1880; reprinted, Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallace, 1945), 440. Heber told Lawson this story when Lawson was courting Kimball’s adopted daughter, Elizabeth Ann Noon Kimball, whom Lawson married in 1856. Elizabeth was the daughter of Sarah Peak Noon by her first husband, William Spencer Noon. Author Orson F. Whitney was Kimball’s grandson, the son of his and Vilate’s daughter, Helen Mar Kimball Smith Whitney, also one of Joseph Smith’s plural wives.

29. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball*, 9–96.

30. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 336.

31. Quoted in Stan Larson, ed., *Prisoner for Polygamy: The Memoirs and Letters of Rudger Clawson at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, 1884–87* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 12.

32. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 336 note. Though the sources disagree as to whether Vilate helped to choose the two elderly sisters, I believe she did. The two sisters, Laura and Abigail Pitkin, were subsequently sealed to Kimball in the Nauvoo Temple on February 3, 1846.

these things c[a]me to pass.”³³ “You have my *first and best* and Eternal love fore time and Eternity,” he added on September 3, 1843. “And I pray God the Eternal Father to let you live while I live, fore thare is no Soul that can fill your place in my heart.”³⁴

Sometime prior to his death in mid-1842, **Vinson Knight** married Philinda C. Eldredge Myrick.³⁵ Philinda had wed Levi N. Myrick on November 18, 1827, but he had been killed in the Haun’s Mill Massacre in late 1838. According to Knight family history,

It is said that Martha [McBride Knight, Vinson Knight’s first wife] was the first woman to give her consent for her husband to enter Plural Marriage. She knew some thing was worr[y]ing her husband and he couldn’t seem to tell her about it. One evening as she was sitting in the grape arbor behind the house Vinson returned home carrying a basket. He explained to her that he had taken some fruit and vegetables to the widow, Mrs. Levi Merrick, whose husband had been killed at Haun’s Mill, M[iss]o[uri]. He also explained to her that he had been told to enter Plural Marriage. That if he had to, this Sister Merrick would be the one he could help best. He must have been greatly relieved when Martha replied, “Is that all.”³⁶

Knight may have attempted to effect a second plural marriage before his death. On June 23, 1843, William Clayton recorded in his diary: “This A.M. President Joseph [Smith] took me and conversed considerable concerning some delicate matters. . . . Also Brother [Vinson] Knight he [i.e., Joseph Smith] gave him [i.e., Knight] one [i.e., a plural wife] but he

33. Letter quoted in Danel W. Bachman, “A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith” (M.A. thesis, Purdue University, 1975), 185.

34. Heber C. Kimball, Letter to Vilate Kimball, September 3, 1843, holograph, LDS Church Archives.

35. See Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 369; and D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1994), 559. See also Franklin D. Richards, Diary, December 9, 1887, LDS Church Archives: “This evening Sister Gilbert Belnap daughter of Vinson Knight’s once Presiding Bishop until his death in Nauvoo. Her mother [i.e., Martha McBride Knight] was sealed to the Prophet Joseph [Smith]. Her father received another wife—widow Merrick whose husband was martyred at Haun’s Mill.”

36. Della Belnap, “Martha McBride Knight,” typescript, not paginated, LDS Church Archives; courtesy Todd Compton.

went to loose conduct and he could not save him.”³⁷ Following Knight’s death, Eldredge married Daniel H. Keeler civilly on February 1, 1843. There is no evidence that Knight’s marriages were repeated in the Nauvoo Temple.

The evidence for Isaac Morley’s two early plural marriages is both inferential and based on family tradition. Historian Maureen Ursenbach Beecher was the first to note that Eliza R. Snow recorded the name of her older sister Abigail Leonora Snow Leavitt as “A L Morley.” Abigail had been scribe for Eliza’s copy of her patriarchal blessing, which Isaac Morley had pronounced on December 19, 1843. Beecher notes that Eliza’s identification of her sister by Morley’s name “confirms her knowledge that her sister’s sealing to Isaac Morley . . . had in fact already taken place.”³⁸ Abigail’s name appears simply as “A. Leonora Leavitt” in Morley’s own book of his patriarchal blessings in LDS Church Archives.

In fact, Eliza Snow clearly implies a plural marriage between Isaac and Abigail at least as early as September 1843 in her *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* . . . (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1884), 70, 73, and 75. Abigail had married Enoch V. Leavitt (1799-1866) in 1821, but by 1830 had left him. She and two daughters joined the LDS Church in 1831. According to Morley family history, Isaac subsequently took as his second plural wife Hannah B. Finch Merriam on January 14, 1844.³⁹ Finch had married Edwin P. Merriam (born 1803) on November 5, 1831. After three children had been born, Merriam died on September 14, 1842.

Shortly after his marriage to Finch, Morley and his civil wife, Lucy Gunn, broached the subject of plural marriage with their daughter Cordelia (born 1823). “In the spring of forty-four [1844],” Cordelia remembered in her autobiography, “plural marriage was introduced to me by my parents from Joseph Smith, asking their consent and a request to me to be his wife. Imagine if you can my feelings, to be a plural wife, some-

37. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 108. *An Intimate Chronicle* misidentifies “[Vinson] Knight” as “[Newel] Knight.”

38. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed., *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000), 273 note 41. Earlier, Beecher had used the verb “suggests” instead of “confirms.” Maureen Ursenbach, “Eliza R. Snow’s Nauvoo Journal,” *BYU Studies* 15 (Summer 1975): 414 note 43.

39. Vera Morley Ipson, “History and Travels of the Life of Isaac Morley Sr.,” 1958, 2, LDS Church Archives.

thing I never thought I ever could. I knew nothing of such religion and could not accept it. Neither did I.”⁴⁰ Cordelia was sealed to Smith by proxy after his death.

According to his sworn testimony dated June 26, 1869, **Joseph Bates Noble** reported that

in the fall of the year A.D. 1840 Joseph Smith, taught him the principle of Celestial marriage or a “plurality of wives”, and that the said Joseph Smith declared that he had received a Revelation from God on the subject, and that the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, (Joseph Smith) to move forward in the said order of marriage, and further, that the said Joseph Smith, requested him, (Jos. Bates Noble) to step forward and assist him in carrying out the Said principle, saying “in revealing this to you I have placed my life in your hands, therefore do not in an evil hour betray me to my enemies.”⁴¹

In a second statement given that same day, Noble added “that, on the fifth day of April A.D. 1841, At the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, he married or sealed Louisa Beaman, to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints, according to the order of Celestial Marriage revealed to the Said Joseph Smith.”⁴² Louisa Beaman was the sister of Noble’s civil wife, Mary A. Beaman.

About performing the sealing of Louisa Beaman to Joseph Smith, Noble later testified:

626 Q:— . . . Did you not marry Joseph Smith and Louisa Beeman over at Montrose in Iowa in your house where you lived at that time before you moved over to Nauvoo? A:— No sir it was not performed there. It was performed on this side of the river.

627 Q:— Do you mean that it was performed in Nauvoo? A:— Yes sir.

628 Q:— At whose house? A:— At mine.

40. “Autobiography of Cordelia Morley Cox,” 1, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections).

41. Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

42. Ibid. See also Franklin D. Richards, Diary, January 22, 1869: “Br[other] Joseph B. Noble . . . related that he performed the first sealing ceremony in this Dispensation in which he united Sister Louisa Beman to the Prop[h]et Joseph in May—I think the 5th day—in 1841 during the evening under an Elm tree in Nauvoo. The Bride disguised in a coat and hat.” Noble was not consistent in remembering where exactly he performed this marriage ceremony. See his testimony quoted below.

629 Q:—Who was present? A:— My family. . . .

680 Q:— You performed the ceremony and returned across the river that same night did you not? Is that not what you said? A:— Yes sir.

681 Q:— What made you say the other day that Joseph Smith and that women you sealed to him slept together that night? A:— Because they did sleep together.

682 Q:— If you were not there that night how do you know they slept together? A:— Well they slept together I know. If it was not that night it was two or three nights after that.

683 Q:— Where did they sleep together? A:— Right straight across the river at my house they slept together. . . .

686 Q:— . . . Did he [i.e., Joseph Smith] sleep with her [i.e., Louisa Beaman] the first night after the ceremony was performed? A:— He did.

687 Q:— Now you say that he did sleep with her? A:— I do.

688 Q:— How do you know he did? A:— Well I was there.

689 Q:— And you saw them go to bed together? A:— I gave him counsel.

690 Q:— What counsel did you give him? A:— I said “blow out the lights and get into bed, and you will be safer there”, and he took my advice or counsel. (Witness laughs heartily)

691 Q:— Let the record show that the witness is applauding himself upon the smartness of his answer. . . .

700 Q:— Well did you stay there until the lights were blown out? A:— No sir I did not stay until they blowed out the lights then.

701 Q:— Well you did not see him get into bed with her that time? A:— No sir.

702 Q:— And so you don’t know whether he followed your advice from your own knowledge? A:— No sir I did not see him, but he told me [he] did.

703 Q:— Well do you know from your knowledge that he did? A:— Well I am confident he did.

704 Q:— But you don’t know it of your own knowledge from seeing him do it? A:— No sir, for I was not there.

705 Q:— Was Emma Smith there? A:— No sir.

706 Q:— Did she know any thing about it? A:— No sir, I think not.

707 Q:— Were they married at his house? A:— No sir.

708 Q:—Where were they married—were they married at your house? A:— Well it was a house that I had rented, —or a house that I owned by the bye, for I owned a whole block there that I had bought.⁴³

Two years later to the day after Louisa’s sealing to Smith, Noble, ac-

43. Joseph Bates Noble, Testimony, in “Respondent’s Testimony, Temple

cording to his "Individual Record" (at www.familysearch.org) and Black (*Membership*, s.v. "Noble, Joseph Bates"), married Sarah B. Alley as his first plural wife. Their child, George, was born ten months later. "I have a secret to tell you but I am almost afrade," Vilate Kimball wrote to her husband, Heber C., on June 29, 1843, of Alley's pregnancy. "It was committed to Sarah [Noon, whom Heber had married in 1842] and she was requested not to tell me, but she said she concidered me a part of her self and she would tell me, and I might tell you for it was just what you had prophesyed would come to pass. Now if you know what you have said about sarah Abby [i.e., Sarah B. Alley] then you have got the secret, for it is even so and she is tickled about it and they all appear in better spirits than they did before. How they will carry it out, is more than I know. I hope they have got more faith than I have."⁴⁴

Apparently, Noble had hoped to marry sooner. According to William Clayton's diary for May 17, 1843: "pres[iden]t. J[oseph Smith] said to bro[ther]. [Benjamin F.] Johnson & I that J[oseph]. B[at]es. Nobles when he was first taught this doctrine [i.e., plural marriage] set his heart on one [potential plural wife] & pressed J[oseph]. to seal the contract but he never could get opportunity. It seemed that the Lord was unwilling. Finally another [potential plural wife] came along & he then engaged that one and is a happy man. I learned from this anecdote never to press the prophet but wait with patience & God will bring all things right."⁴⁵ Noble took his second plural wife, Mary Ann Washburn, nearly four months after this conversation took place.⁴⁶

John E. Page's early plural marriages are documented in an interview conducted by Joseph Fielding Smith with Page's third civil wife, Mary Judd. Page's first two wives, Betsey Thompson and Lorain Stevens, had died before he married Mary in 1833 and 1838 respectively. In August 1904, Joseph Fielding Smith, future LDS Church Historian, apostle,

Lot Case," 424, 426–27, Library-Archives, Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri.

44. Vilate Murray Kimball, Letter to Heber C. Kimball, June 29, 1843, holograph, LDS Church Archives.

45. Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 103.

46. See Hazel Noble Boyack, *A Nobleman in Israel: A Biographical Sketch of Joseph Bates Noble, Pioneer to Utah in 1847* (Cheyenne, Wyo.: Pioneer Printing, 1962), 32; courtesy H. Michael Marquardt.

and president, visited Judd, who reported that “she gave her husband, John E. Page, other wives.”⁴⁷ In a fuller statement, Smith reported that Page evidently married polygamously during Joseph Smith’s lifetime:

In 1904 I went to the World’s Fair in St. Louis. James G. Duffin was presiding over the Central States Mission at that time, and I went with him to see Mary Page Eaton, wife of John E. Page. She was an aged woman, and I was introduced to her. The two of us sat there and talked and I questioned her about plural marriage. I asked her, “Did John E. Page have wives other than you?” She replied, “Yes.” I said, “How did he get them?” She said, “I gave them to him.” I said, “How come you did that?” She said, “Well, he wanted them and I gave them to him.” I said, “Well, that was in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith.” She said, “Yes, it was.”⁴⁸

According to D. Michael Quinn, Page may have married Nancy Bliss as a plural wife in 1844, but they separated in 1845.⁴⁹

Both of **Parley P. Pratt**’s early wives left statements of their marriages to him. Though she divorced him in the spring of 1853, Pratt’s civil wife, Mary Ann Frost Stearns, reported on September 3, 1869: “On the twenty-fourth day of July A.D. 1843, at the City of Nauvoo County of

47. Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, 49-50; emphasis Smith’s.

48. Quoted in Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of the Twelve, the Patriarch to the Church, the Assistants to the Twelve, the First Council of the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric, May 5, 1954, photocopy of typescript in my possession. It should be noted that, in 1842, Judd had denied knowing about plural marriage:

“244 Q:— When did you, if at all, know of the practice of plurality of wives,—or the preaching of the doctrine of plurality of wives? A:— I never heard it preached while Joseph [Smith] lived.

“245 Q:— You never did? A:— No sir, not while he lived.” Mary [Judd Page] Eaton, Testimony, “Complainant’s Testimony, Temple Lot Case,” 642.

49. Quinn, *Origins of Power*, 567. See also the entry in Christian Christiansen’s journal which reports a visit ca. 1856 to “Brother Page” near Quincy, Illinois, “who had two wives given him by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo who lived with him without anyone’s speaking to him about it.” Quoted in Davis Bitton, *Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1977), 66; courtesy H. Michael Marquardt. Todd Compton believes that the second of Page’s Nauvoo wives was probably Mary’s sister, Rachel Judd. Compton, quoted in Levi Peterson, email to Gary Bergera, November 4, 2004.

Hancock, State of Illinois She was married or Sealed to Parley P. Pratt for time and eternity, by President Hyrum Smith, in the presence of Mary Ann Young and Elizabeth Brotherton.”⁵⁰ Frost previously had married Nathan Stearns (born 1809) on April 1, 1832. They had one child before Stearns died in mid-1833.

Mary Ann also attested that same day in a second affidavit: “On the twenty-fourth day of July A.D. 1843, at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was present and witnessed the marrying or Sealing of Elizabeth Brotherton to Parley P. Pratt for time and eternity, by Hyrum Smith Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the presence of Mary Ann Young.”⁵¹

On August 2, 1869, Elizabeth Brotherton, Pratt’s first plural wife, stated: “On the twenty fourth day of July A.D. 1843, in the City of Nauvoo County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or sealed to Parley P. Pratt for time and all eternity, by Patriarch Hyrum Smith, in the presence of Mary Ann Young, and Mary Ann Pratt, Mary Ann Pratt being Sealed at the same time.”⁵² “[B]e buisy [sic] in doing good,” Parley wrote to Elizabeth less than three months after their marriage, “and God will bless you, and I will bless you, and you shall want for no good thing, and soon you shall have a house and home, and enjoy more and more of the society of those you love. perhaps I may not see you tonight because of other matters. If not I will see you tomorrow night at the same place at six O Clock or between that and nine.”⁵³

Parley and Mary Ann’s sealing was evidently more complicated than Mary Ann’s affidavit indicates. Pratt family tradition holds that Pratt and Sterns, as well as Pratt and Brotherton, were initially sealed by Hyrum Smith on June 23, 1843, but that, when Joseph Smith learned of the ceremony performed in his absence and without his permission, he rescinded them. Although the reasons are not clear, Joseph Smith had apparently

50. Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid. See also the genealogical data in *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, edited by Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1873; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985 printing), 429–31; and *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt: Revised and Enhanced Edition*, edited by Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 586–92.

53. Parley P. Pratt, Letter to Elizabeth Brotherton Pratt, October 7, [1844], Parley P. Pratt Papers, LDS Church Archives.

wanted Pratt's first plural wife to be Olive Gray Frost.⁵⁴ However, Parley evidently prevailed, and one month later, on July 24, 1843, Joseph asked Hyrum⁵⁵ to seal Pratt and his first civilly married wife, Thankful Halsey Pratt (married 1827, died 1837), for eternity, with Frost acting as proxy for Halsey; then seal Pratt and Sterns; and finally seal Brotherton to Pratt as his first plural wife. Smith subsequently wed Olive Frost, probably at around this same time.⁵⁶

Mary Ann's support of plural marriage vacillated. Vilate Kimball, writing to Heber C. on June 29, 1843, describes Mary Ann's reaction to the doctrine:

I have had a viset from brother Parley [P. Pratt] and his wife [Mary Ann]. They are truly converted [to plural marriage]. It appears that J[oseph] has taught him some principles and told him his privilege and even appointed one [i.e., Elizabeth Brotherton] for him. I Dare not tell you what it is [as] you would be astonished and I guess some tried. She has be[e]n to me for counsel. I told her I did not wish to advise in such matters. Sister Pratt has be[e]n raging against these things. She told me her self that the devel had ben in her until within a few days past. She said the Lord has shown her it was all right. She wants Parley to go ahead, says she will do all in her power to help him. They are so ingagued I fear they will run to[o] fast. They asked

54. According to Pratt family records, as quoted in Proctor and Proctor, *Parley P. Pratt, Revised and Enhanced*, 407 note 9: "Elizabeth Brotherton, daughter of Thomas and Sarah Brotherton, born March 27, 1816 in Manchester, England, sealed to Parley P. Pratt as his wife for time and all eternity, June July 24, 1843. Done at the house of Brigham Young in Nauvoo, by the hand of Patriarch Hyrum Smith." Some family members read the correction of month as evidence of a June 1843 sealing between both Pratt and Brotherton and Pratt and Sterns. For more on the dating of Parley's and Mary Ann's sealing, see Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982), 66-71, summarizing Pratt family historian Stephen L. Pratt. "The sealing power was not in Hyrum [Smith] legitimately," Brigham Young later reported, presumably in reference to the Pratts' June 1843 sealing, "neither did he act on the sealing principle only as he was dictated by Joseph [Smith]. This was proven, for Hyrum did undertake to seal without counsel, & Joseph told him if he did not stop it he would go to hell and all those he sealed with him." Brigham Young, Letter to William Smith, August 10, 1845, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives.

55. Mary Ann Frost Pratt, Affidavit, September 3, 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books. Mary Ann makes it clear that Hyrum, not Joseph, officiated.

56. Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 6, 586-92.

me many questions on principle. I told them I did not know much and I rather they would go to those that had authority to teach. Parley said he and I were interrupted before he got what instruction he wanted and says he did not know when he should have an opportunity. He seemed willing to wait. I told him these were sacred things and he better not make a move until he got more instruction.⁵⁷

Reportedly, Parley was eager to take additional wives, which Mary Ann initially sanctioned. As William Clayton, writing in his diary on August 20, 1843, noted: "I also had talk with M[ary]. Aspen who is in trouble. P[arley]. P. P[ratt] has through his wife [Mary Ann Pratt] made proposals to her but she is dissatisfied[.] Sister P[ratt]. is obstinate. When P[arley]. went away sister P[ratt]. cautioned A. [Aspin] against me & said the Twelve would have more glory than me &c. I tried to comfort her & told her what her privilege was."⁵⁸ However, Mary Ann's views changed, perhaps as the challenges of life as a plural wife became apparent. As Parley later wrote of her: "Afterwards Alienated from her husband and Saught by all manner of falsehoods to destroy his Influence and Character. But repenting of these things and Confessing them before President B[righam]. Young in the temple at Nauvoo and Solemnly convening to take back her words of falsehood, Wherever they had been Spoken she was frankly forgiven by her husband [himself]."⁵⁹

Although Parley and Mary Ann may have been sealed in July 1843, Joseph Smith subsequently indicated that they had not been sealed for eternity and Mary Ann was not later anointed to Parley as a part of his second anointing.⁶⁰ Instead, she was sealed and anointed to Joseph Smith by

57. Vilate Kimball, Letter to Heber C. Kimball, June 29, 1843, holograph, LDS Church Archives.

58. Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 118. Pratt also successfully courted Belinda Marden. She wrote a poem in April 1844 that begins: "For nought to me is all beside / If of his presence I'm denied / The happy hours with him I've spent / To me a holy charm have lent." She concludes, speaking as though in Parley's voice: "My dear, your prayers for future life / Are granted—You shall be my wife." Parley P. Pratt Notebook, Perry Special Collections. Pratt and Marden were sealed on November 20, 1844.

59. Parley P. Pratt, quoted in "Family Record of Parley Parker Pratt," March 11, 1850, Parley P. Pratt Papers.

60. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898*, typescript,

proxy in the Nauvoo Temple in early 1846.⁶¹ Thus, Joseph Smith may have wanted to take Mary Ann as a plural wife, as he had Orson Hyde's wife, Marinda. When he discovered that Hyrum had sealed the Pratts, he cancelled the sealing, then arranged to have Parley and Thankful sealed for eternity, Parley and Mary Ann sealed for time, Parley and Elizabeth Brotherton sealed for both time and eternity, and finally had himself sealed to Mary Ann and to her sister, Olive, for eternity.⁶²

Willard Richards's first plural marriages—to teenage sisters Sarah

edited by Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-85): 2:340, recorded about Pratt's second anointing on January 21, 1844: "Joseph [Smith] said Concerning Parley P Pratt that He had no wife sealed to him for Eternity and asked if there was any harm for him to have another wife for time & Eternity as He would want a wife in the Resurrection or else his glory would be Clipped. Many arguments He used upon this subject which were rational & consistent. Br[other] Joseph said now what will we do with Elder [Parley] P Pratt? He has no wife sealed to him for Eternity. He has one living wife but she had a former Husband and did not wish to be sealed to Parly for Eternity. Now is it not right for Parley to have another wife that can [blank]?" Yet according to his own diary, Joseph Smith was not present for Pratt's second anointing (Brigham Young performed the rite), and presumably Smith made these comments in another setting. That Woodruff's statements regarding Mary Ann's having a "former husband" and not wanting "to be sealed to Parly for Eternity" were crossed out suggests that this information may not have been correct or perhaps that Woodruff later learned that Pratt had been sealed to Elizabeth Brotherton six months earlier.

61. According to Pratt family tradition, Brigham Young believed that "if Joseph [Smith] had lived he would have had Mary Ann [Pratt] sealed to him [in the Nauvoo Temple]." Consequently, following Smith's death, Young advised Parley to "Take Sister Mary Ann and her children; take good care of them and take them to Joseph [Smith] and it will do more for your exaltation than anything you can do in the matter." LDS Church President John Taylor later explained to one of Parley and Mary Ann's children: "Your mother was sealed [in the Nauvoo Temple] to the Prophet Joseph [Smith], your father acting as proxy." John Taylor, Letter to Moroni L. Pratt, October 29, 1886, First Presidency Letterpress Copybooks, LDS Church Archives.

62. Even so, the Pratts' marriage was not happy. "A few days after the foregoing Ordinance [i.e., Mary Ann's sealing to Joseph Smith]," Parley commented: "She forsook her husband [i.e., Parley] who had moved Out from Nauvoo, on his way to the Mountains Choosing to return (Like Lots Wife) and remain In Nauvoo till Spring. She accordingly returned and took two of the Children with her

and Nanny Longstroth in January 1843—are attested to only in Richards’s family history. Prior to his first plural marriage, Richards had married Jennetta Richards civilly in 1838. According to Sarah Longstroth’s descendants:

When Joseph Smith told Grandpa [i.e., Willard Richards] to take another wife, he had no one in mind; so the Prophet said, “Willard, what about some of the women you knew in England?” And immediately Grandfather thought of the Longstroth family and how they had taken good care of him when he was so ill. The Longstroths had come to America and were living in St. Louis, and Willard went down there and asked the parents for Sarah and Nanny. Sarah was sixteen, and Nanny was fourteen. The parents thought Nanny was too young, so Willard said, “Let me marry her, and she can come back home and stay with you and when you feel that she is ready you can send her to me.” With the consent of the girls this was agreed upon. A few weeks later, Grandpa Longstroth brought the girls to Nauvoo. They married Dr. Willard Richards in January 1843. Joseph Smith performed the ceremony.

Nanny returned to St. Louis with her father, and Sarah may have stayed in Nauvoo for awhile, but later was with her family in Rockport, Mo. where they were living in 1843 and early 1844. The Longstroths moved to Nauvoo in Mar 1844 and it is known that Sarah was living with her family when Willard’s wife Jennetta died (July 1845). Sarah and Nanny were sealed to Willard Richards in the Nauvoo Temple Jan[uary] 22 and 25, 1846 and it was after this time that the marriages were consummated.⁶³

Richards’s third Nauvoo plural marriage—to Susannah (Lee) Liptrot—as well as the plural marriage of his own sister Rhoda to Joseph Smith five months later are documented in his diary, though in short-hand. As deciphered, Richards’s diary entry for June 12, 1843, reads: “Marr[ie]d Susana L[ee] Liptrot a[nd] Rhoda [Richards] to Jogh[er] [Joseph

viz—Moroni and Olivia Pratt. . . . After this she came to the Council Bluffs, where her husband had an interview with her and still kindly Invited her to go with him; but she still refused and wished to return to the State of Maine.” Quoted in “Family Record of Parley Parker Pratt.”

63. Ann Richards Martin, “Sarah Longstroth (1826–1858),” in *Richards Family History*, edited by Joseph Grant Stevenson, (Provo, Utah: Stevenson’s Genealogical Center, 1991), 3:279; see also p. 285.

Smith].”⁶⁴ Susannah was the widow of John Liptrot (born 1804), married in England before 1829. All four early wives were subsequently resealed (Jennetta, by proxy) to Richards in the Nauvoo Temple.⁶⁵

The two early plural marriages of Joseph Smith’s older brother, **Hyrum Smith**, are documented in the testimonies of Hyrum’s wives. His first civil wife, Jerusha Barden, died in 1837. Later that same year, he married British convert Mary Fielding. On August 11, 1843, he took as his first plural wife Mary’s sister, Mercy R. Fielding Thompson, the widow of Robert B. Thompson, who had died on August 27, 1841. Before the end of the month, Hyrum married a second plural wife, Catherine Phillips. “On the eleventh day of August A.D. 1843 at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois,” Mercy stipulated on June 19, 1869, “She was married or Sealed for time to Hyrum Smith, Presiding Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, by Joseph Smith, President of the Same, according to the laws of said Church regulating marriage. In the presence of her sister Mary Smith.”⁶⁶ In an untitled autobiographical sketch, dated December 20, 1880, Mercy added:

On the 11 of August 1843 I was called by direct revelation from Heaven through Brother Joseph the Prophet to enter into a state of Plural Marriage with Hyrum Smith the Patriarch. This subject when first communicated to

64. Willard Richards, Diary, June 12, 1843, LDS Church Archives, transcription courtesy D. Michael Quinn. See also the notation after July 1, 1866, in Wilford Woodruff, *Historian’s Private Journal*, LDS Church Archives: “Willard Richards & Susannah Liptrot were sealed June 12, 1843, by Joseph Smith in Josephs Store Nauvoo.” My appreciation to D. Michael Quinn and George D. Smith for pointing out these sources.

65. Also of interest is Richards’s account of his fourth plural marriage, this one performed after Joseph Smith’s death. Richards and his new wife, twenty-one-year-old Alice Longstroth (born January 28, 1824, died November 21, 1909)—sister to Sarah and Nanny—mutually covenanted a plural union between themselves without the aid of an outside officiator: “At 10. P.M. took Alice L.....h by the [hand] of our own free will and avow mutually acknowledge each other husband & wife, in a covenant not to be broken in time or Eternity for time & for all Eternity, to all intents & purposes as though the seal of the covenant had been placed upon us. for time & all Eternity & called upon God. & all the Holy angels—& Sarah Long—th to witness the same.” Richards, Diary, December 23, 1845. Willard and Alice were not resealed in the Nauvoo Temple, and Alice subsequently wed Moses Whittaker (1820–52) and later George D. Watt (1824–1909).

66. Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

me tried me to the very core of my former traditions and every natural feeling of my Heart rose in opposition to this Principle but I was convinced that it was appointed by him who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind. Soon after Marriage I became an inmate with my sister in the House of Hyrum Smith where I remained until his Death sharing with my sister the care of his numerous family I had from the time I moved to his House acted as scribe Recording Patriarchal Blessings.⁶⁷

Hyrum and Mercy had participated six weeks earlier, on May 29, 1843, in a proxy ceremony uniting Hyrum and Jerusha with Mercy acting as proxy for Jerusha, then the union of Mercy and Robert with Hyrum acting as proxy for Robert. Thus, Hyrum and Mercy's celestial marriage was for time only. In 1883, Mercy explained to Joseph Smith III, who was reluctant to believe that his father had practiced plural marriage:

My beloved husband, R[obert]. B. Thompson, your father's private secretary to the end of his mortal life, died August 27th, 1841, (I presume you will remember him.) Nearly two years after his death your father told me that my husband had appeared to him several times, telling him that he did not wish me to live such a lonely life, and wished him to request your uncle Hyrum to have me sealed to him for time. Hyrum communicated this to his wife (my sister) who, by request, opened the subject to me, when everything within me rose in opposition to such a step, but when your father called and explained the subject to me, I dared not refuse to obey the counsel, lest peradventure I should be found fighting against God; and especially when he told me the last time he came with such power that it made him tremble. He then enquired of the Lord what he should do; the answer was, "Go and do as thy servant hath required. He then took an opportunity of communicating this to your uncle Hyrum who told me that the Holy Spirit rested upon him from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. The time was appointed, with the consent of all parties, and your father sealed me to your uncle Hyrum for time, in my sister's room, with a covenant to deliver me up in the morning of the resurrection to Robert Blas[h]el Thompson, with whatever offspring should be the result of that union, at the same time consoling your uncle to build a room for me and move me over as soon as convenient, which he did, and I remained there as a wife the same as my sister to the day of his death. All this I am ready to testify to in the presence of God, angels and men.⁶⁸

67. Mercy Fielding Thompson Smith, untitled autobiographical sketch, December 20, 1880, LDS Church Archives.

68. Mercy Fielding Thompson, Letter to Joseph Smith III, September 5,

A decade later, giving testimony in the Temple Lot Case, she commented:

If there was communication between the eternal world and this I should never have been sealed to any body—if I had not obeyed the command of the Lord, when the Lord sent it through an angel to his prophet Joseph Smith—and sent my own husband or a message from him in the eternal world to me through the prophet, and to his brother Hyrum that he should take me, and my little child—that is the word that my dead husband sent from the eternal world to brother Hyrum that he should take charge of me and my little child and keep us in this world, and on the day of resurrection to deliver us up safely to my husband. Now that was the message from my husband to the prophet, or to brother Hyrum through the prophet, commanding Hyrum to take me to live with my sister with my little child, and he did not act on it quick enough, and so he came the second time—or he went and enquired of the Lord—and the Lord spoke to him through the angel, and when he inquired of the Lord the voice told him to go and do as his servant required him to do and that was the time that he went to Hyrum and told him what he had been ordered to do, and he then sent my sister over to me to break the word to me.⁶⁹

Of her own experience as Hyrum Smith's plural wife, Catherine Phillips testified in 1903:

I was married to Hyrum Smith, brother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as his plural wife, and lived with him as his wife.

The sealing was performed by the Prophet Joseph Smith himself in Nauvoo, State of Illinois, in August, 1843, in the brick office belonging to my husband, and occupied at the time as a dwelling by Brother and Sister Rob[er]t. and Julia Stone, and was witnessed by my mother, Sister Stone and her daughter Hettie.

In consequence of the strong feeling manifested at the time against plural marriage and those suspected of having entered into it, I, with my mother, moved to St. Louis near the close of the year, where I was living when the Prophet Joseph and my husband were martyred.⁷⁰

Hyrum Smith's conversion to plural marriage was difficult. As Brigham Young recalled in 1866:

1883, reproduced in "Testimony as to Her Marriage to Hyrum Smith," *Deseret Evening News*, February 6, 1886.

69. Mercy Rachel Thompson, Testimony, "Respondent's Testimony, Temple Lot Case," 263.

70. Catherine Phillips Smith, Affidavit, January 28, 1903, in "Affidavit of

Right north of the Masonic Hall in Nauvoo the ground was not fenced, this was in the year 1842 [sic, 1843]. There were some rails laid along to fence up some lots. Hyrum [Smith] saw me and said, "brother Brigham, I want to talk to you." We went together and sat upon those rails that were piled up. He commenced by saying, "I have a question to ask you. In the first place I say unto you, that I do know that you and the twelve know some things that I do not know. I can understand this by the motions, and talk, and doings of Joseph, and I know there is something or other, which I do not understand, that is revealed to the Twelve. Is this so?" I replied "I do not know any thing about what you know, but I know what I know.]" Then he said, "I have mistrusted for along time that Joseph has received a revelation that a man should have more than one wife, and he has hinted as much to me, but I would not bear it." . . .

I will now go back to where I met Hyrum. He said to me, "I am convinced that there is something that has not been told me. I said to him, "brother Hyrum, Joseph would tell you everything the Lord reveals to him, if he could." I must confess I felt a little sarcastic towards Hyrum, although he was just as honest as an Angel, and as full of integrity as the Gods' but he had not that ability which Joseph possessed to see and understand men as they were. I took advantage of this, and I said to him, "Brother Hyrum, I will tell you about this thing which you ~~say you~~ do not know ~~about~~ if you will swear with an uplifted hand, before God, that you will never say another word against Joseph and his doings, and the doctrines he is preaching to the people." He replied, "I will do it with all my heart; ~~I want to be saved~~" and he stood upon his feet, saying, "I want to ~~be knowing~~ the truth and to be saved." And he made a covenant there, never again to bring forward one argument or use any influence against Joseph's doings. Joseph had ~~a good~~ many wives sealed to him. I told Hyrum the whole story, and he bowed to it and wept like a child, and said God be praised. He went to

Widow Smith," *Deseret Evening News*, September 27, 1905. Neither Mercy nor Catherine was subsequently sealed and/or anointed to Hyrum (by proxy) in the Nauvoo Temple. Only Mary Fielding was resealed (January 15, 1846) and reanointed (January 30, 1846) to her deceased husband. However, on January 27, 1846, Louisa Sanger and, on January 30, Lydia Dibble Granger, widow of Oliver Granger, and Polly Miller were all sealed by proxy to Hyrum for eternity. In addition, Louisa was sealed to Reuben Miller (Hyrum's proxy) for time, Lydia to John Taylor (Hyrum's proxy) for time, and Polly to Samuel Bent (Hyrum's proxy) for time. Lydia was also anointed to Hyrum (with Taylor again acting as proxy), and Polly, though this is not clear, may have also been anointed to Hyrum (with Bent acting as proxy). There is no evidence that Louisa was anointed to Hyrum. On the basis of these sealings, some have speculated that these three latter women had been sealed to Hyrum while still alive as his plural wives.

Joseph and told him what he had learned, and renewed his covenant with Joseph, and they went heart and hand together while they lived, and they were together when they died, and they are together now defending Israel.⁷¹

Hyrum subsequently became a staunch proponent of his younger brother's doctrine. He presented his brother's revelation on plural marriage (LDS D&C 132) to members of the Nauvoo Stake high council in August 1843 and performed many plural marriage sealings from June 1843 until his and his brother's deaths a year later.

John Smith, Joseph Smith's uncle, married Clarissa Lyman on September 11, 1815. According to Jesse Nathaniel Smith, John then married Mary Aikens as his first plural wife on August 13, 1843.⁷² Aikens had first married Silas Smith (born 1779) in 1828. They had three children before Silas died in 1839. About the same time as his plural marriage to Aikens, John Smith was also sealed, according to Benjamin F. Johnson, to Julia Ellis Hills Johnson:

My mother having finally separated from my father, by the suggestion or counsel of the Prophet [Joseph Smith] she accepted of and was sealed by him to father John Smith. In this I felt not a little sorrow, for I loved my father and knew him to be naturally a kind and loving parent, a just and noble spirited man. But he had not obeyed the Gospel, had fought it with his words; and as I knew a stream must have a fountain and does not rise above it, so I consoled myself, assured by the Prophet's words that a better day would come to my father.⁷³

Julia Ellis had married Ezekiel Johnson (born 1773) in 1801. They had sixteen children. Johnson, who never joined the LDS Church, died in early 1848 in Nauvoo. Prior to Julia Johnson's marriage to John Smith, his nephew Joseph Smith had married as plural wives two of Johnson's daughters: Delcena Johnson Sherman in July 1842, and Almera W. Johnson in May-June 1843. Following Joseph Smith's death, Mary Aikens was sealed to her deceased husband (with John Smith as proxy) in the Nauvoo Temple. Julia Johnson was both resealed and anointed to John Smith.

The abundant evidence for **Joseph Smith's** Nauvoo plural wives was

71. Brigham Young, Sermon, October 8, 1866, LDS Church Archives.

72. *Journal of Jesse Nathaniel Smith: The Life Story of a Mormon Pioneer, 1834-1906* (Salt Lake City: Jesse N. Smith Family Association, 1953), 7.

73. Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review: Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Johnson* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Co., 1997), 88-89.

first published in Andrew Jenson, "Plural Marriage," *Historical Record* 6 (May 1887): 233–34. Jenson was followed by Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (1945; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 457–88; Thomas Milton Tinney, *The Royal Family of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Junior* (Salt Lake City: Tinney-Green[e] Family Organization Publishing Company, 1973); Danel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith" (1975); George D. Smith, "Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy" (1994); D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (1994), 587–88; and most recently Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*. Although some readers may disagree in a handful of instances with Compton's identifications of Smith's Nauvoo wives,⁷⁴ I believe he is accurate. In fact, I am persuaded that the evidence allows for an additional four (if not more) plural wives—Mary Houston, Sarah Scott Mulholland, Mary Ann Frost Stearns Pratt, and Phebe Watrous Woodworth—bringing the total of Joseph Smith's known Nauvoo plural wives to at least thirty-six.⁷⁵

Houston, Woodworth, and Pratt were all sealed and anointed to Joseph Smith by proxy in the Nauvoo Temple, a privilege suggesting a plural

74. See Richard Lloyd Anderson and Scott H. Faulring, Review of *In Sacred Loneliness*, in *FARMS Review of Books* 10 (1998): 2. But see Compton's response, "Truth, Honesty and Moderation in Mormon History: A Response to Anderson, Faulring and Bachman's Reviews of *In Sacred Loneliness*" (July 2001), privately circulated. Compton identifies thirty-three plural wives, Anderson and Faulring twenty-nine. In his response, Compton presents his reasons for keeping thirty-three and even notes that the actual number may be higher.

75. I do not believe that Fanny Alger, whom Compton counts as Smith's first plural wife, satisfies the criteria to be considered a "wife." Briefly, the sources for such a "marriage" are all retrospective and presented from a point of view favoring plural marriage, rather than, say, an extramarital liaison, which seems clearly to be Oliver Cowdery's interpretation of the relationship. In addition, Smith's doctrine of eternal marriage was not formulated until after 1839–40. For Compton's counter-argument, see his *In Sacred Loneliness*, 25–42. I also believe the circumstances of Lucinda Pendleton Morgan Harris's plural marriage to Smith better fits the context of Smith's pattern of contracting plural marriages ca. 1841–42 with married or widowed women than it does to the late 1830s, the period some have assigned to Harris's and Smith's plural marriage. Most recently, Lyndon W. Cook, comp., *Nauvoo Marriages Proxy Sealings, 1843–1846* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 2004), 12–13, has suggested that three more women be

marriage during Smith's lifetime. In fact, Woodworth's daughter, Flora Ann, *had* married Smith during May or June 1843, probably at around the same time as her mother's own possible plural marriage to Smith. Sarah Scott, who had married James Mulholland (1810–39) in early 1839, wed Alexander Mullinder/Mullander (born ca. 1810) civilly on October 25, 1843, with Apostle John Taylor performing the ceremony. Mulholland was probably a “front” husband to conceal Sarah's plural marriage to Smith—much the same arrangement by which Smith had authorized Joseph Kingsbury and Sarah Whitney's “prete[n]ded marriage” on April 29, 1843. Scott was sealed to Mulholland for eternity and to Heber Kimball, not Mullinder, for time on February 3, 1846, in the Nauvoo Temple. The record of that ceremony identifies her explicitly as “Sarah Smith,” implying an earlier sealing to Joseph Smith. Finally, Orson F. Whitney, son of Helen Mar Kimball Smith Whitney, Joseph Smith's youngest plural wife, wrote in his biography of his grandfather, Heber C. Kimball, that Mary Houston and Sarah Scott were known plural wives of Joseph Smith during Smith's lifetime.⁷⁶

A few other clarifications seem appropriate. First, although Zina Huntington's family history reports that Joseph Smith initially approached her as a prospective plural wife in the winter of 1839–40,⁷⁷ Zina herself insisted that Smith never directly broached plural marriage with her until the day of their marriage in October 1841. Rather, “my brother Dimick told me what Joseph had told him [regarding plural marriage],” she recounted. “Joseph did not come until afterwards. . . . [T]he Lord had revealed to Joseph Smith that he was to marry me. I received it from Joseph through my brother Dimick.”⁷⁸

Joseph Smith may have initially raised the topic indirectly with Dimick, possibly at the same time in late 1840 when he was preaching plu-

added to the list of Smith's plural wives: Lydia Kenyon Carter (married ca. 1841–43), Sarah Bapson (probably Sarah [Rapson] Poulterer, married ca. 1841–43), and Hannah Ann Dubois Smith Dibble (married ca. 1842–43).

76. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1888), 431; (1945), 419.

77. See Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 80; and Martha Sonntag Bradley and Mary Brown Firmage Woodward, *Four Zinas: A Story of Mothers and Daughters on the Mormon Frontier* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000), 111–12.

78. See Zina D. H. Young, Interviewed by John W. Wight (an elder of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), October 1, 1898, in

ral marriage to Joseph Bates Noble and one or two others. Smith evidently opposed Zina's civil marriage to Henry Jacobs in March 1841.⁷⁹ Only after that marriage did the prophet's overtures become explicit. "He [Joseph Smith] sent word to me by my brother [Dimick]," Zina remembered, "saying, 'Tell Zina I put it off and put it off till an angel with a drawn sword stood by me and told me if I did not establish that principle upon the earth, I would lose my position and my life.'"⁸⁰ Impressed by Joseph's urgency, Dimick finally agreed to raise the subject with Zina. Zina did not learn for certain of Smith's intention until October 27, 1841, when he proposed to her, she agreed, and Dimick performed the ceremony.

Second, H. Michael Marquardt has shown that despite their affidavits attesting to their resealing to Joseph Smith on May 11, 1843, for the benefit of Smith's civil wife, Emma Hale Smith,⁸¹ sisters Emily Dow and Eliza Partridge were in fact probably resealed to Smith twelve days later on May 23, 1843.⁸²

Third, both Almera Johnson and Ruth Vose Sayers recalled Hyrum Smith performing their plural marriages to Joseph Smith: Almera in the

Zina Card Brown Family Collection, LDS Church Archives; published as "Evidence from Zina D. Huntington-Young," *Saints' Herald* 52, no. 2 (January 11, 1905): 28-30.

79. See Benjamin F. Johnson's reminiscence: "Of the Prophets Partiality or Love for Sister Zina I will only say she was always in his favor. & that after a two & half years mission to Canada & the middle States I returned to learn she had but recently married [Henry Jacobs], which perhaps did not ^quite^ please the Prophet for in answer to this great love for her she soon became his own wife, was among the first to accept the plural ~~order~~ order of marriage." "'Aunt Zina' as I Have Known Her from Youth—By 'Uncle Ben,'" n.d., in Zina Card Brown Family Collection.

80. Zina D. H. Smith, in "Joseph, the Prophet. His Life and Mission as Viewed by Intimate Acquaintances," *Salt Lake Herald Church and Farm Supplement*, January 12, 1895, 212.

81. Affidavits dated May 1, and July 1, 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books; see also Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl," holograph, 185-86, LDS Church Archives.

82. H. Michael Marquardt, "Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young on the Witness Stand: Recollections of a Plural Wife" (2001), privately circulated; see also H. Michael Marquardt, "A Preliminary List of Women Married or Sealed to Joseph Smith (1841-44)," privately circulated.

spring of 1843, and Ruth in February 1843.⁸³ However, Hyrum evidently did not accept his brother's doctrine until May 26, 1843. Thus, if the two women are remembering correctly that Hyrum was the officiator, the two ceremonies presumably would have occurred between May 26, 1843, and Joseph's and Hyrum's deaths on June 27, 1844. If the dates are correct, then someone else may have officiated. In Ruth's case, it is possible that she was reporting a resealing performed by Hyrum.

A possible, if garbled, account of Ruth and Joseph's plural relationship is found in Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal's sensational *Mormon Portraits[;] or the Truth about the Mormon Leaders from 1830 to 1886[.] Volume First[.] Joseph Smith the Prophet His Family and His Friends* (Salt Lake City: Tribune Printing and Publishing Co., 1886), 64–66. Wymetal's story is third-hand at best but seems to report the accidental discovery by Richard Rushton Jr. (1814–84) of Ruth Sayers in Joseph Smith's Mansion House during the last week of April 1843 while Emma Smith was in St. Louis. Wymetal identifies her as “the beautiful and attractive wife of Elder Edward Blossom, a high councilor of Zion, (afterwards exalted to the apostleship by Brigham Young).” Ruth, age thirty-five at the time, was married to Edward Sayers, a florist, and the recalled identification of Sayers as “Edward Blossom” may be understandable. However, Sayers was not Mormon and hence was not a Nauvoo Stake high councilor or later apostle. Wymetal, or his sources, may have confused Ruth Sayers with Lucinda Harris,⁸⁴ whose husband, George, was a high councilor in Nauvoo, but was never an apostle. For an interesting account of Edward Sayers in Utah in 1853, see Mrs. B[enjamin]. G. Ferris (Cornelia Woodcock Ferris), *The Mormons at Home . . .* (New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856), 185–86. Ferris also describes Vienna Jacques Shearer (124–26, 154–56, 186–87), reputedly one of Joseph Smith's plural wives. If Ferris's information is correct,

83. Almera Johnson Smith, Affidavit, August 1, 1883, LDS Church Archives; Ruth Vose Sayers Smith, Affidavit, May 1, 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

84. Thanks to rare book dealer Rick Grunder, we know that Lucinda Pendleton Morgan married George Harris on November 23, 1830, and not November 30, 1830. See www.rickgrunder.com/Newspapers%20for%20Sale/lucindaharris.htm. See also *Spirit of the Times & People's Press* (Batavia, New York) 1 (November 30, 1830): 3; courtesy H. Michael Marquardt.

Shearer was probably not sealed to Joseph Smith during his life (although she was sealed to Smith by proxy in 1858).

William Smith, Joseph Smith's mercurial younger brother, married Caroline Grant civilly in 1833. Ten years later, following a poorly executed foray into John C. Bennett's unauthorized system of plural marriage in early 1842, William evidently married first Mary Ann Covington Sheffield, then perhaps Mary Jones prior to Joseph Smith's death. In both instances, according to Covington, Brigham Young performed the ceremony. Mary Ann Covington had previously married James Sheffield (born 1814) in England in early 1836 but reportedly left him when he mistreated her. She arrived in Nauvoo in early 1843. In 1892, Covington, then in Salt Lake City, affirmed her and Jones's plural marriages to William Smith:⁸⁵

13 ... A:— Well I went to live at Orson Hyde's and soon after that time Joseph Smith wished to have an interview with me at Orson Hyde's. He had the interview with me [in April 1843], and then asked me if I had ever heard of a mans having more wives than one, and I said I had not. He then told me that he had received a revelation from God that a man could have more wives than one, and that men were now being married in plural marriage. He told me soon after that his brother William wished to marry me as a wife in plural marriage if I felt willing to consent to it. . . .

14 Q:— State to the reporter whether or not you consented? . . .

15 . . . A:— Yes sir.

16 Q:— You consented? A:— Yes sir I did.

17 Q:— State to the reporter whether or not you were ever married to William Smith? A:— I was married to him.

18 Q:— Who performed the ceremony? A:— Brigham Young.

19 Q:— Can you state who was present at the performance of the ceremony besides Brigham Young? A:— Not any body but William Smith and myself.

20 Q:— State to the reporter whether or not—whether or not you ever witnessed any other ceremonies, where any one was married in plural marriage? . . .

21 Q:— How many did you witness? A:— I witnessed one.

22 Q:— What was that? A:— I witnessed one other plural marriage to William Smith.

85. In response to hostile questioning, Covington apparently expressed some uncertainty on the exact date of her marriage to William Smith. However, her memory of other past events is impressive, and I can find no persuasive reason to doubt her account of her marriage.

23 Q:— State to the reporter who that was? . . . A:— It was Mary Jones—her name was Mary Jones.⁸⁶

24 Q:— Who performed the ceremony? A:— It was Brigham Young. . . .

27 Q:— Was that last ceremony you have mentioned where he was married to Mary Jones performed after or before the ceremony where you were married to him? A:— After. . . .

30 Q:— Was this after or before the death of Joseph Smith? . . . A:— It was before the death of Joseph Smith.

145 Q:— In whose house were you married to William B. Smith? . . .

146 . . . A:— Well it was in her house—in Agnes Smith's house. . . .

183 Q:— And you swear positively that you roomed with William B. Smith as his wife one night, but you can't say whether it was five nights or ten nights? A:— Yes sir, I know I did one night—and I can't say how many more. . . .

197 Q:— Is it not a fact that you were just sealed to him for eternity, and that that is how Brigham Young sealed you to him,—just for eternity? A:— I was sealed to him for time and eternity. I was sealed to him as everybody else was.⁸⁷

While Covington reports that her marriage to William Smith took

86. Covington may have meant Mary Jane Rollins (born December 25, 1829, died July 22, 1880), whom William married on June 22, 1845, one month after the death of his civil wife. *Nauvoo Neighbor*, July 2, 1845, 3. The exact status of William Smith's marriage to Rollins is unclear. Their marriage does not appear in "A Record of Marriages, in the City of Nauvoo, Illinois, kept and made agreeable to a City ordinance bearing date the 17th day of February 1842, entitled 'An Ordinance concerning Marriages,'" LDS Church Archives. However, this book is probably incomplete: no marriages were recorded between March 18 and October 9, 1845, and only four additional marriages were recorded thereafter, the last occurring on December 31, 1845. That William married so soon after Caroline's death may suggest a prior relationship with Rollins. Non-Mormon journalist Thomas Sharp hinted as much when he wrote in the *Warsaw Signal*, July 2, 1845: "Patriarch Bill Smith, brother of the Prophet, whose wife died about four weeks since, was again married on last Sunday week—having been a widower about 18 days. His bride is about 16 and he is 35. Bill will do very well for a father to the church but his wife won't do for mother. *Wonder* if Bill was not engaged before his former wife died." The marriage was short-lived. Rollins left Smith by the end of the summer; the two formally divorced in early 1847; and Rollins subsequently married Frank Williamson on March 13, 1849.

87. Mary Ann Covington Sheffield Smith Stratton West, Testimony, in "Respondent's Testimony, Temple Lot Case," 495–96, 500, 501. On the other hand, William Smith, "Complainant's Testimony, Temple Lot Case," 168, as-

place in the fall of 1843, the ceremony may have actually occurred sometime during April-May 1844 (or perhaps in late spring 1843), as William was living in the eastern United States from the summer of 1843 to April 1844.

On October 19, 1845, William was excommunicated from the LDS Church for various infractions, including unauthorized plural marriages, undertaken after Joseph Smith's death. In late 1846, Covington married Joseph A. Stratton (born 1821). Stratton died in 1850 in Salt Lake City. In 1864 Covington wed Chauncey Walker West, who had married Mary Ann's sister Sarah in 1855 and who would add a third Covington sister, Susan, as his plural wife in 1867.⁸⁸ Later, Covington was sealed to Stratton, with West acting as proxy.

Like most early Mormon diarists, **Erastus Snow** did not record his first plural marriage. However, unlike most early diarists, he did record—in code—his early eternal sealing to his civil wife, Artimesia Beaman (married 1838). She was a sister of Joseph Smith's first Nauvoo plural wife, Louisa Beaman. As translated, Snow's diary entry for February 15, 1844, reads: "Record of Marriage On the 15th day of February 1844 I Erastus Snow according to the laws provisions of the Holy Priesthood, was married and sealed for Times Eternity to Artimesia Beman by Hyrum Smith Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."⁸⁹ According to a later statement by Snow, he was sealed to Minerva White, his first plural wife, in March 1844. Hyrum Smith, "officiating under the Prophet's direc-

serted that polygamy was not introduced into the LDS Church until after his brother's death. "Your father never sealed or married any plural wives to me," he also wrote to Joseph Smith III on July 20, 1892, "nor did he ever tell me that he believed in Polygamy—nor did he ever read any revelation in my presance [sic] in the Council of the twelve—nor did I hear of any talk of revelation on Poligamy not untill after the Brigham Mormons left Nauvoo—in the Spring 1846. . . . how much your father may have had to do with this doctrine—Previous to his death I know nothing about it. if any Person got Polygamy teachings from William Smith—no other one is responsible for it but himself." Holograph in Community of Christ Library-Archives.

88. See Franklin L. West, *Chauncey W. West: Pioneer-Churchman* (Salt Lake City: Author, 1965), 24, 32. Mary Ann bore two children, one of whom survived to adulthood, before Chauncey died on January 9, 1870.

89. Erastus Snow, Diary, June 1841–February 1847, text opposite p. 50, LDS Church Archives.

tion,” performed the ceremony.⁹⁰ Both wives were later resealed and anointed to Snow in the Nauvoo Temple.

Five years before he died, Snow publicly described his introduction to early Mormon plural marriage:

The Prophet Joseph Smith in the year 1841 [sic, 1843] made known the principle of the Celestial Order of Marriage to ~~him~~ me. He invited me out for a walk with him and told me that when He was translating the Scriptures that part of it w[h]ere one of the Old Prophets was deviding His property to His ofspring. ^Then it was that the Lord revealed unto him^ That the time had come now when the principle should be practiced. Joseph told me the Names of some of the wives or wom[e]n which had been sealed to him by Joseph B. Noble. That Emma His 1st wife was acquainted with ^these wom[e]n^ and had administered to him but she had turned against him now. That in the conversation the Prophet was pure and Noble. He [i.e., Erastus Snow] testified that He was perfectly acquainted with the Wives of the Prophet Joseph. The 1st ones Name was Luisa Demon [i.e., Louisa Beaman] who was a pure and virtuous woman all her life.

Emma believed that there could not be a Holy Alliance between the man and the woman unless the woman consented to it with all her heart.

Emma used her womanly nature to teas and annoy Joseph and went so far as to threaten Joseph that she would leave Him and cohabit with another man and the Lord forbade her in the Revelation. . . .

I [i.e., Erastus Snow] know and do bare record that He [i.e., Joseph Smith] did [practice plural marriage] and counceled me to obey and enter into this order and about a year after my conversation with him upon the subject He sent His brother [i.e., Hyrum Smith] who sealed [on April 2, 1844] a second wife [i.e., Minerva White] to me and she is living now.

The Law was that the 1st wife place the right hand of the 2d into the hand of her husband and expressed her willingness and consent. He [i.e.,

90. “Apostle Erastus Snow’s Testimony,” in Jenson, “Plural Marriage,” 232, courtesy H. Michael Marquardt. In contrast, Snow family genealogical records report that this first plural marriage occurred on February 2, 1844. Moroni Snow, “The Descendants of Erastus Snow,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 3 (April 1912): 64. According to Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), 87, Joseph Smith performed Snow’s plural marriage. However, Snow’s personal report that Hyrum Smith officiated seems more likely. By 1844, Joseph Smith had ceded most such responsibilities to Hyrum.

Erastus Snow] entered into that order of Marriage with more Secredness then when He married His 1st wife.⁹¹

Like Erastus Snow's early plural marriage, the evidence for **John Taylor's** two plural marriages is found only in his family's genealogical records. As summarized in Taylor's official biography, *The Life of John Taylor*, by B. H. Roberts (1892; reprinted, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1963), 465–66, 471–83, Taylor married Leonora Cannon civilly in 1833, followed by plural wives, Elizabeth Kaighan on December 12, 1843, and Jane Ballantyne two months later on February 25, 1844.⁹² Though not stated, Hyrum Smith probably performed both ceremonies. In 1845–46, all three wives were resealed and anointed to Taylor (as were an additional five plural wives) in the Nauvoo Temple.

"When this principle was first made known to us by Joseph Smith," remembered Taylor, an apostle since 1838,

it was in Nauvoo. . . . We were assembled in the little office over the brick store. There being present Bro[ther]s B[righam] Yo[u]ng Heber C. Kimball. Orson Hyde & myself.⁹³ Bro[ther] Willard Richards may have been present too, but I am not positive. Upon that occasion, Joseph Smith laid before us the whole principle pertain[ing] to that doctrine, and we believed it. Having done this Joseph felt, as he said, that he had got a big burden rolled off his shoulders. He felt the responsibility of that matter resting heavily upon him. Notwithstanding, however, that we receiv[e]d the principle & believed it, yet we were in no great hurry to enter into it. Sometime after this, I was riding out of Nauvoo when I met Joseph coming in. We met in the old graveyard . . . and I moved to Bro[ther] Joseph and he moved to me, I think we were both on horseback, but of that I am not sure, Said he "Bro[ther] Taylor stop" and I stopped. He looked me right in the eye, and spoke with all the solemnity that I ever heard him speak, said he: "Brother Taylor, that principle has got to be complied with forthwith; and if not, the

91. "A Sinopsas of Remarks made by Apostle E[rastus] Snow July 22 [1883] at Nephi [Utah] Sunday evening," reported by Thomas Crawley, clerk of the Juab Utah Stake Conference, LDS Church Archives.

92. See also Nellie T. Taylor, "John Taylor, His Ancestors and Descendants," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 21 (July 1930): 105–6.

93. If Taylor's memory is correct, Hyde's presence dates this meeting to sometime after his return to Nauvoo on December 7, 1842.

Key will not be turned.” He had told us before that if this principle was not entered into, the Kingdom could not go one step further.⁹⁴

“Did I feel to stand in the way of this great, eternal principle,” Taylor added, “and treat lightly the things of God? No. I replied: ‘Brother Joseph, I will try and carry these things out,’ and I afterwards did, and I have done it more times than once.”⁹⁵

According to *The Theodore Turley Family Book*, compiled by Nancy Romans Turley and Lawrence Edward Turley (n.p., 1978], 56) as well as his “Individual Record” (www.familysearch.org), **Theodore Turley** married Mary Clift as his first plural wife “prior to 1842.” He previously had married Frances Kimberly civilly in 1821. On October 20, 1842, Mary gave birth to a son, Jason. However, as closer scrutiny makes clear, Jason was fathered not by Turley, but by Gustavus Hills, who had formed a liaison with Clift as part of John C. Bennett’s unauthorized system of polygamy.⁹⁶ Jason died at age one on October 26, 1843. In March–April 1844, Turley married Mary’s sisters, Eliza and Sarah Clift, as his plural wives, at which time he presumably also married Mary. The family antedated Theodore and Mary’s plural marriage, no doubt reflecting the family’s desire to provide Jason with legitimate parentage, at least in the eyes of the LDS Church. All three wives were resealed and anointed to Turley in the Nauvoo Temple.

As with other poorly documented plural marriages, the evidence for **Lyman Wight’s** early marriages is circumstantial. According to Wight family history:

At this time, September of 1844, many things were probably going through Lyman Wight’s mind. He was now in Prairie, La Crosse County, Wisconsin with his family and four wives. Three of them recently acquired. There was Jane Margaret Ballantyne, 25 year old daughter of John and Janet Ballantyne, Scottish emigrants with the company. Jane was pregnant and expecting a child in late winter. Then there was Mary Hawley, 22 year old daughter of Pierce and Sarah Hawley, Vermonters with the company.

94. Taylor, quoted in Minutes of Meeting, October 14, 1882, L. John Nuttall Papers, Perry Special Collections.

95. John Taylor, n.d., *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool, Eng.: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1855–86), 24:231.

96. See my discussion of this incident in “‘Illicit Intercourse,’ Plural Marriage, and the Nauvoo Stake High Council, 1840–1844,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 23 (2003): 75–77.

The next was Mary Ann Hobart, 17 year old daughter of Otis and Sophronia [sic] Hobart. . . . There, of course, was the ever faithful Harriet [Benton], now age 44 and at the end of her childbearing years. Harriet was old enough to be the other wives' mother. Harriet appears to stoically accept the new and everlasting covenant of plural marriage or perhaps she welcomed the company. We have no record of her opinion.⁹⁷

If Wight, an LDS apostle since 1841, had married polygamously by September 1844 and if one of his wives were due to give birth by March 1845 at the latest, the plural marriages would have most probably been performed before Joseph Smith died on June 27, 1844.

Lyman left Nauvoo for the Wisconsin pineries ca. July 21–22, 1843. Among the 150 or so people accompanying him and his family were his three wives: Jane Ballantyne, Mary Hawley, and Mary Ann Hobart, as well as their parents and siblings.⁹⁸ According to Joseph Smith's diary, Lyman returned to Nauvoo by May 1, 1844. Wight subsequently left for Washington, D.C., on May 22, 1844, and returned to Nauvoo on August 6, 1844. He and other members of the Pine Company then left Nauvoo for Wisconsin on August 28, 1844. Assuming that Lyman married plurally before Joseph Smith died, he probably did so before the third week of July 1843.

In Wisconsin, Wight actively preached plural marriage. Gideon Carter (born 1831) recalled as much during an interview with B. H. Roberts in 1894:

I remember that while he [i.e., Wight] and his company were stopping at Prairie La Crosse in the fall and winter of 1844–45, Lyman Wight's son, Orange L. Wight, who was the husband of my sister Matilda, married a plural wife, a young lady to whom he had been engaged before marrying my sister, but with whom he had broken though some misunderstanding. I understood that Lyman Wight performed the ceremony. *En route* from Texas one Joel Miles married a plural wife; and Lyman Wight himself, before we arrived in Texas, also married a plural wife; and I remember distinctly that while living in Texas he had three wives, and I think he had four.

Question by B. H. Roberts: Mr. Carter, did Lyman Wight say that Joseph Smith taught plural marriage, and did he practice it by virtue of the prophet Joseph Smith having introduced it?

Answer: He did. He said that he saw and heard read the revelation establishing plural marriage before Joseph Smith's death. I have heard

97. Jermy Benton Wight, *The Wild Ram of the Mountain: The Story of Lyman Wight* (Afton, Wyo.: Afton Thrifty Print/Star Valley Llama, 1996), 236.

98. *Ibid.*, 216.

Lyman Wight relate many times how Joseph Smith announced the revelation to his brother Hyrum. Hyrum did not at first receive it with favor. His whole nature revolted against it. He said to Joseph that if he attempted to introduce the practice of that doctrine as a tenet of The Church it would break up The Church and cost him his life. "Well," Joseph replied, "it is a commandment from God, brother Hyrum, and if you don't believe it, if you will ask the Lord He will make it known to you." The matter caused Hyrum much distress and anguish of heart, he well-nigh sweat blood over it, so repugnant was it to his feelings, and such his dread of seeing it introduced into The Church; but he inquired of God, according to Wight's statement, and he received from the Lord the same revelation that Joseph had—that it was a true doctrine, and a commandment from God. . . .

Lyman Wight also said that Joseph Smith had given him authority to perform these plural marriage ceremonies in connection with other ceremonies in the Church.⁹⁹

Orange Wight recounted some of the challenges facing young men in Nauvoo during the early years of plural marriage:

At first the Doctrine was taught in private. . . . I noticed when in company with the you[n]g folks the Girls were calling one another Spirituals. . . . Now altho[ugh] only in my 20th year would not be 20 untill 29 November [18]43, I concluded to lo[o]k about and try to pick up one or more of the young Ladies, before they were all gone, so I commenced keeping company with Flora Woodworth, Daughter of Lucian Woodworth, called the Pagan Prophet. I was walking along the street with Flora near the Prophets residence when he Joseph [Smith] drove up in his carrage stoped and spoke to I and Flora and asked us to get in the carrage and ride with him he opened the doore for us and when we were seated oposite to him he told the driver to drive on we went to the Temple lot and many other places during the Afternoon and then he drove to the Woodworth house and we got out and wen[t] in.

After we got in the house sister Woodworth took me in an other room and told me that Flora was one of Josephs wives, I was awar[e] or believed that Eliza R. Snow and the two patrage [Partridge] Girls were his wives but was not informed about Flora. But now sister Woodworth gave me all the information nessary, so I knew Joseph Believed and practiced Poligamy.¹⁰⁰

Lyman Wight was excommunicated from the LDS Church on De-

99. Quoted in Roberts, *Succession in the Presidency*, 122–25; original in LDS Church Archives.

100. Orange Lysander Wight, *Untitled reminiscence*, 1903, LDS Church Archives. There is some speculation that Orange may have been an early polyga-

ember 3, 1848, for insubordination. Though his wives remained with him, they were never resealed or anointed to him in the Nauvoo Temple.

Edwin D. Woolley's early plural marriages are documented and summarized in Leonard J. Arrington's biography, *From Quaker to Latter-day Saint: Bishop Edwin D. Woolley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 111–14, 489. Woolley married Mary Wickersham civilly in 1831. Before the end of 1843, he also married two plural wives: Louisa Gordon Rising and Ellen Wilding. Gordon was separated from David L. Rising (born ca. 1816, married mid-1838). The second of their two children was born ca. 1841–42, but David did not die until September 1845. As Woolley and Louisa's first child, Edwin Gordon, later wrote: "Edwin D. Woolley was among the first who adopted the principle of plural marriage as taught by the Prophet Joseph, and he received at the hands of the Prophet for his first plural wife Louisa Chapin Gordon, the mother of the subject of this sketch, and afterwards received a second plural wife by the same authority, so that before leaving Nauvoo at the time of the exodus in 1846 he had three living wives."¹⁰¹ Though all three women were resealed to Woolley in the Nauvoo Temple, only Wickersham was anointed to him.

The most thorough treatment of **Brigham Young's** plural marriages is Jeffery Ogden Johnson's "Determining and Defining 'Wife': The Brigham Young Households," in *Brigham Young's Homes*, edited by Colleen Whitley (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2002), 1–12, 219–30. Second only to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young was the most married of early Mormon polygamist husbands. Following the death of his first civil wife, Miriam Works, in 1832, he married Mary Ann Angell in early 1834, then took as his first plural wives Lucy Ann Decker Seeley in mid-1842, Augusta Adams Cobb and Harriet Cook in November 1843, and Clarissa

mist as well; his untitled reminiscence is unclear. According to Wight family history, however, Orange married Matilda Carter on February 6, 1844, and Sarah Hadfield plurally on February 7, 1845. Wight, *Wild Ram of the Mountain*, 239, 445, 501. Joseph I. Earl, Letter to Francis M. Lyman, September 14, 1905, LDS Church Archives, further clarifies: "Orange L. Wight says he and Sarah Hadfield his second wife were mar[r]ied by his Father at La Crosse Wisconsin, between the first [sic] and fifteenth of Jan 1845."

101. Edwin Gordon Woolley, autobiographical sketch, n.d., 2–3, LDS Church Archives.

Decker (Lucy's sister) in May 1844.¹⁰² In about 1835, Lucy had married William Seeley (born 1816). After three children, they reportedly separated by 1842. Seeley died on May 20, 1851. Augusta Adams married Henry Cobb (born 1798) in late 1822. They had seven children, who remained in Boston after Adams joined the LDS Church. Adams and Cobb evidently separated by 1843. Cobb died in mid-1872.¹⁰³

All four of Young's plural wives left affidavits of their sealings to him. In the first, Lucy Decker stated: "On the fourteenth day of June A.D. 1842, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed for time and all eternity to President Brigham Young, by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in the presence of Elder Willard Richards one of the Twelve."¹⁰⁴ In two affidavits, both made on the same date, Augusta Adams attested: "On the Second day of November A.D. 1843, She was married or sealed, for time and all eternity to Pres[iden]t. Brigham Young, by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, in the presence of Mary Ann Young, Fanny Murray, and Harriet Cook." The second one reads: "On the Second day of November A.D. 1843, in the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock State of Illinois, She witnessed the marrying or Sealing of Fanny

102. Before marrying Lucy Decker, Young had courted Martha Brotherton (born 1824) as his first plural wife. She, however, rejected his proposal and subsequently published her description of the episode in *American Bulletin* (St. Louis), July 16, 1842, then in *Warsaw Signal*, July 23, 1842. Reprints followed in the *Louisville Journal*, July 25, 1842; *New York Herald*, July 25, 1842; *Alton Telegram*, July 30, 1842; and *Quincy Whig*, August 6, 1842. Following Brotherton's death, Young had her sealed to him by proxy on August 1, 1870. Stanley Ivins, research into LDS sealing records, Ivins Papers, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City. Brotherton's sister, Elizabeth, became Parley P. Pratt's first plural wife in mid-1843.

103. The marital status of Lucy Decker and Augusta Adams at the time of their marriages to Brigham Young is not entirely clear. While they may have separated from the husbands prior to Young's proposals, it is also possible that Young's offers of marriage facilitated their decision to leave their husbands. My thanks to Todd Compton for pointing out this possibility.

104. Lucy Decker Young, Affidavit, July 10, 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

Murray to President Joseph Smith, by President Brigham Young; Mary Ann Young and Harriet Cook, being present."¹⁰⁵

Harriet Cook also made two affidavits, also both on the same date: "On the Second day of November, A.D. 1843, in the City of Nauvoo, Hancock Co[unty]. State of Illinois, She was married to President Brigham Young by the Prophet Joseph Smith, for time and eternity, in the presence of Mary Ann Young, Fanny Murray Smith, and Augusta Adams Young." The second one reads: "On the Second day of November A.D. 1843, in the City of Nauvoo, Hancock Co[unty]. State of Illinois, She was present and witnessed the marrying or Sealing of Fanny Murray to President Joseph Smith, for time and eternity, by President Brigham Young; Mary Ann Young, and Augusta Adams Young being present."¹⁰⁶

The fourth wife, Clara Decker stated: "On the eighth day of May A.D. 1844, in the City of Nauvoo, Hancock Co[unty]. State of Illinois, She was married or Sealed for time and eternity to President Brigham Young, by Elder Willard Richards, one of the Twelve, by Sanction of Pres[iden]t. Joseph Smith, and in the presence of Elder Lorenzo D. Young, Harriet P. Young & Lucy Ann Young."¹⁰⁷

Brigham Young's affection for his wives is evident in a letter he wrote from Philadelphia on August 17, 1843, to his first wife, Mary Ann Angell: "Give my love to . . . Br[other] Deckers famely [Young had married Lucy Decker two months earlier] and finely all that you have an opertunity . . . take the first Share of my Love to your self and then to the rest . . . Give my love to Sister Haritt [i.e., Harriet Cook, whom Young would marry on November 2, 1843, ten days after his return to Nauvoo] if she is there. . . . She is a fine wooman."¹⁰⁸ Mary Ann, Lucy, Augusta, Harriet, and Clarissa were all later sealed to Young in the Nauvoo Temple. Mary Ann, Lucy, and Harriet (and presumably Clarissa) were also anointed to him. Augusta was anointed to Joseph Smith.

105. August Adams Cobb, Affidavit, July 12, 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

106. Harriet Cook Young, Affidavit, March 4, 1870, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

107. Clara Decker Young, Affidavit, March 4, 1870, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

108. Brigham Young, Letter to Mary Ann Angell Young, August 17, 1843, Special Collections, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

The last of the early Mormon polygamist husbands, **Lorenzo Dow Young**, married Persis Goodall civilly in 1826, then wed Harriet P. Wheeler Decker plurally in early 1843. Lorenzo's older brother, Brigham, probably performed the ceremony. Harriet previously had married Isaac P. Decker (1799–1873) in 1820. They had six children, including Lucy and Clarissa, who married Brigham Young as plural wives. Harriet and Isaac apparently separated by 1843. According to Decker family history:

Isaac [Decker] did not believe in polygamy, and after having lost his fortune as a banker for the Church in Nauvoo, he could not afford more than one wife, but being a stubborn "Dutchman" he did not tell the church authorities his reason for not entertaining polygamy. He [i.e., Wayne Decker] says that Brigham Young, becoming regusted [sic] with Isaac, worked on Harriet to marry Lorenzo, telling her that Isaac was not a faithful member of the Church because he did not live up to its Scriptures. That is the reason Harriet did marry Lorenzo [Dow Young] then, and a few years later when Isaac did come out west, he got even with Harriet by marrying three or four other wives just to spite her.¹⁰⁹

Persis and Lorenzo had separated by January 27, 1846, when she was sealed and anointed to Levi Richards (1799–1876) as a second wife in the Nauvoo Temple.¹¹⁰ Harriet remained with Lorenzo, to whom she was resealed and anointed in the Nauvoo Temple.

Analysis

Not surprisingly, given both the secretive nature of early Mormon plural marriage as well as later trends in territorial Utah, more than half of these early polygamist husbands had no more than two wives prior to Joseph Smith's death. Close to an additional third had a maximum of three wives. (See Table 1.)

On average, husbands were older than their wives at all marriages,

109. Marguerite L. Sinclair, Letter to Frank M. Young, June 21, 1947, Lorenzo Dow Young Papers, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City. After arriving in Salt Lake City, Decker married at least five wives.

110. Some Richards family members, evidently basing their conclusions on an incorrect marriage date between Persis and Levi of January 27, 1848, believed that Persis "always resented that she was left behind in Winter Quarters and never became a part of Lorenzo [Dow Young]'s family in Utah." *Pioneer Women of Faith and Fortitude*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1998), 3:2562.

Table 1
Total Number of Wives Per Husband, 1841–44
Includes Civil and Plural Wives

<i>Total Number of Wives</i>	<i>Number of Husbands</i>	<i>Percentage of Husbands</i>
Two	14	50.0
Three	9	32.0
Four ^a	3	11.0
Five ^b	1	3.5
Thirty-seven ^c	1	3.5

^aWillard Richards, Theodore Turley, and Lyman Wight

^bBrigham Young

^cJoseph Smith

both civil and plural. (See Table 2.) The youngest man to marry civilly was Lorenzo Dow Young (to Persis Goodall) at age eighteen, the oldest John Smith (to Clarissa Lyman) at thirty-four. The youngest man to marry plurally was William D. Huntington (to Caroline Clark) at twenty-four, the oldest John Smith (to Mary Aikens Smith) at sixty-two. The youngest woman to marry civilly was Tamson Parshley (to Howard Egan) at age thirteen, the oldest Leonora Cannon (to John Taylor) at thirty-six. The youngest woman to marry plurally was Helen Mar Kimball (to Joseph Smith) at fourteen, the oldest Julia Ellis Hills Johnson (to John Smith) at sixty.

While at first glance, it may appear that a high percentage of plural wives were married to other men at the time of their plural marriage (18 percent), Joseph Smith’s plural marriages accounted for all of these as well as for more than a third of his own plural marriages.¹¹¹ In fact, the majority of plural wives had never previously been married at the time of their plural marriage. Still it is not always possible to differentiate convincingly between married and separated wives. (See Table 3.)

111. For an apologetic explanation of Smith’s marriages to already-married women, see Samuel Katich, “A Tale of Two Marriage Systems: Perspectives on Polyandry and Joseph Smith” (Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research, 2003), available at www.fairlds.org/pubs/polyandry.pdf.

Table 2
Age at Civil and Plural Marriages, 1841–44

<i>Number and Type of Marriage</i>	<i>Husbands</i>		<i>Wives</i>	
	<i>Average Age</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Average Age</i>	<i>Range</i>
First civil ^a	24	18–34	21	13–36
First plural	39	24–62	28	16–46
Second plural	42	32–62	28	14–60
Third plural	42	36–48	22	15–31
Fourth plural	40	38–42	27	15–40
Fifth+ plural ^b	38	38	30	14–58

^aDoes not include the second and/or third civil marriages of John E. Page, Parley P. Pratt, Hyrum Smith, and Brigham Young

^bApplies only to Joseph Smith

Table 3
**Marital Status of Plural Wives,
at Time of Plural Marriage, 1841–44**

<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Including Joseph Smith's Wives</i>		<i>Excluding Joseph Smith's Wives</i>		<i>Joseph Smith's Wives Only</i>	
	<i>Number/Percentage</i>		<i>Number/Percentage</i>		<i>Number/Percentage</i>	
Single	46	58	28	63	18	50
Widowed	11	14	6	14	5	14
Separated	10	13	10	23	0	0
Married	13	16	0	0	13 ^a	36
Total	80		44		36	

^aPresendia L. Huntington Buell, Sarah Kingsley Howe Cleveland, Elizabeth Davis Goldsmith Brackenbury Durfee, Lucinda Pendleton Morgan Harris, Elvira A. Cowles Holmes, Marinda N. Johnson Hyde, Zina D. Huntington Jacobs, Mary E. Rollins Lightner, Sylvia P. Sessions Lyon, Mary Ann Frost Stearns Pratt, Ruth D. Vose Sayers, Patty Bartlett Sessions, and Phebe Watrous Woodworth

Table 4
Pre-Martyrdom (June 27, 1844) Plural Husbands' Positions

<i>Membership/Positions</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Anointed Quorum	16	57
Second Anointing	11	39
Council of Fifty	14	50
One of the above	17	61
All of the above	10	36
None of the above	11	39
Seventy	3	11
High Priest	14	50
Apostle	11	39

Also of interest is the fact that twenty-one women (26 percent of Nauvoo plural wives) were biological sisters. Six of Joseph Smith's wives (16 percent of his plural wives and 7.5 percent of all plural wives) are included in this category (the asterisk indicates Joseph Smith's sister-wives): Pamela and Adeline Andrus Benson, Ruth and Margaret Moon Clayton, Elizabeth and Mary Ann Buchanan Coolidge, Caroline and Harriet Clark Huntington, Sarah and Nanny Longstroth Richards, Mary and Mercy Fielding Smith, *Zina and Presendia Huntington Smith, *Emily and Eliza Partridge Smith, *Maria and Sarah Lawrence Smith, and Eliza, Mary, and Sarah Clift Turley.

The majority of plural husbands were members of an elite class of LDS priesthood holders. All of them had been ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood and all held the office of Seventy or higher. Just being practicing polygamists prior to Joseph Smith's death put them in a select category. But all of them were also members of either Smith's Quorum of the Anointed (early temple endowment initiates) or of the Council of Fifty (political kingdom of God), or had received their second anointings. One-third of plural husbands received all of these privileges prior to Smith's death; but more than a third of plural husbands received none of these blessings before Smith died. (See Tables 4 and 5.)

Given the retrospective significance of Nauvoo's Female Relief Society, it is interesting that only forty-seven (3.5 percent) of the 1,331 identified members were involved in early polygamy as either civil or plural

Table 5
Status and Priesthood Office of Plural Husbands, 1841-44
Dates in italics postdate Joseph Smith's death

<i>Name</i>	<i>Initiated into</i>		<i>Received</i>		<i>Joined</i>		<i>Priesthood Office at</i>	
	<i>Anointed</i>	<i>Quorum</i>	<i>Second Anointing</i>	<i>Council of Fifty</i>	<i>Plural Marriage</i>	<i>Plural Marriage</i>	<i>Plural Marriage</i>	<i>Plural Marriage</i>
James Adams	May 4, 1842		Died	Died			High priest	
Esra T. Benson	December 15, 1845		January 16, 1846	December 25, 1846			High priest	
Reynolds Cahoon	October 12, 1843		November 12, 1843	March 11, 1844			High priest	
William Clayton	February 3, 1844		January 26, 1846	March 11, 1844			High priest	
Joseph W. Coolidge	December 16, 1845		January 26, 1846	N.A.			High priest	
Howard Egan	December 16, 1845		N.A.	N.A.			Seventy	
William Felshaw	December 12, 1845		January 27, 1846	N.A.			High priest	
William D. Huntington	December 20, 1845		January 24, 1846	N.A.			Seventy	
Orson Hyde	December 2, 1843		January 25, 1844	March 13, 1844			Apostle	
Joseph A. Keltling	December 24, 1845		January 22, 1846	N.A.			High priest	
Heber C. Kimball	May 4, 1842		January 20, 1844	March 11, 1844			Apostle	
Vinson Knight	by July 31, 1842		Died	Died			High priest	
Isaac Morley	December 23, 1843		February 26, 1844	March 1, 1845			High priest	
Joseph Bates Noble	by March 20, 1845		January 23, 1846	N.A.			High priest	
John E. Page	January 26, 1845		N.A.	March 1, 1845			Apostle	
Parley P. Pratt	December 2, 1843		January 21, 1844	March 11, 1844			Apostle	
Willard Richards	May 4, 1842		January 27, 1844	March 11, 1844			Apostle	
Hyrum Smith	May 4, 1842		October 8, 1843	March 11, 1844			Apostle*	
John Smith	September 28, 1843		February 26, 1844	March 14-April 11, 1844			High priest	
Joseph Smith	May 5, 1842		May 28, 1843	March 11, 1844			Apostle*	
William Smith	May 12, 1844		N.A.	April 25, 1844			Apostle	
Erastus Snow	December 12, 1845		January 23, 1846	March 11, 1844			Seventy	
John Taylor	September 28, 1843		January 30, 1844	March 11, 1844			Apostle	
Theodore Turley	December 20, 1845		February 3, 1846	March 1, 1845			High priest	
Lyman Wight	May 14, 1844		N.A.	May 3, 1844			Apostle	
Edwin D. Woolley	December 22, 1845		February 7, 1846	N.A.			High priest	
Brigham Young	May 4, 1842		November 22, 1843	March 11, 1844			Apostle	
Lorenzo Dow Young	December 13, 1845		January 26, 1846	N.A.			High priest	

* Member of the First Presidency.

wives. More precisely, 16 percent of women married to Nauvoo's early plural husbands were members of this women's organization: 61 percent of the civilly married wives ($n = 17$) and 38 percent of the plural wives ($n = 30$). Significantly, however, 50 percent of Joseph Smith's plural wives were Relief Society members ($n = 18$).¹¹²

On average, civil wives gave birth to their first child thirteen months after their marriage.¹¹³ For plural wives (excluding Joseph Smith's plural wives and a handful of cases in which the first child followed marriage by sixty or more months¹¹⁴) the period between marriage and first birth was nearly twice as long (twenty-four months). In fact, evidently only four children—excluding those attributed to Joseph Smith¹¹⁵—were born to plural wives prior to Smith's death: Lucina Cahoon (daughter of Reynolds Cahoon and Lucina Roberts Johnson Cahoon), Daniel Clayton (son of William Clayton and Margaret Moon Clayton), Adelson Kimball (son of Heber C. Kimball and Sarah Peak Noon Kimball), and George Noble (son of Joseph B. Noble and Sarah B. Alley Noble).¹¹⁶ In contrast, fourteen children were born to civil wives during the same thirty-month period. The ratio of births by status of wife is: .5 per civil wife, .05 per plural wife.

112. Calculated from Maurine Carr Ward, "This Institution Is a Good One': The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, March 17, 1842 to 16, March 1844," *Mormon Historical Studies* 3 (Fall 2002): 87–203.

113. I exclude Caroline Huntington from the total of civil wives because her first child was evidently born more than seven years after her marriage to William Huntington.

114. These plural wives were Martha Hyde (84 months), Elizabeth Pratt (96 months), Nanny Richards (74 months), all of Joseph Smith's plural wives, Mary Ann Wight (72 months), and Clarissa Young (65 months).

115. The following four children may or may not have been fathered by Joseph Smith with his plural wives: Orson W. Hyde (mother Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde), Josephine R. Lyon (mother Sylvia Sessions Lyon), Florentine M. Lightner (mother Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner), and Moroni Pratt (mother Mary Ann Frost Stern Pratt). Todd Compton, "Fawn Brodie on Joseph Smith's Plural Wives and Polygamy: A Critical View," in *Reconsidering No Man Knows My History: Fawn M. Brodie and Joseph Smith in Retrospect*, edited by Newell G. Bringhurst (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 164–73.

116. George Reynolds, a secretary to the First Presidency, Letter to H. Neidig, June 7, 1892, First Presidency Letterpress Copybooks, hypothesized about the low birth rate: "The facts that you refer to are almost as great a mystery to us as they are to you; but the reason generally assigned by the [plural] wives

Thus, early plural wives were ten times less likely to give birth before Joseph Smith died than were civil wives.

Drawing upon the above findings, the “average,” or representative, early Mormon polygamist husband was twenty-four years old when he married civilly and thirty-nine years old when he first married plurally. He had been ordained to the office of high priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood and, prior to Joseph Smith’s death, was either a member of the Quorum of the Anointed or Council of Fifty, or had received his second anointing. The “average” wife was twenty-one years old at the time of her civil marriage or twenty-eight years old at the time of her plural marriage. If a plural wife, she had never previously married and was not a member of Nauvoo’s Relief Society (unless she was married plurally to Joseph Smith). A civilly married couple’s first child was born thirteen months after their marriage, while a plurally married couple’s first child was born two years after their marriage, which would put this birth after the death of Joseph Smith.

Perhaps the identification of the earliest Mormon polygamist husbands and wives will always remain preliminary at best. In many instances, we are asked to rely on sources and surmises that may not hold up under closer examination. The biographical and genealogical records from which we tease conclusions are only as reliable as the materials used by the compilers, writers, and submitters themselves. Ideally, first-person eyewitness accounts are the most desirable; unfortunately, they are also the scarcest. Despite these limitations, I believe this tentative list helps to bring us nearer to identifying the men and women who fully embraced, during Joseph Smith’s lifetime, his celestial doctrine of eternal plural marriage.

themselves is, that owing to the peculiar circumstances by which they were surrounded, they were so nervous and in such constant fear that they did not conceive.”

Appendix
The Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841–44:
An Alphabetical Listing

<i>Husband/Wife/Child(ren)</i>	<i>Birth-Death</i>	<i>Civil Marriage/ Eternal Sealing</i>	<i>Sealing Officiator</i>
James Adams	January 24, 1783–August 11, 1843		
Harriet Denton	January 31, 1787–August 21, 1844	ca. 1809	
Infant	?–?		
Lovenia	May 3, 1813–September 5, 1838		
Charlotte	May 2, 1815–January 10, 1832		
Lucian	December 10, 1816–?		
Vienna	July 10, 1818–?		
Roxena Higby Repsher–S ^a	March 20, 1805–?	July 11, 1843	Joseph Smith
Ezra T. Benson	February 22, 1811–September 3, 1869		
Pamela Andrus	October 21, 1809–September 14, 1877	January 1, 1832	
Charles	September 26, 1832–October 14, 1832		
Chloe	April 1835–October 13, 1835		
Charles	July 9, 1837–February 18, 1873		
Adin	March 1841–March 1841		

^aMarital status at time of plural marriage: M = married, NM = never married, S = separated, W = widowed.

Jonathan	March 1841–March 1841		
Pamelia	February 28, 1842–?		
Harvey	September 26, 1844–September 26, 1844		
Isabelle	March 9, 1846–?		
Charlotte	July 4, 1850–?		
Adeline Andrus–NM	March 18, 1813–April 20, 1898	April 27, 1844	Hyrum Smith
George	May 1, 1846–May 16, 1919		
Florence	September 17, 1851–December 24, 1852		
Frank	October 16, 1853–May 5, 1937		
Reynolds Cahoon			
Thirza Stiles	April 30, 1790–April 29, 1861		
William	October 18, 1789–November 20, 1866	December 11, 1810	
Lerona	November 7, 1813–April 4, 1893		
Pulaski	October 25, 1817–June 18, 1840		
Daniel	September 18, 1819–February 1892		
Andrew	April 7, 1822–November 13, 1903		
Julia	August 4, 1824–December 13, 1900		
Mahonri	September 24, 1830–September 1, 1831		
Lucina Roberts Johnson–W	July 26, 1834–January 24, 1888		
Lucina	March 5, 1806–1861 or 1863	ca. 1841–42	Joseph Smith?
Rais	ca. 1843		
	October 13, 1845–February 27, 1911		

Truman	January 18, 1850–February 4, 1811		
William Clayton	July 17, 1814–December 4, 1879		
Ruth Moon	June 13, 1817–January 15, 1894	October 9, 1836	
Sarah	August 1, 1837–January 27, 1919		
Margaret	April 25, 1839–October 11, 1921		
Henrietta	May 6, 1841–August 20, 1841		
William	February 28, 1843–April 25, 1913		
Vilate	December 8, 1844–July 18, 1918		
Newell	January 12, 1847–February 10, 1941		
David	September 17, 1849–March 31, 1918		
Lydia	November 22, 1852–June 9, 1909		
Algenia	November 21, 1854–August 19, 1929		
Brigham	May 12, 1857–February 12, 1927		
Margaret Moon–NM	January 14, 1820–August 25, 1870	April 27, 1843	Joseph Smith
Daniel	February 18–August 27, 1844		
Joseph	January 10, 1847–February 11, 1873		
Lydia	March 28, 1849–May 30, 1894		
James	June 8, 1852–October 5, 1908		
Lovinia	December 27, 1854–October 22, 1938		
Don Carlos	October 31, 1857–June 25, 1940		

Joseph W. Coolidge	May 31, 1814–January 13, 1871	
Elizabeth Buchanan	July 11, 1815–June 23, 1913	December 17, 1834
Henry	October 6, 1835–May 23, 1918	
Moroni	September 7, 1837–September 25, 1838	
John	July 20, 1839–October 20, 1839	
Rebecca	October 20, 1840–November 16, 1870	
Joseph	February 18, 1843–February 29, 1844	
Sarah	January 28, 1845–November 7, 1905	
Timothy	April 29, 1847–June 17, 1894	
William	December 10, 1849–	
George	July 21, 1852–April 22, 1915	August 24, 1854–?
Mary		
Kate	December 15, 1856–October 31, 1857	
Mary Ann Buchanan-NM	August 5, 1827–?	before June 27, 1844
		Not identified
Howard Egan	June 15, 1815–March 15, 1878	
Tamson Parshley	July 27, 1825–March 31, 1905	December 1, 1838
Howard	April 12, 1840–March 17, 1916	
Richard	March 29, 1842–April 20, 1918	
Charles	March 25, 1844–1845	

Horace	August 12, 1847–March 24, 1862	
William	June 13, 1851–April 15, 1929	
Ira	February 5, 1861–December 13, 1933	
Catherine Reese Clawson–W	January 27, 1804–November 7, 1860	Hyrum Smith
	1844	
	divorced 1852	
William Felshaw	February 3, 1800–September 24, 1867	
Mary H. Gilbert	June 23, 1808–August 26, 1871	February 1, 1827
Nancy	December 10, 1827–December 10, 1827	
Lemuel	November 14, 1828–November 14, 1828	
Josiah	April 1830–April 1830	
Betsey	July 1, 183–July 1, 1831	
Julia	June 27, 1832–February 27, 1923	
William	July 3, 1834–September 14, 1840	
John	November 23, 1836–March 29, 1920	
Anne	December 28, 1839–January 16, 1848	
Lucy	March 8, 1842–December 24, 1915	
Caroline	May 3, 1845–February 19, 1923	
Hannah	November 2, 1848–May 29, 1872	
Sarah	February 3, 1851–November 18, 1863	
Susannah	February 3, 1851–January 2, 1941	

Charlotte Walters-NM	November 28, 1824–September 12, 1884	July 28, 1843	Not identified
Katherine	January 25, 1845–September 29, 1879		
Mary	March 2, 1848–?		
Eleanor	October 12, 1850–April 9, 1903		
William	March 10, 1853–?		
William D. Huntington			
Caroline Clark	February 28, 1818–March 20, 1881		
Hyrum	September 15, 1819–February 28, 1901	September 24, 1839	
Lucia	January 24, 1847–December 11, 1936		
John	March 27, 1850–September 10, 1938		
Harriet Clark-NM	April 17, 1853–June 4, 1896		
Don Carlos	August 2, 1825–August 2, 1918	February 5, 1843	Joseph Smith?
Chauncy	July 20, 1845–?		
Julia	June 15, 1847–June 16, 1847		
Harriet	December 8, 1848–July 8, 1851		
Anna	February 20, 1852–January 14, 1922		
George	November 25, 1853–?		
Lottie	February 2, 1858–June 15, 1905		
	February 9, 1870–July 24, 1962		
Orson Hyde	January 8, 1805–November 28, 1878		

Marinda N. Johnson	June 28, 1815–March 24, 1886	September 4, 1834 divorced 1870	
Nathan	1835–35		
Laura	May 21, 1837–August 10, 1909		
Emily	December 13, 1839–December 6, 1909		
Orson	November 9, 1843–November 23, 1843		
Frank	January 23, 1846–June 28, 1908		
Alonzo	February 28, 1848–June 14 or 15, 1910		
Delia	December 28, 1849–December 25, 1907		
Heber	November 10, 1852–November 11, 1853		
Mary	July 10, 1854–January 29, 1855		
Zina	April 23, 1858–February 24, 1939		
Martha R. Browett–NM	June 5, 1817–October 30, 1904	February–March 1843 divorced 1850	Joseph Smith?
Adella	April 1850–July 1850		
Mary Ann Price–NM	June 5, 1816–June 16, 1900	March 1843	Joseph Smith
Urania	August 15, 1846–August 27, 1846		
Joseph A. Kelting	October 13, 1811–after March 1894		
Elizabeth Ann Martin	April 3, 1818–ca. May 1, 1850	May 5, 1832	
Minerva O. Woods–NM	October 18, 1827–July 12, 1896?	before June 27, 1844	Not identified

Heber C. Kimball	June 14, 1801–June 22, 1868		
Vilate Murray	June 1, 1806–October 22, 1867	November 7, 1822	
Judith	July 29, 1823–May 20, 1824		
William	April 10, 1826–December 29, 1907		
Helen Mar	August 22, 1828–November 15, 1896		
Roswell	June 10, 1831–June 15, 1831		
Heber	January 1, 1835–February 8, 1885		
David	August 23, 1839–March 28, 1883		
Charles	January 2, 1843–December 2, 1925		
Brigham	January 29, 1845–July 23, 1867		
Solomon	February 2, 1847–February 7, 1920		
Murray	January 20, 1850–June 29, 1852		
Sarah Peak Noon–S	May 3, 1811–December 3, 1873	early 1842	Joseph Smith
Adelmon	October/November 1842–April 1843		
Henry	ca. 1844–before 1868		
Sarah	July 1, 1845–December 1, 1860		
Vinson Knight	March 14, 1804–July 31, 1842		
Martha McBride	March 17, 1805–November 20, 1901	July 6, 1826	
Almira	June 21, 1827–January 23, 1912		
Rizpah	May 13, 1829–March 17, 1895		

Adaline	May 4, 1831–June 10, 1919	
James	September 4, 1833–April 11, 1912	
Nathaniel	October 30, 1836–December 31, 1839	
Martha	February 9, 1839–March 24, 1844	
Rudolphus	September 29, 1841–September 3, 1842	
Philinda C. Eldredge Myrick–W	August 2, 1809–July 24, 1852	before July 31, 1842 Joseph Smith
Isaac Morley	March 11, 1786–June 24, 1865	
Lucy Gunn	January 24, 1786–January 3, 1848	June 20, 1812
Philena	October 2, 1813–March 18, 1894	
Lucy	October 4, 1815–October 19, 1908	
Editha	January 25, 1818–March 30, 1893	
Calista	May 11, 1820–July 14, 1822	
Infant	1821–21	
Cordelia	November 28, 1823–June 10, 1915	
Theresa	July 18, 1826–October 7, 1858	
Isaac	May 2, 1829–May 21, 1908	
Abigail Leonora Snow Leavitt–S	August 23, 1801–February 11, 1872	before September 1843 Not identified
Hannah B. Finch Merriam–W	March 19, 1811–April 16, 1874	January 14, 1844 Not identified
Joseph	July 15, 1845–October 18, 1846	
Simeon	June 12, 1849–March 19, 1853	

Mary	March 26, 1852–January 29, 1918	
Joseph B. Noble	January 14, 1810–August 17, 1900	
Mary A. Beaman	October 19, 1810–February 16, 1851	September 11, 1834
Meriam	November 8, 1835–November 22, 1835	
Joseph	November 1, 1836–March 27, 1844	
Nephi	August 20, 1838–August 31, 1838	
Louisa	September 9, 1839–September 10, 1839	
Edward	February 2, 1841–November 28, 1909	
Mary	April 19, 1843–April 19, 1843	
Hiram	May 6, 1844–November 6, 1846	
Eliza	August 12, 1847–March 1, 1927	
Benjamin	July 31, 1849–January 17, 1921	
Sarah B. Alley-NM	October 17, 1819–December 28, 1846	Joseph Smith?
George	February 2, 1844–January 12, 1911	April 5, 1843
Mary Ann Washburn-NM	November 18, 1828–October 10, 1882	September 8, 1843
Mary	February 25, 1847–December 10, 1855	Joseph Smith?
Tamar	August 28, 1849–September 12, 1849	
Joseph	October 10, 1853–July 11, 1921	
Hyrum	November 14, 1854–June 15, 1855	
Alfred	ca. 1857–57	

John E. Page ^b	February 25, 1799–October 14, 1867	
Betsey Thompson	ca. 1810–October 1, 1833	July 1, 1831
Infant	ca. 1832 or 1833–May 1, 1835	
Lorain Stevens	ca. 1804–October 1838	December 26, 1833
John	September 27, 1834–?	
Manasseh	1836–?	
Ephraim	1837–?	
George	1838–?	
Mary Judd	November 26, 1818–March 6, 1907	January 1839
Excenia	1840–?	
Celestia	1843–?	1844–?
Orson		
Celena	1848–?	1850–?
Mary		
Justin	July 25, 1851–?	
Jerome	March 8, 1861–?	
Nancy Bliss [?]	?–?	before June 27, 1844 Not identified

^bPage's first three wives were all monogamous marriages.

Parley P. Pratt	April 12, 1807-May 13, 1857		
Thankful Halsey	March 18, 1797-March 25, 1837	September 9, 1827	
Parley	March 25, 1837-August 26, 1897		
Mary Ann Frost Stearns-W	January 14, 1808-August 24, 1891	May 9, 1837	
		divorced spring 1853	
Nathan	August 31, 1838-December 21, 1843		
Olivia	June 1, 1841-June 12, 1906		
Susan	April 5, 1843-December 28, 1844		
Moroni	December 7, 1844-April 18, 1913		
Elizabeth Brotherton-NM	March 27, 1816-May 9, 1897	July 24, 1843	Hyrum Smith
Abish	1851-66		
Willard Richards	June 24, 1804-March 11, 1854		
Jennetta Richards	August 21, 1817-July 9, 1845	September 24, 1838	
Heber	July 17, 1839-December 28, 1839		
Heber	October 11, 1840-May 12, 1919		
Rhoda	September 15, 1843-May 3, 1882		
Sarah Longstroth-NM	February 19, 1826-January 26, 1858		Joseph Smith
Willard	January 25, 1847-May 30, 1942	January 18, 1843	
Joseph	October 4, 1848-October 30, 1914		
Sarah	August 25, 1850-March 22, 1915		

Pauline	May 11, 1853–September 21, 1947		
Nanny Longstroth–NM	April 15, 1828–January 7, 1911	January 18, 1843	Joseph Smith
Alice	March 24, 1849–June 17, 1940		
Mary	November 18, 1850–July 20, 1915		
Stephen	July 29, 1853–July 3, 1922		
Susannah Lee Liptrot–S	May 19, 1808–December 27, 1872	June 12, 1843	Joseph Smith
Hyrum Smith^c	February 9, 1800–June 27, 1844		
Jerusha Barden	February 15, 1805–October 14, 1837	November 2, 1826	
Lovina	September 16, 1827–October 8, 1876		
Mary	June 27, 1829–May 29, 1832		
John	September 22, 1832–November 6, 1911		
Hyrum	April 27, 1834–September 21, 1841		
Jerusha	January 13, 1836–June 27, 1912		
Sarah	October 2, 1837–November 6, 1876		
Mary Fielding	July 21, 1801–September 21, 1852	December 24, 1837	
Joseph	November 13, 1838–November 19, 1918		
Martha	May 14, 1841–October 19, 1923		
Mercy R. Fielding Thompson–W	June 15, 1807–September 15, 1893	August 11, 1843	Joseph Smith
Catherine Phillips–NM	August 1, 1819–September 26, 1905	August 1843	Joseph Smith

^cSmith's first two marriages were monogamous.

John Smith	July 16, 1781-May 23, 1854		
Clarissa Lyman	June 27, 1790-February 14, 1854	September 11, 1815	
Daughter	May 9, 1816-May 9, 1816		
George	June 26, 1817-September 1, 1875		
Caroline	June 6, 1820-January 8, 1895		
John	November 17, 1823-February 27, 1893		
Mary Aikens Smith-W	August 13, 1797-April 27, 1877	August 13, 1843	Joseph Smith?
Julia Ellis Hills Johnson-S	September 26, 1783-May 30, 1853	ca. 1843-44	Joseph Smith
Joseph Smith Jr.	December 23, 1805-June 27, 1844		
Emma Hale	July 10, 1804-April 30, 1879	January 18, 1827	
Alvin	June 15, 1828-June 15, 1828		
Thaddeus	April 30, 1831-April 30, 1831		
Louisa	April 30, 1831-April 30, 1831		
Joseph III	November 6, 1832-December 10, 1914		
Frederick	June 20, 1836-April 13, 1862		
Alexander	June 2, 1838-August 12, 1909		
Don Carlos	June 13, 1840-September 15, 1841		
Son	February 6, 1842-February 6, 1842		
David	November 17, 1844-August 29, 1904		
Louisa Beaman-NM	February 7, 1815-May 15, 1850	April 5, 1841	Joseph B. Noble

Zina D. Huntington Jacobs-M	January 31, 1821-August 27, 1901	October 27, 1841	Dimick Huntington
Presendia L. Huntington Buell-M	September 7, 1810-February 1, 1892	December 11, 1841	Dimick Huntington
Lucinda Pendleton Morgan Harris-M	September 27, 1801-after 1860	1841-42	Not identified
Agnes M. Coolbrith Smith-W	July 9, 1808-December 26, 1876	January 6, 1842	Brigham Young
Sylvia P. Sessions Lyon-M	July 31, 1818-April 12, 1882	February 8, 1842	Not identified
Mary E. Rollins Lightner-M	April 9, 1818-December 17, 1913	late February 1842	Brigham Young
Patty Bartlett Sessions-M	February 4, 1795-December 14, 1892	March 9, 1842	Willard Richards
Marinda N. Johnson Hyde-M	June 28, 1815-March 24, 1886	April 1842	Not identified
Elizabeth Davis Goldsmith	March 11, 1791-December 18, 1876	May 1843	Not identified
Brackenbury Durfee-M		before June 1842	Not identified
Sarah Kingsley Howe Cleveland-M	October 20, 1788-April 21, 1856	before June 29, 1842	Not identified
Eliza R. Snow-NM	January 21, 1804-December 5, 1887	June 29, 1842	Brigham Young
Delcena Johnson Sherman-W	November 19, 1806-October 21, 1854	June-July 1842	Not identified
Sarah Ann Whitney-NM	March 22, 1825-September 4, 1873	July 27, 1842	Newel K. Whitney
Martha McBride Knight-W	March 17, 1805-November 20, 1901	August 1842	Heber C. Kimball
Emily D. Partridge-NM	February 28, 1824-December 9, 1899	March 4, 1843	Heber C. Kimball
Eliza M. Partridge-NM	April 20, 1820-March 2, 1886	May 11 or 23, 1843	James Adams
Lucy Walker-NM	April 30, 1826-August 31, 1885	March 8, 1843	Heber C. Kimball
		May 11 or 23, 1843	James Adams
		May 1, 1843	William Clayton

Helen Mar Kimball-NM	August 22, 1828–November 13, 1896	May 1843	Not identified
Flora Ann Woodworth-NM	November 14, 1826–ca. 1851	May–June 1843	Not identified
Phebe Watrous Woodworth-M	October 1, 1805–after 1874	May–June 1843	Not identified
Almera W. Johnson-NM	October 12, 1812–March 4, 1896	May–June 1843	Hyrum Smith
Maria Lawrence-NM	December 18, 1823–1847	May–June 1843	Not identified
Sarah Lawrence-NM	May 13, 1826–November 28, 1872	May–June 1843	Not identified
Elvira A. Cowles Holmes-M	November 23, 1813–March 10, 1871	June 1, 1843	Heber C. Kimball
Rhoda Richards-NM	August 8, 1784–January 17, 1879	June 12, 1843	Willard Richards
Desdemona W. Fullmer-NM	October 6, 1809–February 9, 1886	before July 1843	Brigham Young
Hannah S. Ells-NM	1813–45	before July 1843	Not identified
Olive G. Frost-NM	July 24, 1816–October 6, 1845	ca. July 1843	Hyrum Smith?
Mary Ann Frost Sterns Pratt-M	January 14, 1808–August 24, 1891	ca. July 1843	Hyrum Smith?
Melissa Lott-NM	January 9, 1824–July 13, 1898	September 20, 1843	Hyrum Smith
Fanny Young Carr Murray-W	November 8, 1787–June 11, 1859	November 2, 1843	Brigham Young
Ruth Vose Sayers-M	February 26, 1808–August 18, 1884	by February 1844	Hyrum Smith
Nancy M. Winchester-NM	August 10, 1828–March 17, 1876	by 1844	Not identified
Sarah Scott Mulholland-W	October 25, 1816–December 25, 1878	by 1844	Not identified
Mary Houston-NM	September 11, 1818–December 24, 1896	by 1844	Not identified
William Smith	March 13, 1811–November 13, 1894		
Caroline A. Grant	January 22, 1814–May 22, 1845	February 14, 1833	

Mary Jane	January 1835-?		
Caroline	August 1836-?		
Mary Ann Covington Sheffield-S	May 31, 1815-October 5, 1908	April-May 1844?	Brigham Young
Mary Jones (?) - NM	?-?	April-May 1844?	Brigham Young
Erastus Snow	November 9, 1818-May 27, 1888		
Artimesia Beaman	March 3, 1819-December 21, 1882	December 13, 1838	
Sarah	January 21, 1841-April 11, 1928		
James	April 28, 1842-February 25, 1850		
Charles	March 15, 1844-September 7, 1847		
Mahonri	January 4, 1847-January 28, 1918		
Artimesia	February 8, 1849-April 21, 1925		
Erastus	May 10, 1853-September 20, 1900		
Franklin	September 21, 1854-April 22, 1942		
Mary	July 29, 1856-July 29, 1856		
Moroni	May 13, 1858-January 18, 1935		
Orson	March 28, 1860-February 11, 1929		
George	October 31, 1863-December 15, 1939		
Minerva White-NM	March 22, 1822-April 1, 1896	March 1844	Hyrum Smith
Nephi	June 15, 1845-June 16, 1845		
Mary	October 1, 1846-August 1, 1847		

Erastus	January 27, 1849–March 20, 1888		
Willard	November 16, 1853–September 2, 1936		
Susan	July 9, 1856–January 23, 1917		
Hyrum	January 23, 1859–March 15, 1860		
Levi	March 10, 1861–February 26, 1933		
Louisa	July 6, 1863–August 10, 1864		
Adlen	May 26, 1866–July 8, 1867		
John Taylor			
Leonora Cannon	November 1, 1808–July 25, 1887	January 28, 1833	
George	October 5, 1796–December 9, 1868		
Mary	January 31, 1834–December 15, 1914		
Joseph	January 23, 1836–December 9, 1890		
Leonora	June 8, 1838–January 31, 1908		
Elizabeth Kaighan–NM	June 1, 1842–September 10, 1843		
Josephine	September 11, 1811–August 31, 1895	December 12, 1843	Hyrum Smith?
Thomas	March 15, 1846–July 5, 1921		
Arthur	November 7, 1849–December 11, 1915		
Jane Ballantyne–NM	October 9, 1853–after 1930		
Richard	April 11, 1813–December 26, 1900	February 25, 1844	Hyrum Smith?
Anna	February 4, 1848–March 17, 1905		
	October 21, 1849–November 9, 1890		

David	August 8, 1853–September 6, 1881		
Theodore Turley	April 10, 1801–August 12, 1871		
Frances A. Kimberly	June 22, 1800–August 30, 1847	November 26, 1821	
Theodore	September 2, 1822–November 26, 1822		
Frances	January 1, 1825–November 1, 1846		
Mary Ann	July 13, 1827–December 24, 1904		
Priscilla	June 1, 1829–September 21, 1904		
Frederick	May 23, 1832–February 24, 1875		
Obia	July 5–July 29, 1834		
Sarah	September 24, 1835–March 24, 1914		
Isaac	November 22, 1837–December 3, 1908		
Charlotte	April 15, 1840–November 1, 1899		
Jonathan	September 13, 1842–May 12, 1846		
Eliza Clift–NM	July 2, 1813–?	March 6, 1844	Not identified
Mary Clift–NM	June 16, 1815–March 30, 1850	March–April 1844	Not identified
Jason	October 20, 1842–October 26, 1843		
Ephraim	February 11, 1845–July 6, 1845		
Sarah Clift–NM	May 3, 1817–May 4, 1847	April 26, 1844	Not identified
Lyman Wight	May 9, 1796–March 21, 1858		
Harriet Benton	March 19, 1801–February 26, 1889	January 5, 1823	

Orange	November 29, 1823–June 20, 1907		
Anna	September 30, 1825–September 24, 1906		
Rosina	November 16, 1825–March 26, 1850		
Lyman	December 27, 1833–September 8, 1895		
Levi	March 1, 1836–May 18, 1918		
Loami	November 2, 1838–February 5, 1887		
Jane M. Ballantyne-NM	March 1819–August 31, 1884	by June 27, 1844	Not identified
Amos	early 1845–?		
Carmalony	August 3, 1852–July 26, 1912		
Sonemony	August 3, 1852–?		
John	August 8, 1856–May 14, 1921		
Mary Hawley-NM	September 1, 1823–late 1851/early 1852	by June 27, 1844	Not identified
Menamento	June 18, 1848–?		
Romanan	January 13, 1851–August 3, 1852		
Mary Ann Hobart-NM	October 16, 1828–February 17, 1897	by June 27, 1844	Not identified
Rollonda	early 1850s–?		
Infant	?–?		
Carrima	March 8, 1853–?		
Edwin D. Woolley	June 28, 1807–October 14, 1881		
Mary Wickersham	November 4, 1808–March 29, 1859	March 24, 1831	

John	December 30, 1831–December 13, 1928	
Franklin	June 11, 1834–March 21, 1869	
Rachel	August 7, 1836–November 30, 1926	
Samuel	April 2, 1840–January 28, 1908	
Henrietta	January 5, 1843–January 13, 1911	
Edwin	April 20, 1845–July 20, 1920	
Mary	July 5, 1848–February 10, 1938	
Marcellus	August 27, 1854–July 21, 1921	
Louisa C. Gordon Rising-S	February 28, 1820–April 29, 1847	by December 28, 1843
Edwin	July 30, 1845–January 12, 1930	Not identified
Ellen Wilding-NM	April 8, 1820–October 5, 1913	
Sarah	December 27, 1847–March 28, 1902	December 28, 1843
Joseph	April 4, 1850–May 10, 1877	Not identified
Hyrum	July 16, 1852–October 27, 1936	
Edwin	November 4, 1854–April 29, 1924	
Mary Ellen	December 1, 1858–January 10, 1908	
Brigham Young ^d	June 1, 1801–August 29, 1877	
Miriam Works	June 6 or 7, 1806–September 8, 1832	October 5 or 8, 1824

^dYoung's first two marriages were monogamous.

Elizabeth	September 26, 1825–February 2, 1903	
Vilate	June 1, 1830–November 18, 1902	
Mary Ann Angell	June 8, 1808–June 27, 1882	February 10, 1834
Joseph	October 14, 1834–August 5, 1875	
Brigham	December 18, 1836–April 11, 1903	
Mary Ann	December 18, 1836–August 1843	
Alice Emma	September 4, 1839–November 2, 1874	
Eunice	August 20, 1842–November 17, 1922	
John	October 1, 1844–February 11, 1924	
Lucy Ann Decker Seeley-S	May 17, 1822–January 24, 1890	Joseph Smith
Brigham	June 19, 1845–June 3, 1928	June 14, 1842
Fanny	January 26, 1849–January 20, 1892	
Ernest	April 30, 1851–October 8, 1879	
Shamira	January 21, 1853–August 24, 1915	
Arta	April 16, 1855–April 7, 1916	
Feramorz	September 16, 1858–September 27, 1881	
Clarissa	July 23, 1860–August 21, 1939	
Augusta Adams Cobb-S	December 7, 1802–February 3, 1886	Joseph Smith
Harriet E. Cook-NM	November 7, 1824–November 5, 1898	Joseph Smith
Oscar	February 10, 1846–August 4, 1910	
Clarissa Decker-NM	July 22, 1828–January 5, 1889	Willard Richards
Jeanette	October 14, 1849–March 8, 1930	May 8, 1844

Nabbie	March 22, 1852–March 15, 1894	
Jedediah	January 21, 1855–January 11, 1856	
Albert	January 4, 1858–December 16, 1864	
Charlotte	March 4, 1861–January 20, 1892	Not identified
Lorenzo Dow Young		
Persis Goodall	October 19, 1807–November 21, 1895	
William	March 15, 1806–September 16, 1894	June 6, 1826
Joseph	February 21, 1827–April 15, 1894	
Lucy	January 12, 1828–June 7, 1873	
Harriet	November 27, 1832–August 27, 1836	
John	July 21, 1834–February 16, 1928	
Franklin	April 30, 1837–September 15, 1931	
Lorenzo	February 17, 1839–January 22, 1911	
Lucius	March 9, 1841–March 28, 1924	
Lucia	July 12, 1843–August 9, 1844	
Brigham	July 12–August 14, 1843	
Frances	September 1844–September 1844	
Harriet P. Wheeler Decker–S	June 27–July 15, 1845	
John	September 7, 1803–December 23, 1871	Brigham Young?
Lorenzo	September 5, 1844–September 5, 1844	March 9, 1843
	September 20, 1847–March 22, 1848	

The Remnant Church: An RLDS Schismatic Group Finds a Prophet of Joseph's Seed

William D. Russell

AT THE APRIL 1970 WORLD CONFERENCE of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS)¹ in Independence, Missouri, one of the delegates, A. H. ("Bud") Edwards, rose to offer a substitute to a motion on the floor which called for the First Presidency to appoint women to Church committees more in proportion to their numbers in the Church. Edwards's substitute went further than the main motion and called for an end to "discrimination on the basis of sex in the life of the Church," clearly suggesting that women should be ordained.²

As Edwards read his substitute motion, a loud, collective gasp resounded through the conference chamber, foreshadowing the negative re-

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1. The RLDS Church formally changed its name to "Community of Christ" on April 6, 2001.

2. 1970 *World Conference Bulletin*, 329; "A Transcript of the Business Sessions: The 1970 World Conference," 404-8. These official documents and others in the same series are all available in the Community of Christ Library-Archives,

action that would come fourteen years later when Church President Wallace B. Smith endorsed women's ordination in a statement to the 1984 World Conference that the delegates accepted as a revelation from God. "The uproar from the conference was a shock and a little frightening," recalls Edwards, thirty-two years later.³ The 1984 revelation became Section 156 of the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants.⁴ But the 1970 substitute motion suffered an instant death, as the delegates laid the matter on the table indefinitely.⁵

When the 1984 conference approved Section 156, which also indicated that the soon-to-be-built temple in Independence would be dedicated to the pursuit of peace,⁶ it became clear that the largest "schism"—separation from the unity of the Church—in the history of the RLDS Church was in the making.⁷ In the six years following the approval of Section 156, at least one-fourth of the active RLDS members terminated their involvement in the Church. Many of these people formed separate splinter groups in their local areas.⁸ Others simply grew tired of the

Independence. See also Richard P. Howard, *The Church Through the Years*, 2 vols. (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1993), 2:396–97.

3. Bud Edwards, email to Bill Russell, March 15, 2002.

4. 1984 *World Conference Bulletin*, 308–9; "Doctrine and Covenants 156," *Saints' Herald* 131, no. 9 (May 1, 1984): 3; "A Transcript of the Legislative Sessions: The 1984 World Conference," 113–54.

5. 1970 *World Conference Bulletin*, 329.

6. D&C 156:5a. Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural citations are from the Community of Christ Doctrine and Covenants (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1990). In addition to citations to section and verse, the Community of Christ tradition designates parts of verses with alphabet letters.

7. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., edited by E. A. Livingston (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1462, defines schism as: "formal and willful separation from the unity of the Church."

8. William D. Russell, "Defenders of the Faith: Varieties of RLDS Dissent," *Sunstone* 14, no. 3 (June 1990): 14–19; and "The Fundamentalist Schism, 1958–Present," in *"Let Contention Cease": The Dynamics of Dissent in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, edited by Roger D. Launius and W. B. "Pat" Spillman (Independence, Mo.: Graceland/Park Press, 1991), 125–51, and the following essays in the same volume: Larry Conrad, "Dissent Among Dis-

bickering and stopped attending church.⁹ The only comparable division in the Church had occurred in the 1920s during the early years of the presidency of Frederick Madison Smith, the grandson of Joseph Smith, Jr. The issue then was the centralization of power in the office of the President of the Church, which came to be called "Supreme Directional Control."¹⁰ This paper will examine the most recent and most successful attempt, so far, to organize a new general Church, with a prophet, apostle, and other high Church officials.

The debate over women's ordination had been simmering in the Church since the early 1970s. The feminist movement had made some RLDS people aware of how patriarchal culture limited women's opportunities to use their talents in ways that would benefit themselves as well as the Church and the larger society. The first published, sustained argument for greater recognition of women's giftedness in the RLDS Church, including advocacy of ordination, appeared in a short-lived quarterly journal published by liberals on the faculty at the RLDS Church's Graceland College, beginning in 1970. *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought, and Action* published only eleven issues in three years, before ceasing publication

senters: Theological Dimensions of Dissent in the Reorganization," 199–239; W. B. ("Pat") Spillman, "Dissent and the Future of the Church," 259–92, and Roger D. Launius, "Guarding Prerogatives: Autonomy and Dissent in the Development of the Nineteenth-Century Reorganized Church," 17–58. See also Paul M. Edwards, *Our Legacy of Faith* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1991), 282; Howard, *The Church Through the Years*, 2:409–32; Roger D. Launius, "The Reorganized Church, the Decade of Decision, and the Abilene Paradox," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31 (Spring 1998): 47–65.

9. For a somber look at the decline in active membership in recent years, see George N. Walton, "Sect to Denomination: Counting the Progress of the RLDS Reformation," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 18 (1998): 38–62.

10. On the Supreme Directional Control controversy, the most thorough study is that of Larry E. Hunt, *F. M. Smith: Saint as Reformer* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House; 1982), 233–345. See also Kenneth R. Mulliken, "The Supreme Directional Control Controversy: Theocracy Versus Democracy in the Reorganized Church, 1915–1925," in *Let Contention Cease*, 91–124; Paul M. Edwards, *The Chief: An Administrative Biography of Fred M. Smith* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1988), chap. 9; Howard, *The Church Through the Years*, 2:227–42.

in 1973 for financial reasons. In a December 1970 editorial, the nine-member Editorial Committee advocated ordination for women.¹¹ The most articulate spokesperson on behalf of feminist causes in *Courage* was co-editor Carolyn Raiser. Others who advocated the cause included Chris Piatt, Marge Troeh, and Barbara Higdon.

Theological tension had been simmering in the Church since the early 1960s; but during that decade, the ordination of women had not yet surfaced as a significant issue. The feminist movement was not highly visible in American society until the end of the 1960s. The issues debated in the Church during the 1960s revolved around the nature and interpretation of scripture and of the Church's sacred story. Some people in the Church—usually called “liberals”—challenged the traditional interpretations on a variety of issues. At the beginning of the decade, challenges to orthodoxy were coming from some professors at Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa, and from the three departments at Church headquarters in Independence: Religious Education, directed by Clifford P. Buck; History, directed by Charles A. Davies; and Herald Publishing House, directed by Roger Yarrington.¹² Those who challenged traditional RLDS orthodoxy might be called “New School” thinkers. Various terms like “fundamentalist,” “conservative,” and “traditionalist” have been applied to

11. See the following articles and editorials in *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought, and Action*: Editorial Committee, “Sex Roles in a Changing World,” 1, no. 2 (December 1970): 81–84; Carolyn Raiser, “All Animals Are Equal: But Some Animals Are More Equal Than Others,” 2, no. 3 (Spring 1972): 413–20; The Editors, “Interview with Marge Troeh,” 3, nos. 2–3 (Winter/Spring 1973): 71–80; Barbara Higdon and Larry Moffett, “Women’s Lib in Print,” 3, nos. 2–3 (Winter/Spring 1973): 109–13. See also Howard, *The Church Through the Years*, 2:381–408. I edited *Courage* throughout its short three-year life. The other members of the editorial committee were Barbara Higdon, Paul Edwards, Roger Yarrington, Clifford Buck, Joe Pearson, Roy Muir, Lorne White, and Judy Schneebeck. Carolyn Raiser soon joined the editorial committee and became co-editor.

12. Church Statistician James E. Lancaster Jr. was closely associated with Church Historian Charles Davies and the men in the Religious Education Department of Religious Education. He published what may have been the most controversial article in the *Saints Herald* during that period: “By the Gift and Power of God: The Method of Translation of the Book of Mormon,” *Saints’ Herald* 109, no. 22 (November 15, 1962): 798–802, 806, 817; reprinted with some revisions as “The Method of Translation of the Book of Mormon,” *John Whitmer Historical*

those who opposed the New School thinking that eventually led to the schism of 1984. I will refer to the traditionalists as advocates of the “Old School” way of thinking. They favored returning the Church to the traditions that were slipping away as the leadership embraced more and more of the New School ideas.

The ordination of women was merely the last straw for many Old School Saints who had been concerned about the Church’s deemphasis of many beliefs that had been central tenets of the RLDS faith for more than a century. It was clear by the end of the 1960s that some highly placed Church leaders no longer regarded the Book of Mormon as history and did not believe that the RLDS pattern of Church organization and doctrines constituted a restoration of the forms and beliefs that Jesus had established during his mortal ministry. Some no longer believed in the interpretation of Christian history regarding apostasy and restoration that had long been taught in the Church nor, indeed, believed that the RLDS Church was “the true Church of Jesus Christ.”

While Old School Saints were shocked and angered over approval of Doctrine and Covenants 156, many held out hope that the World Conference of 1986 might rescind Section 156 and correct the error which they felt had been made by the prophet, Wallace B. Smith, and the delegates at the World Conference of 1984. Therefore, after the 1984 World Conference, a “wait and see” attitude was common among traditionalists, and only a very few local RLDS splinter groups emerged between the biennial conferences of 1984 and 1986.¹³ But when a resolution to rescind Section 156 came to the floor at the 1986 World Conference, President Smith ruled the motion out of order, reading a long statement to explain his reasoning. Essentially, his position was that, since only the prophet can bring a purported revelation to the World Conference for consideration, only

Association Journal 3 (1983): 51–61, and as “The Translation of the Book of Mormon,” in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, edited by Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 97–112.

13. One of the few that started during the inter-conference period was Center Branch in Independence, led by Rudy Leutzinger, who subsequently was expelled from the Church. Only about a dozen fundamentalist splinter groups’ leaders were expelled—which is the RLDS equivalent of LDS excommunication. Several hundred men were “silenced”—removed from the priesthood.

the prophet can bring a motion to rescind a revelation.¹⁴ A leader of the Old School faction among the delegates appealed the chair's decision. Eighty-eight percent of the voting delegates (2,265 to 323) supported Smith's ruling.¹⁵

Interestingly enough, some of the New School revisionists who strongly supported Section 156 were disappointed with President Smith's ruling. Clearly the 88 percent support for his ruling demonstrated that an overwhelming percentage of the delegates supported Section 156 and were prepared to vote against the motion to rescind it. But the ruling prevented a vote on the *merits* of the motion to rescind. As Church Historian Richard Howard expressed it, the chair's ruling "closed off the possibilities of jurisdictions, quorums, or even the World Conference initiating measures that seek in any way to modify the modern Church canon." Howard characterized it as a "radical shift in canonization principle and procedure."¹⁶ Others have noted that President Smith's ruling means that the only person who can correct a mistaken revelation is the very person who made the mistake in the first place.

As a result of this failure to rescind Section 156, many Old School Saints decided it was time to begin forming separate groups. In the nineteen years since the World Conference of 1986, Old School Saints have organized more than 200 local splinter groups, the vast majority in the United States, and most of them in the Midwest. Several types of schismatic groups have emerged, and the divisions can be seen as natural, possibly even predictable ones. Most of the local groups are independent of any higher authority at the present time.

Ten years before the 1984 conference, Richard Price, an employee of Bendix Corporation in Kansas City, living in Independence, Mis-

14. 1986 *World Conference Bulletin*, 288–89.

15. *Ibid.*, 289. The Nebraska District has also sent a resolution to the 1986 World Conference calling for the removal of Section 156. 1986 *World Conference Bulletin*, 233. The World Conference acted only on the Central Missouri Stake resolution, published in the 1986 *World Conference Bulletin*, 230–31.

16. Howard, *The Church Through the Years*, 2:53. Recently, Howard has called for the creation of a "Task Force on the Canon," composed of a learned and diverse group of scholars, who would make recommendations to the Church, thus opening the canonization process. Richard P. Howard, "A Proposal for a Task Force on the Canon," *Theology Colloquy*, Graceland University, February 2, 2002. Photocopy in my possession.

souri, had published *Saints at the Crossroads*, warning the RLDS people of what he regarded as “liberal heresies” being espoused by Church officials at headquarters.¹⁷ *Saints at the Crossroads* might appropriately be seen as a 250-page critique of “position papers” authored by staff in the Department of Religious Education as they developed new curriculum materials for Church school classes. Their papers were not intended for distribution outside their curriculum committee, but Old School Saints surreptitiously secured copies and circulated them widely. The Old School Saints were shocked at the contents of the papers, which expressed liberal positions on many issues of history and theology. Price’s book achieved a wide readership, with 12,000 copies having been sold or given away by 2001.¹⁸ Price’s book and an earlier newspaper, *Zion’s Warning* (1970–76), published by Barney Fuller and Glen Stout, were the first two extensive, widely circulated published warnings issued by Old School thinkers trying to alert the Saints about the New School “heresies” being introduced by Church leaders. Their warnings were for the most part accurate. The Church and its leaders have embraced many of those New School ideas in the three decades since Fuller and Price issued their warnings.

During the period of uncertainty between the conferences of 1984 and 1986, Price offered a very effective strategy for the Old School Saints, at least in the short run. It recognized the turmoil experienced by Old School Saints who were torn between their commitment to the restored gospel in general and of the RLDS Church in particular and their resistance to the new ideas. That strategy, published in a book, *Action Time*, and a pamphlet, *The Restoration Branches Movement*,¹⁹ proposed that whenever and wherever the local RLDS congregation is controlled by “the liberals” (which typically meant that the congregation’s leaders supported the World Church leadership or had ordained women), then the faithful Saints should withdraw from participation and establish an “Independ-

17. Richard Price, *The Saints at the Crossroads* (Independence, Mo.: Price Publishing, 1974).

18. Richard Price, “Saints at the Crossroads,” *Vision*, Issue 37 (June 2001): 14; Richard Price, Letter to Bill Russell, November 6, 2001.

19. Richard Price, *Action Time: The Problem of Fundamentalism Versus Liberalism in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and Suggestions for Coping with That Problem* (Independence, Mo.: Price Publishing, 1985) and *The Restoration Branches Movement* (Independence, Mo.: Price Publishing, 1986), both written with the assistance of Larry Harlacher.

ent Restoration Branch" controlled by local elders who were ordained by proper authority and who adhered to the traditional RLDS doctrines. Price advised the Old School Saints not to resign from the RLDS Church, but to await the opportunity to help return the RLDS Church to its traditional doctrines and practices. Over the years, Price has remained optimistic that this will eventually happen.²⁰

By "Independent," Price meant branches independent of control

20. Price, "The Restorationists Will Regain Control of the RLDS Church," *Vision* 7 (September 1991): 18, cites as evidence the growth of the Restoration Branches and the decline in membership and vitality of the institutional (RLDS) church. He believes that, if the restorationists will remain in independent branches, the time will come when the Lord "cleanses the RLDS Church (Doctrine and Covenants 105:9-10) and replaces those New Agers with righteous servants." Price's son David noted that the name "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" was given by revelation at Far West on April 26, 1838, and recorded in the *Elders' Journal*, August 1838, 52, and in Joseph Smith III and Heman Hale Smith, *History of the [Reorganized] Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1805-1890*, 4 vols.; continued by F. Henry Edwards as *The History of the [Reorganized] Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vols. 5-8 (Independence, Mo.: Herald House, 1970): 2:151. David Price stressed that Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith had declared that the 1838 revelation "settles definitely the name of the church." David M. Price, "What's in a Name?" *Vision*, Issue 11 (November 1992): 5-6. The Prices apparently feel that, since God gave the name by revelation, he will not allow the name to be desecrated for long. However, the Utah church carries the same name given in the 1838 revelation, without a qualifier such as "Reorganized," or "Restoration," or "World," or "Remnant," as has been added by some recent factions. But Price would reply that Joseph Smith III was told by revelation to "join the Reorganized Church" (*Saints' Herald*, October 24, 1936, 1, 330), "which indicates that the Lord approved of that addition." Richard Price, "The Name of the Church Was Given by Revelation," *Vision*, Issue 12 (March 1993): 10. Community of Christ Historian Mark A. Scherer, "'Called by a New Name': Mission, Identity, and the Reorganized Church," *Journal of Mormon History* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 45, notes that this 1838 revelation at Far West became Section 115 of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants but was never canonized by the RLDS Church. Perhaps Scherer was suggesting that it was all right to change the name of the church since the traditional name is not in the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants. Scherer also suggested that the "Church of Jesus Christ" part of the name would have likely pleased the Missouri Saints while "Latter Day Saints" would have pleased the Kirtland Saints "because it acknowledged their strong dispensationalism."

from the RLDS hierarchy and their appointees. "Restoration" meant that the independent branches would preach the original gospel restored in 1830. "Branch" meant they would establish only a local branch (congregation) and not create a general Church organization—that is, they would not organize beyond the local level. Each branch would do what a local branch does: conduct worship services and Sunday School classes, elect its own officers, and conduct other business, such as calling and ordaining priesthood members who are "local" rather than "general Church" in nature. Such local officers are deacons, teachers, priests, and elders, but not seventies or any of the various types of high priests who are regarded as "general Church officers."

He based his ideas to a great extent on the historical precedent of the 1850s when the Saints in various locations in Wisconsin and Illinois kept what might appropriately be called "the Kirtland gospel" alive until a new prophet, Joseph Smith III, was called and accepted the office. "The Kirtland gospel" seems an appropriate term because those who joined the "New Organization" (later the Reorganization and now the Community of Christ) ultimately rejected all of the innovations associated with the Nauvoo period in the history of the Saints. The RLDS Church through the years sought to retain a faith that is roughly approximate to the faith held by the Saints at the end of the Kirtland period in 1838. Old School Saints today often contend that they seek to return to the original faith of 1830, failing to notice that many important RLDS doctrines and practices were introduced in Kirtland during the 1831–38 period and were therefore not part of the original faith held by the Saints in 1830. But because of their strong emphasis upon restoring the New Testament Church and restoring the faith of the early Latter Day Saints, the term "restorationists" has been commonly used by the Old School Saints.

A majority of the local schismatic congregations established by Old School Saints followed Richard Price's strategy. Outsiders have often thought of Price as the leader of the Restoration Branch Movement, because his publications on the subject were early, frequent, widely circulated, and certainly influential. But he has never been the pastor of a Restoration Branch or held any formal leadership position in the Restoration Branch Movement. He has been strongly criticized both by people who have remained in the RLDS Church and by a variety of Restoration Branch members. RLDS Church Historian Richard P. Howard characterizes *Saints at the Crossroads* as a "bitterly angry book" whose style "sacrificed

truth and accuracy to the rage of its author." W. B. ("Pat") Spillman terms Price a "self-appointed strategist of the fundamentalist cause" whose "view is no doubt extreme, and stated more for its propaganda effect than for serious analysis."²¹ At the same time, some Old School Saints have criticized Price for his sometimes harsh tone in criticizing others. Some see him as too negative and attacking. Others challenge his belief that ultimately the Old School Saints will be able to restore the true gospel under the traditional name, "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." His views constitute a stricter interpretation of the scriptures and Church traditions than most restorationists have.

Given Price's strict, literalistic interpretation of the RLDS heritage, people on all sides should be able to understand the harsh tone in some of his writings. Price's "Independent Restoration Branch" strategy seems to have been an effective policy, certainly in the short run.²² And he has consistently articulated that strategy in the pages of a magazine he has published since 1989, *Vision*.²³

One effect of the "Independent Restoration Branch" strategy was that men who held the Melchisedec Priesthood could exercise leadership in local branches where they could preach, teach, pray, and testify in the Old School manner, and sing the old familiar hymns without any hindrance from World Church apostles, regional administrators, stake presi-

21. Howard, *The Church Through the Years*, 2:31 note; Spillman "Dissent and the Future of the Church," 263–64. While Howard discusses the schism over the ordination of women in his two-volume history, published in 1992–93, Paul M. Edwards, in his official one-volume history, *Our Legacy of Faith: A Brief History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1991), does not mention that the conflict over women's ordination led to schism nor does he include Section 156 in his chronology of important events in Church history. The only entry for that year was Barbara Higdon's inauguration as president of Graceland College.

22. On Richard Price's career in the Church, see William D. Russell, "Richard Price: Leading Publicist of the Reorganized Church's Schismatics," in *Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History*, edited by Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 319–42.

23. *Vision* is published by Price Publishing Company, 915 E. 23rd Street, Independence, MO 64055, which is also the site of the Restoration Bookstore. *Vision* is a very useful source for news about the Restoration Branches and for the publisher's critique of other restorationist factions and of the RLDS Church.

dents, or other career Church appointees hired and evaluated by the RLDS hierarchy in Independence. These World Church appointees were the very men who had been guiding the Church down the dark path that led toward acceptance of the New School ideas that were so troublesome to the Saints of the Old School. Church officials had pressured reluctant congregations into using the “new curriculum” materials in the 1970s and the new hymnbook of 1981. They could block priesthood calls initiated by local fundamentalists and initiate calls for New School thinkers and others who supported the new World Church policies. And they could often control who got elected or appointed to stake or district offices and who preached the sermons and taught the important classes in local congregations.

In the long run, the difficulty for the independent branches will be the need to eventually create a general Church structure in conformity with the requirements of the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants. A major obstacle will be achieving agreement on the identity of who God has called to be the true Prophet, Seer, and Revelator for the Church, divinely commissioned to set the Church in order in the aftermath of the “liberal heresies.” Unfortunately, it appears to be difficult for a large group of men to achieve consensus regarding the thoughts of God.

In the long run, difficulties might arise because of the lack of ordained men in the higher offices of the Church. In the short run, the Restoration Branches have had the benefit of the ministry from men ordained to the higher offices (e.g., seventies, high priests, patriarchs, and bishops) by RLDS authorities before they affiliated with the Independent Restoration Branches. Obviously these men will all grow old and die. The numbers of active seventies and patriarchs are both in single digits at this point. So the Old School schismatics will eventually need to create a general Church structure and ordain new seventies, high priests, patriarchs, bishops, and of course, twelve apostles and a prophet. If not, they will forever remain local independent branches.

For many of the Old School Saints, the prophet must be a descendant of Joseph Smith Jr., as has every RLDS prophet until 1996, when the prophet who gave the Church Section 156 called a non-Smith to be his successor. To remain independent restoration branches forever would leave the restoration branches in the position of being, in effect, Southern Baptists with two extra books of scripture to defend.

Richard Price has cautioned the traditionalists not to “run before

the Lord,” that is, not to proceed with organizing beyond the local branch level without genuine revelation calling the Saints to do so. Here again, he uses the 1844–60 model, when the “true Church” remained alive in, for example, the Beloit and Yellowstone branches in Wisconsin and Illinois. Independent of the “Brighamite heresy,” these branches awaited a son of Joseph the Martyr to lead them. Price says that those who moved too quickly to fill the higher quorums during that period were rejected by God, their revelations were false, and they taught false doctrines which led to further apostasy.²⁴ He correctly recognized, early on, that men would inevitably step forward who had either seen themselves as God’s prophet to save the Restoration or who would claim divine light revealing that some personal friend or relative had been called to that task. It is probably inevitable that various claims to the prophetic mantle would be brought forward in this climate, where Old School Saints thought that Wallace B. Smith was not now nor never had been truly a prophet.

Keenly aware of this strong probability, Richard Price in the August 1999 issue of his *Vision* magazine, identified twelve contemporary groups or individuals who had “run before the Lord” by organizing beyond the local level or proclaiming themselves the prophet without authentic revelation to proceed. The groups he identified were led by: (1) Stanley King, (2) Barney Fuller, (3) Eugene Walton, (4) Bud Ormsbee, (5) Lee Abramson, (6) John Cato, (7) Robert Murdock, (8) Bob Baker, (9) Norman Page, (10) Bill Whenham and Glen Hendrix, (11) Doyle Launius and Jack Ferguson, and (12) David Bowerman and Lee Killpack.²⁵ He could also have included groups led by Ron Livingston and Jeff Lundgren.²⁶

But many Old School Saints think Richard Price is too cautious, even naive, to continue hoping that the RLDS Church (now the Community of Christ) will someday come to its senses and reaffirm the traditional

24. Richard Price, “Running before the Lord,” *Vision*, Issue 2 (Fall 1989): 12.

25. Richard Price, “High Priests’ Group Organizes Twelfth Restoration Church,” *Vision*, Issue 32 (August 1999): 8–10.

26. Ron Livingston, who no longer claims his given name, is the prophet and high priest for a group of about fifty people who claim to be Essenes (a pre-Christian Israelite sect) who live on more than two hundred acres of land between Lamoni and Davis City, Iowa. Jeffrey Don Lundgren was the prophet and seer of a group of twenty-nine people in Kirtland, Ohio, until April 1989 when he murdered a family of five, who were part of his group. Lundgren is currently con-

gospel.²⁷ Inevitably, as the years pass, the number of these optimists has declined. Since the early days after the schism of 1984, Old School Saints have been divided between those who, like Richard Price, do not want Old School Saints to resign from the RLDS Church and are therefore “nonseparatists,” and those who do withdraw and are “separatists.” The separatists do not believe that the RLDS Church will one day reaffirm the Old School beliefs, so there is no reason to hope that the Church will ever turn from its present apostasy. Like seventeenth-century Puritans in England, some believed the Church of England could not be reformed and therefore became “separatists.” Others believed that there was still hope for the Church of England and were therefore “nonseparatists.”

In the RLDS schism, the division between the optimists (nonseparatists) and the pessimists (separatists) was probably inevitable. However, the optimism of the nonseparatists has gradually gotten more and more difficult to maintain as the RLDS Church continues to move further away from past traditions. The revelation on women in 1984 began the formal schism.²⁸ But gradually it became clear that, by calling in the same revelation for the Independence Temple to be dedicated to the pursuit of peace, Wallace B. Smith was calling for an important new direction in the Church’s mission.

Then in 1994 the Church changed its policy on the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper from closed to open communion, which was a big issue for the Old School Saints. The next year Wallace B. Smith announced his recommendation that W. Grant McMurray be ordained his successor. Finally, at the 2000 World Conference the delegates voted to change the name of the Church to the “Community of Christ.” While McMurray was president at that time, the idea goes back to a suggestion made by Wallace B. Smith at a leadership retreat in Colorado in 1994. These five changes, initiated by Wallace B. Smith, have created a gulf so wide be-

finied to death row in the state prison at Mansfield, Ohio. Only three members of Lundgren’s group retain any allegiance or contact with their former scriptural mentor.

27. On the recent RLDS name change, see Scherer, “‘Called by a New Name.’”

28. Two self-proclaimed prophets arose prior to 1984—Stan King in Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada, and Eugene Walton in Independence. Both movements were short-lived.

tween the RLDS Church and its Old School schismatics that it appears impossible to close. James Rogers, a restorationist who has chosen the separatist camp, reflected on this debate: "There is a sense of hurt and frustration in the struggling Restoration Branches today. Some are hoping that the Lord will turn the institutional [RLDS] Church around and correct the breaches. To this we must ask, 'Did God turn Brigham Young around, and those who followed him?'"²⁹

It was probably predictable that some Old School Saints believed that the elders should take the lead in restoring the wayward Church, while others thought the seventies or high priests should perform that task. Understandably, elders tended to believe that the elders should lead, while at least some of the seventies and high priests looked to their particular quorums. The elders could cite a historical precedent: the early conferences of the Church up into the Kirtland period were elders' conferences.

At present, the separatist group that seems to be posing the most serious challenge to the unity of the Old School schismatics is the recent movement by certain high priests, initially led by David W. Bowerman and V. Lee Killpack, to reestablish the original church under the name, "The Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." This movement, however, follows an earlier serious effort by Old School seventies to build a new general church structure. Most of them had affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, led by A. Lee Abramson. These Seventies noted support in the Doctrine and Covenants for the idea that, if the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles are in apostasy, it is the duty of the Seventies to set the Church in order, if the Seventies are unanimous. The Seventies cited Doctrine and Covenants 104:11f-j; 122:9a, 10a, and 124:4 in support of their position.

The effort to get a unanimous quorum of Seventies, however, failed; and on October 1, 1989, a meeting of only five Seventies convened. All five agreed that the Church needed to be "set in order," which, they affirmed, meant they were "unanimous."³⁰ The result was the formal organization of the "Restoration Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" in 1991. This group numbered about a thousand by the end of its first

29. James Rogers, "The Name of the Church," *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 2 (February 1, 2000): 17-18.

30. R. Ben Madison, "The History of the Restoration Church of Jesus

year. Two years later in 1993, Marcus Juby became its prophet, seer, and revelator. By 2002, its membership had dwindled to about two hundred members, due to endless internal schisms. The future looks dim for the Restoration Church.³¹

After the restorationist Seventies failed to accomplish their mission of setting the RLDS Church “in order,” some of the Old School high priests felt that scripture and historical precedent suggested that they take the lead temporarily in guiding the Church. One of these high priests, Roger Gault, from Blue Springs, Missouri, noted that according to the 1852 “Word of Consolation,” the original statement of what became the Reorganized Church, the highest authority always presides. Therefore in the absence of the First Presidency and the Quorum of Twelve, the high priests preside.³² Other scriptures and the historical record offered what they considered corroborating evidence. Three documents authored by Church prophets seem particularly important.

The first is Doctrine and Covenants 122:10a, presented by Joseph Smith III in 1894. “Should the Church fall into disorder, or any portion of it, it is the duty of the several quorums of the Church, or any one of them to take measures to correct such disorder; through the advice and direction of the Presidency, the Twelve, or the Seventy, or a council of high priests, in case of emergency.”³³

The second is Joseph Smith III’s March 4, 1912, “Letter of Instruction,” naming his son, Frederick Madison Smith, as his successor. Although the conference accepted this letter and sustained Frederick M. as the next Church president, Joseph III’s biographer, Roger D. Launius,

Christ of Latter Day Saints,” 104, unpublished book manuscript, photocopy in my possession, used by permission. Madison was Church Historian for this group.

31. R. Ben Madison, interviewed by William D. Russell, April 8, 2002, Independence. The Restoration Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is headquartered at the former Alton School, 801 W. 23rd Street, Independence, MO 64055. Its official publication has been *Restoration Advocate*, copies of which are in the Library-Archives, Community of Christ Temple, Independence.

32. Roger Gault, “Scriptural and Historical Evidence of Church Reorganization,” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 3 (May 1, 2000): 12.

33. Quoted in Lee Killpack, “By What Authority a Council of High Priests?” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 2 (February 1, 2000): 14.

notes significantly that Joseph III's Quorum of Twelve resolved that "we do not commit ourselves to the terminology nor all the conclusions contained in the 'Letter of Instruction'" and the General Conference did not endorse it and has never endorsed it as the official policy of the church with regard to succession in the office of President of the Church.³⁴

This precedent became important in November 2004 when Grant McMurray resigned as Church president, citing personal reasons and declining to name a successor. The Quorum of the Twelve took on the task of heading the "process of discernment" by which the Lord's choice for McMurray's successor would be revealed. In consultation with the other headquarters quorums, including the still-functioning First Presidency, they called for the entire Church to engage in this discernment process. The Council of Twelve announced in a letter dated March 4, 2005, signed by all of the Twelve except its president, Stephen M. Veazey, that "God graced our efforts and gave to each of us a testimony that Stephen M. Veazey is called to lead the church as prophet-president."³⁵ This recommendation would be proposed at a specially called World Conference, June 2-5, 2005. Veazey's selection was sustained by that conference.

A third key document was President Israel A. Smith's statement at general conference in 1952, the centennial year of the creation of the "New Organization," which became the "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." Roger Gault cites Israel as saying: "The testimony of all concerned was that it was not a new organization; that was not necessary. For the original body has perpetual existence in and through its faithful adherence . . . for the name of the church had no legal significance whatsoever—The whole controversy was in the domain of doctrine and tenets."³⁶

These high priests concluded that, given the apostasy of the First Presidency and the Twelve, and given the Seventies' inability to act in unanimity, then they should exercise leadership. Gault quoted Joseph Smith

34. Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 349-50. The "Letter of Instruction" was published in the *Saints' Herald* 59 (March 13, 1912): 241-48, and in *History of the Reorganized Church*, 6:560-75.

35. "Official," *Herald*, April 2005, 6.

36. Israel A. Smith, "The Return: Conference Address of the President," *Saints' Herald: Conference Daily Edition*, Monday, March 31, 1952, 36.

III: "If the Melchisedec priesthood is present in any of its offices, the right to organize or to reorganize, the power to establish, to build up and to confirm the Church is there; and if directed by command of God, to perform all the work necessary."³⁷ In the view of Gault and Killpack, the current situation constitutes a clear emergency. The Remnant Church leaders push further than Richard Price in using the 1844–60 period as precedent because they believe that God has established a pattern (Heb. 8:5; D&C 52, 91) which he follows, thereby allowing Saints to be able to discern what to do in difficult times.³⁸ In Hebrews 8:5, God admonished Moses to "make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." In Doctrine and Covenants 52:4b, Joseph Smith announced a revelation in June 1831: "I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations." Two years later, in Section 91:1a, referring to creating the Kirtland Stake, Joseph wrote, "Behold, it must be done according to the pattern which I have given you." Therefore, concludes Lee Killpack, "the scriptural record is clear that the Lord provides a pattern in all things."³⁹

Killpack believes that the RLDS Church has ignored the pattern and that doing so has had dire consequences for the Church: "The evidence of rejected patterns and the law of lineage [in the office of President of the Church] established by the Law Giver himself as well as the pollution of the ordinances occurring in the RLDS Church indicate that the

37. Joseph Smith III, *RLDS Church History*, 5:538, quoted by Roger Gault, "Scriptural and Historical Evidence of Church Reorganization," *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 3 (May 1, 2000): 9.

38. The Conference of Restoration Elders, a group of several hundred elders who still adhere to the Independent Restoration Branch strategy, included in its organization a "Pattern Committee." However, not all restorationists believe that the Lord always uses a single set structure. For example, William ("Vim") Horn, chairman of the Conference of Restoration Elders, 1998–2002, recently stated: "It is hard to say a singular event is 'the pattern,'" but "over time there have been different structural forms. There is the New Testament structure, the Book of Mormon structure, the 1830 structure, and the 1850s structure." He was guest speaker at the adult Sunday School class, Lamoni Community of Christ, Lamoni, Iowa, March 3, 2002; notes in my possession.

39. Lee Killpack, "'Succession in Presidency:' Presented to the Center Place Prayer and Study Group," *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 1 (October 1, 1999): 9.

Church as represented by that institution is in apostasy.”⁴⁰ Breaking with the lineage tradition for the Church president, which occurred in 1996 when W. Grant McMurray succeeded Wallace B. Smith, was evidence of abandonment of the Lord’s pattern. Open communion admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper persons who had not made a baptismal covenant in the Reorganized Church, seen as pollution of the ordinances. Ordaining women was another. Not only was the sacrament of priesthood ordination polluted by the ordination of unauthorized persons (i.e., women); but women’s ordination corrupted all other sacraments, since women who administered the sacraments corrupted those sacraments because they lacked authority. Also, the male elders who called them lack God’s authority for their action, as the Old School Saints see it. Killpack stated the essence of what many Old School Saints have said: “The power and authority of a presidency is diminished and eventually decimated by a continual and willful departure from the law.”⁴¹

Many Old School Saints have echoed the statement of Joseph Smith III who said: “The Church is the faithful remnant, the body remaining true to the doctrine of the Church.” Between the disorganization of the Church in 1844 and the Reorganization under Joseph III, the Church was “the remnant scattered abroad, who remained true to the principles first given as to the gospel of Christ; and with any body of such remnant.”⁴² These high priests also drew on another of Joseph Smith III’s statements for assurance that they are the legitimate Church: “The body has perpetual existence in and through those people who still adhere faithfully to the original tenets and doctrines.”⁴³ Smith’s definition of “the Church” is conservative because it implies that the true Church should not undergo change or evolution in doctrine. This is consistent with the concept of the true Church as the restoration of the New Testament Church. But it appears to be in conflict with another central tenet of Latter Day Saintism, which holds that humankind needs continued revelation as a source of further light and truth. The existence of contin-

40. *Ibid.*, 8.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Roger Gault, “Scriptural and Historical Evidences of Church Reorganization,” *The Hastening Times*, 1, no. 3 (May 1, 2000): 10.

43. *Ibid.*, 9.

ued revelation implies that current concepts are fallible and that, therefore, change is needed to move closer to the fullness of the gospel.

The two key high priests who took the lead in creating the Remnant Church were David W. Bowerman and V. Lee Killpack. Bowerman retired from RLDS World Church appointment in 1991 after thirty-two years, twenty-four of which he served as president in four stakes—Omaha-Council Bluffs, Kansas City, Tulsa, and Blue Valley (Independence, Missouri area).⁴⁴ Lee Killpack retired in 1999 as a science teacher at Tri-Center Community Schools in Neola, Iowa, and moved to the Independence area. Bowerman made a presentation to the Restoration Branch pastors in Independence (the “Pastors in Zion”) on June 2, 1992, suggesting that a conference of restorationist elders be called for April 1993. James Daugherty, historian for the Conference of Restoration Elders, reports that on July 18, 1992, approximately two hundred elders met in Independence and approved Bowerman’s plan.

The first Conference of Restoration Elders (CRE) convened in Independence, April 5–9, 1993, attended by 406 Melchisedec and 23 Aaronic priesthood men, along with 99 nonpriesthood members. They affirmed belief in the three standard books of scripture, the “Epitome of Faith” (the RLDS version of The Articles of Faith), and various pre-1984 RLDS General Conference resolutions on membership, priesthood, the sacraments, and tithing. It tabled proposals involving marriage, divorce, and remarriage, probably because the Church’s resolutions on these sensitive subjects, adopted in the 1960s before the dramatic rise in divorce rates in America, are too conservative even for Old School Saints, some of whom have been divorced themselves.⁴⁵

At that first conference in 1993, Bowerman was chosen as chairman of the CRE. The elders elected a Coordinating Council and other committees. The conference also began publishing a magazine, *Tidings of Zion*. Sixty-nine issues had appeared by the end of 2004. While Bowerman was leading the organization, the conference approved for publication various

44. David W. Bowerman, interviewed by William D. Russell, November 28, 2001, Independence.

45. The Church’s resolutions on divorce began in the nineteenth century. Until 1962, the only legitimate grounds for divorce were acts of adultery (World Church Resolution 1034 [1962], replaced by World Church Resolution 1182 [1984]).

documents of “inspired counsel” that had been presented through J. J. Basse, David Bowerman, Warren Chelline, Vernon F. Darling, Conrad R. Faulk, C. Houston Hobart, and Robert R. Murie Sr., and published in *Tidings of Zion*.⁴⁶ The content of these “counsel” messages tended to point in the direction that Bowerman was advocating. Thus, it is no surprise that, as of this writing, all of these men have affiliated with the Remnant Church except Vernon Darling.

David Bowerman was concerned that the autonomous local branches were too independent of each other, with each of the local Restoration Branches going its own way. Bowerman looked at the two hundred plus local splinter groups that had proliferated between 1984 and 1993 and concluded that, without guidance, these groups might diverge too sharply to be unified again.⁴⁷ He hoped that guidance could come from the Conference of Restoration Elders that he had created in 1993. He also believed that Church law and tradition supported the leadership of the high priests, given the apostasy of the higher quorums. But over the next five years, 1993–98, resistance to Bowerman and his associates increased. Finally, at the annual Conference of these Restoration Elders held in April 1998, those who opposed the direction Bowerman seemed to be going elected William (“Vim”) Horn as chairman of the conference. Horn served in this capacity for four years, until April 2002, when Seventy Richard Neill—possibly Bowerman’s strongest opponent within the organization—became its chair. In April 2005, Paul Gage replaced Neill.

A major point of contention between the two factions in the Conference of Restoration Elders had been over evangelism in distant parts of the world. It came to a head between the 1997 and the 1998 conferences. Bowerman was concerned because various members of the CRE’s Evangelism Council had created independent organizations for missionary work in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. He and others felt that foreign missions should not be operating outside the authority of the conference. But Neill noted that the Center Place Missionary Council, which created such agencies as the African Restoration Ministries, pre-

46. “Inspired Counsel,” *Tidings of Zion*, no. 22 (January–February 1997): 9–14. *Tidings of Zion*’s address is P.O. Box 4085, Independence 64057.

47. David Bowerman thinks this figure is high. Bowerman, interviewed, November 28, 2001, Independence. In contrast, I regard it as a conservative estimate.

dates the establishment of the Conference of Restoration Elders in 1993.⁴⁸ Bowerman supporters, a majority in the Coordinating Council, voted by a 7-4 majority to dismiss Richard Neill from their council. They also dismissed several members of the Evangelism Council, which also included Neill. The men of the Evangelism Council have undertaken missions to Nigeria, Kenya, the Congo, Nepal, Honduras, Australia, Germany, and Great Britain.⁴⁹ Neill, expelled in 1997 from two leadership roles in the CRE, became its chair in 2002.

This situation captures the two decades of tension between Old School Saints who would have their congregations remain autonomous as Independent Restoration Branches and those who want some centralized leadership. In 1994 Richard Neill published a pamphlet expressing regret that so much criticism has gone on within the Restoration Branches. In 1996, Jack Basse, a prominent high priest from Sperry, Oklahoma, gave a prophetic message at the end of that year's meeting of the Conference of Restoration Elders: "I, the Lord, . . . have not been well pleased with this Conference. . . . I have heard the murmurings and the backbiting in your discussions, both privately and in your meetings."⁵⁰ Tom Beil from Blue Springs, Missouri (now deceased), worried that "two hundred independent Restoration branches are becoming similar to the Baptist congregations. Each branch is independent and autonomous, with unique rules, incorporation papers, and/or bylaws."⁵¹ Lane Harold, from Lees Summit, Missouri, lamented, "The Lord's Latter Day Church is not to be permanently expressed as a collection of fiercely independent congregations existing in a very tentative alliance, and which association is subject to cancellation any time our feelings become hurt. We get no scriptural encouragement from our Lord when we allow ourselves to grow resentful of any outside influence, even from neighboring brothers and sis-

48. Richard Neill, interviewed by William D. Russell, November 27, 2001; see also William ("Vim") Horn, "What Are You Being Asked to Accept?" *Tidings of Zion*, no. 38 (September-October 1999): 5.

49. *Ibid.*

50. "Admonition and Counsel to the 1996 Conference: Message through High Priest Jack Basse," *Tidings of Zion*, no. 20 (September-October 1996): 1.

51. Tom Beil, "Are We Becoming 200 Different Churches?" *Tidings of Zion*, no. 17 (March-April 1996): 1.

ters.”⁵² Roger Gault of the Remnant Church deplored the fact that the many independent branches “are mostly separate entities unto themselves” and suggested that they all need to “pray for one another, instead of preying on one another.”⁵³ Lane Harold commented early in 2000: “Much valuable time has been lost in endless debate and acrimony since 1993.”⁵⁴

There is a natural tendency to assume that God is displeased with such debates, since the Saints are admonished in all three RLDS standard books to be “of one heart and one mind.”⁵⁵ Lane Harold wrote that the anger and impatience of the Lord is not limited to those who have continued to support the RLDS Church, but extends also to those who formed independent congregations and then grew comfortable when much more work was needed to rectify the problems.⁵⁶ It is understandable that people would be disturbed about such contention because the issues for them are extremely important. If God is unchangeable and wants the Saints to be of one heart and one mind, and if He has established a pattern of true doctrine and organization and that pattern is the New Testament Church, then deviation from it is a serious matter. But since Old School Saints

52. Lane Harold, “Scouting Out the Kingdom As We Leave the Nineties,” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 2 (February 1, 2000): 30.

53. Roger C. Gault, “The Role and Duty of the High Priest,” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 2 (February 1, 2000): 4, 7.

54. Lane W. Harold, “When All Else Fails—Read the Directions,” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 2 (February 1, 2000): 12. Basse, Beil, Harold, and Gault all joined the Remnant Church when it was created in September 2000.

55. The RLDS Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 1:36, admonishes: “Arise from the dust, my sons, and be men, and be determined in one mind, and in one heart united in all things, that ye may not come down into captivity; that ye may not be cursed with a sore cursing.” Both RLDS Doctrine and Covenants 36:2h and Genesis 7:23 of the Inspired Version include this statement: “And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness.” RLDS Doctrine and Covenants 45:12 also contains this advice: “With one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed unto you, and it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the most high God.” These passages are all from the Joseph Smith Jr. contribution to the Latter Day Saint canon of scripture, not in standard versions of the Bible.

56. Harold, “When All Else Fails,” 29.

sometimes differ about exactly what “the pattern’s” essential elements are, internal disagreements should not be a surprise.

Most of the local schismatic groups have remained independent branches, with complete local autonomy, even though the RLDS Church has always been a hierarchical church with considerable authority vested in its general officers at headquarters. (This is even truer of the much larger LDS Church headquartered in Salt Lake City, thanks in large part to the revelations of Joseph Smith Jr. in the Doctrine and Covenants which assert considerable centralized authority.) The centralized hierarchical authority in the Latter Day Saint churches is somewhat similar to the centralized authority of churches which are “episcopal” in their form of government. The opposite is the “congregational” form of church government which preserves local autonomy. In the United States, the Baptists are the best example of the congregational form. For the RLDS, “Church law,” found primarily in the Doctrine and Covenants, views this centralized hierarchical authority as being part of “the pattern” required by God. In light of the hierarchical nature of the “true Church,” as RLDS members have traditionally viewed it, one might wonder why many of the Restoration Branches have become protective of their autonomy as local branches.

David Bowerman thinks that the misuse of authority in the past by the RLDS leadership caused the people in the Restoration Branches to be too cautious about vesting authority beyond the local level.⁵⁷ Certainly, the caution of men like Richard Price and many others is understandable. Price has often warned against creating another hierarchy. “I have opposed doing so because I believe that only God can call leaders to the high Church offices. I believe He has not yet done so, but I believe He will in His own due time.”⁵⁸

But if God calls a prophet to lead the schismatic members, will the Old School Saints recognize him? In the five years that Bowerman led the Conference of Restoration Elders, he advocated going forward with some organizing beyond the local branch level, even though no prophet existed as yet. But he was not able to get the conference as a body to agree to it. However, one project he began, early on, did later have an important role

57. David W. Bowerman, “The Hastening Time,” *Tidings of Zion*, no. 26 (September–October 1997): 1.

58. Richard Price, Letter to Bill Russell, April 5, 2002.

in the creation of what became the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

In 1994 Bowerman began to encourage "Prayer and Study Groups" across the United States, led by Old School elders. The only serious group that developed was in the "Center Place"—in and around Independence—when nine men began holding monthly meetings of six hours' length. The original group included Bowerman, Conrad Faulk, Roger Gault, James Rogers, Ron Turner, Jake Simmons, Vernon Darling, Jack Basse, and the late C. Houston Hobart.⁵⁹ The group expanded until eventually about forty Melchisedec Priesthood men were meeting twice a month. Some men developed papers on a variety of topics and discussed them with the group. Of considerable importance is the fact that Frederick N. Larsen, a grandson of Frederick M. Smith and great-grandson of Joseph Smith III, took an active part in the meetings, beginning in 1996.⁶⁰

At a meeting of the prayer and study group held in May 1999, a document entitled "A Proclamation and Invitation to the Faithful" was presented for discussion.⁶¹ Its writers realized that a study group has no formal authority in the Church, a fact that critics were quick to point out: "There is no provision in the law for a study group to function in the administrative affairs of the Church," wrote one dissenter. "A study group has no authority to conduct legislation."⁶² Recognizing this point, supporters of the proclamation called a meeting of restorationist high priests for July 17, 1999, to consider this document. Lee Killpack invited all known restorationist high priests to this gathering, using as his data base the mailing list of high priests in the Conference of Restoration Elders as

59. All but Turner and Darling joined the Remnant Church when it was organized in September 2000. David W. Bowerman, interviewed, November 28, 2001, Independence.

60. David W. Bowerman and V. Lee Killpack, interviewed by William D. Russell, September 17, 2001, Independence.

61. "A Proclamation and Invitation to the Faithful," *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 1 (October 1999): 2–4, with the names of 123 signers of the Proclamation on p. 5.

62. Dale Crown, "By What Authority?" *Tidings of Zion*, no. 38 (September-October 1999): 9. This issue of the *Tidings* contains rebuttals to the Proclamation written by William ("Vim") Horn, James Daugherty, John Henderson, Paul Gage, and Milo M. Farnham, in addition to Crown's.

well as that of an earlier group known as “The High Priests’ Assembly,” begun by Dr. Milo Farnham.

Twenty-four high priests attended the meeting.⁶³ They believed that the restorationist high priests were “the appropriate administrative” body to take whatever action they believed to be consistent with the “‘law and covenants’ of the Church.”⁶⁴ They chose V. Lee Killpack to chair their temporary council. He had earlier been elected chair of the high priests group within the Conference of Restorationist Elders. According to Bowerman and Killpack, when the vote was taken on the “Proclamation and Invitation to the Faithful,” only one high priest voted against it.⁶⁵ Killpack chose Roger Gault and Jim Rogers as his two counselors. Then the three selected nine other high priests to complete a “Council of High Priests.” They were Jack Basse, David Bowerman, Albert Burdick, Carl VunCannon, Lane Harold, Dale Miller, Joe Ben Stone, Harold Tims, and Melvin Zahner.⁶⁶ Critics like Richard Price immediately charged that Bowerman’s people were setting up a new church, seeing these men as likely its apostles and leading officers.

In language much like that of Joseph Smith III when he accepted the presidency of the Church on April 6, 1860, the writers of the proclamation declared that they felt “compelled by a Higher Power” in preparing it.⁶⁷ The proclamation asserted that none of those men who so far had claimed succession and authority had divine sanction, meaning the self-proclaimed prophets discussed above, and the churches that resulted from their work. The proclamation further asserted that the Conference of Restoration Elders had strayed from its founding purposes. It resolved to stand firmly behind the statement of faith that the Conference of Res-

63. V. Lee Killpack, interviewed by William D. Russell, November 28, 2001, Independence.

64. Roger Gault, “The Center Place Prayer and Study Group,” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 1 (October 1, 1999): 17.

65. David Bowerman and Lee Killpack, interviewed by William D. Russell, November 29, 2001.

66. The names of the Council of High Priests are listed in a sidebar, *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 2 (February 1, 2000): 16.

67. Joseph Smith III said on that occasion: “I have come in obedience to a power not my own, and I shall be dictated by the power that sent me.” Quoted in Launius, *Joseph Smith III*, 117.

toration Elders had approved in its first conference in 1993,⁶⁸ on succession, reorganization, and the role of the Melchisedec Priesthood. The proclamation urged “recognition of the lawful role of faithful High Priests to select a *temporary* council to provide interim leadership for guiding and renewing the Church” (emphasis in original). And the “Proclamation and Invitation to the Faithful” acknowledged various “inspired messages” that had been published in the *Tidings of Zion*, the magazine of the Conference of Restoration Elders.⁶⁹

Once the high priests group had approved the proclamation, they decided to call a Melchisedec Assembly, which was held on October 30, 1999, at the Blue Springs, Missouri, Restoration Branch, to see if the elders approved the proclamation and the procedures advocated. At this meeting, the elders voted to accept the proclamation and the Council of High Priests and its leaders. They also authorized the calling of a conference to be held in April 2000.⁷⁰ The General Conference held in Independence on April 8–9, 2000, voted “nearly unanimously” to continue the original church of 1830 under the name “Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.”⁷¹

When Bowerman had been defeated as chairman of the Conference of Restoration Elders in 1998, he and his supporters lost control of that organization’s bi-monthly magazine, *Tidings of Zion*, and created their own magazine, *The Hastening Times*. Its first issue appeared in October 1999. In this magazine, the proclamation’s supporters continued expressing their need for some centralized leadership under the direction of the high

68. “Statement of Faith,” *Tidings of Zion*, no. 16 (January-February 1996): 15–19.

69. “A Proclamation to the Faithful,” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 1 (October 1999): 3, 2.

70. V. Lee Killpack, interviewed by William D. Russell, November 28, 2001; “Report of the Council of High Priests,” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 1 (October 1999): 6.

71. “General Conference,” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 3 (May 1, 2000): 3. The Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is headquartered across the street from the Community of Christ Temple in the former William Chrisman High School, 700 W. Lexington Avenue, Independence, MO 64050.

priests. The "Proclamation and Invitation to the Faithful" was published as the lead article in that first issue, followed by a list of 123 signers.⁷²

In the Latter Day Saint tradition, evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit has normally been seen as an important sign of God's favor for a Church or any religious group. This is especially true for Old School Saints. Marylyn Gosling of Kansas City, Missouri, was frightened when she first read the proclamation. "Oh, dear, something else to divide us even more," she wrote in the *Hastening Times*. But she visited the conferences of both groups and reported finding the Spirit lacking at the Conference of Restoration Elders, in contrast to the abundance of the Spirit she felt at the Remnant Church's conference.⁷³

Remnant Church member Warren Chelline has written that the test of veracity lies in these three areas: scriptural support, historical precedent, and spiritual verification.⁷⁴ Chelline and the others of the Remnant Church believe it has satisfied all three tests. Clearly the Remnant people found scriptural support and historical precedent for their position. But they also believed that they need revelation from God directing them to proceed with the process of restoring a legitimate general Church structure. That occurred when High Priest Lee Killpack presented a revelation that he had received on March 23, 2000, two weeks before the April conference. This revelation instructed the elders to proceed with organizing the Church at the higher levels by appointing a committee of three patriarchs, the late C. Houston Hobart, E. D. ("Dan") Gough, and Conrad R. Faulk. After fasting and praying for guidance, these three would then name seven apostles. The revelation also called for a conference to be held on September 23, 2000, to deliberate on whether to approve the calling of the seven men recommended by the three patriarchs. The revelation concluded: "Be faithful little flock, and

72. "A Proclamation and Invitation to the Faithful," *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 1 (October 1999): 2-4, with the names of 123 signers of the Proclamation on p. 5. One of the 123 was Paul Edwards, a retired dentist, of Independence, not to be confused with Paul Madison Edwards, a grandson of RLDS President Frederick M. Smith, and longtime president of the RLDS Church's Temple School. He and Frederick Niels Larsen, discussed below, are first cousins.

73. Marylyn Gosling, "Testimony of Marylyn Gosling," *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 4 (August 1, 2000): 29-30.

74. Warren H. Chelline, "A Great and Marvelous Work," *The Tidings of Zion*, Issue 29 (March-April 1998): 14.

in My time I will send you one mighty and strong, again, to be your President, Prophet, Seer, and Revelator.”⁷⁵ The conference held in April approved the revelation, authorized the three patriarchs to recommend seven apostles, and called for the conference to be held in September.

More than 500 people registered for that conference. The three patriarchs reported that the seven men called to be apostles were: Gary L. Argotsinger, David W. Bowerman, P. James Buchman, Steve R. Church, V. Lee Killpack, Robert E. Ostrander, and James L. Rogers. The conference approved their calls, and they were ordained.⁷⁶ The seven apostles chose Bowerman as president and Killpack as secretary of the Quorum of Apostles. The apostles have since divided the United States and Canada into seven regions, with each apostle taking charge of the work in one particular region.⁷⁷

A second conference was held a year later on September 21–23, 2001, at William Chrisman High School at Noland Road and Highway 24 in Independence.⁷⁸ It was attended by 138 priesthood from several states. At that time, there were only 205 priesthood members in the Remnant Church.⁷⁹ The evening preaching services and the Sunday morning service were open to nonpriesthood and attended by several hundred people. At the sessions exclusively for priesthood holders, the conference

75. V. Lee Killpack, “Inspired Message—General Conference—April 8–9, 2000,” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 3 (May 1, 2000): 4.

76. “Report of Fall General Conference,” *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 5 (November 1, 2000): 3.

77. In choosing seven, they were perhaps following the historical precedent of the Reorganized Church, which, in its early stages, also by conference decided to ordain seven apostles and gradually build up the numbers. Seven apostles were ordained on April 8, 1853. The number had grown to nine by the time Joseph Smith III was ordained as Church president on April 6, 1860, and was finally completed to twelve on October 6, 1860. For a list of general Church officers, see Edwards, *Our Legacy of Faith*, 313–25.

78. “Priesthood Conferences” (announcement), *The Hastening Times*, 2, no. 3 (August 1, 2001): 8.

79. Bowerman interview, November 28, 2001.

gave tentative approve for the budget for 2002 of over a quarter of a million dollars.⁸⁰

Since the Remnant Church has placed a lot of faith in the idea that God has established a pattern for organizing the true Church, it would follow that the person chosen by God would be a direct descendent of Joseph Smith Jr. This dream was fulfilled when Frederick Niels Larsen, a great-grandson of Joseph Smith III, stepped forward with an affirmation of his conviction that God has called him to be president of the high priesthood and of the Church. Larsen was born January 15, 1932, the son of Ed Larsen and Lois Smith Larsen, the daughter of Frederick M. Smith, the second president of the RLDS Church. This grandfather, for whom Frederick Larsen was named and whom he resembles, blessed him and later confirmed him a member of the RLDS Church. He was ordained a priest in 1956 by his great-uncle, RLDS President Israel A. Smith, and an elder in 1960 by another great-uncle, the recently ordained RLDS President W. Wallace Smith. In 2001 he was ordained a high priest by David Bowerman, under the auspices of the Remnant Church.

He had stopped attending his RLDS congregation in Independence after Section 156 in 1984 and did not affiliate with any of the restorationist schismatic groups until 1996 when he was invited to attend Bowerman's Prayer and Study Group. He was one of the twelve men who met in Carthage, Missouri, and drafted the "Proclamation and Invitation." He testifies that on two occasions in November of 2000 "the Lord revealed to me very clearly that the mantle of leadership would fall on my shoulders." When he awoke on March 5, 2001, "the voice of clear inspiration" came to him, further confirming his call. So on February 27, 2002 Larsen wrote a letter to the members of the Remnant Church. In it he said: "It is my intention to present to the Quorums and the General Conference in April an Inspired Document responding to a call to the Presidency of the High Priesthood and of the Church of Jesus Christ."⁸¹ The April 5-7, 2002, General Conference approved Larsen's document, which became Section R-145 of the Doctrine and Covenants of the Rem-

80. V. Lee Killpack, email to Bill Russell, September 24, 2001.

81. Frederick N. Larsen, "Letter to the Membership of The Remnant CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST of Latter Day Saints," *The Hastening Times* 3, no. 2 (May 2, 2002): 4.

nant Church.⁸² The revelation called David W. Bowerman to be Larsen's counselor in the First Presidency. Since then, Larsen has submitted four more revelations, the most recent, R-149, was approved at the April 2002 General Conference. Wayne Bartrow of Blue Springs is the third member of the First Presidency. The conference also approved other officers, including members of the Standing High Council.⁸³

As President of the Church, Frederick M. Smith had been very interested in the teachings of his great-grandfather, Joseph Smith Jr., on Zion and those of his grandfather, Frederick Madison Smith. Fred Larsen shares his grandfather's enthusiasm for the Zionite ideal and told the *Salt Lake Tribune* how he sees his role: "to prepare this people for what might come spiritually and physically. We do believe in the literal gathering of Zion. This is the center place, the promised land. This will be the starting point for spreading the gospel," and Independence is where "the Lord will return."⁸⁴

At the time Fred Larsen assumed the prophetic office, he was seventy years old. His great-grandfather had been twenty-seven when he assumed the presidency in 1860. At the time of the 2002 General Conference, there were nearly a thousand members and seventeen branches had been organized: five in Missouri (Carthage, Ava, and three in the Independence area); and four in Oklahoma (Blackgum, Muskogee, Sperry, and Texoma). The others were in Delta, Colorado; Missouri Valley, Iowa; Lake Elsinore, California; Marlin, Texas; Magic Valley, Idaho; Floyd's Knob, Indiana;

82. The Remnant Church, along with many of the leaders and members of the independent restoration branches, reject the revelations of W. Wallace Smith (1958-78), Wallace B. Smith (1978-96), and W. Grant McMurray (1996-2004). Therefore they accept only Sections 1-144 of the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants.

83. See the post-conference issue of *The Hastening Times* 3, no. 2 (May 1, 2002): 4-19. The eleven high priests who form the Standing High Council are Albert V. Burdick, Ralph W. Damon, Samuel R. Dyer Jr., James E. Gates, Paul R. Gress, James L. Ross, Richard T. Scott, Gregory A. Turner, David R. Van Fleet, Frederick L. Williams, and Melvin Zahner.

84. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Joseph Smith Descendant at Helm of LDS Remnant Church," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 20, 2002, C-2. Larsen also stated in this interview that he is the "one mighty and strong" foretold in latter day scripture.

Jackson, Mississippi; and Toronto, Ontario, Canada.⁸⁵ Recently two branches have been organized in Bella Vista, Arkansas, and Garden City, Michigan. As of March 31, 2005, the Church had 1,244 members.⁸⁶

It is common among Restoration Branch and Remnant Church members to assert that they did not leave the RLDS Church. Rather, "The RLDS Church has left us," as Conrad Faulk wrote in the *Tidings of Zion*.⁸⁷ Therefore, the Saints of the Remnant Church take the official position that they did not start a *new* Church. Remnant Church Historian Raymond Clough says the Remnant Church is a *renewed* Church "reborn with all the spiritual truth of the primitive gospel and hope of salvation that was returned to earth in 1830." By the same token, Clough asserts, the Reorganized Church of 1860 was not a new Church but merely the rebirth of the restoration of 1830.⁸⁸ Marjorie F. Spease writes that, when the RLDS Church came into being, it "was simply a setting in order of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints—the original church exactly as it had been restored in 1830."⁸⁹ Old School Saints typically hold that the test of truth is to be found in holding to the New Testament doctrines and practices that were restored by Joseph Smith in 1830.

It appears that about half of the active restorationist high priests in the Independence area have affiliated with the Remnant Church, although a much smaller percentage of the elders and other restorationists joined. Clearly its greatest appeal so far has been to high priests. Paul Gage of Independence, a high priest who did not join the Remnant Church, contends that they represented less than 35 percent of the restorationist high priests. "By this action it would seem that they have separated themselves from the quorum of high priests, which for the past seven or eight

85. V. Lee Killpack, interviewed by William D. Russell, September 24, 2001.

86. Wayne A. Bartrow, telephone-interviewed by William D. Russell, April 11, 2005. Bartrow is a member of the Remnant Church's First Presidency.

87. Conrad Faulk, "Our Dilemma," *Tidings of Zion*, no. 28 (January–February 1998): 1.

88. Raymond Clough, "Why a Remnant Church of Jesus Christ?" *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 4 (August 1, 2000): 21.

89. See also Marjorie F. Spease, "A Pattern from History," *The Hastening Times* 1, no. 2 (February 1, 2000): 23.

years has worked with and through the CRE.”⁹⁰ Even if Gage’s estimate is accurate, however, it seems that the Remnant Church has made a good beginning.

The Remnant Church attracted a significant number of well-known Church leaders from the ranks of elders and high priests in the Independence area. By way of contrast, the Restoration Church, launched in 1991 and led by the Prophet Marcus Juby, attracted very few leaders from the headquarters area. Rather, their leaders were widely scattered geographically. Also, Fred Larsen does not appear to be a person who alienates those who work closely with him, as did Marcus Juby. Time will tell if their numbers will grow and ultimately win a majority of the restorationists to their cause.

During the last four decades of the nineteenth century, the RLDS Church became by far the largest Mormon splinter church for at least two reasons: First, the son of the founding prophet became their leader, and Mormons have always valued lineage. Second, Joseph Smith III was an effective leader—a “pragmatic prophet,” as Roger Launius characterized him in the subtitle to his biography of the Church president.

Frederick N. Larsen is a direct descendent of Joseph Smith, Jr., but through his mother, Lois Larsen, who was not in the priesthood. That is not satisfactory for some fundamentalists, while others accept the idea. If Larsen proves to be an effective leader, the Remnant Church may well become the historical parallel to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which became the largest Latter Day Saint splinter group after Joseph Smith III became its president in 1860. Just as the RLDS Church rejected the Nauvoo innovations of Joseph Smith Jr. and hearkened back to the brand of Mormonism preached in the Kirtland era, so the Remnant Church and other restorationists reject the innovations introduced during the W. Wallace and Wallace B. Smith period (1958–96) and hearken back to the faith articulated during the presidency of Israel A. Smith (1946–58) and before.

90. Paul Gage, “Why I Cannot Accept the ‘Proclamation,’” *Tidings of Zion*, no. 38 (September–October 1999): 10.

The Weight of Priesthood

Stephen Carter

I WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD one March Sunday. The chapel curtains were bright with the springtime sun, as if angels were standing outside. The church itself was new, built only a year or two before out in the middle of some farmland. Cows were the closest neighbors. The brown bricks and stoic wood paneling gave the building a solid feel—unlike my stomach, which was clutching and jerking. One of my buddies, David, was sitting on a chair at the front of the chapel, and large, suit-coated men had gathered around him. I was next in line.

My whole extended family had come to see me. After all, I was one of the first grandchildren to go through a confirmation. Later we'd all get together at our house and eat sandwiches, but first, I had to take the hot seat. I was a little frightened. But it was a fear that had never entered my heart before. I knew the metallic pang from the anticipation of a parent's wrath. I understood the snatch of panic when older kids came after me. But this was the first time I had the fear of God in me.

Is that what you call it? Fear? I can't call it respect or awe; those seem passive nouns. I need something active to describe the feeling of coming up against the major powers I had heard about all my life. Fear is when you are going to do something and you don't know exactly what will happen as a consequence. It's when you wonder if you are in over your head. When you wonder if you might lose something. Or be crushed by what you are given.

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Weight. Yeah, there was a lot of weight to this whole process. It had started the day before that fateful Sunday when I stuck my toe into the baptismal font water, warm as amniotic fluid. I felt the pull of the water as I walked down the stairs. The legs of my white jumpsuit flowered out, and air blew out of my collar as the water gained ground. By the time I had hit the bottom step, I was in almost up to my chest. It was a little hard to breathe. I had to hold my arms up to keep them clear of the water. My dad took my hands in the way we had practiced. I looked up at the mirror that hung over the water. It was there to help the people in the back see what was going on. It gave them a bird's-eye view. Kind of like how God was seeing me, I guess.

Dad held his arm to the square and said a short prayer. It told me that I was being baptized by someone who had authority from God. Then I went down. The idea, I was told, was to bend your knees and lean back. Kind of like doing the limbo. That way none of your hair sticks up, or your belly. You have to be totally immersed; otherwise you have to do it again. And as even an eight year old knew, a second time is anti-climactic. Under the water, I heard the gabble of bubbles and a rushing sound. I felt completely alone. Then I thought, "I wonder when I'll come up again?" and the world exploded around me. I was back with water in my eyes and the jumpsuit clinging to my body. I couldn't see much at all. Not even all the little kids that had scooted to the font so they could see better. I stumbled out of the font. Pure.

Well. That was it, I guessed. I was clean. No sins clung to me. It was a pleasant feeling for a second or two, until I started shivering in my wet clothes. My dad led me into the changing room where David and his dad were . . . well, changing. I had not anticipated this situation. The last time I had been anywhere close to naked in the church was two months before when I had made my trial attempt at using the standing urinal, not realizing that one did not have to pull down one's pants in order to use it, though the people waiting in line may have understood that principle. But that was behind me now. I was clean. Except for the fact that I had to take off my jumpsuit and change into clean underwear in front of three other people. I shot a furtive glance at David. He was watching me out of the corner of his eye, suited and shivering like me. I looked at my dad, hoping for a clue. Hmm. David's dad seemed to be doing the same thing. I

had never seen so much hair in such unexpected places. Perhaps I could study the tiles and make conversation until everyone was done changing—except that Dad was patting me on the back and telling me to get moving.

David and I locked eyes—just daring each other to look. I unzipped mine. He unzipped his. As long as I watched him, I was sure he wouldn't do anything funny. One arm. Steady. Down the torso. Hips. Oh my gosh. Underwear doesn't come on easily when you're sopping wet. But we made do.

Dang. Did this mean I had already committed a sin? It was kind of hard to tell. David better just keep his mouth shut.

But here I was, Sunday, sitting on a hard chair at the front of the chapel in the center of the circle of men. I was staring at their belt buckles and smelling their Old Spice. They went into blessing stance: left hand on one another's backs, right hand on my head. The weight of the priesthood was upon me. My dad started praying, telling me to receive the Holy Ghost. I waited. Nothing palpable—except the weight. There must have been ten right hands on my head, all charged with the priesthood of God, and a few pounds each. He said more, but I didn't quite catch it all. Then the prayer ended, and the second, unessential, but traditional ordinance started: the shaking of hands. Why did we feel compelled to do this? Well, first, all Mormons do it after a blessing. Kind of a thank-you gesture. The blessing just doesn't feel finished otherwise. Perhaps it's another contact, in case the head wasn't clean enough. One more circuit for the Spirit of God to enter through.

I bore my testimony that day. I don't remember what I said, but the weight of the priesthood stayed with me. Mostly in my neck. That was the thing I remembered. To receive God is to receive weight. It had been in my wet clothes and in the hands of the priesthood bearers. And then, ten years later, in my bones.

I was an elder. They announced me in stake conference. I stood so everyone could see me. I had a new white shirt and tie for the occasion. The whole extended family was there, because, once again, I was the first. We gathered in our living room a few hours later. I sat in a chair and the men moved in around me, forming a circle and placing left hand on backs, right hand on my head. Now I looked at their chests. But the weight was exactly the same, though my neck held up better. This time it wasn't the spirit of God I was receiving, but His priesthood. An eighteen-year-old

with God's power? It seemed as likely that He would give an eight-year-old His spirit. But that's what they had told me for years. Those men, so ponderous and steady, had latent power rippling under their skin. The kind of power that could heal the sick, comfort the downtrodden, and call down the might of heaven. As the prayer began, the fear entered me again. An active fear of a God who was acting upon me. Their hands lifted from my head, and I was returned to my normal gravity. I stood to complete the circuit. And felt something. The marrow in my bones seemed heavier, solid. Normally a skinny, geeky kid, I suddenly felt as if there was a live wire strung through my joints. I sat down and put my arm around my girlfriend's shoulders. And for the first time, I felt that I could actually protect her. That I was a real man. A priesthood bearer.

Except it took a while to turn on the juice. This happens to me a lot. I get all psyched—spirit in my britches—and then the laundry needs doing for the next six months. The boil slows to a simmer. For a long time after my ordination, there weren't any dead who needed raising. The sick, having heard of my new powers, had not shown themselves at my door. The gravity melted slowly, or else my muscles adapted. Whichever. But I knew there was a catch to getting the priesthood. The Church just doesn't go around ordaining eighteen-year-olds to be elders for nothing. You have to sign your name to something else first: mission papers. In order to be a real man, you've got to head out into the world for two years under the Church's flag. You have to join that army of boys with black nametags and ties. And when you go out into the world to preach the gospel, you really should have some idea of how to use the priesthood.

At least, I thought so. There are two great story settings in the Mormon Church, the pioneer trek and the mission field. In both of these dramatic settings, a person is not surprised to hear about miracles. They are those uncharted countries where ordinary life is exploded. Where there be dragons and cherubim. What Mormon has not heard of the packs of demons attacking Heber C. Kimball and his companions as they proselytized in England? How the hooked shapes leapt at them, and how the elders fought them off with their own fists and the priesthood. Who has not heard of a child being brought back from death's door by the ministrations of two twenty-year-old missionaries? But it is one thing to hear those stories from the mouths of missionaries returning home from the mission field or from teachers in Sunday school. It is another to actually enter them. God has to fill your bones.

I wanted to rev the divine engine, prime the priesthood pump. Get that power moving. I figured, since God gave it to me, maybe He'd also give me a chance to use it. So I asked Him about it for a few weeks. It was a half-hearted request because, frankly, the thought of administering to someone scared me to death. Large, Old Spiced men with heavy hands gave blessings. I was as close to the Atlas Body Building Program's derided ninety-eight-pound weakling as one could be, and I wore Speed Stick. Certainly I didn't qualify. But the fact was, I had the priesthood.

One evening, a few weeks before I left for my mission, I was sitting in the chapel of the Manti Temple. This temple is located in a tiny town in the middle of miles of Utah's sagebrush and sun. The original settlers built a temple—the second to be dedicated in Utah—on the hill east of town. It's an odd building, a kind of mutated Puritan-style church house, or diminutive castle, with towers on each end of the building. But instead of being steepled, they end in a trapezoidal taper. The whole building is made of limestone, solid as the mountain it's built upon. During the day, its silhouette is visible for miles. At night it lights up, stunning the whole valley. It's my favorite temple. I'm not sure there are any Mormons from Utah who don't have a pioneer-built temple as their favorite. There's an element of sweat and studiousness that draws us to them. Men and women sacrificed to build those early structures. Some of them are our own flesh and blood. A million stories surround each one of them. And you can feel it. Like priesthood.

I was dressed in my white clothing, waiting for the next endowment session to start. I was looking forward to the ritual. In the Manti Temple, it is especially dramatic, as the walls and ceilings of the large rooms are painted with scenes from the creation, the Garden of Eden, the telestial world, the terrestrial world, and finally God's kingdom. As you move from room to room, the light increases, giving you the feeling that you're getting closer to God with each step.

But that was the night the lights went out in Manti. A storm had chased us there, and apparently it had struck something important. My mom, dad, and aunt were sitting with me when the room went black. As the little emergency lights came up, one of the temple officiators walked in and told us we'd have to wait till the electricity came back before we could start our session. My dad and aunt walked the halls to console my dad's bum back. A car accident early in his twenties had doomed him to a life of back pain and periodic migraine headaches. I moved to the back of

the chapel to get away from the tapestry at the front. It's an attempt at a Raphaellesque group with women and children. And it's awful. The people's noses are huge, and the babies' heads are deformed. But the pioneers did it. So we keep it. After all, they did a great job on the building itself.

I talked to God in the dark of His temple. I gave Him the low-down again: I'm headed out and I don't want to be a total greenhorn, okay? Just give me something to break me in. I'll take anything.

* * *

The lights came back on. The air conditioning started pushing the air again. I walked up and sat next to my mom. She leaned over and said, "You know, your dad's back and headaches have been hurting him a lot lately. I bet he'd appreciate a blessing from you."

Well, there you go.

I wasn't familiar with the biblical parable of the sleeping housemaster at the time. If I had been, I might have looked on this incident a little differently. Jesus said that prayer is sometimes like a fellow going to a man's house to ask a favor—except that he's doing it in the middle of the night. He annoys the housemaster with his request until the housemaster gets fed up and gives it to him. What the man actually gets is never made clear.

So I guess I got my chance. I set a date with my dad to give him a blessing, then proceeded to worry myself sick about it. When the day came, I fasted, hoping to have God's spirit with me. Because, when you give a blessing, there's no telling what's going to happen. Sometimes nothing happens. But someone doesn't ask for a blessing without thinking something is going to happen. So the blesser is in a double bind. On the one hand, he's not sure God is going to will anything to really happen. On the other hand, the lessee is really counting on the blesser to bring those blessings down. I retract—the blesser is actually in a triple bind, because he doesn't know if it's right to invoke healing upon the person. It seems a little presumptuous to tell a person he or she is going to be healed without the go-ahead from God. The problem is, you don't know what God has in mind until the oil has been applied, the hands are on the head, and the blessing is being spoken. Everything hangs on the spur of the moment. Are you ready to receive whatever intelligence it is God is willing to send down? Sheesh. Talk about a burden. I found out later that Joseph Smith had some of his apostles do a healing blessing over and over again until

they finally got the Spirit. But that's just not done these days. It's kind of like baptism: You want to get it right the first time, because after that, it gets plain embarrassing.

Besides that, it was my dad. And I happened to like my dad. I knew that he had suffered from back and head pain for his whole adult life. I really wanted to be part of a process that might heal him.

Finally, the actual minute came. We were gathered in my dad's bedroom. He was sitting in his rocking chair. Another priesthood holder had anointed my dad with consecrated olive oil, and now my hands were on my father's head. I felt my position distinctly. My father had often given me blessings of healing. And every year on the Sunday before a new school year started, he would give each of his children a father's blessing to help them get started (though my math grades never improved). Now I was the one giving the blessing. I cleared my mind and allowed myself a bit of time to listen. By "listen," I mean to God. I was a piece of beeswax waiting for any sort of impression to come. And I was desperate enough to take anything.

Turned out, my dad wasn't slated for immediate miraculous healing. Or even postponed, medically assisted healing. Or anything. In fact, I told him this pain was a test, and he needed to suffer through it. You'll find stuff along the way, I said, that will help alleviate the pain, but for now, God loves you. Keep a stiff upper lip. And all that.

Which reminds me, there's another gremlin hanging on the back of the blesser's mind. Namely, what if I don't have enough faith? Maybe I went into this whole deal not believing enough. Maybe I am the cause of the defusing of this blessing. Maybe a mustard seed could leave me in the dust. And, of course, this worry seemed the most probable explanation to me as the blessing ended. Perhaps my faith had failed.

So far I was batting nothing. I decided to just keep this whole incident in my pocket as I went off on my mission to Toronto and be really careful about whom I agreed to bless. I hadn't lost faith in the power of the priesthood, but you could say that I became a kind of deist. I started thinking of blessings as moral support rather than a transaction from God, because the few people I blessed always felt the quiet goodness of the Spirit afterward, but the effects didn't last long. I figured this was all right. We'd stick with what we had. But the old stories still knocked around in the back of my mind: those missionaries who actually called the power of God down from heaven.

One day I received a letter from my mom. She told me something weird—that my first blessing was actually seeing some action. Dad had figured out that eating mint or sage brings on a headache. “Remember,” she wrote, “that you told him he would find ways to alleviate his pain; well, here it is.” I was surprised. Maybe there was something to this blessing thing after all. Then a few months later, my mom wrote again to tell me that Dad was installing a Jacuzzi, which apparently does wonders for an aching back. It sounded a little on the worldly side to my poverty-ridden missionary sensibilities, but God is reputed to work in mysterious ways.

About eighteen months into my mission to Toronto, my companion and I were dawdling away a muggy summer afternoon knocking on doors inside a large apartment complex. It was tedious going. Hardly anyone was at home. In fact, at one door, a housecleaner answered and gave us a royal chewing out for awakening the apartment’s occupant, a woman dying of cancer. She slammed the door and we walked down the hall, feeling like scum, but seeing nothing else but to stump ahead. What else were we going to do, preach on a street corner in heat so wet your shirt stuck to your skin? No, we preferred this air-conditioned somnambulism. It was not a little annoying to hear the door open behind us again. No doubt the housekeeper was going to inform us that she had called the manager and that we were to be expelled at any moment.

“Hey, come back,” she said.

We looked back. Her face seemed different. She told us to come in and pointed at the woman lying in a rented hospital bed. She was a short, round Guyanese woman in her sixties. Her dark skin contrasted the white floral print gown she was wearing.

“Elders,” she said, “Elders, Jesus brought you. Thank you, Jesus.”

Apparently Jesus had brought us to that apartment. But now what were we supposed to do? The first thought that comes to any missionary’s mind when he is in a situation like this is, I wonder if this person wants to be baptized? It’s not a subtle thought, but missionary work is not a subtle job. The problem was, I had no idea what this woman was trying to say. She had a thick accent and couldn’t get too many words out at a time. I thought about just teaching her the first missionary lesson when my companion finally got what she was saying.

“She’s a Mormon.” He picked up a book from the shelf, and sure enough, it was that distinctive navy blue cover with gold lettering. Admittedly, my heart fell a little. We hadn’t baptized someone in a while, and I

was hoping this encounter was the answer to our prayers. We found out that her name was Evelyn and that she had been baptized a few years ago, but had moved, contracted cancer, and lost contact with the Church.

Over the next few weeks, we became regular visitors and started to meet Evelyn's family. There was her husband Raja, her son Rohan, and Gita, his wife. Rohan and Raja had also been baptized into the Church, but Gita, being a new member of the family, was Hindu, which turned our missionary meters right back on. But for some reason, we never really got around to having lessons with Gita. Whenever we visited, we talked with Evelyn. The only thing she wanted to do was pray with us and tell us about Jesus—and we thought *we* were the missionaries. It was a strange, exhilarating experience to sit next to her lump of a body, sizzling with cancer, and listen to her praise Jesus. It was all we could do to agree with her as quickly as she praised.

The months wore on, and November arrived. The humidity now cut through clothes and iced everyone who was silly enough to be outside, meaning, of course, the missionaries. Evelyn's health followed the decline in weather. More often she would be asleep when we came over, and she would wake only briefly from time to time. No one complained, though; sleep is certainly preferable to pain. One day we stopped by for no particular reason. The odor of deterioration hit us as we walked in. We found Gita, a stick-thin girl with large black eyes and lips perpetually formed into a kiss, trying to comfort Evelyn, who was groaning and rolling her head from side to side. Her fingers were crushing Gita's tiny hands.

"She hasn't slept for days," Gita told us.

Evelyn saw us and gurgled, "Elders, come pray over me." What she meant was, "Give me a blessing." This time the stakes were way up. My dad's pain of a few years ago had been almost theoretical to me. It was something he could take care of, a sort of test case for me. But now I saw Evelyn sunken so far that she was barely coherent. There's a certain feel to the area around someone in complete pain. It smells, oddly, like the flesh of a child. The pained skin gives off an almost electrical charge. Your own nerves vibrate sympathetically with the pain. We put our hands on Evelyn's head. Since my companion was a new missionary, he wanted me to give the blessing—coward. But I did it. And I said, "The pain will lift. You will sleep. God is watching over you."

Her hands loosened their grip and her eyes closed. She fell asleep saying, "Thank you, Jesus." I swear this is true.

We weren't always so helpful. A week later we stopped by Evelyn's house to sing some Christmas carols. My companion, Elder Christopherson, happened to be an opera singer, fullback, and retired illegal fireworks smuggler. When we had finished, one of the more long-winded members of our quartet said a closing prayer; and during it, Evelyn lost her breath. She gasped and coughed with a vigor that meant she needed a hospital. But our prayer-giver didn't seem to notice and droned on while Evelyn's family rushed to her rescue and called the fire department. The medics carried her out on a stretcher, and we were left to wonder if our rendition had really been that bad.

The mission office transferred me out of that part of town a few days later. A week after that, I got a call from Elder Christopherson; Evelyn had passed away. But not, he told me, before he gave her a blessing. She'd been in a coma for a week. But when he blessed her, she came out of it, grabbed Elder Christopherson by the shirt and said, "Fat Man, baptize my family." Then she talked lucidly with her family for a few moments, closed her eyes, and died.

* * *

I'd really like to end the story there. It's a good, happy ending. Boy gets priesthood, boy struggles with priesthood, boy succeeds. The problem is, life goes on. Things change.

Most of the people I had baptized on my mission have fallen away from the Church. Even Evelyn's family. They all either wandered off or rejected the Church outright. I'm still not sure what to think of that. I had been part of the great story: healing, blessing, converting—exercising the priesthood of God. I had made covenants, and I had helped other people do the same thing. And somehow it had all blown away. My priesthood legacy.

There's a popular saying in the Church that a person's mission experience is the high-water mark in his or her spiritual life. You'll never really progress beyond the faith you gain in the mission field. As disheartening as that idea appears, it seemed true to me during the five years after my mission. Mainly because I finally had the time to doubt.

Doubting is a difficult business in Mormonism, especially if you were raised in the Church. There's a sense that the whole gospel, from Joseph Smith's first vision to the latest general conference talk, is completely intertwined. That you can't remove one thread from the tapestry, or the

whole thing will unravel. I don't know how many times I taught potential converts that if they believed the Book of Mormon was scripture, then Joseph Smith, who brought it forth, must be a prophet. And if Joseph Smith is a prophet then the church he started must be God's true church. And that was only the beginning of this giant game of dominoes.

Not only is the Church a unified work, it is also based on the assumption of eternity. Everything you do has an eternal consequence. That's made more than clear in the temple ceremony. The entirety of eternity is spread out, from the creation of the universe to your own personal entrance into God's kingdom. You make covenants there. And since the temple is, after all, God's house, He's there witnessing every one of them.

But there is also an element of chaos. A popular story used in sermons tells about a young priesthood bearer who watched one of his buddies get struck by lightening. He ran to his friend's side, laid his hands on his head, and healed him. What would have happened, the speaker will ask, had that young man not been worthy at that moment?

Don't get caught with your priesthood down.

The doctors found a tumor growing on my mother's brain a few years after I returned from Toronto. It messed with her gyros and deadened her hearing. And, if it didn't get taken out, it would eventually kill her. My mom has always been a big one for blessings. She once told me that when she receives a blessing, she can feel a conduit reaching from inside her, through the blesser, into heaven.

So naturally, when she found out about the tumor, her blessing rate skyrocketed. And it seemed to work because the doctor's blade didn't slip, he filleted the tumor nicely, and she lived to tell the story. I wasn't close by during this period, so my dad gave her most of the blessings. But a few weeks after the operation, she called on Dad and me to give her another blessing. Recuperating from brain surgery needs all the help it can get.

I entered her dim bedroom. She was sitting in the same chair my dad had been sitting in when I had gone on my maiden priesthood voyage. She asked us to sit down, and then, with a right angle of black stitch marks striding across her head, she asked us to bear our testimonies.

When people have been strapped to a stainless steel gurney and wheeled to the edge of death and then wheeled back to life again, they're changed. It doesn't matter if they didn't see a light at the end of the tunnel or angels descending. There's just something about being there, doing that, having the scars to show, that gives this particular kind of traveler a

third eye. The kind, I thought as I sat in my parents' room, that can see into your soul. Perhaps it's all the time they've spent in solitude, pain whitening away their bodies so all that's left is spirit. And now, though my mother's eyes were closed, I thought that I could feel this heightened sense turned on me. And that I didn't measure up. I wasn't the person I had been when I was a missionary. I no longer had that singleness of heart or that purity of faith. It had been alloyed with doubt, disappointment, and questions. I certainly hadn't shaken off any of my Mormonness. When you grow up listening to stories from the Book of Mormon and the Old Testament, they never leave you. The heroes still bang around in their armor, and old bearded men prophesy in Hestonian tenors. But I was different.

I stumbled through a testimony that sounded nothing like the confident assertions of faith we hear every month in testimony meeting. It was full of hopes and wishes, but no beliefs or confessions. All I could call myself was a Mormon by yearning. My dad, on the other hand, said simply, "I know God lives and that through His Son Jesus Christ, I can be saved from my sins." The brevity clinched his surety, and my mother settled into her chair, sustained.

I anointed my mother, placing a drop of consecrated oil on her head and rubbing it into her scalp. But that was all. My father gave the actual blessing; and during it, even though my hands were on my mother's head, I felt that I was watching from outside the circle. I wanted to be inside; but wanting wasn't enough. I couldn't be a pure conduit for my mother. She wouldn't have been able to feel it.

Yeah. The priesthood is a weight.

Sometimes I wish I didn't have this weight. Sometimes I wish I could drop it: the power, the responsibility, the tradition, the expectations. I wish I could cut all the ropes and just fly for a little while, scope out the scenery, and choose a nice place to visit. Sometimes I envy the people who can leave the Mormon Church, who can forget about their priesthood, who can find a new tradition that suits them better, or create their own. What would happen if I didn't have to wrestle this angel anymore?

* * *

I admit that one reason I hold on to my priesthood looks a lot like superstition. And it might be. There is a piece of my heart that believes (irrevocably, I think) that this priesthood will one day save either my life or

the life of someone I love. And as I've pointed out, perhaps it already has. I can't imagine holding the sick or dying body of one of my children or my wife and not being able to bless them. There's this chance that God will reach down through me, if I have the faith of a mustard seed. Perhaps it is a weakness in character to feel that way. Maybe I'm using my idea of the priesthood as a crutch. As if I'm hanging on to God and my priesthood like an old salad shooter, hoping it will come in handy someday.

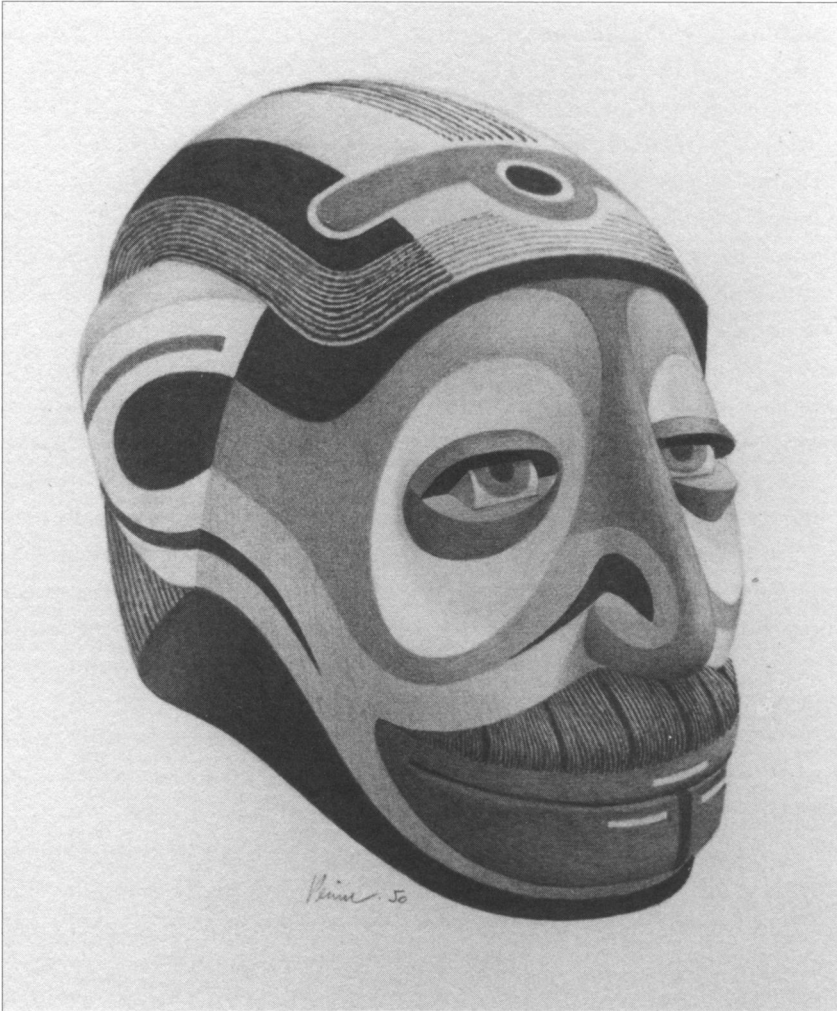
But, then again, the priesthood could be a social construction, something that keeps Mormons organized and the men on top. After all, my polygamous ancestors firmly believed that people who didn't enter into plural marriage were unworthy of the highest orders of heaven. I'd like to think that perhaps they were a little wrong about that as my monogamy is pretty well in place. I want to tell myself that plural marriage was a social construction helpful in keeping the Mormons organized and the men on top. But you don't practice plural marriage unless you believe in it. There has to be some unquestionable core, something transcendent that gives all the pain and wondering some meaning. If I believe in the priesthood only as a social construction, I wonder if it will fail me because I failed it. In which case, why hold on to superstition? It won't work anyway.

This is reality: I doubt. I yearn. My doubt is not going away any time soon. Things I once thought were permanent fade. My stories, which once fit into the larger story, are becoming too complex.

It's anticlimactic to start over, I know. You can't keep the original drama, and you run the chance of boring the audience. But what if I cleared away all the scenery? What if I emptied the whole room and left all the stories behind? Is there any place I can begin again?

Well, sometimes, at night, I crawl over to watch my two boys as they sleep, and I can't resist the impulse to lay my hands upon the head, first of one, then of the other. Though one hand can cover most of the top of a small head, I use both hands. At once I feel completely connected with them—as if I am in the midst of the most intimate gesture that can occur between two people. And it seems, during those moments, that the weight is lifted, or shared, or completely buoyed. No healings. No miracles. No stories.

I'll start here.



Gaark of Malbinoplit
(graphite; 11" x 9"; 1987; collection of the Perine Newman Trust)

GETTING OUT/STAYING IN: ONE MORMON STRAIGHT/GAY MARRIAGE

Getting Out

Ben Christensen

BEING A GAY MORMON is one thing; being a gay Mormon married to a woman is quite another. At this point, defining exactly what *gay* means to me is not only a question of how true I am to my religious beliefs, but also a question of how faithful I am to my wife. Knowing this, one can't help but wonder why I chose to marry in the first place. Was it unyielding faith? Earth-shattering love? Temporary insanity? Not-so-temporary stupidity? Probably all of the above, give or take an adjective or two.

* * *

I made a point of not telling Jessie ahead of time that I wanted to talk to her because I didn't want her to go through the torture of wondering what horrible thing I wanted to talk about. I knew she'd immediately assume that I was going to dump her, which was far from my intentions. She might have thought that I was going to officially propose, but she's smart enough to distinguish between a good "I want to talk to you" and a bad "I want to talk to you."

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After going to the temple, we decided to stop at Taco Bell. I went through the drive-thru because I knew that inside wouldn't be a good place to talk—too many people. Then I looked for a church parking lot, which took surprisingly long considering we were in American Fork, Utah. As we pulled into the dark lot it occurred to me that I was behaving strangely—insisting on going through the drive-thru, then spending five minutes trying to find an empty lot to park in. It also occurred to me that bad things happen to girls who park in dark places with boys. Hoping Jessie wasn't thinking the same thing, I scarfed down my burrito as quickly as possible. When I finished she was still trying to figure out how to eat her Mexican pizza without a fork.

"Is it okay if we talk about something?" I asked.

"Oh. Okay." I sensed the uneasiness in her voice, the insecurity. Although we'd been friends for over a year, we'd only been dating for a few weeks. Neither of us had been in a serious relationship before. Dating had progressed into kissing, and kissing had progressed into talking about marriage much faster than either of us had expected. Jessie had expressed concern early on about our romance possibly not working out and ruining our friendship. Now, in the car, I saw in her face that she believed her fears were about to come true. She looked as if she were on the verge of crying, and we hadn't even started.

"Before I say anything else, I should say that this has nothing to do with us or our relationship. At least I hope it doesn't. I'm happy being with you and I still want very much to marry you and I still love you."

This seemed to help, but I could see the gears turning in her head as she wondered what horrible confession I had to make, now that some of the expected options were eliminated. I must have told her that I loved her at least four more times before I gathered the courage to go on.

"I . . . I'm . . ." I sighed. "Sorry, you'd think this would be easier after I've done it so many times. I can't even get the words out of my mouth."

Jessie reached across the compartment between the seats and squeezed my hand. "It's okay," she said, looking into my eyes.

I looked away. It's nearly impossible for me to speak about myself openly. Even with her. I took a deep breath. "I'm not like other guys." I took another breath. "As long as I remember, I've been attracted to men." There. I'd said it.

She nodded. Her eyes were turning pinkish and raw, but no tears

came. I couldn't tell if she was angry, surprised, sad, or what; she didn't say a word.

"I've talked to countless bishops and counselors at LDS Social Services. I've been trying to overcome this problem for years, since before my mission. I've come to accept that it might be something I have to deal with for the rest of my life." I told her how I'd first talked about it to a counselor in the stake presidency, who also happened to be my best friend's father, when I was seventeen. Since then I'd told only three of my sisters, two friends, and my mother (not counting the bishops and counselors and random group therapy people). I told her about how the counselors said it probably had something to do with my relationship with my father (or lack thereof) and my "defensive detachment" from men. This theory made *some* sense to me but didn't quite all add up. There had to be more to it. Maybe I'd blocked out some kind of early childhood abuse, or maybe it really was a genetic thing. I'd stopped caring about the whys anyway, I told her.

Her first question was one I had expected. "Have you ever . . . ?"

"No. I've never done anything with another guy. Anything." I paused, allowing that to sink in. "I just wanted you to know before you made any kind of commitment to marry me. You know, so you know what you're getting into." As if I knew what either of us was getting into.

Silence.

"What are you thinking?" I asked.

"I'm scared."

"That we'll get married and five or ten years down the road I'll mess up?"

She nodded.

"To be honest, that scares me too. I know getting married won't make these feelings go away. But I can promise you that if we get married I'll be faithful to you. I won't leave you. I refuse to become my father."

I really wanted to be as confident as I sounded. Maybe I was.

"At any rate, I don't want you to decide tonight. I want you to take your time and think about it, then let me know if you still want to marry me. I won't blame you if you don't."

Another silence, then Jessie's voice, calm, slow. "I think I still do want to marry you. I'll think about it and pray about it, but I think I do."

Jessie told me the next day while we sat together on the steps in front of her apartment that she wanted to go ahead with the engagement. She

was hesitant to get into a marriage that might prove to be as tumultuous as her parents' was, always wondering if divorce was right around the next corner, but at the same time she knew that (1) we were nothing like her parents, nor would our problems be anything like theirs, and (2) even they had made it through more than twenty-five years of ups and downs and were now very happy together. If I had asked her a few years earlier, when things were still pretty rocky for her parents, she might've said no. Who knows?

A week or two later, I officially proposed with a white-gold diamond ring after homemade lasagna and before Breyers ice cream at Kiwanis Park.

* * *

In an ideal world, I'd be able to sit down at lunch with a group of friends and we'd all talk openly about our challenges and struggles. One might say, "I was getting *Newsweek* this morning at Barnes and Noble, and I was really tempted to pick up a copy of *Penthouse* also." Or, "I thought I'd kicked this smoking thing years ago, but I'm really craving a cigarette today." Or, "Last night my kid wouldn't stop crying and I was so angry I almost hit her." "I can't stop thinking about this guy in religion class," I would say.

(Actually, in an ideal world I'd be turned on by boobs like the other 90 percent of the world's male population.)

It ticks me off that Mormon social taboos force me to lie about who I am. Every day of my life. I've been doing it for so long, it's become second nature. A year or so ago in an English class at BYU, we were playing a "get to know you" game. This one involved each person in the class saying what celebrity she or he would like to kiss. Besides the fact that I was bothered by the general immorality of the question, it really bugged me that if I said Ewan McGregor I'd probably be turned in to the Honor Code Office (and yet it's okay for a married man to say he'd like to make out with Gwyneth Paltrow). I ended up saying Lauryn Hill, not because I'm any more attracted to her than to any other woman, but because I like her music and I thought it would be interesting to throw a black rapper into all this fantasizing about whitebread movie stars. I don't think God really wants us to lie in order to make people think we're "normal," but Mormon culture sure expects us to. It's not like pretending I'm attracted to women will make it true.

I don't intend to justify homosexual behavior. If I thought homosexual behavior was okay, I would have left the Church long before I even met Jessie. I certainly wouldn't have gone on a mission. Sex outside of marriage (and for that matter, lust) is wrong, regardless of whether it's with women or men. But the initial attraction itself is not a sin, and people who happen to be attracted to their own gender shouldn't be made to feel any worse than people who happen to be attracted to the opposite gender. There shouldn't be any need to make homosexual attraction into some deep, dark secret, something to be ashamed of. It's not as though I choose who I'm attracted to any more than anyone else does—as if I wouldn't have enough problems without being attracted to the gender my religion forbids me to marry.

Married men often talk to each other about how they had to look the other way in order to avoid having bad thoughts about a beautiful woman passing by. An innocent attraction is confessed, perhaps joked about, then dismissed before it can fester in the mind and grow into lust or something worse. I believe this is healthy. In my wife's family, there's an ongoing joke in which my mother-in-law will see some guy on TV and comment on how hot he is, then add with a grin, "But not as hot as your dad." Will I ever be able to casually comment that Tom Cruise is hot, but not as hot as my wife?

* * *

Difficulties arose fairly quickly in our engagement. It bothered Jessie that she was usually more interested in kissing than I was. This bothered me too, but I didn't know what to do about it. I definitely loved her, and out of that love an attraction was growing, but to be honest it was nothing compared to the strong desire I had for men. But then it's not accurate to even compare the two feelings. My attraction to Jessie, the drive that made me want to hold her in my arms and feel her body next to mine, came entirely from my heart. On the other hand, the drive that made me want to feel a man's body next to mine was purely a libido thing. I've never allowed a physical attraction to a man to become any more than just that. Apples and oranges.

That summer I worked as a park attendant in northwest Provo. I spent eight hours a day cleaning bathrooms and mowing grass and picking weeds by myself. Way too much time to think, particularly if you're an engaged man prone to second-guess every decision you make. Every day

I'd wonder if I was making a mistake, if I was forcing myself into something I just wasn't ready for yet, or if everything I believed in was a load of crap and I really should run off to San Francisco and embrace a rampant life of unrestrained queerness. More than anything, I was afraid that getting married would cut me off from that option. While I wasn't ready to completely accept homosexuality, I wasn't ready to completely abandon it either. As far as I was concerned, that was what marriage meant—permanently burning the bridge of homosexuality. Marriage is forever.

* * *

Once, when I was a teenager, in a rare bout of courage I asked my father about a somewhat sensitive subject: The Divorce. At least it was a sensitive subject for me, since I saw it as the defining point of my hopeless and miserable teenage life. As far as I was concerned, my father had abandoned not only my mother but also me; and in my melodramatic view of the world, I couldn't understand how anyone could not see the cruel injustice of not having a father figure around during my oh-so-precious formative years.

As I recall, we were driving on some highway between Green Bay and Milwaukee. The land of cheese and beer was my home away from home for two summers and one Christmas between the ages of nine and sixteen. To a boy who had lived all his life on an island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, the long stretches of road and farmland were very foreign. So was everything else about my father.

"You don't understand," he said in his defense. "Marriage is complicated. Sometimes divorce is unavoidable."

"It's avoidable if you put some effort into it," I muttered. I was shaking with the anger I felt toward this man whom I didn't know well enough to yell at or swear at or hit.

"Ben, I'm not going to argue with you about this. You're fifteen years old. You'll understand when you get married."

Who was he to talk about marriage, at that time going through divorce number five? How dare he assume that I would fail at marriage just because he had? I thought these things but I didn't dare say them.

Years later, after I'd taken some big steps toward forgiving my father and building some kind of relationship with him (more than anything, I stopped blaming him for everything and started taking responsibility for my life), I still couldn't accept what I perceived to be his "fail and bail" phi-

losophy of marriage. If I married Jessie and I couldn't handle being married and I bailed, then he'd be right. I couldn't allow that to happen. I wouldn't.

* * *

One morning while I was cleaning up the playground at Rotary Park, I found a condom streaked with poop lying on the ground. It was the single most disturbing thing I had ever seen. This all-too-graphic image, this irreconcilable association between anal sex and poop, helped me ultimately opt for a heterosexual lifestyle. If I start thinking I might like to have sex with a man, the poop-streaked condom stands in my way, shaking its little rubbery head and saying, "This path is not for you, my friend."

* * *

A couple of years ago, KBYU planned to air some talks given at a conference about overcoming homosexuality. Gay rights activists in Salt Lake complained, and KBYU backed down and canceled the scheduled programming. When I learned about this, I felt betrayed. Betrayed by a church that told me to give up homosexuality but didn't have the guts to stand by this doctrine in the face of adversity (realizing, of course, that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and KBYU aren't exactly one and the same), and betrayed by my gay and lesbian brothers and sisters who fought so hard for their right to be who they wanted to be but would deny me that same right.

I don't understand people who call themselves liberal and progressive but are threatened by homosexual reparative therapy enough to try to stop people like me from having that option. In my mind, this kind of thinking is anti-progressive. The whole point of the civil rights and women's liberation movements was to allow blacks, women, and other minorities to break free of what had been their traditional roles. We live in a world now where it's okay for blacks to do what was once considered "white" and for women to do what was once considered "male"—get an education, have a career, etc. Why then is it not politically correct for a gay man to venture into what is usually considered the exclusive territory of straight men—to marry a woman and have a family—if that's what he chooses to do?

I already know the answer to this question. Many gays and lesbians

believe that if homosexual reparative therapy is recognized as a legitimate and viable option, it won't be long before we're back to the days of labeling homosexuals as social deviants and forcing them to submit to electroshock therapy or some such barbarism. Others don't feel this way. When I voiced my frustration over the KBYU thing on a Mormon discussion board, one man contacted me and apologized for the overzealous activists who demanded that KBYU back down. He believed God had told him to leave his wife and pursue a homosexual relationship, but he felt in no way threatened by those of us who choose not to. He assured me that most gays and lesbians would not react as the vocal minority had.

It's easy for me to blame liberal gays for making me ashamed to be straight and conservative Mormons for making me ashamed to be gay, but truthfully a lot of it comes from my own fears. I'm afraid of what people will think of me. I'm afraid that I'll be labeled by one side as a religious wacko in denial about who I really am or by the other as a sex-crazed pervert unable to look at a man without mentally undressing him.

When I first heard Lauryn Hill's song "I Get Out," I felt that she was singing my life with her words. In "I Get Out," Ms. Hill talks about getting out of the boxes that society tries to force us into: "Psychological locks / Repressin' true expression / Cementin' this repression / Promotin' mass deception / So that no one can be healed / I don't respect your system / I won't protect your system / When you talk I don't listen / Oh, let my Father's will be done."

My everyday existence is a threat to the world's neat little boxes of "gay" and "straight." I get out of the boxes that liberals and conservatives would put me in. The freedom is exhilarating.

* * *

A couple of times during our engagement, I talked to Jessie about my fears. I tried to explain that I loved her but I wasn't sure if that would be enough. These conversations tended to end with one or both of us crying and my concluding that I just couldn't bring myself to hurt her.

One night I talked to one of my sisters about my uncertainty. I didn't tell her exactly why I was afraid to get married, just that I was. She told me about an experience she'd had years before when a guy she was dating proposed. He seemed to feel good about marrying her, and he was a priesthood holder so she was hesitant to question his inspiration, even if she didn't have the same feeling. She also really liked him, so she didn't want

to hurt him by saying no. After a lot of prayer and thought, though, she came to a wise conclusion, which she now shared with me.

"Ben, you have to think about yourself first. I know you love her, so you don't want to hurt her, but doing what's best for you really is doing what's best for her. Telling her no may hurt her now, but marrying her when that's not right for *you* will hurt her more in the long run."

The problem was that I didn't know what *was* right for me. How could I be sure?

* * *

For the record, "gay" is not the Mormon PC term. Mormon (and other conservative Christian) psychologists differentiate between living a homosexual lifestyle and experiencing homosexual desire by referring to the former as "gay" and to the latter as "SSA," which stands for "same-sex attraction." But you can't *be* SSA, and saying "I struggle with SSA" or "I have SSA" makes it sound as if I suffer from some obscure venereal disease. SGA—same-gender attraction—is no better.

So, for lack of a better term, I choose to call myself gay. Does that mean I have sex with men? No. It means I'm naturally attracted to men and, like it or not, that's part of my identity. An important part, yes, but not the most important part. "Gay" falls somewhere below "child of God," "Latter-day Saint," "husband," and "father." Maybe even below "writer," "librarian," and "unabashed reader of comic books."

But it's still part of who I am, and I'm okay with that. It makes me unique. It separates me from all the things I don't like about heterosexual male culture—like football, hunting, and chauvinism—while connecting me to millions of people like me around the world.

Which, of course, is a lie. I'm no more gay than I am straight. No, I don't fit into any of the heterosexual male stereotypes, but I don't fit into the gay stereotypes either. I don't have an effeminate voice or walk with an exaggerated gait, nor do I have a supernatural fashion sense. If I were to appear on *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, it would be as the hopeless aesthetic reject, not as the voice of queer wisdom. I can't call myself a big fan of Barbra Streisand. I tried drama in high school and was horrible at it. It's not only the stereotypes, either. I'm practically clueless about the nuances of queer culture, save for a few terms and practices I've learned about from books and movies. I know, for example, that a ring on the right-hand ring finger has another cultural connotation besides "widowed."

Yes, there is a sense of identification when I read E. M. Forster or listen to Elton John, but there's always this nagging feeling that they wouldn't consider me one of them. I don't think I'd fit in at a Village People concert any more than I do in elders' quorum or on a basketball court. The fact of the matter is that I'm as distanced from gay men as I am from straight men. I'd like to think that I'm both, but really I'm neither. In the politics of sexuality where gays and lesbians are only beginning to topple the social hierarchy dominated by straights, I fall into some hidden crevice, not even recognized enough to be repressed. I'm practically nonexistent.

* * *

I'd always assumed that I'd go on a mission, come home, meet a girl, get married, and have a family just like normal Mormon guys. I really looked forward to this, even craved it, feeling I'd been robbed of a normal family as a child. Along with this scenario went the assumption that somewhere along the way I'd *become* a normal Mormon guy, my attraction to men somehow magically disappearing. This fantasy seemed like even more of a reality during my freshman year of college when I was actively working to overcome homosexuality with the help of bishops, counselors, and therapy groups. But then after I'd worked through all the issues, done everything the therapists told me to, and made miles of progress in learning to have normal healthy relationships with men, even with my father, nothing really changed.

Don't get me wrong—I was a happier, more confident person, much better equipped to deal with homosexual attraction than I had been in high school—but the attraction was still there, as strong as ever. Somewhere along the line, perhaps while I was on my mission, I came to accept that I would very likely be attracted to men for the rest of my life. As much as I believed in the healing power of the Atonement and the possibility of real, lasting change, I didn't feel, nor do I now feel, that the kind of change I'd wished for is part of the plan for me. My resolve now was to reach a point similar to John Nash's situation at the end of the movie *A Beautiful Mind*. Speaking of the hallucinations that have plagued him most of his life, he says, "No, they're not gone, and maybe they never will be. But I've gotten used to ignoring them, and I think as a result they've kind of given up on me."

So I came home from my mission less sure that marriage and family

were in my future. I'm not sure what kind of life I envisioned for myself—a lonely celibacy, I suppose—but for a month or two I'd resigned myself to it.

* * *

Here's where Epiphany Number One comes in. This must've been in January, because I'm pretty sure it was before Jessie came home from her mission. I'd attended one of those BYU firesides where they tell you to get married. I pretty much tuned out the entire thing because it didn't apply to me, but then I got home, sat on my bed, and had a distinct impression that yes, it did apply to me. Yes, I was gay, but that didn't mean I was excluded from Heavenly Father's desire for his children to marry and have families.

I thought of a sister missionary who had been in my district for nearly eight months and was coming home soon. I really admired her intelligence and her love of reading, and her complete disregard of whether people thought she was cool or not. She seemed like the type of person I'd like to marry. So I planned it all out. I'd email her when she got home, and we'd build our friendship while she was in Maryland. Then she'd come out to BYU and we'd start dating and then we'd get engaged and then we'd get married.

I think more than anything I liked this plan because it seemed like a Normal Mormon Guy type of thing to do (or at least a Normal BYU Student type of thing—it's hard to distinguish after being in Utah Valley for so long).

To my surprise, the following months happened exactly as I'd planned. This is quite disturbing, now that I think about it. It must have disturbed me then, too, because on the morning of the day that we were to mail out the wedding invitations, I was still worried that I was marrying Jessie for the wrong reasons. I didn't want to marry her just to prove to myself and others that I was normal, or to avoid hurting her feelings, or because it was the right thing to do. I wanted to marry her because I loved her and I wanted to be with her. Which I was pretty sure I did.

What it came down to was making a decision between doing what my heart wanted or doing what my libido wanted. I wished I could have both, but I knew that was impossible. On this particular morning in October, the libido was winning. I was just about ready to call the whole thing off. I felt like I was standing on a cliff and all I could see in front of me was impenetrable darkness. It terrified me.

And now we get to Epiphany Number Two. Oddly enough, inspiration came in the place I was least likely to be thinking of spiritual things—the men’s locker room showers. I was washing my hair, staring at the wall, when it struck. I wouldn’t say it was a voice, but it was the closest thing to a still small voice I’d ever experienced. I can’t even say that it came to me in words, so I’m not sure how to quote it, but it was something like, “Jump. Jump into the big, scary, unknown darkness. Don’t look back.” (It might have been more along the lines of “Just do it,” but I refuse to believe that the Spirit works for Nike.)

So Jessie and I were married in the Salt Lake Temple two days before Thanksgiving. And then we lived happily ever after.

Mostly. Not all the time, of course. All the problems, all the concerns, all the doubts we had before we got married didn’t go away. She still is usually more interested in kissing than I am, and I still feel bad because of that. I feel even worse about the way I can’t help noticing the well-built men who jog bare-chested during the summer. Or how good some men look in a white shirt and tie. Occasionally I allow myself to wallow in self-pity over how hard my life is as a gay married Mormon.

Really, though, my challenge is not that unique—it’s irrelevant whether I’m attracted to men or women. The goal is to be attracted only to my wife and no one else, male or female. This makes things more complicated, yet in a way simpler, than when I was single.

* * *

This evening, after a roast-beef-and-potatoes meal, Jessie and I took our nine-month-old daughter across the street to the library where I work. As I pushed Sophie’s stroller through rows of picture books, Jessie and I talked about favorite authors, infant sleeping patterns, my job, and our budget. My co-workers smiled at Sophie and commented on her cuteness. My life is surprisingly typical of a straight Mormon male. Hardly even a hint of queerness to it.

Is all this normalcy only an act, a facade covering up repressed desires? Maybe. I don’t know. What I do know, though, is that I’m happy. Whatever my reasons, this is the life I chose and I plan on keeping it.

Homosexual Attraction and LDS Marriage Decisions

Ron Schow

BEN HAS WRESTLED HONORABLY and honestly with this matter, trying to make all of the conflicting personal, societal, and religious/church elements fit into something acceptably coherent. It is a formidable challenge, one faced by a number of Latter-day Saints.

It is clear that our culture, in which everyone is expected to marry, puts enormous and excessive pressure on homosexuals to marry. I am aware of the pressure on homosexuals because in the last fifteen years I've been studying this issue of same-sex attraction (SSA) and meeting with homosexuals in our culture. Universally, they report feeling the pressure to marry. Many homosexuals also report on their marriages which have ended in failure. For example, in 1994 I surveyed an LDS homosexual group of 136 where 71 percent were returned missionaries (indicating their commitment to the Church) and 36 had tried marriage. They had been married an average of nine years and had an average of 2.5 children. Only two of the 36 were still married.¹

Recent conversations with Latter-day Saint homosexuals confirm that far too many are choosing to marry despite the fact that both Presi-

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1. Ron Schow, "1994 Survey of 136 LDS Same Sex Oriented Individuals," in *The Persistence of Same Sex Attraction in Latter-day Saints Who Undergo Counsel-*

dent Hinckley and Elder Oaks have cautioned about such marriages. Elder Oaks reinforced President Hinckley by quoting him: "Marriage should not be viewed as a therapeutic step to solve problems such as homosexual inclinations or practices."²

Evergreen, a resource group committed to promoting change therapy for homosexual Latter-day Saints, helps create this problem by promoting the idea that persons can "transition out of homosexuality." This idea is also promoted by many ecclesiastical leaders, most of whom are not well informed about the nature of homosexuality. The extent of the problem is seen in the fact that Evergreen receives over 150 requests for help each month from those with homosexual attractions; 40 percent of these requests come from men who are married. Only 10 percent of the calls come from women. The remaining 50 percent are from single men.³ This pattern indicates a great deal of social pressure on LDS men with homosexual attractions to marry heterosexually, with unfortunate outcomes for many of them and their spouses and children.

It is possible that Ben can achieve a successful marriage, but, unfortunately, the odds are against him and Jessie. An increasing body of data, some mentioned above and some that I will summarize below, reinforces this pessimistic forecast. Much pain—directly and indirectly—results when these marriages fail.

Why do so many marital relationships of this kind fail? Primarily because the homosexual attraction of one spouse creates a major difficulty, despite hopes that such attraction will diminish over time. In reality, the great majority of those who are homosexually oriented cannot fundamentally alter their feelings by desire, therapy, or religious practice. Unfortunately, our culture continues to exert pressure to marry based on two essential misunderstandings about homosexuality—that it is a condition that is chosen and the expectation that, after marriage, these feelings will

ing or Change Therapy, edited by Ron Schow, Robert A. Rees, William Bradshaw, and Marybeth Raynes (Salt Lake City: Resources for Understanding Homosexuality, 2004), 31–41.

2. Gordon B. Hinckley, quoted in Dallin H. Oaks, "Same Gender Attraction," *Ensign*, October 1995, 13.

3. David Pruden, Evergreen executive director, personal communication to Ron Schow, October 2002.

go away. The reality is that homosexuality is not a choice and, except in rare cases, is not subject to change.

An LDS Family Services therapist who spoke to us about his clinical experience likely has had the most extensive experience in working with single and married homosexual Latter-day Saint men—approximately eight hundred men in more than thirty years.⁴ Approximately half of these clients left counseling after one or two sessions; the other half, who were in therapy for one to three years, include roughly two hundred single men and two hundred married men. Among the two hundred single men, only 10 percent were able to marry. Almost all of them (nineteen of twenty) identified themselves as bisexual. Of the two hundred married males (a large portion of whom, it is probably safe to speculate, were likely bisexual), only half were able to stay in their marriages, although there is no information as to what kinds of accommodations they had to make to do so, nor how many of these marriages will ultimately endure.

Thus, marriage seems risky for homosexuals and even bisexuals since we presume that some will end their marriages without trying therapy and that those receiving skilled professional assistance still achieve only this level of success. Based on many personal interviews, I know that many of these mixed heterosexual/homosexual marriages, even when they do not end in divorce, result in marriages in which there is no true intimacy nor a mutually nourishing relationship.

One of the reasons so many homosexuals enter into such high-risk marriages is that they are encouraged to do so by many LDS counselors, therapists, and ecclesiastical leaders who are ill informed about the nature of homosexuality and the dangers of homosexual-heterosexual bonding. Far too often, these marriages end in broken homes and with broken hearts. It is imperative that those who are in positions to counsel with homosexuals and the heterosexual partners with whom they are considering marriage know the facts about choice and the persistence of homosexual feelings along with the risks of homosexuals marrying heterosexuals.

Ben's situation is a case in point. He affirms that he did not, and would not, choose willingly to be attracted to men because such feelings create so much difficulty in his life. Ben's story also affirms that even with

4. His findings are summarized in "Summary of Data," in *The Persistence of Same Sex Attraction*, Table 1, 10–11.

noble efforts, homosexuality is not a condition where the feelings will go away.

Ben and Jessie have made a decision and deserve our understanding because of the pressure in our culture for them to make a successful marriage; but this decision has set them on a very difficult path. The outcome of this decision may significantly affect their own lives as well as that of their daughter Sophie. Based on my extensive work with homosexuals for more than a decade, I submit that, if Ben is actually gay and not bisexual, their marriage faces formidable obstacles.

Understanding Homosexual Attraction

It is important to understand some fundamental background information about sexual orientation. Humans experience a spectrum of sexual attraction. The HH (Homosexual-Heterosexual) Scale, defined originally in 1948 by Alfred Kinsey and his associates, uses seven points to define this range. Those on the heterosexual end of the continuum (0) are attracted only to the opposite sex. A minority on the other end (6) are attracted only to the same sex. Between (1–5) are those attracted to both sexes, with 3 representing an equally dual orientation. As applied historically, position on the scale is determined half by behavioral history and half by phenomena such as fantasies and dreams.

Most professionals agree that the HH Scale is an overly simplified approach to what is in reality a much more complex matter. Nevertheless, it has some utility as long as we understand that it cannot completely capture the inherent complexity of human sexuality. Since libido also varies in strength, one could likewise speak of a scale for this dimension of sexuality that goes from low to high. In a slightly different approach, we can put two bar graphs side by side with one bar representing homosexual attraction and the other representing heterosexual attraction. One can have high levels in both (bisexual and fully sexual), low levels in both (asexuality), or some combination of the two.

The vast majority of homosexual-heterosexual marriages fail. However, as Ben attests, some, with strong determination, choose to try and beat the odds. Such hopes of success are, in part, based on claims that some homosexuals have achieved successful marriages characterized by adequate sexual compatibility.

Such claims, however, must be examined in the light of (1) the complexity of homosexual feeling as it manifests itself in individuals (the HH

Scale); (2) the relative importance that individuals attach to sexual intimacy as an element in the marital relationship (strength of libido and capacity for sublimation of sexual desire); and (3) other important factors such as whether individuals have personal compatibility and maturity adequate to withstand challenges to the marriage which are far greater than average.

1. *Bisexuality*. In most mixed hetero/homosexual marriages that can claim some degree of success, the partner with same-sex attraction is really bisexual and is able to emphasize his or her heterosexual attraction sufficiently to create sexual intimacy. Thus, heterosexual-homosexual couples considering marriage should carefully explore the possibility that the homosexually attracted partner is bisexual.

The LDS family therapist previously cited, and Dr. Beverly Shaw (past president of AMCAP, the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists), who have worked with hundreds of Latter-day Saints with SSA, report that bisexuality may make some marriages workable.⁵ This is because such individuals have the ability to bond romantically (are capable of expressing genuine emotional and physical intimacy) with partners of the same *and* the opposite sex. Those at 5 or 6 on the HH scale, however, are at much higher risk of marriage failure than those at 4 or below.

These reports support my own study, mentioned above, from the thirty-six LDS homosexuals who had tried marriage. At the time of the survey, only two were still married. Seventy-eight percent were 5 and 6 on the HH Scale, indicating that essentially they were not attracted to the opposite sex and therefore probably should not have married.⁶

2. *Libido*. The importance attached to sexual satisfaction is another variable affecting the success of these marriages. When both parties have little interest in or need for sexual intimacy, marriage may become a more realistic possibility. The partners may also be able to deemphasize sexual intimacy through sublimation of sexual feelings. Other kinds of compatibility such as mutual interests, strong friendship, and non-erotic attachment may also be important factors for those who do not have strong libi-

5. Ibid., and Beverly Shaw, "Counseling with Homosexual Latter-day Saints: My Experience and Insights," in *The Persistence of Same Sex Attraction*, 15-16.

6. Schow, "1994 Survey of 136 LDS Same Sex Oriented Individuals."

dos. Prospective couples should be aware, however, that the homosexual desires may intensify over time and present a risk later in the marriage.

Myths, Misunderstandings, and Stereotypes

The widespread failure of homosexual-heterosexual marriages, together with the psychological stress single homosexuals feel because of extraordinary pressures to marry, are largely attributable in LDS culture to ignorance about homosexuality and to unexamined beliefs about marriage and family life.

Many young couples consider marriage or enter marriage unaware of the liabilities and challenges they face. Here are a few of the myths and misunderstandings involving homosexuality and marriage.

1. *Sex in marriage will solve the problem, or, conversely, sex isn't that important.* Because of the Church's appropriate emphasis on premarital chastity, young people generally have not experienced sexual intimacy in a committed relationship. Thus, they have little understanding of what marriage without sexual intimacy or with unsatisfying sexual expression might mean. Few homosexual-heterosexual marriages survive without at least some degree of mutually satisfying sexual expression.

2. *Homosexuality is a personal challenge only.* A young man who just ended his eight-year temple marriage as part of coming to terms with his homosexuality told me that he deeply regretted his own lack of understanding that made him treat his gayness as a "personal issue." As a result, although he expected some difficulty and was prepared for it, he did not disclose his homosexuality to his wife before their marriage. He didn't realize, he says, "the impact that my own struggle would have on other people. Nevertheless, I wonder if any straight woman or man can really understand in advance the implications of entering into a mixed orientation marriage. I think a lot of gay men contemplating heterosexual marriage underestimate the impact that their actions have on their future spouse."

With considerable after-the-fact remorse, he explains finally coming to terms with his wife's anguish: "It was only after I came out to my wife that I realized how much she had suffered and endured over the years in asking questions like why didn't I find her desirable or why our sexual relationship never seemed satisfying. Was it a failure on her part? she wondered. She had sadness about feeling alone, confused and hurt in ways that were nearly impossible to articulate."

This young man emphasized the falsity of a prevalent myth: "I saw

my struggle with (and against) homosexuality as my own cross to bear. I felt I was the one who was suffering, struggling, and trying to make things right. What I failed to recognize was that my wife was also part of the same struggle even though she lacked basic information."

3. *Anyone with the basic capacity to marry, should get married.* This same young man also articulated another view held widely within the Church and inculcated through years of socialization of youth: "There is such a strong bias toward marriage and married couples in the church, that it is almost unthinkable to consider alternatives to the idealized father-mother-children arrangement." As a young man, he saw "no other alternative" than temple marriage and children. "The fact that I was gay was irrelevant. Getting married is what faithful LDS returned missionaries do."

This belief is so strong that it becomes extremely difficult to get past the "faith" that "things will work out" and ask hard questions about, "How will they work out? What will this require of me? Of my wife? In our role as parents?" The young man quoted above lamented his naivete: "Looking at the pain that my little family has experienced leaves me convinced that we need better answers, more openness, and real honesty."

4. *The gay lifestyle is one of wanton promiscuity.* Ben expresses this stereotype when he phrased his options as either temple marriage or "a rampant life of unrestrained queerness." Some may feel, when recognizing their same-sex attraction, that their choices are equally limited. Obviously, there are many choices between these two extremes.

5. *"Homosexuality" is not the same as "homosexual behavior."* The Church has made an important policy shift wherein there is censure of behavior but not of homosexuality per se. This shift is reflected in Church handbook terminology, and yet many members and some leaders are not clearly making the distinction. The 1976 *General Handbook of Instructions* listed "homosexuality" as "grounds for Church court action," as did the 1983 edition.⁷ Not unreasonably, some local leaders interpreted homosexuality itself, even on the part of celibate persons, to be an actionable offense. However, in 1989 the *General Handbook of Instructions* for Church leaders used the phrase "homosexual relations" in that same list of

7. *General Handbook of Instructions* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976), 71; *General Handbook of Instructions* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1983), 51.

grounds for disciplinary councils.⁸ The 1998 handbook uses the terms “homosexual activity,” “homosexual acts,” “homosexual relations,” “homosexual activities,” and “homosexual behavior” as being problematic.⁹ As the language of this current handbook makes clear, it is behavior, not homosexuality per se, that is proscribed.

President Hinckley also made this clear in 1998 when he said, referring to homosexual inclinations, “If they do not act upon these inclinations, then they can go forward as do all other members of the Church.”¹⁰ Church members, therefore, do not have to “give up” or “overcome” homosexuality—only homosexual behavior that is incompatible with Church standards of sexual morality. Such “going forward” does include, of course, a life of sexual abstinence.

6. *Understand the healing power of the atonement.* Some commentators suggest that the “cure” for homosexuality lies in the healing power of the Savior to remove same-sex feelings, arguing that the atonement is sufficient for such requests.¹¹ Such arguments show a fundamental misunderstanding of the atonement. Its purpose is not to change conditions of mortality like sexual orientation, but rather to help us live with life’s challenges, repent of our sins, and surrender our hearts to the Lord so that ultimately we can be sanctified through his sacrifice.

7. *Consider divorce realistically.* There is a strong and appropriate discouragement of divorce in Mormon culture, but couples who marry without a clear understanding of the implications when one partner has bisexual or homosexual feelings need to understand that sometimes divorce is the best solution for both partners. Fear of divorce’s stigma should not

8. *General Handbook of Instructions* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 1989), Section 10, p. 4.

9. *Church Handbook of Instructions* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), Vol. 1:81, 96, 129, 159.

10. Gordon B. Hinckley, “What Are People Asking about Us?” *Ensign*, November 1998, 71. He was responding to Question 2: “What is your Church’s attitude toward homosexuality?”

11. The Evergreen mission statement, which appears on all of its conference programs, begins: “Evergreen is founded on the belief that the atonement of Jesus Christ enables every soul the opportunity to turn away from all sins or conditions that obstruct their temporal and eternal happiness and potential.” Programs in my possession; emphasis mine.

compel husbands and wives to stay in marriages that are not mutually loving and fulfilling.

Promising Developments

Even though there is currently much pain and uncertainty over the issue of homosexuality in Mormon culture, there are several developments which, given time and encouragement, may lead to a more enlightened situation. As noted earlier, it would be helpful for members of the Church to understand that individuals do not choose same-sex attraction and that, generally, SSA feelings do not go away. Ben's essay confirms both concepts. I see no doctrinal reason why this information should not be shared widely with members of the Church.

An encouraging sign is Deseret Book's publication in late 2004 of *In Quiet Desperation* by Fred and Marilyn Matis and Ty Mansfield. The Matises are the parents of Stuart Matis, an LDS man who committed suicide outside the Los Altos Stake Center in San Jose, California, in 2000, after years of struggling against his homosexual orientation. The book strongly confirms that SSA is not a choice and generally will not diminish or vanish in adulthood. According to Marilyn Matis, "When Stuart was thirty-two years old, he finally accepted his feelings of attraction to other men. He said he cried all night long when he realized his feelings of attraction had not gone away—nor had they diminished in any way since he had first recognized them."¹²

The book's preface describes Ty Mansfield: "You will read the reflections and impressions of [another] young man who presently wrestles with same-gender attraction. It will become obvious that he has spent hundreds of hours on his knees, in counsel with priesthood leaders, and in deep and pondering study of the holy scriptures in an effort to cope with feelings of attraction that he did not choose."¹³

Because Deseret Book is owned by the Church, its publication of this book with its strong message that SSA is not chosen and does not diminish over time is, in my opinion, a good sign.

The following First Presidency statement issued in October 2004 suggests that, at least to some extent, Church leaders understand that ho-

12. Fred Matis, Marilyn Matis, and Ty Mansfield, *In Quiet Desperation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 11.

13. *Ibid.*, xiii.

mosexuality is not a choice and that it often results in loneliness: "We of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reach out with understanding and respect for individuals who are attracted to those of the same gender. We realize there may be great loneliness in their lives."¹⁴ The word "respect" suggests that they feel homosexuality is unchosen. Realistically speaking, both married and single people can experience "loneliness," but this statement at least seems to suggest that homosexuals will not be able to marry.

In December 2004, during an interview on CNN Television, Larry King asked President Hinckley if gays are "born that way." The president answered. "I don't know. I'm not an expert on these things. I don't pretend to be an expert on these things."¹⁵ It is helpful when the prophet makes clear that understanding the causes of homosexuality requires "expertise" (in other words, it is not a matter that has been settled by revelation), and that the Church's position on homosexuality may include the possibility that individuals *are* "born that way."

Another promising development is that some bishops have begun to offer sound wisdom based on extensive experience. Robert Rees, who was bishop of the Los Angeles Singles Ward for five years, recently reported: "My experience with the 50 or so homosexuals with whom I have had a close relationship over the past 20 years can be summarized as follows: I have not met a single homosexual Latter-day Saint who chose or was able to change or alter his or her sexual orientation. I also have not met a single homosexual Latter-day Saint who had not tried valiantly, generally over a long period of time, to change his or her orientation."¹⁶ It is likely that Bishop Rees has more experience with this issue than any bishop in the church.

Recently, in my area (southern Idaho), a bishop in a university stake bishops' council urged his fellow bishops to avoid encouraging gay persons to marry. Although some of the bishops objected, the stake president

14. First Presidency Statement, October 19, 2004, retrieved October 20, 2004, from www.lds.org/newsroom/showrelease/0,15503,4028-1-20336,00.html.

15. Gordon B. Hinckley, interviewed by Larry King, December 26, 2004, retrieved January 15, 2005, from <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0412/26/lkl.01.html>.

16. Robert A. Rees, "My Experience in Working with Homosexual Latter-day Saints," in *The Persistence of Same Sex Attraction in Latter-day Saints*, 16.

reinforced the bishop's comments. These are good developments which, in my view, move us in the right direction.

Unfortunately, an anonymous article in the September 2004 *Ensign* does not reveal the same level of understanding, suggesting both that, although difficult, SSA can be "overcome" and that marriage may be an option with "the Lord's help." The article does, fortunately, point out that these feelings are "seldom chosen," but does not say anything about the role bisexuality may have in making possible straight/gay marriages.¹⁷

Equally unfortunate is the fact that Evergreen has a role in training Church leaders, and its literature stresses that therapy can result in a "transition" out of homosexuality. Evergreen also fails to clarify the difference between homosexuality and bisexuality.

If Latter-day Saint couples considering marriage were getting better information from their bishops and if they understood clearly whether the partner in question were gay or bisexual, they would be in a better position to evaluate whether marriage is a possibility. I hope that good guidance can be given to the fine young men and women of the Church, gay and straight, who face the prospect of marriage when one partner is bisexual or homosexual. I also hope that, when such couples decide to marry, they can find the best path through this dilemma and that, if divorce ever becomes necessary, they can also find compassionate support during that difficult process.

Thoughts of a Therapist

Marybeth Raynes

I FREQUENTLY SEE MORMONS who are gay or gays who are Mormon. Which comes first matters immensely to many. I consult with individuals,

17. Name withheld, "Compassion for Those Who Struggle," *Ensign*, September 2004, 58-62.

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lesbian and gay couples, and couples in which one partner is gay, bisexual, or aware of attractions to the same gender but who doesn't identify with the "gay" tag. Moreover, I have seen many who are gay but who yearn to reclaim or rename the spiritual experiences they continue to receive or who want to find places of spiritual service that have as sweet a taste as those within the Church. Others urgently want to come to terms with God, grieve deeply the loss of access to the Church's callings and blessings, or want to find ways to mitigate the shunning they receive from their families.

I also sit with both women and men who want to change their orientation or those who accept that they will always feel a split between their heart and their libido, but who want to be actively Mormon. They voice a clear wish to choose spirituality over sexuality as the only option in the forced-choice structure of today's Church.

The many facets of being homosexual and Mormon named above carry with them enormous suffering, endless questions, and, yes, many times of joy and fulfillment. I am delighted that Ben has brought to the fore the invisible choice that many live with—happily and unhappily. His voice—as well as the voices of other men and women who are married and bisexual or gay—needs to be heard, particularly with the sensitivity and hard-won insights he has gained through growing up being gay and Mormon, then marrying with his and Jessie's eyes as open as possible.

I am aware of more essays by men (but very few by women) about their journey in and out of marriages like this. I can count on both hands the couples I have worked with who have chosen to stay married with the goal of managing the difficulties and enriching their experience with each other and their children. From a wider list of contacts, I have talked in depth with at least a dozen more. I am sharing this information to simply indicate my frame of reference and my level of experience with these couples.

Some of these couples end up leaving the marriage, but I would guess that, for most married bisexual lesbian and gay people, choosing to leave may well be choosing life—literally and emotionally. As a side note, the high rates of suicidal ideation, attempts, and completed suicides do not end in young adulthood or upon being married. Suicide rates in general increase throughout adulthood, and I am guessing that the same trend applies for those with same-sex orientation. While I support leaving a marriage if one must, I am equally concerned about limiting the damage that spouses and children experience.

I am impressed with Ben's conscientiousness about entering his marriage. He employed a number of important strategies that every couple should use when embarking on marriage but particularly with the extra dangers and difficulties a gay/straight marriage entails.

First, he developed a close friendship over a fairly long period of time and then came to feel that he loved his friend before considering marriage. For gay persons, the choice between a deep love and erotic attraction plus love is an excruciating one. I recommend giving yourself plenty of time and contemplation to really feel the direction you most deeply want to go before choosing either path. Consult with trusted others who will support you whatever your choice. Rely on the spiritual practices that work for you. Research the practical implications. Study marriage as well as the nature of your prospective spouse's sexuality. (That is, if you are a man, become well acquainted with the nature of women's sexuality.) Fortunately, a decision-making model for these spiritual-sexual conflicts has been researched and developed by Lee Beckstead and others.¹ Even with last-minute doubts, you will be better prepared by cementing the relationship in caring first.

Second, I recommend disclosing your same-gender attraction before the marriage takes place, as Ben did. Telling someone, or worse, having the spouse find out years later, and after possible affairs and/or one-night stands have already taken place, produces the most damage. I give Ben extra credit for telling his wife early enough in their relationship that she could make a choice before becoming engaged or telling everyone else that a marriage was forthcoming, then later feeling the burden of social opinion regarding her decision to leave or stay in the relationship. Even though it is difficult, even impossible, to count the costs of being married to a gay person beforehand, the imagined choices must be laid before the other person.

It is important to recognize that not all persons are absolutely cer-

1. A. Lee Beckstead and T. Israel, "Affirmative Counseling and Psychotherapy Focused on Issues Related to Conflicts with Sexual Orientation," in *Handbook of Counseling and Psychotherapy with Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Clients*, edited by K. Bieschke, R. Perez, and K. DeBord, 2d. ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, in press). See also A. Lee Beckstead and S. L. Morrow, "Mormon Clients' Experiences of Conversion Therapy: The Need for a New Treatment Approach," *The Counseling Psychologist* 32 (2004): 651-90.

tain before marrying that they are, in fact, attracted to the same sex. They may not understand that their orientation is difficult to change, or, worse yet, be able to project the toll that years of inner and outer conflict may cost both partners. Some women who identify as heterosexual may, years or even decades later, become aware of their erotic or romantic attraction to women. For many men, hopes and promises of change seem so compelling because spiritual directives in other areas of their lives have worked. Others, who are not as compelled by their sexual natures, may have only limited awareness of its eventual power. The nature of our sexuality continues to unfold during the decades of adulthood, just as our other capacities do. How someone knows or comes to know about his or her sexual attractions and patterns is so varied that we should refrain from judging.

Ben also engaged his beloved in an ongoing conversation before the marriage about both his doubts and the possible effect his homosexuality might have on her. I have talked to many women—and several men—who felt left out of discussions of future ramifications, even if they knew about the same-sex attraction prior to the marriage. Amity Buxton, author of *The Other Side of the Closet*, discusses the trauma, silence, and loss of integrity that occur as one spouse comes out of the closet. Effectively, when the gay partner comes out of the closet, the straight one often goes in.² The feeling of invisibility and of not being loved or cherished increases for most spouses unless they pay consistent attention to working together on their relationship. (Of course, this is true of straight marriages also.)

Indeed, this concern about “not being loved” in a gay/straight marriage has led me to more pondering than any other in the area of homosexual married people. I am deeply concerned about what happens to both partners when there is very little or no sexual interest toward the other by at least one spouse. When this is the case, there often may not be a sustained emotional and mental wish to really discover who one’s partner is on many levels. Much like the quip, “Money doesn’t buy happiness, but it sure makes a good down payment,” sexual interest alone does not create a loving marriage, but it certainly is an important feature. In their book, *The Good Marriage*, a study of three types of healthy marriages, Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee conclude that at least warm, if

2. Amity Buxton, *The Other Side of the Closet: The Coming Out Crisis for Straight Spouses and Families*, rev. and expanded ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994), xiii–xx, 175–77.

not deeply passionate, sex is a necessary feature in all types of good marriages.³

Even when good intentions and deep commitments are present at the beginning of a union, marriages of all types need a steady motivational base to survive and thrive. After the initial high, people in most marriages experience a decline in interest toward the other as they enter into the predictable everyday phases of marriage before the deeper skills of really loving another take hold and grow. A gay person may lose that initial motivation to really love and deeply join with his or her spouse on many levels to a greater degree than straight spouses because it was difficult to do so in the first place. If this occurs, the frustration and alienation can be profound for both partners. Additionally, if either or both spouses are engaged in a core-level internal conflict, they often have few resources to reach beyond the self in a heart-felt, collaborative way. In my observation, gay/straight marriages do really well only when the partners are very good friends—indeed, best friends—and do not wish to be with anyone else despite the obstacles.

What I am pointing to is the need to be emotionally, mentally, and spiritually mature beyond the usual expectation of those entering marriage. Of course, we want people to be mature when beginning any marriage; but since a majority of Latter-day Saints marry at young ages, this is not always the case. Given that marriage is one of the chief institutions to help most people grow up—if you chose to let it—most people are quite immature at the point of embarkation. No matter the conditions, growing up takes a long time and a lot of work.

If I could wave a magic wand, I would hope that premarital and marital therapy services would be easily available for gay, lesbian, or bisexual people considering heterosexual marriage. (An additional wand would grant these same services to couples who are already married.) However, these choices remain invisible for the most part because any disclosure is likely to attract unfriendly cross-fire from several sources. It seems that people take sides too easily, even when they want to be supportive. Ongoing support is crucial. Heterosexual marriages, much less other types of unions, generally don't survive without family and community support.

I praise Ben also for clearly taking a stand, spiritually, emotionally,

3. Judith S. Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee, *The Good Marriage: How and Why Love Lasts* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995), 183.

and behaviorally. He presents a cogent argument for his choice. He claims his right to do something hard. If his story is honest on all counts, he has internally worked through the obstacles he has faced so far through spiritual seeking and contemplation and externally by talking with Jessie and keeping the conversation open. He employs an important coping strategy by learning to pay less attention to his urges. Just taking a stand and claiming a right often helps to change one's sense of self (though not one's impulses or orientation) and can create increased motivation. Would that most people had this much foresight and planning!

However, I think it is possible that there are difficult struggles that Ben didn't name. Even if his list is complete, others would have more to add or may not be able to do what he is doing. Additionally, he is just starting out. The years can wear on us unless we renew ourselves with episodic or continual growth. Ben hasn't included much information about Jessie. I wish her well over the years and hope that her voice also finds a place in writing for a larger audience.

Those of you reading this article who are homosexual and married and who have not disclosed your orientation to a spouse, please review your situation and name the ways in which you were doing the best that you could at the time of your engagement and marriage. Then, find someone to talk to so you can, as wisely as possible, remedy the situation, or come to some deep peacefulness about your choices in the future.

To all who are challenged by this issue, and perhaps are engaged in a troubled or problematic relationship, please remember that, given your circumstances, you are undoubtedly doing the best you can and should treat each other with great patience and understanding.

Staying In

Ben Christensen

I WROTE "GETTING OUT" as a somewhat naive twenty-four-year-old. Now I return, in theory a wise and mature twenty-five-year-old. Inevitably, I'll find whatever I write here equally naive a year from now. I don't know

whether this is a function of being young, human, or simply me. Whatever the case, I appreciate life's opportunities to be constantly learning, including the opportunity that well-written essays such as those by Ron Schow and Marybeth Raynes give me to reflect on myself and question my assumptions.

Perhaps the greatest shift in my perspective on homosexuality in the last year is echoed in comments made by Ron and Marybeth. Ron refers to my implication that my only options were marrying a woman or running off to San Francisco to embrace "rampant queerness." He points out: "There are many choices between these two extremes." I think I found myself in this "either/or" mentality because of a shallow understanding of love and sex. In "Getting Out," I say, "My attraction to Jessie . . . came entirely from my heart. On the other hand, [my attraction to men] was purely a libido thing."

Critiquing my essay, a friend asked, "Can you really separate love and sex so easily? *I can't.*" I discarded his concern, believing I had a deeper understanding of love and sex. After all, he writes novels about missionaries who fornicate and teenaged boys who make out with cow udders. For me, the distinction between love and sex was clear. As I've become more honest with myself, though, I see that Marybeth states my dilemma more accurately when she says that people in my situation choose "between a deep love and erotic attraction plus love." This choice is a good deal more difficult than the over-simplified choice I thought I was making. By choosing heterosexual marriage, I've denied myself the experience of loving someone I am naturally attracted to and my wife the experience of loving someone who is naturally attracted to her.

Homosexuality is not just about sex. I desperately crave emotional intimacy with a man. Can I work on having that kind of intimacy with my wife? Yes. Can I attain some level of intimacy in platonic friendships with men? Possibly. Will this be satisfying? Will it fill the hole in my heart I've lived with for years? I don't know.

I'm uncomfortable, however, with Ron's conclusions regarding bisexuality and homosexuality. He admits that "the HH scale is an overly simplified approach to what is in reality a much more complex matter," yet he uses it as the basis for many of his arguments. If I were to guess where I fall on the HH scale (assuming that I believe anyone can reduce

his or her sexual orientation to a number), I would place myself at a 5: "Predominantly homosexual, but incidentally heterosexual."¹ According to Ron, "Those at 5 or 6 on the HH scale, therefore, are at much higher risk of marriage failure than those at 3 or 4." If my marriage fails, then, can I blame it on my fiveness? On the other hand, if it succeeds, am I therefore a 3 or a 4? Arguments like Ron's require one to "speculate" that homosexuals who don't support the desired conclusions "were likely bisexual." My goodness, Ron, I've just barely come to terms with being gay, and now you're asking me to deal with the possibility that I might be, "in reality," bisexual? I'm not sure my self-image can withstand this much turbulence.

As a general statement, I am aroused by the male body and not the female. Nonetheless, there have been occasions, mostly with my wife, where I have felt such an emotional closeness to a woman that I've experienced some sense of sexual attraction. Similarly, I've often found myself attracted to men I wouldn't have otherwise found attractive, due to shared emotional intimacy. Love and sex aren't easily separated, and neither the HH scale nor terms like "heterosexual," "homosexual," and "bisexual" account for this complexity.

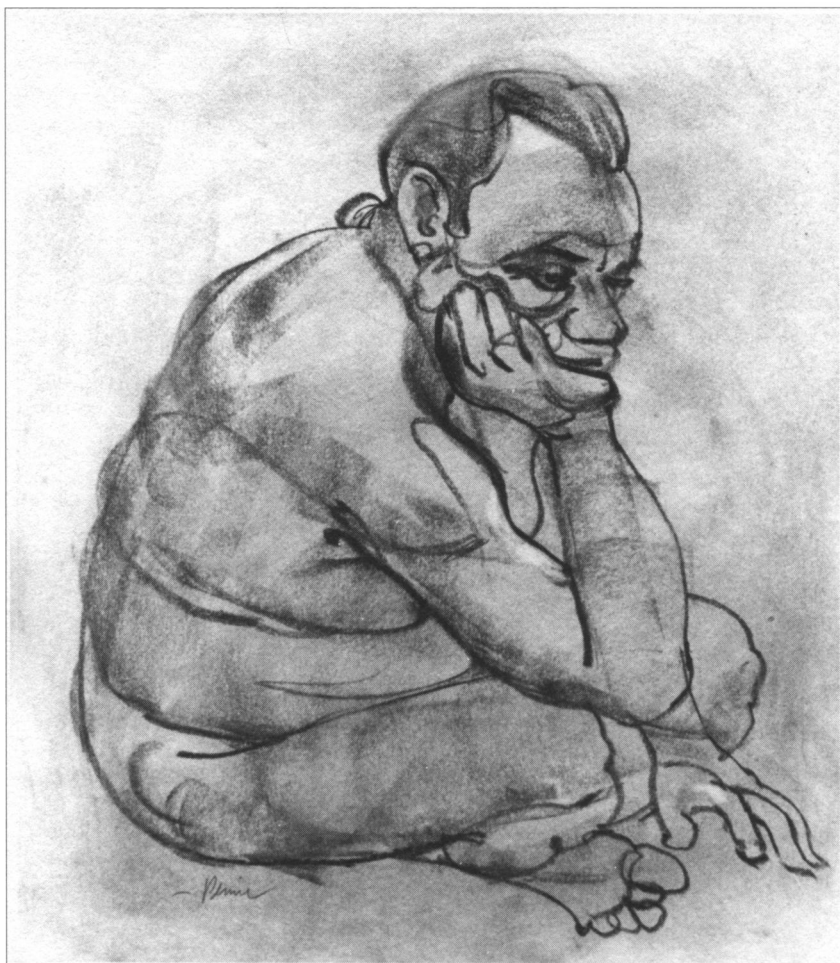
Overall, Ron and Marybeth make convincing arguments for the difficulty of "mixed orientation" marriages. I wholeheartedly agree. If "Getting Out" leads any gay Mormon to jump into marriage without considering the consequences, then I should have my writing license revoked. The problem is, no one offers any better solutions within the bounds of LDS doctrine. Apparently, the current alternative offered by the First Presidency is "great loneliness." What kind of alternative is that? Am I to accept that a Church which proclaims "that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children"² would say that marriage and family simply aren't options for me? Yes, many people don't have the opportunity to marry in this life. That, in my opinion, is a tragedy. Why then

1. Alfred Kinsey, quoted in Ron Schow, "Kinsey and Beyond," in *Peculiar People: Mormons and Same-Sex Orientation*, edited by Ron Schow, Wayne Schow, and Marybeth Raynes (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 160.

2. First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (Salt Lake: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1995).

should I *choose* loneliness? But if heterosexual marriage is “doomed to fail” and homosexual marriage is a sin, that’s exactly what I’m expected to do.

If it seems I have conflicting feelings on this subject, I do. Lately when I listen to Lauryn Hill sing “I Get Out,” I wonder whether my “psychological locks” are the boxes a gay-rights-driven society would put me in, or the boxes a narrow-minded view of God has me in. Maybe God *isn’t* so opposed to people of the same gender having a loving sexual relationship. I don’t know. To be honest, at this point it doesn’t matter. This much I do know: God told me to marry Jessie. I married her. I love my wife, and I love my daughter. Doing anything to hurt them couldn’t possibly make me happy. Yes, the issue is infinitely more complicated than I’ve painted it; and yes, at times the thought of never feeling a man’s body next to mine makes me literally tremble. At these times I find courage in the bold words of Ms. Hill: “And if I have to die, O Lord, / That’s how I choose to live.”



The Thinker, after August Rodin
charcoal, 16" x 14"; 1993, a tribute to the expansive brain;
collection of the Perine Newman Trust

FICTION

Carterville

Douglas Thayer

I WANTED TO LIFT THE GLASS-FRAMED LID and hold the big German brown trout. He was smooth, beautiful, all shining gold—darker gold on top and lighter gold underneath. The gold had black, orange, and red spots in perfect symmetrical and proportioned patterns. He was a joy to look at. The white card said: “Caught by Earl Jones on June 15th, Umbrella Hole, Provo River. Weight—6 pounds 3 ounces. Length—22 inches.”

“I’m going to catch a brown bigger than that. I’m going to win the prize.”

“Oh sure,” said Richard Nelson, who stood next to me looking down. “You and what army? You can’t even catch a limit of little browns. Besides it’s already almost July. You only got two months left.”

Richard and I were friends and fished together, but he wasn’t always encouraging, his tone not always kind. I didn’t always fish with him now, for he caught more and bigger trout than I did. I didn’t tell him about the big trout I’d hooked and lost in the Moss Hole. I was beginning to understand that some things I didn’t tell anybody, not even my mother.

We stood in the glaring Utah summer sun outside Carlson’s Sporting Goods on University Avenue looking down into the glass-topped ice chest at the big trout.

DOUGLAS THAYER teaches at BYU. His novel, *The Conversion of Jeff Williams* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2003), won the Association for Mormon Letters novel prize. He has a new novel, *Harris*, under consideration by a publisher and is finishing a collection of stories. Earlier publications include two collections of short stories, *Under the Cottonwoods* (Provo, Utah: Frankson Books, 1977) and *Mr. Wahlquist in Yellowstone* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1989), and a novel, *Summer Fire* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1983). Thayer and his wife, Donlu DeWitt Thayer, have six children and four grandsons.

Every year on September 1, the fisherman who had caught the biggest German brown on the Provo River (it had to be the Provo River and it had to be a brown) got to choose a hundred dollars worth of fishing equipment from Carlson's as a prize. The Second World War was over, but equipment was still hard to get. I fished with a metal telescope rod, the two top sections pulling out to make the full rod. I couldn't afford hip boots, but wore old tennis shoes and cut-off Levis.

All of the winning trout were caught on the Provo River in Provo Canyon, but my mother wouldn't let me ride my bike up the canyon. I could only fish the river in Carterville. Richard went with his Uncle Pete to fish Strawberry, Scofield, Deer Creek, and other distant reservoirs, but I didn't have access to these waters. Uncle Pete took Richard fishing, bought him fishing equipment, and taught him how to fish. Nobody ever did those things for me. This persuaded me that life was not always fair and could even prove tragic.

I wanted desperately to catch the biggest trout and win the prize. It was a great passion with me. It was the first time I'd felt a great passion, although at the time I didn't know what passion was or which of the various passions I was capable of. I'd just turned thirteen. I wanted to have my name on the card for all the other fishermen to see, have my picture and an article in the *Herald*, be able to tell the story about catching the trout, and become a Provo hero.

At that early age, fishing was my only passion; I had little time for girls. Yet I knew that girls existed and were different from boys. I knew that older boys thought girls were necessary for some reason. However, about this same time I'd begun to feel my body inside my clothes, which I'd never done before. My mother complained because I kept growing out of my shoes.

"I don't know where you think the money's coming from."

"But I can't help it."

"Boys," she said, "boys." I had three married sisters but no brothers. My mother often told me that when I was born I was a surprise.

In the sixth grade at the Franklin Grade School, we'd had to learn to dance. You had to bow to the girl before you asked her for a dance. We learned the waltz and fox trot; but we were not allowed to hold the girls close, which was something I didn't want to do anyway. But at Dixon Junior High School, where I'd been for one year, you could hold them close at the Friday afternoon dances if you wanted to. When I thought about

school starting in September, it seemed more and more like an interesting and even necessary thing to do.

I locked the bathroom door now when I took my Saturday bath. I didn't need my mother to wash my ears. She didn't say anything. I liked to lie in the water with the wet washcloth over my face and think about things. She didn't have to comb my hair anymore either or ask me if I'd put on clean underwear and socks. These had become quite personal matters.

I didn't tell my mother about my great desire to catch the prize-winning Carlson's Sporting Goods trout or tell her about my emerging interest in girls.

She often put her hand on my forehead.

"You look feverish these days," she said. "Are you sick?"

"No."

I'd been sickly as a child.

I was a religious boy. I went to Sunday School. I was taught to be clean and pure and believe in perfection and the celestial kingdom. I would be a missionary someday. I took piano lessons. When I'd turned twelve, I'd become a Boy Scout and had to live the Scout oath and law, and I'd received the Aaronic Priesthood and was ordained a deacon and passed the sacrament. Although still innocent at that early age, I'd begun to feel burdened. But I knew that Jesus liked fishermen and knew where you could catch the most fish, which helped strengthen my faith.

I had chores and cut two older neighbors' lawns but had no full-time summer job, so I had time to go fishing often, as long as I cut my lawns, did my chores, and practiced the piano first.

The first big fish I'd caught had been a carp in Utah Lake. They were easy to catch on night crawlers, big six-inch-long worms that came out at night. I would spot them with my flashlight and grab them. But it did not please me to catch carp, not even if they weighed twenty pounds. I didn't like the carp's large heavy scales, sickly yellow color, and pig mouths; a carp was not pleasant to hold. I also didn't like the heat, the glaring, unshaded lake sun, the gray sewage-tainted lake water, the smell. Carp were not perfect; I did not offer prayers in their behalf. I had begun to need deep, clean, cool, moving Carterville river water, the shade of tall trees, and solitude. Carterville wasn't a town, just a place along the Provo River bottoms where a lot of farmers named Carter lived.

There were carp in the Provo River, but I'd never heard of one being

caught above the Twelfth North diversion dam. If you caught a carp below the dam, you threw it up on the bank to die as a warning to other fisherman that there were carp lurking about, but I always fished a mile above the dam in Carterville. Richard and I also fished Brown's Creek and Spring Creek, the only other two places we could reach on our bicycles.

I liked Carterville best. The deeper water pushing against my legs and thighs was cool, gentle, pleasant. The wide border of high, green, soft trees shaded me. The sounds of birds and water comforted me. The rhythm of fishing, its single-mindedness, stopped me remembering things my mother wanted me to do or said I should do, and that next year I would be old enough to get a full-time summer job. I swam in the deep pools. I didn't wear swimming trunks. I didn't tell my mother about this fact or that I smoked cedar bark occasionally. I'd begun to have a private life.

My father didn't fish. He worked hard at Dixon Taylor Russell selling furniture. He liked to go to war movies. My mother didn't go with him.

"Your father's a good man," my mother said. "He manages to earn a living, which is more than you can say for some men, and he doesn't spend his time and hard-earned money in pool halls standing there drinking beer all afternoon and telling stories. Such nonsense. Nothing but lies."

My mother was death on pool halls.

Feeling a bite come up through the leader and line into the rod, the pulling connecting me to the unseen trout down deep in the water, was wonderful. Feeling it, wanting to be sure before I jerked and set the hook, I waited for the strong pull, my whole body growing tight, my blood pounding. I waited, wanted to know the trout was swimming deeper with my night crawler-baited hook in his mouth, maybe even had it swallowed. I wanted to be sure. It could be a five-pounder. I knew I would need at least an eight-pounder to win the contest. Last year a six-and-three-quarter-pound trout had won.

"Well, at least you caught one," my mother would say when I came home from a discouraging day on the river. She always tried to encourage me.

"Fishing is hard."

"Yes, but it's the hard things the Lord gives us to do in life that make us strong. We all have life's lessons to learn."

"I guess."

I couldn't explain how I felt. Things inside me were changing. I'd begun to feel a great urgency deep inside of me, a longing I could not name, which made me feel strange, aloof, and unique, as if something important and mysterious was about to happen to me.

"The Good Lord can't abide foolishness," she said. "He expects a boy your age to be responsible. You're a deacon now and a Boy Scout."

"Yes. I know."

The legal limit was eight trout, eight browns because planters didn't count. Planters were small rainbow trout the State Fish and Game planted, which were easy to catch, so a real fisherman couldn't count planters as part of his limit. Although I'd never caught a limit of even small browns, what I really wanted was one brown so large he wouldn't fit in my basket. I would have to carry him, my fingers up through the gills and mouth, as I rode my bike up to Carlson's, men and boys coming out in the street to stop me and ask me where I caught him. I saw myself walking, splendid and triumphant, into Carlson's, Mr. Carlson walking out from behind the counter when he saw me come into the store.

"Well, son," he would say, "looks like you got a whopper. Where'd you get him?" And he would call all the clerks and customers to come and see my trout and hear my story about catching him.

My only real hope of catching the prize-winning trout was the Moss Hole, a hole a mile below the mouth of the canyon in Carterville. It was full of roots and snags. An old dead cottonwood tree lay in the middle of the hole. Because of tree limbs and brush hanging out over the hole, fly-fishermen couldn't fish there. Bait fisherman didn't fish it much either because of the snags and moss. You had to get down on your knees to get under the brush and low, dead limbs.

I always fished this hole for a long time because I believed there had to be a big trout there. Kneeling, I cast again and again, snagged sometimes, took off my clothes to wade in and get the hook loose, but sometimes had to break my leader because the snag was too deep and then tie on another Eagle Claw hook.

One late afternoon the end of June, the hole hidden in shadows, I'd had a bite, felt the tap, tap. Hands sweaty I waited, waited, but not long enough, jerked too fast, felt the trout for just that one second, felt him pull, start to swim away. I knew he was big, could feel that, my heart pounding hard, wanting to holler, but then he was gone. Breathless,

mouth dry, I reeled in. My night crawler was gone. I put on two night crawlers, cast many times, but the big brown did not bite again. Browns were smart; they bit only once. I didn't tell Richard or anybody about hooking the big brown. I didn't want anybody else to catch him.

I began to fish more alone. Richard catching more and bigger trout than I did filled me with jealousy, which I knew was a sin. Trying to stay ahead of him on the river, I fished every hole fast. I believed that the first one to the hole would get the fish. I found this not to be true, but it didn't seem to make any difference to me. I needed more patience, more faith. My mother and Sunday School and priesthood teachers mentioned these virtues.

I prayed that I would catch the big trout. I believed that if I were good, Jesus would help me catch more trout. I offered prayers at night in my dark basement bedroom, a narrow window my only light, but up to that summer they were prayers never answered and so lessons in faith. Fishing, sometimes, momentarily having lost hope, I took off my clothes and waded out into the holes, sank, swam underwater seeking to be with the trout, if I couldn't catch them. I didn't think Jesus would care if I didn't wear a suit. None of the other boys swimming in the river wore suits.

"Are you kneeling by your bed to say your prayers every night? Boys get lazy and just lay in bed muttering their prayers. That's a lazy man's way to pray."

"Yes, Mother." I always said yes.

"Good. A boy needs to keep praying on his knees if he wants to stay humble. He needs to ask for faith. This old life takes a lot of faith to get through and make it to the celestial kingdom." The celestial kingdom had degrees, and my mother wanted to get to the highest degree.

I didn't tell my mother that I prayed about fish. My mother was leery of fishermen because so many of them swore, smoked, drank alcoholic beverages, chewed tobacco, couldn't keep a job, and spent most of their time in Hank Smith's Pool Hall telling stories, drinking beer, and shooting pool.

I rode my bike up to Carlson's every day to check the big German browns. The biggest so far was six and three-quarter pounds.

When I hooked a brown, I did not fight him long. Horsing him out, I ran back up the bank. Then, dropping my pole I dived on him, smashed his head on a rock before I took out the hook. I measured him, hefted him to see how heavy, held him in both hands to look at him. Usually, my fish

was a quarter or half a pound, ten to twelve inches long, seldom larger. Fishing, I prayed silently for at least one ten-pound brown in my life, a perfect, splendid fish.

Neighborhood girls sometimes stood watching me as I rode my bike to go fishing, carrying my pole, my basket on the strap over my shoulder, but I didn't stop to talk to them. They just watched. Boys didn't talk to girls about fishing. But I liked the girls to watch me now, as if I were somehow worthy of their momentary attention. When I wasn't going fishing, I stopped to talk to girls, straddled my bike, leaned forward on the handlebars. I liked to look at them. Lying in bed I did think about girls at night sometimes, but I didn't mention them in my prayers as I did fish.

It was of course important to catch trout fairly. The beauty and intelligence of trout required fairness. I believed all good fishermen were fair. I'd heard of some Carterville fishermen dynamiting holes or damming off the water and pouring in gallons of Clorox to smother the fish, so that they could clean out the hole, but I would never do these things.

The Boy Scout oath and law complicated my life and made me more apprehensive about my perfection. Because I was a deacon and passed the sacrament, I must remain clean and pure, which meant I shouldn't drink tea, coffee, or alcoholic beverages, shouldn't smoke tobacco (cedar bark was never mentioned), and shouldn't steal, lie, play strip poker, or swear. And I began to sense there were other sins no one had told me about yet, sins even worse than those I already knew about, that I would have to avoid. I'd heard hints of these sins in Sunday School and priesthood meetings, but I didn't know what they were, and I didn't ask. I understood that some sins involved girls, but you had to be older to be able to commit them.

Kept in a box under my bed and read by flashlight late into the night, my scrounged, out-of-date issues of *Outdoor Life*, *Sports Afield*, and *Field and Stream* became scripture.

"Now don't you spend the whole night down there reading those magazines under the covers with that flashlight," my mother said. "I know what you're doing down there. You need your sleep. You're always tired these days. You're sure you're not sick?"

She'd put her hand on my forehead before I went down to bed.

"I'm sure."

From the magazines I learned of the great skill, deep knowledge, and costly equipment necessary to catch trout and about the splendid

trout-filled water outside of Utah—in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho. Utah was essentially a desert state where there wasn't much water but where religion flourished. There were not many articles or stories about fishing for trout with night crawlers but numerous articles about fishing with flies.

I knew that fly-fishing was the most beautiful, the most expert way to fish. Men who fly-fished were devout fishermen. Hidden back in the trees watching them make their lovely casts, the trout rising readily to their flies, I closed my eyes against the perfection and the bounty of their lives.

When I tried to dry-fly fish, my fly wouldn't float, my line sank, and I couldn't cast very far with my metal rod and braided cotton line. You needed a special silk line that you dressed with a special wax so it would float, and an elegant bamboo rod to cast with. I tried fishing at night with big flies because I'd read that the big browns came out at night to feed, but my line kept sinking, dragging my fly down into the dark river water.

Clean and pure before all the valley sewers emptied into it, Utah Lake had once been full of big trout, not carp. The trout came up Provo River to spawn, the trout so thick you could walk across the river on their backs.

"It's true," Richard said. "My Uncle Pete told me. He knows all about everything. He's the best fisherman in the whole world."

I longed for those vanished trout terribly, blamed the pioneers for introducing carp into the lake, and I envied Richard his Uncle Pete.

Summer evening when, triumphant, Richard helped Uncle Pete unload from his car an iced box full of the two- and three-pound Scofield and Strawberry jeweled rainbows and native trout, and hollered for me to come and see, I crept away filled with the sins of envy, hate, and lust, occasionally now whispering "damn" or "hell" to myself, but nothing worse. The older I grew, the more sins there seemed to be and the more complicated life became, which caused worry.

My mother said, "You must pray that they will be more charitable and take you with them in the future."

"Oh, sure," I said.

Yet, kneeling by my bed, my eyes tightly closed, I asked to be able to fish from a boat and catch the big reservoir trout. I made promises of a faultless life if I could do that, but at that age my fantasies and my faith became my main solace, for I remained uninvited. Lying in bed after my prayers, I sensed my long body under the covers. I'd never thought about

my body before when I was in bed. In spite of my mother's complaint about shoes, my feet continued to grow.

It was already late July, so I fished the Moss Hole prayerfully, casting my night crawler again and again, sometimes getting snagged, but waiting for the big trout to bite a second time, knowing he would win the contest.

Sometimes with Richard, but now usually alone, I made my pilgrimages to the sporting goods stores uptown—Sears, Bee's, Guessford's, and Carlson's, but mostly to Carlson's. I stared up at the old photographs of caught trout and the mounted trout on the walls. Carlson's was a tabernacle, a temple. Boys in our neighborhood did not steal from Carlson's. I didn't steal from anybody. I was a serious Boy Scout.

"Son, do you want to see one of these automatics?" Mr. Carlson would say, taking the silver reel out from the glass case and handing it to me. He was a kind man. I knew everything I would buy with my hundred-dollar prize. Searching the racks, shelves, and glass-enclosed cases, I had the prices memorized.

On hot summer days, Richard and I sometimes stood at the open doors of Hank Smith's Pool Hall to look in at all the men drinking beer, playing pool, and smoking. The air coming out was cool. It was a very interesting place, with wonderful pungent smells and the click of billiard balls, yet I knew that the wide doorway was the entry to sin.

On the wall over the bar was a big calendar with a picture of a beautiful woman fishing without any clothes on. The woman held a fly rod in one hand and a brown bottle of Fisher beer in the other. A big trout jumped at the end of her line. All she had on was a fishing basket held with a wide brown leather carrying strap across her chest. She didn't wear any other equipment. Looking back over her shoulder, she smiled, her smile making me nervous. I didn't know what I would say if I met a woman like her on the river in Carterville.

The barkeeper, who always seemed to be wiping off the bar with his white cloth, sometimes waved at us. He was friendly. I didn't tell my mother.

One evening just at dark, I saw the great trout down deep. He was big, heavy, a long glint of gold, and, I knew, the biggest brown in all of Carterville. It thrilled me to catch that splendid glimpse of gold, my heart beating hard in my chest, my blood pumping in my veins. I knew I had a chance to catch him, to win the prize. The biggest fish so far that summer at Carlson's was seven pounds.

I hooked the big trout in the Moss Hole in late July, but he broke my leader. It was a sad thing to have a bite, feel the pulling coming up through the rod and line into your whole body. You jerked, missed, reeled in slowly, and found your night crawler half-bitten off or gone. It was even sadder to have a big fish break your leader. I saw the flash of the big golden brown again, saw how big he was, my body aching with desire. After that I started fishing with fifteen-pound-test leader. At night in my basement room, falling asleep in my narrow bed, I dreamed I caught the big trout, held him tight in my hands so that he didn't get away.

I didn't tell my mother, or anybody, about losing the big trout. She noticed that I didn't spend as much time with Richard as I used to. He was my only real friend.

"Have you boys had a falling out?"

"No."

"Well, remember that we must all have charity for each other. We all have our trials." She felt my forehead.

I said I'd remember, but I couldn't think of any trials Richard had to suffer through. He had Uncle Pete.

Seeing me on my bicycle, carrying my collapsed telescope rod, my basket hanging from the shoulder strap, men out watering their lawns in the early evening would sometimes wave me down to ask about my success. It was as if they needed to know and had a right to ask.

"You didn't catch any?"

"I had two on."

"You had two on?"

Shaking their heads, they turned away, offering me neither comfort nor instruction.

I knew from the outdoor magazine articles that I had to fish the right place, have the right equipment, and the right skill, even fish at the right time of day and phase of the moon—all in the required combination, perfection, and harmony. I understood, too, how important luck was. Their wicker baskets full of large browns, smiling, other fishermen asked me all the time if I'd had any luck.

"No," I said, "not much."

I'd never thought about the importance of luck before. I'd depended on the blessings and rewards that came from being righteous. I didn't quite know what luck was, except it wasn't something religious; if you had luck you caught fish easily and often. Luck seemed like an impor-

tant thing to have. I knew I wasn't particularly lucky. I wanted to have luck. I knew that my father didn't have much luck. My mother told me that.

"Your poor father," my mother said. "He tries so hard. He's a good man but not a lucky one."

If there wasn't a war movie playing up town, after supper my father sat looking through his old *Life* magazines at the pictures from the Second World War. He'd wanted to be a fighter pilot.

Fishing Carterville, I saw the heads and tails of big browns sticking out of other fishermen's baskets. Baskets came in several sizes. I knew that the fishermen who wore the biggest baskets had luck all the time, their baskets always dirty, bloody, and worn. My basket was small and clean.

Sometimes at night, almost feverish, not wanting to go in to bed in my deep, dark room, and not knowing why, I stayed out late. Dressed only in cutoffs and low-cut tennis shoes without socks, my T-shirt wadded in my pocket, I rode my bike under the dark summer trees to town. The sidewalks nearly empty, driven by some strange desire to know myself, I rode past the dark store windows to see my reflection flash by. It was as if I was in a movie. I found now that I often stood before mirrors studying my own face.

On my bicycle in the dark Provo streets, I saw older boys standing talking to girls. Sometimes they sat in cars with their arms around the girls. In the locker room and showers at school, some of the older boys talked disrespectfully about girls. Thinking this wrong, I didn't listen, yet I felt there were things about girls I needed badly to know.

It was already the middle of August. I walked and waded from hole to hole, my cutoffs wet to the crotch, to let my night crawler drift down through the deep water for browns. I fished only with night crawlers because the big brown in the Moss Hole had bitten on one twice. I had faith in night crawlers.

Always I longed to feel the pull of a bite, have that pleasure. I longed to set the hook, hold against the pulling, the resistance, the feeling from the rod coming up into my whole body. Hoping I'd hooked into at least a five-pounder, I leaned forward to see the trout come up out of the depths, see that first flash of gold, but was always disappointed.

However, I found some comfort in thinking about the Friday afternoon school dances that would start again that fall, the whole end of the

gym filled with standing girls waiting to be chosen, as if holding out some splendid promise of a mysterious fulfillment.

If I fished late and stayed to swim in one of the big holes, I watched if a fisherman came down to cast big flies for the night-feeding browns. These fishermen had delicate split bamboo cane poles, waxed silk lines, automatic reels, and the largest wicker fishing baskets. These they unstrapped and set down.

Treading water, I watched in the white moonlight the large hooked and fighting trout flashing gold as they leaped. And I got out of the river, and, not stopping to dress, walked barefoot over the smooth, white stones to see the trout. Kneeling before the basket, full of desire and envy, my thin, wet, tanned body golden under the moon, I asked permission to touch and hold the lovely long trout.

"They're beautiful," I said.

I fished always alone now. Richard's catching more fish than I did saddened my day, so I understood the folly of competition if you seldom won. I could deal somehow with my own failure but not with his success. Except for ten-inch planters, I still hadn't caught a limit.

Thirteen and sensing the waning hope for my personal perfection, I still wanted to be such an expert fly-fisherman that I got a strike on every cast, caught only two-pounders and up, the tails sticking out of my basket. When other fishermen passed me, I didn't want them even to have to ask about luck, their eyes full of envy and respect.

"Hell, kid, it looks like you really knocked them. What you usin', dynamite?"

As the summer passed, girls became increasingly more interesting; at least I watched them more, saw they had bodies, and I listened to their musical voices when I passed them on the sidewalk or saw them in church. Girls still weren't as important as trout yet. I didn't yearn after them.

"I don't want to go to the celestial kingdom if you can't fish." My despair growing, I said this to my mother in late August.

"Don't be silly," she said. "Whoever heard of not wanting to go to the celestial kingdom?"

"Well, I don't."

"Well, I certainly do, and so does your father, I hope, although you never know with that man and his war movies. Such nonsense."

I'd begun to see girls in my dreams, but they were always distant and shadowy. I didn't recognize any of them. When I went through the Sears

and Montgomery Ward catalogues to yearn over the fishing equipment, I saw the women's sections. The pictures of girls standing in their white petticoats and underwear surprised me. They all seemed to be smiling at me, as if they knew something I didn't know yet.

I fished the Moss Hole one last time the last week in August, the Friday before school started. The contest was over on Monday, Labor Day. The biggest fish was still seven pounds. I was alone, no other fisherman on that part of the river. It was evening. On my knees under the low limbs, I started at the top of the hole, casting and casting, the evening darkness growing, hoping for a bite, uttering silent prayers, willing the big trout to bite once more.

The third time down through the hole I felt a sudden heavy strike that almost jerked the rod out of my hand. Setting the hook hard, heart pounding, I knew it was him, knew it had to be him. Hooked, the big trout went deep, bending my rod, taking my line. Desperate to keep him out of the snags, I tried to keep a short line, turn him back to the bottom end of the hole. The big brown had incredible strength; I knew he must be at least eight or ten pounds, maybe bigger. So excited I thought I would wet my pants, I fought the big trout, held my rod up, depending on my fifteen-pound test leader, knew it would hold him if the hook didn't pull loose. I fought him a long time. It grew darker. I saw him flash gold down deep. I yelled, knew I was winning, edging him to the shallow end where I could slip him out on the grass. The trout was so big he caused waves. Long and gold, he was the biggest German brown trout I'd ever seen in my whole life. Running back, I pulled him until his back was out of the water, and then I fell on him, held him in both arms, dragged and wrestled the trout up onto the grass away from the water where it was safe, knew that the hundred dollars worth of new fishing equipment was mine, that I had won, because my trout was eight or nine pounds at least.

Kneeling over him, full of joy, almost crying, I moved my hands to look down at my big prize-winning brown. It was only then that I saw dimly in the half-light the rows of large scales, the big unblinking eyes, the pig mouth, the sickly yellowness that was not gold, all of my joy turning suddenly to unyielding sorrow.

I didn't kill the big carp, as I should have, leaving him to rot on the bank as a warning to other fishermen about the folly of hope and desire. I took the hook out of his mouth and eased him back into the Moss Hole because that seemed the way things must be, even in Carterville. I picked

up my rod and reeled in the line. I stood for a moment looking at the hole and then turned and walked in under the dark trees.

Riding my bike home, the street lights on the corners making pools of light, I understood that my long summer days of fishing Carterville were ended. The next summer, fourteen, I would have to give up cutting my few lawns and get a full-time job to save money to pay for my clothes, education, my mission for the Church, and other things my mother said lay ahead, and for girls. Going with girls would cost money for malts, movie and dance tickets, candy, and Christmas and birthday presents. Yet it had begun to seem worth the expense. At the Friday afternoon dances, being able to hold girls close as long as the music lasted seemed necessary and appropriate. I hoped that girls might be some solace to me in the life that lay ahead, for in my new wisdom I knew that the religious life my mother espoused, fraught with difficulty, disappointment, and failure as it was, would require great faith.

FICTION

Garden Tomb

Spencer Ellsworth

THE WATER WAS BLACK AROUND OUR KNEES. Bamboo surrounded and overlooked us. It was so quiet in the mist and the dark green stalks that the sound of our legs moving was an intrusion.

Water sopping out of his boot, Hyde lifted a leg and placed his foot on a piece of bamboo. His foot slipped and he plunged backward into the swamp, butt first, rolling back onto his pack. Water closed momentarily over his face and the hand holding his M-16. He came up, spluttered, looked at the bamboo for a moment as if trying to hold something back, then burst out: "Dammit! Piece of shit!"

"Keep it down!" Watts yelled from ahead of us.

Hyde stood up, and looked at me. I put my hand to my mouth to cover the laughs.

"What?" Hyde asked.

"You sound like a retard when you swear."

"Shut up," Hyde muttered, and held his M-16 by the tip of the handle, trying to drain the water out. He moved forward, stepped over the clump of bamboo he had managed to bend a little. "Stupid bamboo." I tried not to laugh, but I couldn't stop.

We struggled through another thicket and our boots sank into soft, squelching mud. I followed close behind Hyde. After a moment, Watts's deep voice called back, "Sarge says take a break in place."

"Are we behind everyone again?" Hyde asked. "How did we get behind everyone?"

SPENCER ELLSWORTH, twenty-four years old, is a creative writing student at Utah Valley State College. He has never been to Vietnam, but he and his wife, Chrissy, eat a lot of Vietnamese food. He thanks Walter Jones for his help with this story.

"You smoke too much," I said.

"Shut up," Hyde replied half-heartedly and slapped my stomach. He slid down against the bamboo. I sank down next to him. Hyde kicked his foot into the mud. "I cannot wait to get out of here," he said. "I will get off that plane and kiss the sweet American blacktop, and I will do a little dance. And eat a big hamburger. A big old cheeseburger with extra pickles and mayonnaise. What's your favorite hamburger place, Lister?"

"They have good hamburgers at the Creamery," I said. "Good ice cream, too. When someone burns BYU, they should save the Creamery."

Hyde looked over at me. "What does your dad teach again?" he asked.

"Religion," I said. "Didn't we already have this conversation?"

"Is this the one where you tell me your dad is a paid preacher for the Church, and I tell you that I still want to go to BYU, and then you go off into that whole thing about the hypocrites at BYU, and then . . ."

"And then we kiss and make up," I finished. "And then you get upset with me, because I touch you in inappropriate ways."

"Lister," he said, holding his hands out, "a guy's gotta have some standards."

I laughed and took a drink of water. "Why can't all Mormons be funny like you, Hyde? You're the first one I ever met who would laugh at that."

"Well, most Mormons can't swear like me, for one thing."

"That's right. Nobody I ever met can swear like that. Sounds like my grandma swearing."

"You never swear," Hyde pointed out.

I laughed.

"What's so funny?" he asked.

"I don't swear around you. Because I respect your standards, even if I don't follow them."

Hyde looked down at the ground. "I didn't mean to . . ."

"No, man, it's cool," I said. "Everyone slips now and then." He looked back up at me. "You can add it to your list of sins, next to the angry thoughts about the VC."

"Ha ha." He looked away, and his eyes began to glaze over, as if he saw something I couldn't. "When we get back to the States—and out of this place," Hyde said, "you will come visit me in Eugene and we will go to church." I nearly choked on my water. "You and I, we will go and sit down

in the front pew, and a nice Mormon girl will come sit beside you and ask, 'Are you new here?' And you will say, 'I'm John Hyde's war buddy.' Then she will ask you to tell your heroic stories. And you will say, one time I saved Hyde's life in a patch of bamboo, a patch of bamboo just like this one—"

"Where did this come from?" I asked, cutting him off. "When did you become my reactivation committee? At least in Vietnam, I should be able to escape this kind of talk."

"Oh, come on, at least let me finish the story," Hyde said. "It was just me . . . you know, imagining something."

I finished off my water. "This is turning into a very long day."

"Hey," Hyde said, "I'm just making small talk." I stood up, looked down at him, and raised an eyebrow. "You know. I get my celestial points in wherever I can," he said.

"You don't even have enough yet to make up for your potty mouth," I said, lifting him up.

"Seriously, Lister," he said as he came up to my eye level, "why aren't you active?"

"This is a great time, Hyde."

"I want to know. Now's as good a time as any."

"I told you. They're all hypocrites."

"You told me they were all hypocrites at BYU. You never said anything about the entire church."

I paused for a moment, looked in the eyes of this kid. He was smiling big. He had big blue eyes and a big Mormon smile. If he made it through Vietnam, he was going to go on a mission, baptize dozens, marry the prettiest girl at BYU, and spend the rest of his days trying to get his kids to stay quiet in sacrament meeting. We were the same age. He looked five years younger. We were from totally different families: his mother poor as dirt, his father a deadbeat drunk; my parents rich, religious, and living on the hill, educated to their eyebrows. And he was Mormon, despite all that, and I was not, by my own choice.

"Well?" he asked.

Shots burst through the mist, shattering the bamboo next to us with a loud *crack*. I hit the mud, Hyde dropping next to me. "Charlie."

"They probably can't see us," I said. Bullets cut the air and shattered bamboo, stalks snapping and splintering loudly. Water burst from the bamboo next to me and soaked my head. "Just keep your head down."

Someone moaned from nearby. "They hit someone," Hyde said. He poked his head up.

"Hyde," I said, pushing him down again, "shut up!"

"Lister, man, they're shooting at the others. If I could get a good view over the bamboo, I could pick them off."

The fire had moved away from us. Hyde began slowly moving up. "I'll kneel on your back. Gimme your gun and I'll get 'em."

"What the—No, Hyde! Keep your head down!"

"Hurry up, Lister!" Hyde said, and grabbed my M-16. Someone else screamed. The firing redoubled, this time to the side of us. I looked around, as if I could somehow see who was getting hit and why.

"Come on, man," Hyde said urgently. "They won't expect it."

"You going for the Medal of Honor or something?"

"Do it, Lister," he said. "Or I'll just stand on you without your consent."

"This is stupid," I said.

"Okay, let's get shot instead, once the gooks clear the bamboo. Don't be scared. I know what I'm doing."

"I . . ." I tried to think of a reason not to. I couldn't. I slung my backpack to the ground and got on my hands and knees. Hyde clambered onto my back, where he crouched, feet digging into my spine. My hands were driven into the mud, cold and sucking.

"Hurry up, fatty," I muttered. I could feel Hyde shift, the increased pain as he stood, and then the loud bursts as he fired off a few dozen rounds. Shots thundered in my ears. A bamboo stalk snapped suddenly and blinded me with water. Hyde's body moved, pushing me down against the ground. "I can't—Hyde!" Return fire burst bamboo stalks around us, one after another shattering and spraying water. "Hyde! I'm moving!"

I rolled out from under Hyde, pulling my hands out of the mud. I expected him to roll with me, to jump down. He fell like a wet sack of sand.

"Hyde?" I crawled through the mud. He was twitching. His back was toward me, and his head was hidden by a piece of bamboo. I turned him over. Where his face had been was a thick mass of red, scattered with white.

The firing died down.

I stared at the red face forever. His big Mormon grin was gone, teeth

knocked out with his nose. His dreaming blue eyes were blank and bloody above the blood.

I stared until I heard footsteps coming toward me, someone thrashing their way through the bamboo. I was clutching Hyde's hand, I realized, around the M-16, and I pulled the gun away from him.

I turned, with the M-16 in my hand, and saw a gook in black pajamas standing there. I didn't realize I had shot the gook until he fell backwards, blood spurting from his chest into the air like a splash of water.

"AaaaaAAAAH!" I leapt up and fired into the bamboo, fired all around me, fired in the direction the gook had come. I heard screams. I fired until my arm was shaking and my gun was clicking, until the clip had run out. I heard more wails, heard gooks shouting and moaning. Lucky shots. I had hit them. I dropped the gun. I muttered, "Die! Die, you—" I could not help looking at Hyde's corpse. "—bastards."

* * *

The base smelled like old rubber and wet GI boots. I had been there for about three days when I heard Carrón, talking to some other poor GI who was trying to get away. "So my dad says to me—do you know what he says, man? He says, Nephi, you've got to . . ." It faded into the distance.

I walked after him. There was a GI there with a cigarette, blowing smoke into Carrón's face as the beaner talked. As soon as Carrón saw me, his face lit up. He had a smile like a fluorescent light, too bright and uncomfortable.

"Hey! Hey, man! I know you! You were with that other guy, that guy from Oregon!"

"Hyde?" I asked.

"Yeah, man, Hyde! We talked in Saigon. We talked about church and stuff! He was a good guy, man. He still around?"

"No," I said. "He bought it last week."

"Oh," Carrón's fluorescent smile faded for a second. "Sorry about that, man. What's your name again?"

"Lister."

"Lister, man! I hear about you! Somebody told me, they said there's a guy named Lister here and his whole platoon got caught coming through the bamboo! All of them dead, except him! And then he pops up and shoots all the gooks that did it! Guy's gonna get Medal of Honor or something! Man, is that you?"

"That was me."

"Oh, man, Lister, I thought it might be you, and I thought, maybe, maybe, that quiet guy who doesn't like Mormons, maybe he did it. I wasn't sure, you know, though."

I was beginning to wonder why I had wanted to talk to this beaner. The other GI was walking away quickly.

"I guess it's different for everyone, you know? Now, with me, man, I was never really brave. My dad says, Nephi, you're going to war and I don't want you to go. But you be a man and make your own decision. And you know what I did?"

I had heard this story the first time I met the guy. "You hid in the closet until the Gestapo came?"

"Man, did I already tell you this?"

"Possibly."

"Anyway, the next day I tell my dad that I gotta go. Some things you know you have to do. I never killed no squad of gooks, man, but coming here was the bravest thing I ever did." He was looking at me now as if he realized that he was rambling. "So, when you ship out again?"

"Don't know," I said. "My tour's almost up. I'm hoping they might keep me here until then." I saw Hyde's face, smiling, talking about me and him at church. "W—what are you doing tomorrow?" I asked.

"Sunday, man? The day of rest? I'm actually getting together with some other Mormon boys on base. Maybe only three of us, but we are gonna have our own little church service."

I looked down at my dog tags, began fumbling with the black rubber edge as if trying to pop it off. "Can I—can I come?"

Carrón's eyes went wide, and he smiled even bigger. "Sure, man!"

"Good. What time?"

"Early, man! I'll be by early! Oh, man, Lister, you're gonna be at church, man! That's great!"

"Yeah."

"Oh, man, it's gonna be good, man! Lister at church! So far nobody wanted to come, man! I told everybody in my unit. They all think it's some kind of weird cult, you know?"

"I've been thinking about it a lot."

"Maybe we get some nurses there too, you know? Good little Mormon girls in white! Right on, man! Right on!"

"Yeah."

* * *

I had a new uniform. It still felt strange, the greens and brown too bright, the fabric clean and soft-smelling. The boots actually hurt my feet, not in the cramped, damp, and pinched-from-shrinking-way, but from a few stubborn stitches rubbing up against my heels that I hadn't worn down yet. I looked at myself in the mirror. My face looked young. I always thought it would look older, dirtier, every time I looked in the mirror.

I washed my hands, dried them off. There was black dirt etched into the cracks on my hands that nothing could scrub out. In one of his fantasies, Hyde had gone on and on about how he could stop the war and be king of all Southeast Asia if he could come up with a soap that could unblacken the hands of GI and gook alike. He was going to have a peace mission flown in to Hanoi, where the American ambassadors would wash the gooks' hands with the soap, and they would fall at each others' feet crying. I looked at my hands, still black. Hyde had a lot of fantasies.

A knock sounded at the door. "Lister, man!"

I opened it. Carrón was there, and another GI who looked a lot like Hyde, except that he was taller, his eyes a little more alert. "This is Robinson. He's from L.A. Robinson, this is Lister."

"Hi." I shut my door behind me. "Are we ready?" I asked. Robinson and Carrón started walking.

"Where you from, Lister?" Robinson asked.

"Provo."

"Happy Valley itself, huh? My sister goes to BYU. How do you like it?"

"It's all right," I said. Carrón burst out laughing. "What?" I asked.

"Lister, man, did you say something good about Provo? Check this out, Robinson. When I first met this guy I say, 'Good place, man, I liked BYU a lot,' and he says, 'Man, everybody at BYU's a hypocrite. They think they're more righteous than the rest of the world. They sit there and read and memorize these obscure Church doctrines and ignore what's really going on. Then they treat the different people like crap because we smoke a little grass.'"

"I . . . said that?" I asked. He had remembered my standard speech almost verbatim.

"Yeah, man." There was a long, awkward silence. Carrón finally

said, "But, you know, everyone has different opinions, man. I think BYU, it's all right . . . you know, everybody's different."

We reached another door, and a GI opened it. He had a kind face, a smooth and smiling Mormon face, except for a large bloody sore just under his hairline. "Hey," he said. "I'm Fairchild, from Salt Lake."

"Hey," I said, and didn't add anything. We sat down. Fairchild had taped white paper over posters on the walls above the bunks, and had a set of military scriptures just like Hyde's sitting on the bed. He sat on one bed with Carrón while Robinson and I sat on the other.

"I would like to call this meeting to order," Fairchild said. "Any ward business?"

"The football game with the Victor Charlie First Ward has been called, on account of weather," Robinson said.

They all laughed. We sang, "I Stand All Amazed." I couldn't remember more than the first line.

Robinson gave the opening prayer. Fairchild stood up and took two tin cups from under his bed, one filled with crackers and one filled with water. He began praying.

Hyde had once told me how he used to save the sacrament cups and pretend they were spaceships. My mother always let me take a few toys to church. Hyde was jealous. He was never allowed to take anything. His mother, he said, got mad if he talked at all during sacrament meeting, even if he had to pee.

I didn't take the crackers or the water. When it was over, Fairchild stood up. "I guess since this is my bunk, then I'm conducting."

"Yay, Bishop Fairchild," Robinson said.

"Out of order. Go into the lobby," Fairchild pointed, and laughed. His face grew serious again. "Um, well, my testimony . . . I guess I had an interesting experience with my testimony the other day. There were two guys in my platoon that were Baptist. Cool guys. Sometimes we would do Bible readings together. And anyway, one of them, he was a really strong Baptist, read his Bible every night, prayed that he and all of us would get home safely. The other guy was not so strong. He—the other guy—told me that back home he would go to church because it made his dad happy, but he didn't really believe it."

Fairchild took a deep breath. "Well, the other day we got ambushed and the gooks gunned down about half of our guys—including the good Baptist. And the bad Baptist comes to me afterwards, after we got dust-off,

and he says, 'What's it all about?' and I said, 'What?' and he said, 'Why am I still here?' I guess he really wanted to know why I believed. So I told him. I told him God had guided my life and made a difference, and I had prayed and felt comforted . . . "

Fairchild paused. He was struggling with his words. This story bugged me. I knew there was going to be a moral. And crying. There was always crying and a moral. They were all paying attention. Fairchild took another deep breath and launched into his story. "—and I didn't do a bit of good. He told me he was convinced now that there was no God. God had not saved the good Baptist, with a girl at home, a family that loved him, and a lot going for him. The bad one told me there was no way God could look down at His children and say that someone so faithful to Him needed to die in a, um, 'crap-hole' country away from everything the guy loved."

Fairchild paused. "You know what? I didn't know what to say to him. We all believe and pray and read and everything—but sometimes, it's really hard. I don't know how often I believe it sometimes." He paused. "I know God loves me. I know He will do what is best for me. Even though it is really hard to do His will and really hard to understand His will, I know He is there." He paused. "I wish I understood more, but I know He is there. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen."

The other two said Amen. Fairchild's eyes haunted me. The other two bore their testimonies; simple and brief, though Carrón went on for a while about his parents coming over from Mexico and how the missionaries were nice to him. After another prayer, I got up. "Thanks," I said. Fairchild was still looking down at the ground.

As I walked out, I heard one of them get up and come after me. I didn't want to look back. I walked out of the bunk and into the steamy Sunday morning. There were several GIs smoking against a wall.

"Can I bum a smoke?" I asked.

"Only the first time." One of them, with olive skin and sagging eyes, handed me a cigarette and lit a match. I took a deep drag. I turned around and Carrón stood behind me. "Lister, man, you left too fast! We weren't done!"

"I'm sorry," I said. "I lied. I didn't really want to come today."

Carrón looked confused. "It's all right, man. I don't think you lied."

I laughed, and sent a stream of smoke out with it. "I lied, man. I lied

worse than any VC-loving, two-faced gook. I almost made myself believe it."

"Believe what?"

"That I could be Mormon, beaner. Hyde—everyone always tells me to go get myself redeemed someday. Sometimes I start to believe them. But it never lasts. Sorry you got your hopes up."

"I don't get it, man."

I started to turn around. Then I turned back. "Look, Carrón, some of us, no matter how we were born or grew up, aren't Mormon. It's the way the world works. There are gooks and there are Americans and we're at war because we're too damn different to get along. And there's me, and there's you." I took a drag off the cigarette. "You—Hyde—that guy in there—you can still believe, even after all this shit around you. Me, I never could believe in the first place."

Carrón looked down at the ground. His mouth for once was not smiling, nor even hovering on the brink of a smile. "You understand?" I asked.

"Lister, man," Carrón said, "maybe I tell you one thing, then I let you go."

"I don't want to talk about this anymore."

"I'll tell you my favorite scripture. I read it over and over, my whole life. Even carried it around—even taped it to my rifle, man, while I was humping. Really tiny note I made." He drew a steamy breath. "It says that when we come to God, he shows us how weak we are. We come to him all proud, saying, Here I am, man! I am a good guy and I want to follow you! And then he tells us, no, man, no, because you are weak with this—maybe you have trouble with girls, maybe you have trouble with smokes, maybe you're just a guy with too much pride. And you realize, hey, man, I am in trouble. I do have lots of problems. I ain't much at all, man!" He said it with almost a laugh, though he didn't smile. "And then He—He says that if you stick with Him, if you let Him be your guide—he promises you something."

"What?"

"He promises to take your weaknesses, man, and make strengths." He looked up, his face serious, his eyes shining. "And it happens, man, it does."

Carrón stood there looking at me in the steamy morning. I looked

away from his eyes, and I said, "So if we never come to Him, we never see weakness, right?"

"Man, then we're not living. And nothing—not the war, not our families—nothing makes sense then."

He stood there staring at me and I met his eyes. They softened a bit. "Coming back ain't so bad, man. Only the first time."

"Maybe later."

He stood there for a long time before he finally left. I lifted the cigarette to my mouth to take a long drag. It had gone out. I still held it in my teeth, sucking in and out like the smoke was my only hope.

The Peach

Patricia Gunter Karamesines

Blake's angel, for all his winks and nods,
Wouldn't have it, though it hangs for having:
Drop of down and blush quavering on the rim
Of ripeness, playing at a fall.

Pendant at the tip of a branch astray
From the greater fruited spray
Where sister peaches cluster meekly
Beneath green custom, this one sweet dangle
Trespasses air my side the fence
Where sunlight fires its skin and any breeze
May dance it.

My neighbor who set the tree as start
Is a man of strict authority, armed, invested,
An officer of our active legion laws.
He knows where all the lines are drawn,
Where fences stand, where right leaves wrong,
And keeping his faith good is wise.
Although this juicy prodigal does seem
To trail a gray gulf, he may better know,
And so the peach appears to plump and glow
With consequence, a nectareous world
Ripening on a branch of orchard heaven
Under scrutiny from many angels' eyes.

Taking such creature to tongue suggests
That becoming as a god by fell choice:
Will birthing, her first cry, Desire;
Light, on which the eye opens suddenly,
That infant slit of lid permitting
The flash from good and evil springing apart
To change the eye forever; then, vision:
Probability, lively, everywhere at once,
Refiguring the garden, reforming
Every place the eye alights each time;
Gleams of possibility sparking like drops
Of dew, infinite, engorged with sudden sun
As far as the eye dares see—to the stars—
And, clinging to skin, so wet and cool,
Instant thoughts of nakedness
Blush the body and Will seeks clothing,
Her prior choicelessness seeming comfort now,
If unfitting, and inaccessible as the opened womb.

Such first physics infusing All and Now,
Poised to go at breath, I too partake. So:

Day by day shall the peach hang unmolested.
With its toys of luster it shall bob and sway
Till summer drops its sun, till it is swept
From splendor by timeliness or wind,
Or till he whose lawful peach it is
Decides its fate by his own hand.

PATRICIA GUNTER KARAMESINES lives with her husband, Mark, and three children in Payson, Utah. She has published poetry and essays in a number of periodicals, including *Dialogue*, *Irreantum*, *Sunstone*, and *Mothering Magazine*. She is also the author of a folk-mystery novel, *The Pictograph Murders* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004).

The Good Shepherd

Craig Watts

If I were the neighborhood bishop
There'd be lots of things I couldn't really help with
No rolling up sleeves to fix Brother Nielsen's car
No driving some new tractor to plow snow
From the widows' driveways
No spring garden to plow

No, if I were bishop
I'd be huddled indoors with the weak, the old, the diseased
Where I belong
Trying to get through the days
Wrapped in quilts
In shuttered rooms
Hardly hoping to see the sun
Anymore

If I were bishop
It would all be about breaking down inside
Entropy of the collective heart
Watching the walls come down on us
Like we knew they would
Almost considering the end deliverance

If I were bishop
The ward would be an ox in the mire
Soft pleading eyes that have given up the struggle
The desperation behind us but still with us
The legs tired out, useless

This bishop would let everyone know
It's not all airy and light
It's not all muscle and hard work
Life beats us up slowly
With the inevitability of gravity

If I were the bishop
of the neighborhood

Salad for Two

Henry L. Miles

I sense someone beside me
and see Emily's eyes on my hands
and the knife in the sink.
She asks, *What are you slicing?*

*A leek, an organic leek
but it's spelled le-e-k.*
She asks again. I say, *leek.*
She says, *the other word. Organic?*
*It means the farmer did not spray the leek
to kill the leek bugs.*

Emily learns kale
as scissored strips fall into the bowl
and she points to specks of mud at the end of each stem.

She watches me wrestle off a rubber band.
I know what that is, she says. It's broccoli.

I skin a stem, cut me a slice
praise the flavor
hold a piece to Emily on my knife.
She eats broccoli raw.

A slice of beet glances off the bowl
and onto the floor.
Emily reaches the piece to my hand.
Grandpa, your finger looks like it's bleeding.

Emily learns flax seeds and pumpkin seeds
counting spoonfuls into the coffee grinder
learns flax seed oil watching the Barleans' bottle
drain yellow into a salad bowl.

I sprinkle cayenne pepper.
She contorts her face.
Grandpa, can I help you with the lemons?
She has seen us lever our squeeze machine.

I cut two lemons, place one in the squeezer
and hold tight to its metal legs.

Emily grasps the long handle with two hands
bends her knees
and pulls her feet off the floor.

Juice drizzles into a measuring cup
and Emily's eyes, teeth, and the gap between them smile.

We squeeze out the other halves
pour lemon juice on cut vegetables, cottage cheese
flax oil, salt, pepper, seeds, cilantro and stir.

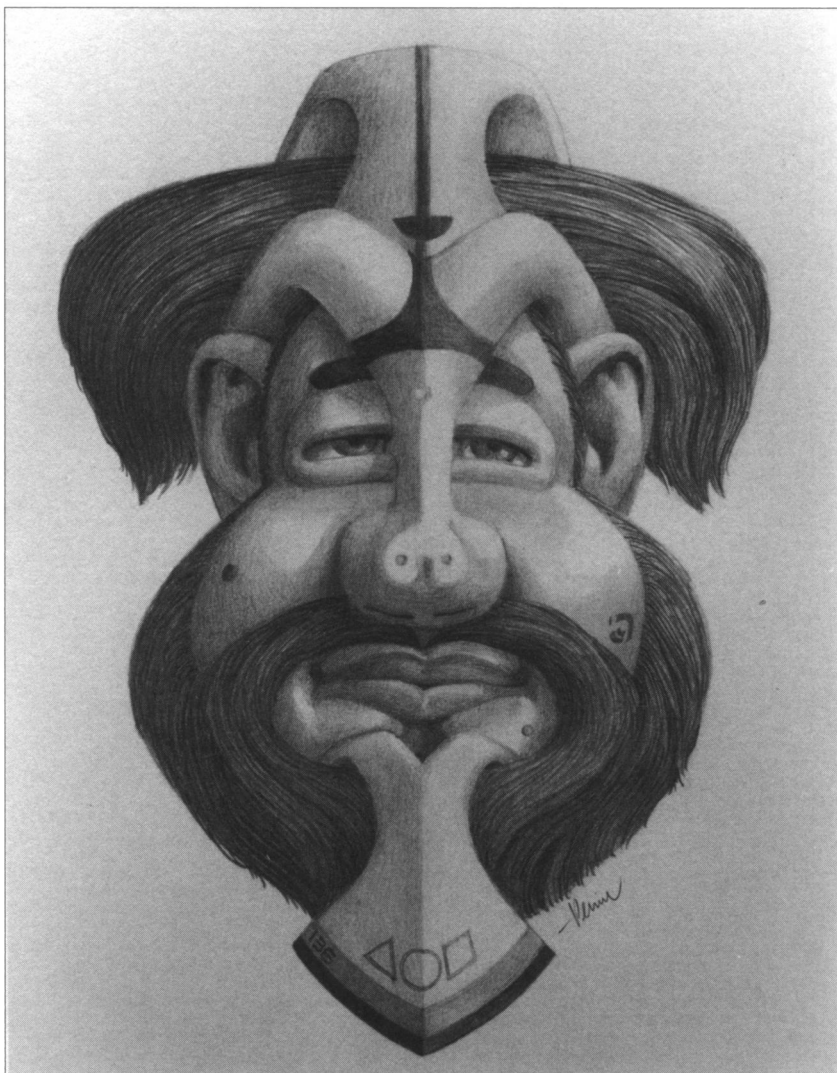
I dip a fork into the mixture,
offer the tines to Emily.
She licks them clean, says, *It's okay, not too hot.*

I return from the cupboard with two plates
place them on the island
and go for two knives and two forks
but Emily is already gone.

She probably went upstairs to see her parents
or enter the cross-country contest
or fill out her college application
or apply for a passport for her mission to England

or be fitted for her wedding dress
or attend her child's mission farewell.
Emily will return, and I'll be gone.

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Sizner of Quag
graphite; 11" x 9"; 1995; collection of the Perine Newman Trust

REVIEWS

The First Piece in the Puzzle

Emmanuel Abu Kissi, *Walking in the Sand: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Ghana* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2004), 384 pp.

Reviewed by Mark T. Decker, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie

When teaching argumentative writing, a wise instructor will often introduce her students to what is called the principle of charity, or the realization that problematic arguments were composed by intelligent people who faced rhetorical constraints that could not easily be ignored. Western Mormon intellectuals would be wise to keep the principle of charity in mind when approaching Emmanuel Abu Kissi's *Walking in the Sand: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Ghana*. This is not a scholarly book catering to people committed to critical inquiry. Instead, it is the work of a General Authority (Third Quorum of Seventy Area Authority) who sees the establishment and expansion of the LDS Church in his country as a miracle.

It would be easy to dismiss this book as oversimplified, feel-good propaganda. Yet Elder Kissi, who was instrumental in the growth he describes, is relating the authentic experiences of many observant Ghanaian Mormons. Thus, we can think of this book, with all its flaws, as a more or less accurate representation of an important element of the Mormon experience in Ghana. *Walking in the Sand* is best seen as the first piece of a puzzle that, as it is slowly assembled by other writers with other perspectives, will provide an ever fuller picture of the Mormon experience in West Africa.

Before we set aside the tools of crucial inquiry, however, we should note that Elder Kissi's project was guided by Matthew K. Heiss, an employee of the Archives of the Family and Church History Department. He edited the manuscript and created the footnotes. Heiss also brings his own agenda to the text, and this agenda problematizes Kissi's narrative. For example, Heiss notes that he did not want "to turn Elder Kissi's manuscript into the polished text of a Western scholar" (xviii–xix). This editorial decision makes the text both more and less accessible to lay LDS readers, probably the primary audience for Kissi's narrative.

While the prose is clear and accessible and while it preserves Kissi's gentle voice, the book's structure is problematic. Much of what comprises the text is a patchwork of items retrieved from the Church Archives and inserted into the nar-

rative verbatim. There are diary entries, transcriptions of talks, minutes of priesthood training meetings, reports to Salt Lake from mission presidents, newspaper articles, and transcriptions of interrogations by government officials. Some of these run for several pages.

Additionally, in attempting to provide a comprehensive recollection of all those who helped establish the Church in Ghana, some chapters give the reader a rapid-fire barrage of names which, though occasionally accompanied by pictures, are generally mentioned only once and in passing. This combination of archival pastiche and leadership catalog can, at times, make for cumbersome reading. On the other hand, it gives the book a familiar feel, a structural kinship with the thousands of locally produced histories of branches, wards, and stakes now sitting on shelves in living rooms and meetinghouse libraries. This generic familiarity may in turn, for lay readers, reinforce the truism about the international sameness of the institutional Church.

Indeed, providing evidence for the universality of the Mormon experience is very important to Heiss. In his preface, the editor expresses his desire that readers will “identify personally with the struggle, sacrifice, faith, and eventual triumph that is so much a part of Latter-day Saint life and history” (xix). And *Walking in the Sand*’s intended audience will enjoy the tale of rapid advancement in the face of adversity the narrative presents.

After all, the growth of the LDS Church in Ghana, especially from the perspective of a believer, is impressive. The first missionaries (arrived 1978) focused most of their efforts on making sure that the Church did not grow too quickly, as people who belonged to preexisting copycat congregations clamored for baptism. A period of government repression known to Ghanaian Saints as “The Freeze” occurred from early 1989 to late 1990. During this time, public meetings were outlawed, expatriate missionaries were sent home, and some Church assets were seized. Soon after this relatively mild (considered in the historical context of state-sponsored oppression of Mormonism and other religions) period of persecution ended, growth accelerated, stakes were created, and the Accra Temple was dedicated in January 2004. The Church, in other words, was fully established, or walking in the sand, as they say in Ghana, in a twenty-six-year period despite significant government interference. Indeed, it could be argued that it was in some ways easier to establish the Church in Ghana than in, say, America’s upper Midwest.

Let us, then, grant Kissi’s and Heiss’s point that there was a typically Mormon experience in Ghana that many Ghanaian Saints genuinely experienced, one that other Mormons would see as uplifting. But because the narrative insists on recounting the putatively typical Mormon nature of the Church’s establishment in Ghana, readers do not get a very full picture of the context in which that establishment took place. This context will need to be filled in by other scholars

and other projects, but *Walking in the Sand*'s omissions could provide interesting starting points for future investigation.

For example, Kissi's brief discussion of the fifteen years between the establishment of congregations that styled themselves as Mormon and the arrival of missionaries sent by Salt Lake does not clearly describe what unofficial Mormon services and congregations were like. Furthermore, Kissi provides only basic biographical information about the colorful founders of these copycat congregations. Of particular interest to many LDS scholars may be Sister Rebecca Mould, who was "known throughout the area as a 'Mormon Prophetess'" (30 note 12). It would be fascinating to learn what a West African Mormon prophetess taught, felt, and experienced.

More importantly, there is little in this book to give readers any grounding in Ghana's turbulent political history, something that is necessary to fully understand the Freeze and other difficulties with the Ghanaian government. Heiss compounds this lack of political context with the annoying habit of relying on obscure internet sources buried in telegraphic footnotes to provide political background. For example, the cursory information on Jerry John Rawlings, president of Ghana during most of the time period covered by this book, comes primarily from <rulers.org>.

Additionally, Kissi apparently had no access to Ghanaian government documents and thus cannot provide a fully developed discussion of the motives of the Ghanaian government during the Freeze. According to Kissi, Rawlings undermined the Church by means of "apparently innocuous" articles in Ghanaian papers that represented "practically the official point of view" (170). Despite dismissing these articles as little more than government propaganda, Kissi reproduces them in full, and they actually do deal with topics that the government would understandably be concerned with. For example, an editorial published in the *Weekly Spectator* immediately after the imposition of the Freeze argues that the "BIBLE' OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS STATES THAT BLACKS ARE CURSED AND WILL NOT GO TO HEAVEN? (185; capitalization in original). An editorial in the *People's Daily Graphic* darkly implies that the "CIA have in the past hidden behind some of these religious bodies to carry out acts of subversion against Third World countries" (172).

Without defending the Freeze, one could see why the leaders of an African nation would be skeptical of a church that, until very recently, had denied a leadership role to men of African descent. Furthermore, it would be easy to see why a left-leaning, Third World government would be skeptical of an apparently wealthy American church that had established itself so rapidly. It could also reasonably be concerned about possible connections to American intelligence efforts. But until we have access to government documents, we will never really know how much these concerns influenced the Freeze.

But we should not expect too much from Kissi, who is not a professional historian and who is understandably primarily concerned with charting the growth of the officially recognized Church in Ghana. Instead, those of us who are genuinely interested in the international growth of the LDS Church should respectfully listen to his story, and then, perhaps, bring our own efforts to completing this fascinating puzzle.

“He was ‘Game’”

Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), xxii + 715 pp.

Reviewed by William D. Russell, Professor of American History and Government, Graceland University, Lamoni, Iowa

Dan Vogel has written an extensive volume on the controversial Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, focusing on his creation of the Book of Mormon as “the making of a prophet.”¹ Vogel has done impressive research, not only in the documents directly relating to Joseph Smith and his family, but also in the Old and New Testaments, the history of Christian thought, and American history in the Jacksonian era.

The characters in the Book of Mormon are one dimensional—either good guys or bad guys. (And “guys” they were.) Similarly, the pre-Fawn Brodie biographies of Joseph Smith were also one-dimensional. The Prophet was either a saint if the author was Mormon or a rogue if he was not. But Vogel sees Smith as both a sincere religious leader and a deceiver (xi, viii, xiv-xv; see also xii). He is both sympathetic to Smith and critical of him. While no historian can be totally objective, Vogel’s biases are not as visible as those of Brodie, on the one hand, or, on the other, orthodox biographies by Richard Bushman and Donna Hill.²

Bushman consciously avoided what he called the “environmental” approach, in which a biographer sees his or her subject as merely a reflection of the forces that were at work in the subject’s family and society. Vogel is a self-con-

1. Some of my comments are based on my panel presentation at the Sunstone Symposium, August 14, 2004, Salt Lake City.

2. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 2d ed. rev. (1945; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971); Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1977).

fessed rationalist and naturalist, who rejects supernatural explanations (570 note 39). I believe that is how the historian should proceed. Historians, when acting as historians, should avoid supernatural explanations, such as those we hear in church meetings. When they do, they are stepping outside their role as historians to make theological affirmations. Historians *as historians* have no way of knowing whether God spoke to Joseph Smith in the grove or that Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James, or John defied natural law and appeared to Smith in the 1820s. Nor can a historian as historian demonstrate that an unlettered farm boy was able to gaze at a peep stone and translate Reformed Egyptian—a language which itself only exists as an act of faith.

You can't say "Joseph went to the Lord and God told him, 'Tell Emma to quit murmuring.'" All we can say is Joseph said God wants Emma to quit murmuring. I think if a historian steps outside the naturalistic approach, she needs to acknowledge it. Perhaps orthodox Mormon historians should preface certain remarks with statements like, "I'm a believing Mormon, and I think this revelation was from God and not Joseph using revelation to get his way with Emma."

The rational, naturalistic way is not the only road to truth. Human reason, too, is limited. But faith assertions are more unreliable than reason and empirical evidence. If you are a person of faith, a naturalistic biography of your spiritual model—Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, or whoever—is an important source for understanding your faith. Read the best naturalistic historical explanation you can find (like Vogel if you're Mormon) and then engage in personal dialogue between the naturalistic explanation and your faith story.

Historical "truth" is imperfect, as any historiographical study will suggest. But where the historical evidence seems particularly strong, we should revise our faith understanding at points where it is in conflict, or at least put a question mark by that item of our faith. Some recent activities of FARMS are a good example, as they have adjusted their explanation of the scope of population in the Americas descended from Lehi as a result of DNA evidence. They weren't willing to completely defy empirical evidence. John Charles Duffy's recent article in *Sunstone* is a masterpiece of research and interpretation regarding this matter.³

The traditional faith story of Mormonism is fraught with conflicts with historical evidence. Indeed, Mormonism is an anti-historical faith. The notion that there is a pure gospel—a plan of salvation or whatever—that existed with Adam, was restored by Jesus, and restored again by Joseph Smith, denies that the gospel is affected by history. I recall a plenary session on the LDS Church's missionary work in Africa held at the Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City a few years ago.

3. John-Charles Duffy, "Defending the Kingdom, Rethinking the Faith: How Apologetics Is Reshaping Mormon Orthodoxy," *Sunstone*, Issue 132 (May 2004): 22–39, 42–55.

The advance advertising promised that this session would look at how the culture in Africa affects the gospel message proclaimed by the Church there. I went to the session with eager anticipation, but alas, not one word was uttered to suggest that African culture in any way helped shape the gospel message these missionaries had proclaimed there.

Two-thirds of Vogel's book is about the Book of Mormon. At first I thought that was too much. Richard Bushman's *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* covers the same years in Smith's life but only one of the six chapters is about the Book of Mormon. However, after finishing Vogel's book, I have concluded that he has made a valuable contribution by undertaking an extensive treatment of ways in which the contents of the Book of Mormon relate to Smith's life. I think the open-minded reader can hardly avoid coming away with the clear conclusion that the Book of Mormon is indeed Joseph's book and not an ancient document.

We create terrible misunderstandings of history when we treat the Book of Mormon as historical. For example, Fawn Brodie estimated that there were at least eight Indian fortification mounds within twelve miles of the Smith farm in Manchester (258). Vogel notes that the Book of Mormon gives us scant details about the temples and palaces, but "the Nephite fortifications are portrayed in great detail and in accord with what was generally understood about these sites." Clearly the historian will conclude that Smith, writing in 1829, was describing what he had seen. Vogel points out that B. H. Roberts, assuming the Book of Mormon was historical, said that whoever built the Ohio fortifications certainly "knew something of Moroni's system of fortification-building" (257). Roberts had it backwards.

Signature Books might want to consider publishing the Book of Mormon portion of this book as a separate volume. And I'd like to see Vogel write Volume 2, covering Smith's last twelve or thirteen years.

One problem with a religious system in which a prophet as prophet has revelations or gives general conference addresses which presumably speak for God is that difficult issues are thereby settled, often with an answer that is both simple and wrong. Poor Oliver Cowdery had a difference of opinion with Joseph Smith over whether John the Apostle tarried on earth after the apostolic age. So Joseph has a revelation on the matter. Are we surprised that, according to Joseph's revelation, Joseph was right? But possibly they were both wrong because the New Testament does not identify "the beloved apostle" as John. That's a later tradition.

Vogel has not written an anti-Mormon book. Contrary to the reviews published in FARMS, Vogel's book is moderate and balanced. He sometimes makes judgments that are consistent with the traditional Mormon faith story when he could have concluded otherwise, such as when he writes: "More likely, Anthon's initial assessment of the characters was more positive than he would later admit.

Otherwise, it is doubtful that Harris would have requested a written statement" (115). Vogel doesn't accept critical judgments of Joseph Smith when there is cause for skepticism. He does not credit the 1830 allegation by a "Methodist gentleman" who told Isaac Hale that Joseph Smith was engaged in extra-marital activities (528). He doesn't accept the allegation that Smith said "the book of plates could not be opened under penalty of death by any other person but [Smith's] first-born son and that the young lad would translate the plates at the age of three" (111). If Joseph did say it and the child had lived, you can imagine the bewildered look on the child's face when his father said, "Okay, son, here's the seer stone. Now translate."

On the other hand, Vogel doesn't avoid embarrassing episodes when the evidence is clear—the arrests, accusations of adultery, and so forth. It is always tempting for the orthodox historian to leave these things out. Bushman sometimes left out material that I'm sure he was aware of and which seemed to me important for a "fair and balanced" treatment of the prophet.

We Mormons have often foolishly said that either the First Vision happened just as Smith said it did, or he was a liar and a fraud. The moderate Vogel offers a middle ground which I think believing Mormons are foolish to reject as without merit: He believes that Smith had a profound religious experience which included seeing Jesus in a heavenly vision and, over time, remembered it as a literal experience (242). Interestingly, Charles Grandison Finney, the greatest revivalist of the era, who also operated in the state of New York, reported a grove experience similar to that of Joseph Smith.

The Joseph Smith movement began as a protest against elites who claimed superiority over ordinary people in religion and other areas of life. Vogel notes that Smith was vulnerable to revelatory competitors like Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page. Smith's limitation of revelation to himself was the first great compromise in the evolution of the movement from radical populism in its infancy to where it is today—the ultimate bastion of American conservatism.

It was unfortunate that the time in which this radical populist movement was emerging was the worst period in American history from the perspective of women's rights. It seems that women were freer in the colonial period than they were in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately the patriarchal worldview that was so strongly entrenched in early nineteenth-century American culture became canonized in the utterances of Joseph Smith. God speaking to a prophet with new scripture resulting was a radical idea. But it became a very conservative force, making it more difficult for Mormon women to break the shackles that bound them.

Revelation coming through ecclesiastical officers makes for conservative policies. I was struck by several references Vogel makes to Seneca Falls, New York, which happened to be the place where in 1848 the first women's rights conven-

tion was held. It is too bad that Emma and the other Mormon women were long gone from the area by 1848. While it is unlikely the Mormon women would have embraced the women's rights movement in New York, Susan B. Anthony and others did make alliances with Mormon women in Utah a generation later. And the populist theme of early Mormonism was consistent with the women's rights agenda.

The Book of Mormon knew nothing of women's rights, however. As Vogel notes, there are only three women in the entire Book of Mormon who are even named (225). Sariah's death goes unreported in the narrative (131), and nothing is said concerning the order of birth of Nephi's sisters, while it is quite clear regarding the first four brothers and reasonably clear on the last two.

When Vogel mentions an Anabaptist Society in Tunbridge, Vermont, that Joseph Sr. "may have joined," he says the Anabaptists "historically defended a belief in polygamy" (178). That is an inaccurate characterization of Anabaptists. They were the left wing of the sixteenth-century Reformation, and pacifism was a central tenet. The polygamist Anabaptists of Muenster, Germany, were an aberration. Their resort to violence and polygamy was a denial of Anabaptism's central tenets. Like so many marginalized groups in history, the dominant groups—here the Catholics, Reformed, and Lutherans—characterized Anabaptism on the basis of an extreme segment totally out of character with the genius of the main movement. I'm confident the Anabaptist group in Tunbridge was in harmony with the mainline Anabaptist groups that survived—the Mennonites, Hutterites, and the Amish. Muenster was a very short-lived community.

In 1965 Charles A. Davies was retiring after seven years as the RLDS Church Historian. He was our last Church Historian without a graduate degree in history. He had been shocked by the stuff he was finding in the headquarters archives about polygamy, the method of translation of the Book of Mormon, and other matters relating to our founding prophet. He often shared his findings with a handful of young scholars at headquarters, sometimes referred to as "the Young Turks." A few days before he retired, these Young Turks took Charlie out to lunch. They asked him, "Charlie, how would you characterize Joseph Smith?" Charlie thought for a minute and then said, "He was game!"

When asked if there are men on the moon, the Prophet described their height, their clothing, and so forth. Bring him an ancient document and the attitude was, "Heck, yes, I can translate it." When a rabbi is delayed several days in arriving in Kirtland to teach Hebrew to the saints, Joseph could step right in until the rabbi arrived.

Charlie was right. Joseph Smith was game. And the man we see in Dan Vogel's book fits that description.

Belief, Respect, and an Elbow to the Ribs

Richard Lyman Bushman, *Believing History: Latter-day Saint Essays*, edited by Reid L. Neilson and Jed Woodworth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 291 pp.

Reviewed by Byron C. Smith, Educator and Collections Manager, The Stone House Foundation, Stephens City, Virginia, and Adjunct Lecturer, Historic Preservation Program, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, West Virginia

I had a very strange experience once in which Richard Bushman was indirectly involved. This experience took place when I was in an interview with the chairman of a graduate program at a well-respected university. At the time, I was trying unsuccessfully to convince him to allow biblical Hebrew as one of the learned tongues that would satisfy his program's language requirement. He was surprised to find out that I was not Jewish and that my interest in the language of the Old Testament stemmed from a genuine interest in the scriptures. When I told him I was a Mormon, his attitude seemed to change. I was expecting the usual awkward silence that comes with the revelation that I ascribe to a system of beliefs that is often considered an affront to modern, enlightened, academic thinking. Instead he asked me if I knew Richard Bushman. At the time I was startled, but it soon dawned on me that he really admired Dr. Bushman and that, accordingly, my sincere belief in the Mormon faith would not be held against me, as it normally is in the world of the agnostic academe.

In some measure, reading Bushman's *Believing History* has helped me to understand why I had this experience. Obviously his long and distinguished academic career, lengthy list of publications, and awards like the Bancroft Prize have secured Bushman the esteem of his peers. These accolades must also be coupled (some would say ironically) with the fact that Bushman is a faithful Latter-day Saint holding a strong belief in Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. In *Believing History*, Bushman's editors, Neilson and Woodworth, assemble an impressive group of previously published essays that help to explain Bushman's intellectual and spiritual biography. These essays strike at the tension between the seemingly incompatible views of the believing Mormon and the unbelieving world.

In a few of these essays, Bushman demonstrates with articulate and piercing honesty the importance of admitting one's biases as a scholar and writing for believing and unbelieving audiences alike. He states in the preface that he wants his unbelieving audience to come to know the "richness and compass of Joseph Smith's thought" and then to stop dismissing the Book of Mormon and other original doctrines taught by Smith as simplistic religious fantasy. Simultaneously, he hopes some believing Mormon readers "will feel my elbow in their ribs from

time to time." He states that he wants to "awaken self-satisfied Mormons to the problems we face, both intellectual and cultural" and to tell them they do not understand "how complicated the world is" (viii).

Like most orthodox Mormons, Bushman sees belief in God and the Mormon faith as a sort of gift that a person must choose to accept. He does not think "that people can be compelled to believe by any form of reasoning, whether from the scriptures or from historical evidence." "They will believe," Bushman writes, "if it is in their natures to believe" (28). And if his unbelieving audience is not persuaded, Bushman says, "at least we can ask for respect" (viii).

The essays in *Believing History* reveal an important element of Bushman's epistemological view on Mormon studies. In a word, Bushman sees true objectivity as impossible. While he is "loath to go all the way with postmodernist thinkers," Bushman feels that "no scholarship, no truth, exists in a social vacuum" (40). In other words, the audiences we care about, as well as the ones we do not agree with, influence and even govern our ability to think objectively on important subjects. "Scholarship," Bushman writes, "is the product of people who are located in institutions—universities, research institutes, or circles of like-minded thinkers" (40). He goes on to say, "In taking an intellectual position, they silently, but inevitably, associate themselves with people of a similar outlook" (41).

As I read Bushman, I am reminded of how this sort of unconscious bias can also lead to uncritical acceptance of substandard scholarship. This appears to be the reason behind the recent fiasco at Columbia over the awarding (and then the retraction) of the Bancroft Prize to Michael A. Bellesiles for his controversial book *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000). Many professional historians struggled to explain how a book with so many flaws, errors, and even what now appear to be fraudulent claims could be honored with such a prestigious award. Others recognized that even members of the dispassionate academic community have a tendency to accept some things on faith and not question what they want to believe to be true.

The Bellesiles affair would not have surprised scholars like Richard Bushman. In fact, Bushman cites an example of this silent bias in his own work. After publishing *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, Bushman was called on the carpet for failing to address the fact that Joseph Smith's father "sometimes drank to excess." "My predilection to defend the character of the Smith family had been revealed," Bushman writes, "and my conscious or unconscious wish to clean up the record was now plainly evident" (279). In contrast, Bushman also notes the failures of unbelieving scholars who have an axe to grind. His critique of Fawn Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* is especially perceptive: "When Fawn Brodie wrote her brilliant study fifty years ago, she was fleeing Mormonism and had no sympathy for the Mormon reader. She showed no pity as she mowed down the faithful with her account of Joseph Smith. More important, she

felt no need to address the objections that Mormon scholars might raise. She was on her way out of the faith and wanted to address the larger world. She played to its prejudices while disregarding believing scholarship" (282). He then quickly aims an elbow at the ribs of those "believing writers" who "do the opposite" and "play to Mormon prejudices while rejecting the larger world" (282).

Before reading *Believing History*, I was, as a student of both early American material culture studies and Mormon Church history, familiar with Bushman's *The Refinement of America* and *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*. I had never read any of the previously published essays now anthologized in *Believing History*. Those who, like me, have found it impossible to keep up with all of Bushman's writing on the subjects of Mormon history, culture, and thought will find this collection of essays informative and revealing. *Believing History* also includes previously unpublished commentaries by Bushman introducing each chapter, as well as a prefatory essay and his afterword titled "Reflections on Believing History." These new notes are refreshingly honest self-assessments of his work and help the reader tie together an otherwise disparate grouping of loosely related papers.

On the other hand, those who crave what could be termed "hard-hitting" analyses of Mormon Church history and doctrine might be disappointed. You might be one of these frustrated readers if you are someone who would rather read an essay called "Was Joseph Smith a Racist?" as opposed to Bushman's 1998 essay "Was Joseph Smith a Gentleman?" (217-31). Nevertheless, even if you are a convinced "unbeliever" and skeptical about Joseph Smith and Mormonism, Bushman's views in *Believing History* are worthy of respect. At the same time, faithful Mormons who read *Believing History* might occasionally feel that metaphorical elbow in their ribs and come away with a better understanding of the messiness and complexity of Mormon history and the Mormon experience in the modern world.

The Open Canon and Innovation

Gary James Bergera, *Conflict in the Quorum: Orson Pratt, Brigham Young, Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), xi + 312 pp.

Reviewed by Michael W. Homer, attorney at law, Salt Lake City

Gary James Bergera's book, *Conflict in the Quorum*, is a well written and fascinating account of Orson Pratt, one of Joseph Smith's original Twelve Apostles, that highlights some of his disagreements with Church leaders (including Joseph Smith and Brigham Young) concerning new revelations and the meaning of sa-

cred scripture. His initial skirmishes with Joseph Smith centered on the secret doctrine and practice of plural marriage. Pratt disagreed with the practice's introduction in Nauvoo, was "cut off from the Quorum" (43), and was not initially included in the Holy Order. When he did become a member of the Holy Order, his wife, Sarah, did not join him. She did not become a member of this elite group, and Pratt did not marry his first plural wife (Charlotte Bishop) until after the death of Joseph Smith (47–48). When Brigham Young became *de facto* Church president, Pratt balked at his plan to reorganize the First Presidency but finally conceded the point at the Kanesville "marathon" conference in 1847 (64–81). Nevertheless, after Young became Church president, Pratt continued to disagree with him with respect to some of his doctrinal teachings.

Bergera is a careful writer, with the result that his book contains a good synthesis of the origins and theological underpinnings of plural marriage, as well as the usual references to secondary sources. These sources demonstrate that Smith's initial instructions and personal behavior concerning this doctrine upset some of his more puritanical followers, including Pratt. Smith, and some of his closest associates, later denied that the Prophet made some of the statements that various witnesses claimed he had. In any event, it is evident that Church leaders understood the volatility of the new teaching as well as the danger of linking it with a duty of obedience to the Church's hierarchy.

While Pratt and Smith were eventually reconciled, Bergera's study suggests that the relationship between Pratt and Young was always problematic. Pratt's first rift with Young involved Young's plan to reorganize the First Presidency. Bergera's tendency to "block quote" from the minutes of meetings is at times a hard slog but perhaps Bergera's point is that attending the meetings would have been an even harder slog and that one can understand the developing dispute only by reading the minutes of these marathon meetings. One does feel the tension among the participants while reading the minutes. Nevertheless, I believe that Bergera should have provided more context and analysis of the proceedings.

One wonders whether part of Pratt's disagreement with Young was not only his belief that reorganization conflicted with Smith's original intent but also the more practical reality (apparently shared by a few of the other apostles) that the Twelve's prerogatives would be weakened when a new First Presidency was created. Obviously, the Twelve recognized that Joseph Smith would remain the paramount figure in Church history and that all future leaders would build on the foundation he had established. In this context, Pratt was not initially prepared to accept Brigham Young as Smith's literal successor.

Ironically, when Brigham Young was sustained as Smith's successor and later decided to publicly announce the practice of polygamy, he chose Orson Pratt to deliver the message. The man whom Young referred to as a "philosopher" explained the theological justifications for the controversial doctrine, which still im-

pacts the image of the Church, and threw down a gauntlet which prevented the Mormon Church from entering the religious mainstream until well into the twentieth century. Four years after the announcement, the newborn Republican Party condemned bigamy as one of the "twin relics" of barbarism, and shortly thereafter two of Utah's territorial judges suggested that polygamy could be prosecuted under the common law. President James Buchanan sent federal troops to Utah to quell the "rebellion" which consisted mainly of a political struggle to control the territory and its domestic institution. Not surprisingly, the federal government eventually won the battle in this political contest of wills.

When Brigham Young was removed as territorial governor and was stripped of the last vestiges of *de jure* secular authority, he became more sensitive when his religious authority was challenged. One of the more interesting themes that Bergera pursues (by quoting word for word the discussions which took place) is the dichotomy between Pratt's willingness to issue public apologies for being "out of harmony," while at the same time continuing to publicly disagree with Young's specific teachings.

Even while some Church leaders were advancing the notion that the prophet's teachings were unassailable, Pratt was offering up specific examples to demonstrate that they were not. While Pratt admitted that, when "President Young speaks by the power of the spirit there is frequently such a flood of revelation that he has not time to explain every particular" (97), Pratt also argued in favor of "a more literalistic and absolutist approach to scripture than Young's dynamic theology" (106).

Nevertheless, Bergera cites examples of both Young and Pratt engaging in creative theology. While Pratt advised elders "never to advance an idea before the world, which we cannot substantiate by revelation" (94), he would occasionally "stretch" the definition of "revelation" and introduce "philosophical underpinnings" (89). But when his teachings conflicted with Young (even on the doctrine which linked Adam and God), the Church president prevailed because he was the only one authorized to define doctrine for the Church despite the fact that some pronouncements were perceived by many as not entirely consistent with the revelations of Joseph Smith or with biblical teachings (128).

Bergera's account of Orson Pratt is an important book even if the substantive issues about which Pratt and his Church leaders argued have long been resolved. Polygamy is no longer a doctrine or practice of the LDS Church (Pratt's initial negative reaction reflects the official contemporary Church position), there is no longer any question concerning the process of succession, and there seems to be no disagreement that the LDS prophet is the final interpreter of Church doctrine. But Bergera's study suggests that one of the slippery slopes of an open canon (as demonstrated by the controversy over Brigham Young's teaching of the Adam-God theory as well as some of Orson Pratt's own teachings) is

that there are undefined boundaries between doctrine and speculation that may cause confusion among Church members (95). But Bergera also demonstrates the strength of this system, which allows Church presidents to abandon doctrines and practices, as well as their theological justifications, when it is necessary to protect the vitality of the Church.

Women in a Time Warp

Sheree Maxwell Bench and Susan Elizabeth Howe, eds. *Discoveries: Two Centuries of Poems by Mormon Women*, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2004), 128 pp.

Reviewed by Danielle Dubrasky, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Southern Utah State University, Cedar City

Discoveries: Two Centuries of Poems by Mormon Women is a slim publication attempting to represent two hundred years of poetry by Mormon women. The anthology is divided into sections that portray the stages of a woman's life. In the preface the editors state, "We chose poems that revealed the life experiences of a Mormon woman from her birth to her death and into eternity" (xv). However, aside from a few poems that refer to leaders or organizations in the Church, most of the poems do not express a distinctly Mormon experience. Hence, the overall effect of the anthology is a collection of poems of uneven quality that does not show, as the preface claims, "how from its beginnings in nineteenth-century Mormondom, poetry has come into its own as an art form in Latter-day Saint culture" (xvi).

However, the anthology has a unique aspect that could have been showcased much more effectively. The early and contemporary poems are blended together in different sections in a way that creates an interesting medley of voices. While the intent may have been to imply that women of both centuries are joined as sisters by common faith, the impression is actually that the twentieth-century women's experience has been shaped by those of the nineteenth century. The effect is an odd time warp, as the twentieth-century women continue to look at their experience through a nineteenth-century lens. Perhaps this is how the anthology becomes distinctly Mormon. Unfortunately, this distinction is too subtle. The anthology would have benefitted from an arrangement and commentary that could have highlighted the relationship between the voices. Another characteristic that seemed prevalent particularly in the contemporary voices was a lack of an autonomous self. Many of the narrators presented themselves in relationship to another person or to a responsibility rather than as individuals.

The first five selections follow a development from a premortal existence to

childhood, adulthood, marriage and children, and old age. The first section, "Beginning," starts with the poem "Of the Beginning" by Susan Elizabeth Howe in which a woman's journey begins with a pre-mortal existence; this poem is one of the few that actually addresses Mormon belief. Two poems are particularly memorable in this section. "Blackberry" by Penny Allen is a sensuous imagistic poem about a modern-day Eve plucking blackberries as she recalls her loss of Eden. The poem itself combines a sexual pain and pleasure in the description of picking the fruit: "She wants it—enough to thread a careful hand / Through the thorns, etching a ragged red / Rivulet on the wrist and pricking tiny / Rubies where she wavers . . . / She plunks it into her wet mouth. / Delicious. More desirable than the first / Death she ate . . ." (4). This poem is remarkable in how it conveys the idea that Eden was sacrificed for a forbidden pleasure, yet the punishment is almost worth that pleasure.

"A Lullaby in the New Year," a sonnet by Linda Sillitoe, presents the dilemma of being a woman in both comforting and chilling tones. As a mother rocks her crying infant daughter, she provides a nurturing space for the baby against her body. However, the final lines present an irony: "We rock / And still you rage. I kiss your hair again. / All right, I whisper, accept, accept, and sleep" (8). The mother seems to be speaking both to herself and to the daughter: She is telling herself to accept the child's rage despite her motherly efforts to comfort her, and she is advising the daughter to accept her situation despite her instincts to rage against it.

The next section is "Childhood" and contains one of the most intriguing poems of the anthology, May Swensen's "The Centaur." This poem distinguishes itself as being one of the few in which the speaker (a young girl) is autonomous. However, she becomes autonomous by melding with another self—the imaginary horse she creates out of a willow branch. The "horse" is male and the girl carves him into existence by using her brother's knife. As she rides the horse, she crosses over to take on a more male identity—"The willow knob with the strap / jouncing beneath my thighs / was the pommel and yet the poll / of my nickering pony's head" (11). This transition becomes more apparent as she makes no distinction between herself and the horse: "I was the horse and rider, / and the leather I slapped to his rump / spanked my own behind" (11). It is only when she is off the horse that her skirt and disheveled hair—signs of her gender—come into focus. The "horse ride" is an escape from that confinement.

The childhood section is followed by "Reaching," a section that seems deliberately vague. I am not sure why it was separated out from the other sections. This group of poems represents a flaw in the book's arrangement. It would have been more effective to have dispersed these poems throughout the book, giving other sections more depth. There is nothing inherent in the poems individually or as a whole that would be considered Mormon.

The next sections continue on through sexual awakening (albeit, very pristinely), motherhood, loss, and aging. I was particularly impressed with a poem that poignantly challenges the struggles of aging. "Coming Apart Together" by Mary Lythgoe Bradford is a lovely poem about passion in old age. The inevitable decay of old age is countered by a kind of resurrected sexuality that has a creative power. In a subtle way, this poem's concluding lines allude to the Mormon notion of humankind evolving into gods.

So far I have discussed only the contemporary authors. Before discussing other contemporary poems, I must comment on the nineteenth-century poets. The discovery and publication of these women is the book's real coup. Their biographies are interesting to read. Many of their poems were ahead of their time. For that reason, the ideas expressed in these early poems contain more of a "Mormon" spirit—radical, nonconformist, questioning, enlightened—than the contemporary counterparts. Two poets intrigued me the most—Lucinda Lee Dalton and Louisa "Lula" Greene Richards.

Lu Dalton married into polygamy and struggled with her husband's alcoholism during her marriage. "An ardent suffragist, Dalton believed that women and men must work as partners on equal footing for all to progress, and this thesis was central to her writing" (96). Could there be a more "queer yoking" than the polygamist and the suffragist? In her amazing "Woman," Dalton refutes the traditional Christian view of woman's subservient position. She counters the Christian image of woman as the cause of humanity's fall from grace with the more enlightened "latter-day" view of woman as a divine daughter of God, as one who fell to "seek knowledge, the God-like prize." Her play on the notion of latter-day redemption continues to the end of the poem with the last two lines: "The Word has gone forth that when all is done, / the last shall be first forever" (6).

Lula Greene Richards was Utah's first woman journalist, officially called by Brigham Young to be the editor of the *Woman's Exponent*. "Her editorials argued for the right of women to vote, to obtain an equal education, and to choose their occupation" (99). In "Apology" a woman apologizes for her contemplative and leisurely nature that distracts her from more traditional domestic duties. However, by the end of the poem, she makes it clear that these duties should be secondary to developing one's creativity.

Two poems most effectively create the time warp between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: "Alisa Leaves for Medical School" by Marilyn Bushman-Carlton and "Nellie Unthank" by Iris P. Corry. In the former poem a mother contrasts letting go of her medical-school-bound daughter with how she left her own mother and a small town to live in the big city. However, the modern-day daughter has opportunities denied to women of an earlier age because "their . . . lives [were] lost / in histories logged by men" (53). The mother concludes: "My daughter leaves, not tucked / in the rib of a husband's hopes / but

chasing her own, / less-accustomed dreams" (53). These lines address the question of how autonomous can the Mormon woman be if she is always seen in relationship to others—spouse, children, even God.

"Nellie Unthank," based on the life of one of the ill-fated Martin Handcart Company's victims, is a brilliantly stark contrast to the concept of sacrifice-compensated-for portrayed in "Blackberry." It tells of Nellie's life in such spare lines that no pity or pain are allowed, but neither is there room for joy. Her legs are amputated because of frostbite when she is a child; she later marries into polygamy. In contrast with the delicious sacrifice of "Blackberry," Nellie's sacrifice is bitter and harsh. The sensuality and thorn prick are replaced by frostbite and amputation, the pleasure of fruit by a compulsion to serve. This poem is unrelenting in both its silent rage and its acceptance.

In a class on Victorian literature at BYU, the professor commented that he saw many similarities between British Victorians and the Mormon Church, especially with regard to patriarchal attitudes and sexual prudishness. Of course, in Victorian literature rich contradictions roiled beneath that controlled surface. Unfortunately this collection, with a few exceptions, avoids addressing the complex identity of Mormon women. The majority of these poems had really nothing to do with the Mormon experience, only with the general experience of being a woman. None of the contemporary poets was born after the 1950s, thus limiting the portrayal of Mormon women's experience to two generations. These contemporary poets would have come of age when roles for women might not have been very different from those of their foremothers; however, the women's movement would also have had an influence.

As women experiencing a kind of hybrid coming of age—raised to believe one definition of a woman's role and then made aware of other possibilities—it seems that they could write from a unique, transitional perspective. However, they seemed to be writing as an extension of the nineteenth-century voices, not as voices in their own place and time. The collection of contemporary poetry could have been made far more eclectic by including women of more recent generations and of cultures other than white America.

Ironically, I got the impression that, if the nineteenth-century women were living now, they would have been on the forefront of the women's movement and would still be arguing for equality within the Church without apology. What has happened to the spirit of early Mormon women who used the revolutionary Church doctrine and belief to argue for equality? They did not seem to be stifled by the Church authorities. Rather they acted on a belief in their own authority. This anthology raises the question: Where is the feminist empowerment that governed so much of the early Church? It was crucial to the Church's early development. Why is it now seen as such a threat?



Untitled

charcoal; ca. 1990s; collection of the Perine Newman Trust

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Throughout a long life, Robert Perine continually sought new ways to express his vision and use his creative gifts. Born in Los Angeles in 1922, he identified himself as a practicing artist from the age of six. Following military service during World War II, he graduated from the Chouinard Art Institute. He taught at the University of Alabama during 1950–51, then returned to southern California for a freelance career as a graphic designer. His most notable client was Fender Musical Instruments, for whom he created the legendary “You won’t part with yours either” advertising campaign. Although he attempted to maintain his focus on painting, his business, church, and family responsibilities dominated his attention for nearly two decades.

In 1969 he made a career change that allowed him to paint more seriously. Innovating with the medium he loved—watercolor—he departed dramatically and very successfully from its traditional use. During the 1970s and early 1980s, his work appeared in dozens of exhibitions and garnered numerous accolades. Among the institutions that own his work are the Butler Institute of American Art, the University of Massachusetts, Brigham Young University, Neiman Marcus, and the San Diego Museum of Art.

Eager to expand his creative reach, Perine expanded from painting to writing and arts activism, starting with writing and publishing the history of the original Chouinard Art Institute in 1985. Over the years, he wrote ten novels, several collections of short stories, three volumes of poetry, seven plays, and three musicals (for which he also composed the music). His last major art piece was an immense work called *The Tribes of Xyr*, which includes 372 graphite head drawings of imaginary beings grouped into fifteen tribes. For each tribe he created a symbol, an alphabet, and a tribal history. Perine also wrote “Descent into Xyr: The World of Waterling Dilper,” a novella that details his encounters with this mythical world, located in an intricate series of caves in the high desert somewhere in the southwest.

In 2003, Perine was the driving force behind the opening of a new Chouinard Art School, where he was the director and taught watercolor, design, and figure drawing. Seeing Chouinard arise from the ashes was the culmination of a decades-long dream for Perine, who treasured the combination of creativity and art fundamentals the original school had provided.

Perine was raised as a non-affiliated Christian. His first wife was Mormon, and he joined the Church shortly after they married in 1947. They had three

daughters: Jorli, Lisa, and Terri. He became active in the Laguna Beach California Ward during the late fifties and sixties, ultimately serving as bishop. In the aftermath of his career change in 1969, he and his wife divorced, and he left the Church. However, he continued to consider himself a Mormon—one who was not connected to a ward and did not go to Church but who valued its teachings. While he had many differences with the church, he also loved it deeply.

In 1979, Perine married Blaze Newman, an artist and teacher like himself, who nurtured his expanding creativity. He died in November 2004, of a sudden heart attack. He taught until the day before his death. Following is a tribute to Perine, given by his wife at the memorial service on November 13, 2004.

Tribute

Bob Perine knew what he wanted and pursued those things passionately. Our meeting 26 years ago appeared to be serendipitous but, in fact, he'd placed his order just a few months before. Lonely and searching for a meaningful relationship, he decided that he'd have a better chance if he enumerated exactly what he wanted in a woman. So, he sat himself down and wrote out a list of every trait he could think of. He wanted a woman who was an artist; Jewish; smart, funny, and feisty; with curly hair; petite; left-handed; between the ages of 30 and 40. The only part he got wrong was that I was only 27.

Born just two years after American women got the right to vote, Bob was raised traditionally yet was truly a feminist; he believed in the equality of women and lived that belief. He loved and admired strong women, luckily for me. His acceptance of my need for independence allowed me to flourish as a teacher and as a person. During the years when I was often at school from 7 A.M. until 10 P.M., not only did he never complain or even whimper, he was incredibly supportive. He'd help me with projects, mentor individual students interested in art, and even allow me to bring whole classes to our home on field trips, where he'd mesmerize them with stories of the Tribes of Xyr. After one such trip, a student gasped, "I never imagined there could be such an imagination."

Bob's deceptively conventional appearance hid an astonishing man whose imagination, wisdom, and spirit enriched the lives of everyone who met him, even though they may have spent only minutes with him. He combined playfulness with deep spirituality and a sensitive understanding of people. Fundamentally, he was the cock-eyed optimist, with a profound belief in human decency and the ultimate triumph of justice. I remember his telling me about the day in 1978 when he heard that the Mormon Church had lifted its ban on blacks in the priesthood. He was driving on the freeway when the news came over the radio. Bob had to pull off the road because he couldn't see through his tears of relief and pride.

He loved all types of mental challenges, from crossword puzzles and Scrab-

ble to teaching himself to write in his mid-fifties, from developing a radical new use of watercolor to opening and running an art school just last year. His mind was his favorite toy. Many years ago, he wrote: "Tomorrow has a new name and a new thirst." Embracing that "new thirst" gave him an astonishing capacity for growth, regularly reinventing himself and developing his boundless gifts. I used to call him "my little Zen master" because he lived so fully in the present. Neither the past nor the future were terribly important to him. Sometimes that trait infuriated me because he wouldn't consider possible consequences of an action, but ultimately, I knew that his focus on "the now" was a major part of his apparent agelessness and of his genius.

He could be stubborn as a mule but his sense of fair play forced him to be open-minded—eventually. I still remember the night I took *Shrek* out of the red Netflix envelop. He scoffed at the idea of watching an animated movie—those were for children. I told him to trust me and pushed "play." After two hours of giggling, gasping, and guffawing, as the credits rolled, he said, "Disney, eat your heart out." The following week, he bought the DVD and we immediately watched it twice more. He sat friends down and said, "You've got to see this." In all, he watched *Shrek* at least six times and could barely wait for the sequel. It's a small story but embodies his breath-taking flexibility as well as his appreciation for quality work.

About his own work, he wrote, "As an artist, my job is to entertain the eye. My images are not responses to cultural shifts or social injustices I cannot fix. Art is more than reaction. Like peace, I see it as an antidote to human anxiety. It offers new ways of stimulating thought. It's about restoring equilibrium, transcending a world too complicated to manage. I think of the rapport between artist and viewer as love incognito—a mystical, spiritual seduction." And all of us here today were seduced—by his capacious mind, his extraordinary visions, and his boundless spirit.

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. Papers 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 between Mormonism and 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 accepted until January 2006. Early submission of manuscripts is encouraged. In formatting and documentation, submissions should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition. **Electronic submissions are preferred.** They should be sent as attachments in Word or WordPerfect to Ethan Yorgason at 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. Address queries to Yorgason at (808) 293-3617; fax: (808) 293-3888. For *Dialogue*’s publication policy, please see our website at www.dialoguejournal.com

CALL FOR PAPERS
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 after life; 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, appeared in our summer 2005 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 *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition. **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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HELP *DIALOGUE* PREPARE FOR CELEBRATING ITS FORTIETH YEAR

Next year, 2006, marks *Dialogue's* fortieth year. Following are some of the ways that have occurred to us for commemorating this anniversary. We would like to:

- Publish brief reflections on *Dialogue* by former editors and staff members, present and former board members, and dedicated *Dialogue* readers.
- Include a section of previously published poetry in one of the anniversary issues.
- Highlight a few influential articles from the past. This could be done either by inviting their authors to update their views or by inviting other scholars to comment on the papers and their influence.
- We solicit our readers' help. We would be happy to consider your reflections on *Dialogue*. We would also appreciate having you call notable poetry and articles from past issues to our attention.

Send your reflections and suggestions to the *Dialogue* Submissions Office. An electronic copy of your reflections is preferred. Send attachments in Word or WordPerfect to dialoguemss@aol.com. Please provide mailing address and phone number. A submission 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.

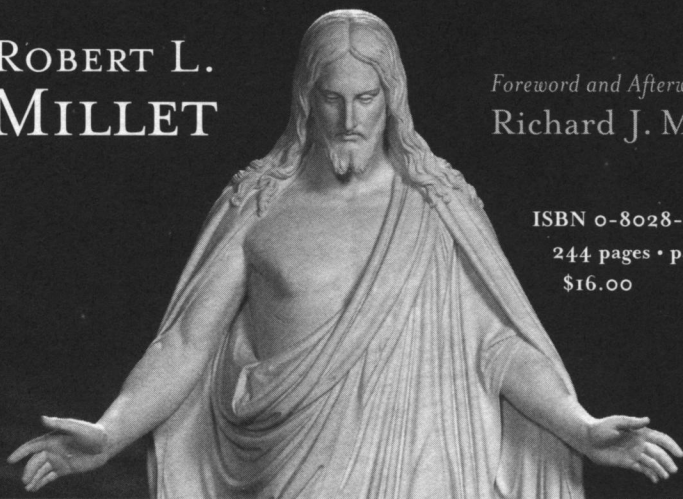
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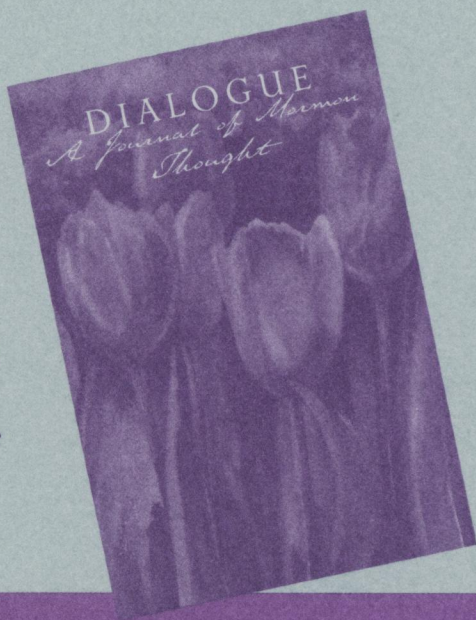
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