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A Journal of Mormon Thought

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DIALOGUE

A Journal of Mormon Thought

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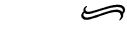

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Mormons as Christians

I have been thinking about how to describe the deviant theology of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We should not compare ourselves to "historical Christianity," or, as Klaus Hansen does ("The Long Honeymoon: Jan Shipps among the Mormons," 37, no. 3 [Fall 2004]: 1–28), to "mainstream Christianity." Each of those terms is a disservice to the Restoration. Rather, we should speak of the traditions that have, over the centuries, been constructed over and around the beauty of biblical Christianity. It is to many of those extra-biblical traditions that we take exception.

In light of Genesis 1:27, I find it particularly amusing that Professor Hansen speaks of "Mormons' anthropomorphizing of the divine."

Douglass F. Taber
Newark, Delaware

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Thinking Globally: Explorations into a Truly International, Multi-Cultural Church

Levi S. Peterson

With this issue, *Dialogue* begins a special series which, rather than filling a single issue, will present a number of articles in successive issues. Under the supervision of guest editor Ethan Yorgason, this series will focus on different facets of the Mormon experience and identity outside the usual Anglo-American cultural realm. Our first offering is Walter van Beek's intriguing "Mormon Europeans or European Mormons? An 'Afro-European' View on Religious Colonization."

Dialogue has a long-standing interest in international and multi-cultural expressions of Mormonism. In fact, a random search through back issues from its inception shows it perennially popping up.[1] In 1996, a special issue under Armand Mauss's guest editorship was devoted to "the assumption that the future of Mormonism in the next century depends largely on what happens outside North America."[2] Among the many fine articles Mauss solicited was Thomas Murphy's on the future of Mormonism in Guatemala, in which Murphy sees as inevitable the mingling of Mormonism as Utah Mormons know it and the traditional native Mayan religion. "Mormonism in the next century," says Murphy, "is apt to be in-

1. For example, see Wesley W. Craig Jr., "The Church in Latin America: Progress and Challenge," 5, no. 3 (Fall 1970): 66-74; Garth N. Jones, "Spreading the Gospel in Indonesia: Organizational Obstacles and Opportunities," 15, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 79-90; and Douglas F. Tobler, "Before the Wall Fell: Mormons in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-89," 25, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 11-30.

2. Armand Mauss, "Guest Editor's Introduction," 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 5.

creasingly characterized by diverse understandings of what it means to be Mormon. Diversity can be fostered or it can be suppressed, but it will never disappear."[3] In 2001, *Dialogue* devoted an issue to comparative studies of Mormonism written in part by non-Mormon scholars, a number of whom chose to focus upon the Church in foreign settings. In his introduction, guest editor Douglas J. Davies, who is not Mormon, asserts that if "Mormon Studies is ever to flourish as an identifiable field, then the comparative aspect is vitally important."[4]

Other recent papers reflecting on Mormonism's international and multicultural aspects include Gary Lobb's study of membership trends among Europeans of color, first presented at the Mormon History Association's 2000 conference in Denmark.[5] Under my own editorship have appeared anthropologist Jennifer Basquiat's exploration on the interface of Mormonism and Vodou in Haiti and articles by David Knowlton and Mark Grover on measuring membership growth in Latin America.[6] The offerings by R. John Williams, Devyn M. Smith, and Adrianne Baadsgaard Cope, though not expressly solicited for this series, also touch upon this theme.

At my request, Ethan Yorgason is serving as guest editor of the series. His successful session on Mormonism's international and multicultural aspects for the 2004 MHA conference in Provo featured van Beek's original presentation. I appreciate Ethan's efforts in soliciting and editing the articles for this series. When the series is completed, probably toward the end of next year, we anticipate his summary retrospective. Following the series, *Dialogue* will undoubtedly continue to publish the explorations of those who think globally about a universal gospel being preached by what is still an American church.

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3. Thomas W. Murphy, "Reinventing Mormonism: Guatemala as Harbinger of the Future?" 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 192.

4. Douglas J. Davies, "Mormon Studies in a European Setting," 34, nos. 3-4 (Fall-Winter 2001): 8.

5. Gary C. Lobb, "Mormon Membership Trends in Europe among People of Color: Present and Future Assessment," 33, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 59-68.

6. Jennifer Huss Basquiat, "Embodied Mormonism: Performance, Vodou, and the LDS Faith in Haiti," 37, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 1-34; David Clark Knowlton, "How Many Members Are There Really? Two Censuses and the Meaning of LDS Membership in Chile and Mexico," 38, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 53-78; Mark L. Grover, "The Maturing of the Oak: The Dynamics of Latter-day Saint Growth in Latin America," ibid., 79-104.

Mormon Europeans or European Mormons? An "Afro-European" View on Religious Colonization

Walter E. A. van Beek

Introduction

Mormon history is part of the colonization history of the American West; and the LDS Church, as a major player in that process, still bears a colonization imprint in many ways. The colonizing days are over now, and the Church is part of a major political presence in the world, no longer the colonized, but rather the colonizer. In this article, I argue that the Utah-based modern Church has replicated the same colonization process on its membership abroad to which it was once subjected.[1] To elucidate this argument, I will sketch colonization processes experienced in nineteenth-century Deseret and compare them with the colonization processes now apparent in the modern Church. I will use the perspective of an an-

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WALTER E. A. VAN BEEK is an anthropologist with a joint appointment at Utrecht University and the African Studies Centre at Leiden. His specialty is West African anthropology with extensive fieldwork among the Kapsiki/Higi of North Cameroon and the Dogon of Mali. He has also coordinated M.A. and Ph.D. research in Namibia and South Africa. A former branch president and president of Rotterdam Stake, he is currently a counselor in the Utrecht Ward bishopric and Public Communications representative for the Netherlands.

1. Mark P. Leone, *The Roots of Modern Mormonism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 6–10, 225–26, also uses the colonizer/colonized concept, though somewhat differently. I am indebted to Ethan Yorgason and Armand Mauss for their constructive remarks and bibliographic assistance.

thropologist who has dealt most of his life with African local cultures-*cum*-religions that have been subjected to clear and well-described colonization pressures to show similarities between the situation of African groups and that of Mormon settlement in Deseret. Then, to discuss the Church's internal colonization, I will also write from the perspective of a European Mormon who, for almost the same length of time, has been an active member of the LDS Church in the Netherlands.

First, I give a short description of the history of the LDS Church, slightly tongue-in-cheek and in the ethnographical present, the way the LDS "tribe" around the 1860s in the territory of Deseret would have been described by anthropologists used to an African situation.[2] (Only a somewhat outdated anthropologist would use the term "tribe" these days, but for our narrative it is indispensable.[3]) Then I proceed with a European LDS view of the relationship with the "domestic Church," and finally try to assess some basic identity features of Mormons in Europe under the question: Mormon Europeans or European Mormons?

The "Tribe" of Deseret

The Deseret tribe inhabits a remote hinterland of the continent, occupying a large territory with fuzzy boundaries, united by its one important ritual center. The people are bound to the land by a mythical charter using ancient images such as "the everlasting mountains," a new Jordan river with another Dead Sea, and the "people of Israel." Effectively they see themselves as a chosen people who fled from an oppressing government to an unpolluted land. The promised land is considered to have been prepared by deity. They view themselves as a replica of a mythical tribe that once, on another continent but in similar surroundings, possessed such a land. The area was considered to have been empty, despite the presence of a small remnant of an old population. These remnant people (in African situations often considered half-mythical creatures) enjoy a special status in the founding myths of Deseret. They represent a positive

2. My narrative device has, of course, been inspired by the classic example of Horace Miner's, "Body Ritual among the Nacirema," *American Anthropologist* 58, no. 3 (1956): 503–7.

3. Historically, the notion of "tribe" originated in large measure from this colonization project. Most of the local groups habitually called "tribes" are a product of the interaction of local groups of uncertain status with the foreign colonizer who had its own ideas about how African groups should be and behave.

presence, not as such, but only as remnants of history. As remnants they were watched with some fear and apprehension, tolerated and marginalized.[4] The Deseret tribe tends to accentuate its distinctiveness from its own earlier cultural origins in a large neighboring territory; but it still retains more of the earlier culture and religion than the people of the tribe suppose.[5]

The tribe of Deseret is kin-based, as is any tribe. As people flee from their recruitment area to the relative safety of the new mountain homeland (a very common situation in Africa too), they cannot at first participate in a structure of consanguine relations. A myth (the "blood of Ephraim") offering fictive kinship is called upon to explain how all those who heeded the call and gathered from the recesses of the world in fact belong to one of the tribes of the Israelite diaspora.[6] This mythical kinship is linked with a quest for the tribal homeland, making immigration a permanent feature of tribal self-definition. Of course in due time, fictive kinship evolves into real kinship, for the tribe has a very strong tendency towards marriage within the group (endogamy). As in any tribe, marriage is an important concern for the elders: women form a very important asset, and procuring progeny (the more the better) is a focal point of the religion. Apparently, much of the appeal of polygyny is due to this desire.

Polygyny forms one of the most obvious parallels with Africa, as throughout that continent polygyny is the rule. However, Deseret polygyny is based upon an explicit myth ("revelation") and is one of the most contested—and therefore cherished—issues of the tribe. Polygyny in the Deseret tribe is as deeply engrained in religious life as African polygyny is in social

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4. Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 58–70, 114–21.

5. Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957); Richard N. Ostling and Joan K. Ostling, *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999).

6. Armand L. Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim: Traditional Mormon Conceptions of Lineage and Race," *Journal of Mormon History* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 131–73; Arnold H. Green, "Gathering and Election: Israelite Descent and Universalism in Mormon Discourse," *Journal of Mormon History* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 195–228.

life.[7] In Deseret the ecclesiastical elders dominate the marriage market. They happen to have an extra inducement to marry more wives and usually the means at their disposal to do so. In consequence, "plural wives" tend to be considerably younger than their husbands, in Deseret as in Africa.[8] The tribe follows peculiar drinking taboos,[9] and they manifest other unique customs, too. The tribe routinely excludes nonmembers (and even nonconforming members) from the rituals in their temples, stating that outsider presence would spoil the ritual and pollute the shrine (a quite common view in African religions, too).

A standard amount of ethnocentric bias can be recognized in the tribe. They call themselves "the elect," "Saints" or "God's people," thus drawing a clear boundary between themselves and others, for whom counter-names are employed, such as "the world," or "gentiles," sometimes "the sectarians." Still, these out-groups are not considered evil per se, as they contain actual kinsmen and potential tribe members. So out-group relations are, on the whole, on a double footing: The difference between the tribal society and the outer world is stressed, yet the larger society is defined as a recruitment area. As far as routine life experiences are concerned, people beyond the tribal border cannot be trusted.

People tend to restrict their social encounters to tribesmen. With them they share the same language, values, and social (including authority) structure. Consequently, they rely on them for help and support, the extended kin group being important in this respect. As is usual among tribes, they have a more complex folk sociological model in which they differentiate between kindred tribes containing potential kinsmen and tribes to which no kinship can be traced; in short, they are neither color-blind nor innocent of ethnic labeling.[10]

Authority is strongly centralized in the tribe, as usual without a *de facto* separation between religious authority and political power. The paramount

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7. Jessie L. Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987).

8. Ibid., 34–35; Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 111–12.

9. These taboos, characteristically, would be more rigidly enforced at a later stage, when differences with the surrounding population would diminish.

10. John L. Sorenson, *Mormon Culture: Four Decades of Essays on Mormon Society and Personality* (Salt Lake City: New Sage Books, 1997), 244–46.

chief, who has more wives than most tribesmen (like one of the great classical case studies in anthropology, he is like a Trobriand chief), enjoys tremendous popular respect, though on a basis of affective kinship rather than in a specifically "political" sense. He may be affectionately called "Brother," though usually the formal title of the chieftainship, "President," applies. In daily life he distinguishes himself as little as many African chiefs do, wearing about the same outfit as any of his people. People listen with respect; and when he sends people off to distant places to enlarge the tribal territory, normally they go unquestioningly. Few material symbols of kingship are used. In ceremonial gatherings, the overt symbols of power are practically absent, though the placement of the elders in ritual settings is highly significant: Chiefs are seated higher than the commoners and always face them. The authority structure is reinforced in a semi-annual rite with all those attending raising their right arm in support of the chief leaders. Authority is, in fact, unchallenged. It is based upon an unquestioning acceptance of the legitimacy of the chief, who has a personal history of close association with the much mythologized founding hero and with whom he is even said to have had a fleeting moment of supernatural identification.[11]

The chief's appointed community and lineage elders try to follow his example. They lead their communities as undisputed authorities; in theory their authority is grounded just as directly in the supernatural world as that of the great chief. In practice, however, they have to follow his general counsel and policies. They, like the chief, have their own businesses to tend, their fields to plow, and their harvests to reap. In their tribal section leadership as well as in their utilitarian work, they tend to rely on kinsmen and in-laws. Leadership is not considered a full-time occupation, although on the level of the chief and his counselors, in effect it is.

Religion, as in any well-organized tribe, is of prime importance for the unity of the tribe. The hierarchical structure is heavily imbued with ritual power, the political system depending on the religious one. Tribal character-

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11. Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 84; Richard S. Van Wagoner, "The Making of a Mormon Myth: The 1844 Transfiguration of Brigham Young," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 1–24. In African myths, founding heroes often are blacksmiths. The founding hero of Deseret bears the same name, a curious coincidence. The explicit mythology that sprang up after his violent death is very tribal.

istics in the religion are found in, among other things, the territorial myth, the absence of full-time religious specialists, ritual clothing, patriarchal blessings as divination, a sacred initiation at the start of adulthood for boys, and girls' initiation into the tribal secrets at the age of marriage.[12] African tribal religion usually is rooted in its geography: sacred places, holy mountains, shrines along the footpaths of the ancestors. These religions often do not travel well, though individual cults may.[13]

Deseret religion has its holy grounds as well. The main messianic message is couched in territorial terms: the tribe has a gathering place for eschatological times. Its relations with the neighboring tribes are often stated in terms of this messianic territoriality. Characteristically, for any tribe, the future holiness of a territory links to pre-historic elements: gathering places of ancestors, high points of the tribe's specific history, and spots significant to the founding hero. As with any tribe, the landscape of Deseret is part of sacred history and future eschatology. As with any African tribe, magic is a basic element of the religion, both in its grounding myths and in everyday life, as tales of miracles and healing testify.[14]

This only partially tongue-in-cheek description of a few aspects of early Deseret Mormonism—perhaps an exercise in what Nibley called "the art of telling tales about Joseph Smith and Brigham Young"[15]—shows how apt is our depiction of the Mormons of the mid-nineteenth century as a tribal group: that is, as a group of people bound together by fictive and real kinship ties and a mythical charter, occupying a definite territory to which they are ideologically bound, their

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12. For an overview of the commonalties between Mormon and African religions, see Dennis L. Thomson, "African Religion and Mormon Doctrine," in *Religion in Africa: Experience and Expression*, edited by Thomas D. Blakely, Walter E. A. van Beek, and Dennis L. Thomson (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heineman, 1994), 89-99.

13. John M. Janzen, "Drums of Affliction: Real Phenomenon or Scholarly Chimaera?" in *Religion in Africa*, 160-81.

14. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987); John L. Sorenson, "Ritual as Theology and as Communication," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 117-28.

15. Hugh Nibley, *Tinkling Cymbals and Sounding Brass: The Art of Telling Tales about Joseph Smith and Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991).

group life facilitated by sharing a culture and speaking a common language, and unified by a comprehensive power structure.

Of course, there are differences. A crucial one is the claim to universality and exclusiveness by Deseret religion. Traditional religions, be they African or other, have no claims on unique truth, nor on universal application or exclusive authority. Such a pretension is far removed from the everyday practicality of local religions.[16] Claims of universality and exclusivity belong in the Christian/Moslem sphere,[17] not in the tolerant and easy-going traditional religions of Africa and elsewhere. It is this feature, however, that will transform the colonized Deseret people into the religious colonizer of the rest of the world.

From "Tribe" to American Colony: Deseret's Domestication

The usual historical way that African groups entered into the wider world was through the colonization process of being conquered and defined as part of an empire, often British and French, but sometimes Portuguese or Dutch. In any case, inclusion in a colonial state transformed the African groups, in fact "domesticating" them into citizens of a larger empire. This domestication entailed the installation of markets (for imperial products), the extraction of minerals and primary products (for imperial use), the establishment of education, health services, and a new religion, plus occasional conscription for imperial wars. Deseret Mormons followed quite a similar process.

For the tribe of Deseret, domestication came quickly. This first transformation, usually dubbed the "Americanization" of the LDS Church, started at the end of the nineteenth century, though many processes had been set in motion much earlier.[18] The abolition of plural marriage, for example, was, in a sense, welcome in many Church cir-

16. Walter E. A. van Beek and Thomas D. Blakely, "Introduction," in *Religion in Africa,* 1-20.

17. H.U.E. "Bonno" Thoden van Velzen and Walter E. A. van Beek, "Purity, a Greedy Ideology," in *The Quest for Purity: Dynamics of Puritan Movements,* edited by Walter E. A. van Beek (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton, 1987), 3-35.

18. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Ethan R.

cles.[19] This transformation was not completed until well after World War I, so it cannot truly be called revolutionary. Still, it occurred rather swiftly and smoothly, the adaptation by Mormon society progressing along natural lines, even with its peculiar contradictions.[20] Of course, this transformation was in large part an aspect of the industrialization of Utah, yet the integration of the changes was remarkable.

Now let us see what changes this transformation has wrought in the "tribal" characteristics of the people of Deseret, now transformed into the "Domestic Church."

Domestic Mormons no longer occupied a distinct territory, though there still was a recognized Mormon core area or corridor in the American West.[21] A latent ideology of gathering still prevailed, and people still tended to settle in the core area, although lack of economic opportunity there resulted in a near-balance between immigration and emigration as early as the 1920s.[22] In the face of economic realities (lack of arable land, obstacles to dramatic industrialization, etc.), in the last three-quarters of a century, leaders of the Domestic Church have had to move away from the nineteenth-century ideology of the territory and of gathering in Zion.[23] The external holy place outside the tribal boundary (Missouri-as-Zion) decreased in ritual importance, and statements of the

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Yorgason, *Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

19. John L. Sorenson, "Mormon Folk and Mormon Elite," *Horizons* 1, no. 1 (1983): 4–18; Yorgason, *Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region*, 40, 212–23.

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

21. Donald W. Meinig, "The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847–1964," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55 (June 1965): 191–220; Donald W. Meinig, "The Mormon Nation and the American Empire," *Journal of Mormon History* 22 (Spring 1996): 33–51.

22. James P. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 499.

23. Ronald D. Dennis, "Gathering," and A. D. Sorensen, "Zion," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1992): 2:536–37, 624–26.

founder about the larger definition of Zion (America-as-Zion, read United States of America-as-Zion) were stressed.[24]

Kinship was less frequently mentioned as a basis for either association or gathering, and the functional interrelationships of roles became more important than common descent. The former marriage system changed beyond recognition. Polygyny as the cultural ideal became contrary to group norms after a prolonged and bitter fight with the colonizing society, although it lingered on in a vague theological sense. The colonized Domestic Church no longer differentiated itself from mainstream America in many respects, save by a general conservative stance, trailing slightly behind the changes in the society at large; although it should be noted that, from a European viewpoint, American denominations are very conservative indeed. Genealogy continues as a serious, though rather esoteric, interest.[25]

Characteristic of domestication was the changing position of women. Traditional societies, even if they relegate women to a seemingly lower social status, in fact leave women considerable leeway in fulfilling their own goals and objectives. Inclusion in a larger society often puts this freedom at risk. The same process happened in the Domestic Church. Women's influence in official matters has always been marginal. But, as elsewhere, their influence was maximal in times when the structure of society was weakest:[26] the laying on of hands by women, the vigils for dying sisters, and women poets who wrote the hymns of Zion came to an end when the hierarchical structure of Domestic Mormon society reasserted itself.[27] This organizational marginalization of women has been clear in the "Correlation" movement inside LDS Church gov-

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24. Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 29–33; Yorgason, *Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region*, 165–68.

25. For a fascinating analysis of the Mormon distinctiveness of "family history," see Fenella Cannelli, "The Christianity of Anthropology," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 11 (2005): 335–56.

26. Van Velzen and van Beek, "Purity, a Greedy Ideology," 8–9.

27. In anthropological terminology, women rose to the forefront in *liminal* times, when the values of *communitas* for a short time gained the upper hand over *structure*, *communitas* referring to the experience of relating to others as fellow-humans in contrast to relations through structural differences. Linda King Newell,

ernment.[28] In this internal colonizing project the women's organization lost its periodical, its margin of autonomy, its funds, and—in part—even its building. With "correlation," domestication was completed: the Domestic Church was an American colony, and prophetic aspects gave way to managerial skills.[29]

African groups often used to decry their own backwardness, yearning for modernization as a way to respectability.[30] Americanization, as the domestication of Deseret is usually called, resulted in a similar search for respectability by the Domestic Church. The link between Mormons and American culture always was strong and grew even stronger.[31] In fields that have no direct bearing on its fundamental message, such as sports and athletics, the Church proudly advertised the achievements of its members, following the American appreciation of competitive sports and national media exposure; a sports hero who competes on Saturdays but not on Sundays is considered a good role model and, except for the last quarter century, might be called to speak in general conference. Though not uncritical of present-day American life,[32] Mormon society enthusiastically embraced those elements that led to acceptance of Mormons as respectable Americans, if not *the* respectable Americans.

"Tribal" self-sufficiency had to go in this transformation. The territory of Deseret had become the much smaller state of Utah (and environs), and the colony was increasingly drawn into a larger world. At first

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"A Gift Given, a Gift Taken: Washing, Anointing, and Blessing the Sick among Mormon Women," *Sunstone* 6 (September/October 1981): 16–25.

28. Maxine Hanks, ed., *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992); Marie Cornwall, "The Institutional Role of Mormon Women," in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives*, edited by Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 239–64.

29. Hugh Nibley, "Leaders to Managers: The Fatal Shift," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16, no. 4 (Winter 1983): 12–21; Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 156–76.

30. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 239–57; Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 21–59.

31. John L. Sorenson, "Mormon World View and American Culture," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1973): 17–29.

32. John L. Sorenson, "Mormon Folk and Mormon Elite," *Horizons* 1, no. 1 (1983): 4–18.

the old Deseret furnished the American metropolis raw materials (e.g., through mining companies) and uninhabited expanse (for military exercise grounds and nuclear testing grounds); in this the new Utah showed itself a colony of the United States, with a definite dependency on the metropolises on either coast of the United States.[33] As development continued, the Domestic Church (albeit reluctantly) settled into its function as a part of a larger machine.[34] Though the general implications of this growing dependency were hardly seen as a problem, a marginal tendency to fight dependency remained. Self-help and self-reliance were highly valued, community orientation applauded, and welfare programs developed to heighten individual and local Church self-sufficiency. The ideal of a self-reliant, autonomous community or society continued to live on in modified fashion as family independence.[35]

From Colony to Colonizer

In the 1960s most African countries became independent, and the situation of the local groups changed to some extent. The "tribal" labels imposed by the colonizer were not removed, and relations with the former empire became very ambivalent.[36] On the one hand, the newly independent states tried to put as much political distance between themselves and the colonizer as possible; but on the other, they remained highly dependent on their former overlords. In economy, education, technology, health, and in almost every other sector, they had to rely on expertise, help, and financial aid from the North. As a result, what emerged from the colonial states were not independent entities, but neo-colonial states—in name independent, but *de facto* satellites of the old imperial center.

In anthropology this situation has been expressed in the *dependencia* model, developed primarily to characterize the relationship between the

33. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition.*

34. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive.*

35. Garth L. Mangum and Bruce D. Blumell, *The Mormons' War on Poverty: A History of LDS Welfare, 1830–1990* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993).

36. Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (London: James Currey, 1992).

United States and Latin America.[37] In this model the "metropolis" creates "satellites" through inequalities in political power and economic exchange. The metropolis is not only enriched by this relation, but also keeps satellites subdued; the process has been called the "development of under-development." This relation holds for Africa vis à vis Europe: African countries, with the exception of South Africa, can be considered neo-colonies or satellites of the European metropolis, and the political unification of Europe has even stipulated this relationship. For example, most French-speaking African countries use a currency that is directly dependent upon the Euro.

For their part, the Mormons, who had been a more or less "tribal" society during the nineteenth century, became an American colony beginning in the early twentieth century, and then gradually gained their own power. The Domestic Church had become part of the metropolis, and—by virtue of its own ideology—even became colonizer. It now colonized the rest of the world, the mission field, in a curious reversal of history. So here our narrative switches from the relationship between the Church and the United States toward the relationship within the Church between metropolis and periphery, or between what Quinn calls the Headquarters Culture and International Church.[38] The reason to link the two relationships is obvious: the same processes that shaped Deseret and the Domestic Church are now impinging upon the Church Abroad. With international expansion, the notion of the "Domestic Church" changes from a "domesticated American Church" into "homeland headquarters" versus the international periphery.

The mission field had always been the feeding ground for the growth of Deseret, the Utah-based Church growing from both its own dynamics and input from various mission fields. After domestication, the outer world was no longer a recruiting ground for new homeland inhabitants, as immigration gradually slowed. Colonial units away from the Mormon core area were established in most regions where formerly the new tribesmen had been recruited. The main characteristic of these units has

37. Andre G. Frank, *Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment* (London: MacMillan, 1978).

38. D. Michael Quinn, "LDS 'Headquarters Culture' and the Rest of Mormonism: Past and Present," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, nos. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2001): 135–64.

been their dependence on the Domestic Church, in ideology, leadership, mission personnel, and finances. The relation is characterized by a clear hierarchy between colonizer and colonized, uncritical adoption of the colonizer's culture, view of the colony as an area to be developed, inequality in financial and personnel exchange, unequal distribution of relevant knowledge, etc. These colonial wards and branches were explicitly seen to represent a stage in a process of growth, a transition toward greater autonomy, but not independence–following the model of the erstwhile African colonies.

This colonial relationship came under tension in the period of rapid expansion between World War II and 1980. Spectacular growth erupted, presenting new challenges to domestic Mormonism, both in terms of control and theology.[39] Any African colonial system has a dual society–in fact, a two-tiered system. The colonizer and colonized are different, but the colonized have to be as equal as possible among themselves. A colony is a foreign territory ruled by law, which should apply to all subjects equally, at least to all subjects within the colony. Thus, the colonizing Domestic Church, now a metropolis creating satellites, had to undo all internal differences among the people it ruled over. But here was a problem. Basing itself upon a fully tribal myth of dispersed Israelite tribes, the old Deseret theology had compared missionizing to the calling home of dispersed kinsmen, especially from the tribe of Ephraim. However the Church grew rapidly in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, areas where descent and kinship through ancient Israel were not particularly obvious or explicable. The notion of Latter-day Saints as descendants of Ephraim had to be deemphasized, which, in fact, happened.[40] Even more important was the change toward color-blindness, a development which needed a full-blown revelation to undo an informal myth that had hardened into popular doctrine.[41]

Growth into a large Church also raised other doctrinal problems. A focus on the elect, hunted out among the masses of the unrepentant, has

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39. Lowell C. Bennion and Lawrence A. Young, "The Uncertain Dynamics of LDS Expansion, 1950-2020," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 119-29.

40. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children.*

41. Armand L. Mauss, "The Fading of the Pharoahs' Curse: The Decline and Fall of the Priesthood Ban against Blacks in the Mormon Church," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14, no. 3 (Fall 1981): 10-45. For an account of one

been part of the Mormon heritage. The paths to Zion are repeatedly defined as narrow and steep, trodden by few. The notion that all people might, but will not, be saved because of their love for worldly things is a central doctrine.[42] Mormonism has always tried to avoid the choice between "a Church of the elect" and "a Church for all people" by claiming to gather the kindred elect from the Diaspora.[43] With growth in membership and recruitment area, the notion of "elect" has been redefined in a similar way as the notion of "gathering."

Any colonizing project also changes the colonizer profoundly. The Netherlands has in the past colonized what is now Indonesia, just as England and France have colonized most of Africa. These European countries cannot be understood apart from the influence their colonies exerted upon them. The colonization project changes everyone involved. The same happened within Mormon history, as exemplified in some theological concepts. The idea of gathering in Zion formerly, implicitly as well as explicitly, meant immigration to the core region of Deseret; now Zion was stressed as a ubiquitous presence, a tree to be planted deeply in foreign soils. The stakes of Zion (Deseret at first had been but a single stake) were the new gathering nodes. Thus, territory had been rendered abstract. Formerly Zion was a particular place in America; now it can be anywhere.

The spiritualization of goals, well-known in expanding African churches, has occurred for Mormonism, too. From a specific place, Zion has been spiritualized into the "pure of heart," a fairly easy transformation thanks to scripture allowing this definition received even before the Deseret period.[44] Of course, there still is a notion of a center stake, although it is now seen in the popular mind as Salt Lake City. Even so, Missouri ideology, though latent, also lingers vaguely on.

A correspondingly gradual decrease in the immediacy of eschatolog-

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scholar's negotiations with LDS leaders and scholars as he was preparing to publish on the doctrine, see Lester E. Bush, "Writing 'Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview' (1973): Context and Reflections, 1998," *Journal of Mormon History* 25, no. 1 (1999): 229–71.

42. Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Burlington, England: Ashgate, 2000), 162–63.

43. Dennis, "Gathering," and Sorensen, "Zion."

44. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism*, 29–33.

ical expectations has set in. This is less clear than the territorial change but can be gleaned from various sources. One indication is that, in patriarchal blessings bestowed around World War II, one frequently heard the phrase "marching up to Zion," while in present blessings, this phrase rarely appears, at least in the Dutch stakes. The eschatological climax has been postponed a bit, and even the arrival of the third millennium A.D. could not fire popular Mormon imagination in this direction.[45]

The Mormon Periphery: Satellite and Metropolis

Relations between the Domestic Church and the Church Abroad changed during the years of expansion, from 1980 onwards. The colonial churches have increased in numbers and leadership potential, though by varying rates in different areas. Where strong enough, they have developed into units equivalent to those in the core area in the abilities of their local leaders and in their financial self-support. Still, policy is made by the Domestic Church, and the top leadership generally comes from the core region. Decisions on leadership beyond the local level, on building and missionary policies, and on stake formation are also made there. So the former colony has developed into a satellite, and the former colonizer has changed into a metropolis. The metropolis has not only retained financial and political control over the satellites, but the lines of command have been strengthened at regular intervals. Administrative centralization has countered the centrifugal forces of expansion. One example is the metropolis's ambivalent relationship toward the internet. At first, the central Church strongly discouraged private or regional websites, as everything had to be centralized (and controlled) from Utah. When this no longer proved possible, strong directives enabled a limited number of strictly supervised local and regional websites to flourish. In fact, this change came rather late, in 2003; by then the Dutch stakes had already had their unofficial website for five years.

Expansion means internal growth, too. The administrative apparatus has mushroomed; what used to be a tribal council now is a multina-

45. Walter E. A. van Beek, "Chiliasme als Identiteit: De Heiligen en hun Aller Laatste Dagen," in *Maar Nog is het einde Niet: Chiliastische Stromingen en Bewegingen bij het Aanbreken van een Millennium*, edited by Lammert G. Jansma and Durk Hak (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), 117–38.

tional board of directors.[46] Still, this professionalization of the apparatus is strictly administrative and, in line with fundamental policy, has not resulted in the emergence of a class of theologians.[47] Specialists of many extractions populate the administrative offices of the Church. Whole careers have sprung up, wholly within the Church but apart from any ecclesiastical work, though some of the top leaders are recruited from these ranks. Consonant with this accent on administration, the personal charisma of the leaders, though occasionally still considerable, has followed the route Weber outlined with his concept of the "routinization of charisma."[48] Charisma devolves from persons to positions, into a positional charisma that proves quite stable and adaptive.[49]

Satellite status implies that the status of the LDS Church inside these countries is different from that in the core region. Whereas the Domestic Church is now the fifth largest American denomination, a major player in a major country, the situation of satellites is different. Abroad they are anomalies on the religious scene, often dubbed "sects." Sociologically—and discounting the derogatory association that goes with the term—"sect" they are.[50] One can expect satellites to identify with those colonial models they know, usually older ones than those currently *de rigueur* in the metropolis.

There seems to be a perceptible time lag in institutional and doc-

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46. D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), and *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997).

47. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism*. It seems that the Church Educational System (CES) now sets the theological tone in the Church.

48. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, (1947; reprinted, New York: Free Press, 1964), 363–70.

49. I concur with Stark's recent critique on "ancestor worship," which should fade away; Rodney Stark, "Putting an End to Ancestor Worship," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43, no. 4 (2004): 465–75. Though Mormonism closely fits the Weberian type (work, frugality, and capitalism) the "Weber thesis," as it is usually referred to, is historically debatable. Nevertheless, Weber's insights on the development of bureaucracies are still important, including the notion of charisma and its subsequent routinization. Here again, the LDS Church provides a very good example.

50. They are sects in the sociological sense because they are small, religiously isolated groups with a definite tension between their own and the surrounding cultures. Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge, *The Future of*

trinal developments between metropolis and satellite. For instance, in these satellite churches the expectation of a literal gathering seems to have lost less of its appeal than in the domestic stakes. In Europe, for example, members still expect a literal, massive gathering to the central United States—still "marching up to Zion." Church programs aimed at self-reliance and self-help, like food storage, often are interpreted as preparations for the great exodus over the ocean. During the late 1980s the first item in food storage for Dutch members was the backpack, filled with food for the long march to Zion.[51] Likewise, I have the impression that, in the overseas areas, the ideals of self-sufficiency and autonomy are voiced much louder than in the United States. In Europe, for instance, some regions try to emulate mid-century conditions in Utah by shying away from government relief for their needy numbers. This, despite the fact that the social welfare network is much stronger in Europe than in the United States, and storage in Europe has no function as a private insurance against joblessness, periods of illness, or other postmodern calamities.

Inside the European Periphery

Most colonial regimes in Africa had their anthropologists, sometimes in official "government anthropologist" positions. Their recording of the tribal ways was appreciated, and the records generated were occasionally used in the *mission civilizatrice* of the empire. Despite knowledge of the other cultures, however, what was passed on to the colonies was the exact replica of the political system of the metropolis, with all of its implicit cultural values. Historian Basil Davidson even calls this replication the "curse of the nation state."[52] Africa's postcolonial development, with its plethora of political disasters, has taught a bitter lesson. Despite all of Europe's insights on foreign culture, it systematically overlooked the simple fact that a postcolonial African state was not going to replicate a European one.

Now the view from the Mormon satellites will replace the view from Africa, a second twist in our tale. The quest is to specify the relationship between satellite and metropolis. The dilemma in the title is clear: Are the

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Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 21–24, 245–47.

51. I was president of Rotterdam Stake in the 1980s and had several meetings with my Dutch and Belgian colleagues on this issue.

52. Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden*, 121.

LDS Church members in the satellites "European Mormons"? Are they first and foremost in their own self-definitions "Mormon," and secondly "European," be it Dutch, English, French or Portuguese? Or are they "Mormon Europeans," for whom their national (and by extension European) identity comes first, sharing the values and norms of their society before those of the LDS Church? This question implies that the message of the LDS Church, both in its voiced texts and in its organizational routines, has American overtones and is part of American culture, an aspect that has been amply demonstrated and commented upon in the literature.[53] Here I give just some examples of this hegemony by pointing out a few Americanisms in Mormon Church culture. I later go into detail on the question of where European culture is different from American to show why Mormonism's appeal is waning in Europe.

First, the hegemony of the metropolis. The literature points out hegemonic elements in some detail.[54] The fact that lesson materials are made in the Domestic Church, to be translated afterwards, indicates that information flows only one way: from the center to the satellite Church, and not vice versa. This direction holds not only for the tiny Dutch-speaking part, but also for the huge Spanish-speaking portion of the Church. This fact is more than a matter of convenience; those who write (and publish) define! The hegemony even extends to the translation itself. According to all known international standards of translation, translation should originate within the goal-language, not in the source-language.

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53. Shipps, *Mormonism*; her "Difference and Otherness: Mormonism and the American Religious Mainstream," in *Minority Faiths in the American Protestant Mainstream*, edited by Jonathan D. Sarna (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 81–109; and her "Surveying the Mormon Image since 1960," *Sunstone* 118 (April 2001): 58–72; David C. Knowlton, "Mormonism in Latin-America: Toward the Twenty-First Century," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 159–76; Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1991); Walter E. A. van Beek, "Ethnization and Accommodation: Dutch Mormons in Twenty-First-Century Europe," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 119–38; Rodney Stark, "The Basis of Mormon Success: A Theoretical Application," in *Latter-day Saint Social Life: Social Research on the LDS Church and Its Members*, edited by James T. Duke (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 29–70; Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*.

54. Quinn, "LDS 'Headquarters Culture.'"

While the LDS Church does have translation departments in the various language areas, it retains a central translation office in the Domestic Church. From there, it exercises considerable control on the translation, even specifying which Bible translation is officially approved for Church use in various areas.

The recent Book of Mormon retranslation project into several European languages (Danish, German, Swedish, Dutch) provides an example. The effort was heavily supervised from Utah with full authorization from the highest levels. Ironically, the Dutch project was almost killed at one point because of criticism from a Dutch General Authority living in Utah[55] and was rescued only by compromise. The directives of the revision were explicit.[56] Since the project was about scripture, and thus highly sensitive, the Church authorities wanted as literal a translation as possible within the confines of both languages. This of course is a possible and, in the case of scripture, comprehensible choice. But the corollary, the trans-

55. He judged the new translation too colloquial; he also thought the new text deviated too much from the biblical text (especially in the Isaiah chapters). But he checked against the wrong Bible translation (the obsolete *Statenvertaling,* which long has held the same position as the King James translation does for the English language area) instead of the currently used NBG translation (*Nederlands Bijbel Genootschap).* Still, as a General Authority, his voice prevailed, and the text had to be changed.

56. This revision had a long history. I participated as a member of the committee reviewing the translations and discussed the situation with the translators in question, who happen to be close friends. In 1986 many new translations (from the English original) were planned for other languages, Dutch among them. For six years a carefully selected and officially called group of members, led by the Dutch Translation Branch, worked on a new text. The result initially was met with great enthusiasm, especially by the Dutch members who were called upon to comment. Later, the text ran into hot water in evaluations at the central level (see previous note), and the whole project had to be redone because of remarks from on high. The new translation had to position itself between the recently produced text and the older version, published together with the new translations of the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price, plus a study guide in a triple combination in 2005. The new translation enjoyed an enthusiastic reception from the Dutch members, some of whom wondered why the newest official Dutch Bible translation (NBV) had not been used; but the two translation projects had proceeded in parallel by coincidence, so it had not been possible to integrate this most recent Dutch Bible translation.

lation guideline, did not follow so obviously. For a large number of English words, in principle and if humanly possible, the same Dutch word was to have been used throughout the scripture. In this way the literal quality of the translation would be guaranteed, it was thought. Of course, any 1:1 translation is a linguistic impossibility. Not only does it fly in the face of acquired wisdom from centuries of translation, but it also negates fundamental differences in languages. Such an effort in translation is, in fact, linguistic nonsense for natural language texts, but it does illustrate the need the metropolis felt for control. Headquarters could check the translation in this manner, without knowing the language. Characteristically, the revision was made under close and continuous supervision by personnel from the translation office in the core area. A supervised session of the final proofreading of the Dutch text provided a rather curious illustration of the need for control. In one day, under watchful American eyes, a variety of native speakers who knew some English, performed the proofreading. It was not a professional job (the Dutch translation department later performed its own proper proofreading at its own initiative), but it was definitely under metropolitan control. The same holds for simultaneous translations of General Conference. Until recently, the central office had Dutch immigrants do the interpreting. After years of listening to these "Dunglish" performances, the professional Dutch translation department was allowed to do it, but only with equipment that allowed Salt Lake to operate the controls.

The presence of a corporate culture throughout the Church is another aspect of Domestic cultural hegemony. Job rotation, the insistence on efficient meetings and some interpersonal formalities vis à vis office holders, the style of reporting on stewardship, and the deference to authority throughout are examples. Crucial is the separation of position and personality, a separation which does not match well many satellite cultures. The missionary organization is replete with corporate Americanisms: numerical goal setting, the almost strangling focus on baptisms, and of course the small power games between missionaries who vie for enviable positions of leadership inside the mission.

Another example is the separation between the sexes. In Europe such a clear separation between male and female worlds is unthinkable and rejected. Couple orientation in Dutch culture is, for example, much more dominant over peer orientation than it is in the United States, so the Mormon separation of the sexes in Church services is regarded as a

strange American phenomenon. As one consequence, Dutch Church leaders decided early on that youth camps would have to be mixed, a fact they carefully concealed from their American superiors. At a deeper level, the thin line between chastity (considered a Christian principle) and prudishness (observed in American public life, especially in the LDS Church) is, in the eyes of the Europeans, definitely and irrevocably crossed by the American core area in the direction of the prudish. An example is the recent directive that youngsters with actual sexual experiences in their past may not be called upon a mission. Here, prudishness seems to have conquered the notions of repentance and forgiveness. Also, rules for lady missionaries are a case in point. Female missionaries are allowed to meet with a local Church official only in a larger meeting or when another woman is present. Even inside the chapel or other public place this holds. Here prudishness defeats efficiency.

The importance of dress codes—even inside a university!—is a sign of institutional prudishness on the one hand and of corporate culture on the other. Recently an apostle argued for white shirts in Church on the basis of a color symbolism (white = pure) that not only is definitely Atlantic (white is the color for mourning in East Asia, and for fertility in Africa) and not universal at all, but also freezes an outdated clothing fashion that once was in vogue in corporate America.

The 1997 pioneer celebration provides an incidental example of Domestic cultural focus. The sesquicentennial's official guidelines, after broadly defining pioneers,[57] suggested a number of activities, each of them focusing mainly on the Utah pioneers, as did the logo (featuring a handcart) and the theme ("Faith in Every Footstep"). The guidelines offered only one cultural translation, relating the example of an LDS branch of Cambodians who celebrated their first "pioneer" converts—not in Cambodia, however, but in Utah and Massachusetts!

Of course, pioneers are extremely important in the formation of the Church and the United States; but not in other cultures. For one thing, the term "pioneer" does not have the same positive ring in many cultures, and

57. The official letter signed by the First Presidency (January 20, 1995) stressed the pioneer heritage and the positive effect of homage to the pioneer spirit and legacy. The guidelines identified anyone who stands for what is right, lives the commandments, follows the commandments, preaches the gospel, and is an example of a Christian way of life, as a pioneer.

"pioneer spirit" or "pioneer values" has no meaning in communally oriented cultures, let alone "pioneer recipes and meals." More important, each country abroad has its own significant history, often much older than the recorded Deseret one. Each has its own role models, its cultural heroes, its liberators, its founding fathers and mothers. To call them "pioneers" is a misnomer. To try to mold these histories into a "pioneer" framework is not only slightly insulting but also is a missed opportunity. Each of the colonies abroad could have been asked to select significant moments or events in its national history and invited to celebrate them as examples of piety, perseverance, and faith. Synchronization (though, in fact, why synchronize at all?) with the Utah celebration could have resulted in a cross-cultural palette of Christian role models.[58]

Mormon European or European Mormon?

At stake is a crucial difference between metropolis and satellite. Inside the metropolis the Domestic Church is part of a larger, encompassing Mormon culture. Through its self-definition and by its manifold programs and policies, the Church aims at having a large place in the lives of its members. It is what in sociology is sometimes called a "greedy institution," one claiming the whole life of the individual. General Authorities readily concede this point, citing it as evidence of the Church's trueness.

However, such claims give the institution the task of filling the void

58. On this issue, my letter to the editor ("Oh, pioneers. . . .," *Sunstone* 20, no. 1:2) generated some flak from Dietrich Kemski of Germany ("Pioneers again," *Sunstone* 20, no. 2:2). He argued that German members had enthusiastically embraced the pioneer celebrations. Indeed, so had some Dutch members, but the results of both were quite pathetic. Television coverage showed some members, both in the Netherlands and Germany, towing handcarts through a forest; the commentaries were scathing in their friendly condescension: the "Mormons" were portrayed as people not from this world, imitating American customs totally unrelated to European reality. If those celebrations did anything, it was to reinforce the image of Mormons as a sect. Eric A. Eliason, "The Cultural Dynamics of Historical Self-Fashioning: LDS Pioneer Nostalgia, American Culture, and the International Church," *Journal of Mormon History* 28, no. 2 (2002): 160, is correct in assuming that German culture asserts more links to the Wild West than Dutch culture. But I seriously doubt his assumption that pioneer nostalgia could be a productive symbol worldwide.

it has created by separating converts from their old environment.[59] Mormonism never was simply a faith; it always was a "way of life." In the nineteenth century, this way of life was realized by the "gathering," in which the Mormons could be a people and where being Mormon implied participation in that group's culture. The old Deseret Church could become a greedy institution by virtue of its social inclusiveness. A saving grace has been the value placed on pragmatism. Mormons always have considered themselves a practical people and their religion a practical one. The practical bent of Mormon society prevented the greediness of the institution from being all-consuming. That pragmatism is highly visible in the history of that extreme form of institutional command over individual lives called the United Order, which was either a failed short-lived ideal or merely an opening phase of territorial colonization.[60] The people retreated from it as soon as its impracticalities became evident.

With Americanization, the Church's inclusiveness dwindled. The life of Mormons became more secularized, consonant with the general American movement toward a more secular society.[61] But the Deseret period plus the subsequent period of Americanization involved a culture region with Mormon dominance where a Mormon (sub)culture could evolve, supporting both the implementation of the belief system and people's accommodation to it and to the mainstream American culture.[62]

For Church members in the satellite areas, however, the picture is different. In official ideology, the Church is defined as an institution that should direct the lives of its members. Satellite members support this claim and realize that their way of life should be markedly different from that of their non-Mormon countrymen. The Church Abroad, evidently, cannot fill the cultural functions demanded by this ideology, as the minority situa-

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59. For an incisive description of converts' isolation from a strongly Catholic culture, see Wilfried Decoo, "Feeding the Fleeing Flock: Reflections on the Struggle to Retain Church Members in Europe," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 97–118.

60. Leonard J. Arrington, Dean L. May, and Feramorz Y. Fox, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons*, 2d ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976). The United Order was an experiment in communitarian economy that is now considered by the Church as an ideal, but presently unfeasible, way of life.

61. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive.*

62. Yorgason, *Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region.*

tion precludes formation of a supporting Mormon culture, with guidelines for both living and bending the rules. The absence of a mediating Mormon culture creates the dilemma of a Church that should be important in most aspects of its members' lives but which does not have the means to serve as a "total way of life." Members in minority situations always face the question of how one can, as a Mormon, be different from the "gentiles" without a fully organized, supportive Mormon culture. The result, in sociological terms, is called—however much one might deplore the negative connotations—a sect: a group with built-in tensions with the surrounding culture.[63]

So, for satellite members, the Mormon Americanisms are clear, but the differences of their own culture from that part of American culture that shines through in Mormonism are even more relevant. Let us now look at what this predicament means to Mormons in Europe, the oldest colony and the oldest satellite—but not the most successful satellite. European LDS membership is characterized by stagnating growth (little or no growth, even some receding numbers), with the majority of new converts not from the autochthonous population, but from immigrant minorities.[64] Despite the insistence on conversion of families—still the official mission policy—whole families that convert are extremely rare. The European Church is dominated by the second and third generations who descend from the autochthonous population, while a small margin of immigrant people keeps coming in and filtering out. The result is a small, inward-looking denomination, largely invisible to the outside, in which leadership simply passes to successive generations of insiders.[65]

What is the relation of this stagnant growth to the satellite situation? It is my thesis that the changing relation between metropolis and satellites (i.e., the United States and European countries) is at the heart of this predicament. As an example of a European country, I take the Netherlands, which not only is best known to me, but also has within Europe a certain vanguard role in new developments, especially where general tolerance and certain personal freedoms are concerned.

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63. Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion*, 21.

64. Gary C. Lobb, "Mormon Membership Trends in Europe among People of Color: Present and Future Assessment," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 55–68.

65. A small survey taken in a selected number of wards and branches in the Netherlands has produced this observation, to be used in a later paper.

Like all European countries, the Netherlands ("Holland" for short) is a very secular country, much more so than American visitors realize in their visits to the "old country." The issue is that Holland has turned secular in the last half century. Up until World War II, the Dutch social landscape was dominated by denominational competition. Each major sector of the population had its own denomination, whether Roman Catholic or one of the manifold versions of the ever-splitting Protestant Churches, divided roughly by a north-south division. Each of these denominations had its own social world, a so-called "pillar," consisting of an educational system, health services, social services, and even a broadcasting system. The Socialist (not Communist!) part of the population, dispersed throughout the country, had its own "pillar" as well. Someone who grew up within a—say Protestant—Church joined a "school with the Bible," played on a Protestant soccer club, went to a Protestant university, married a Protestant woman, had children delivered in a Protestant hospital and monitored by a Protestant health service organization, listened to Protestant radio, voted the Protestant political party, and eventually, in a Protestant old age home, died a pious death, and was buried by an undertaker from his or her own faith. The rest of Holland did the same in their respective pillars.

This "pillarization" started at the turn of the twentieth century with a struggle for the control of schools. Its heyday lasted half a century. After World War II, the pillar system crumbled with increasing speed in a process called "depillarization" that not only divided social and welfare services from denominations but eroded the whole confessional basis of Dutch society.[66] Holland went from a fully religious society, not to a civil society with strong churches, but to a civil society in which churches had lost their *raison d'être.* Of course, industrialization and continuing urbanization contributed to this trend as well, but the main religious trend was a massive leave-taking by members, a progressive drop in attendance.

The role of the churches changed from a major structural element in society into a peripheral institution, taking as their main function the preservation of some elements of Calvinist culture as well as providing a general conscience for the nation as a whole, albeit often through individual voices of warning. Throughout, the churches compete not with one another, but

66. Karel Dobbelaere and Lillian Voyé, "From Pillar to Postmodernity: The Changing Situation in Belgium," *Sociological Analysis* (recently renamed *Sociology of Religion*) 51 (Suppl. 1990): S1-S13.

with non-church organizations, voluntary organizations, welfare organizations, pressure groups, etc. It has been argued that organizations such as Green Peace, Foster Parents (now "Plan International"), Amnesty International, and the Red Cross better represent the general Christian culture in the Netherlands than the remaining churches do. The fact that Holland routinely gives the highest percentage of GNP in the world (together with the Scandinavian countries, to which Holland is culturally very close) in development aid is indicative. So, not only are the churches empty, but they have lost to secular organizations their main power to provide meaning. After decades of attendance losses, averaging 2 percent per year, the trend seems to have slowed somewhat, however. Sociologists of religion now dare to speak of a rock bottom of Dutch religiosity, embodied in small, isolated, but stable religious communities, small islands in a secular sea.

Other European countries followed different pathways to secularization, resulting in effectively similar situations.[67] Belgium, predominantly Roman Catholic, never had strongly competing pillars, but here the Catholic Church became heavily engaged in movements for social welfare and equity. There, the Roman clergy, also with the help of some charismatic

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67. For a comparison with other "satellites," see *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996), especially contributions from Ian G. Barber and David Gilgen, "Between Covenant and Treaty: The LDS Future in New Zealand," 207–22; Michael W. Homer, "LDS Prospects in Italy for the Twenty-First Century," 139–58; Thomas W. Murphy, "Reinventing Mormonism: Guatemala as Harbinger of the Future?" 177–92; Marjorie Newton, "Toward 2000: Mormonism in Australia," 193–206; Jiro Numano, "Mormonism in Modern Japan," 223–25. See also Henri Gooren, "Analyzing LDS Growth in Guatemala: A Report from a Barrio," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 97–116; Jörg Dittberner, "One Hundred Years of Attitude: The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Free and Hanseatic City of Bremen," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 51–70; Lamond F. Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987), and "Mormon Colonies in Mexico," in *Historical Atlas of Mormonism*, edited by S. Kent Brown (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 110–11; Marc A. Schindler, "The Ideology of Empire: A View from 'America's Attic,'" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 50–74. The Haiti example, with its creative syncretism, deserves special attention here: Jennifer Huss Basquiat, "Embodied Mormonism: Performance, Vodou, and the LDS Faith in Haiti," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 37, no. 3 (Winter 2004): 1–34.

personalities, became the country's major voice of conscience, displacing other-worldly goals in favor of this-worldly objectives. Germany experienced a process more like Holland's, though pillarization never was as fully expressed. Germany always had known secular civil society and nonconfessional service organizations, but here the people's retreat from religion meant simply declining church attendance, not abandoning the church altogether (the Dutch option). People stay on as members of record, still paying church taxes, which are collected through the state tax system. In fact, most of Europe's inter-church and ecumenical activities are financed by this *Kirchensteuer* (church tax) from Germany, where religion has become a default option.

These varieties of secularization are quite different from the U.S. situation. Of course, the genesis of the United States has been a thoroughly religious process, and civil society in the United States rests upon the denomination as the second of two foundations (the other is the school system). Churches operate in a denominational market, but choosing a denomination is a normal option. The default option in Germany is paying a church tax, in Holland joining a preservation project, in Belgium going to mass for the wedding and funeral; but in the United States, one joins a denomination of one's choice. The church (and school) networks form the main venues for the formation of sodalities and provide most of the educational and recreational programs. In Europe, all these functions have their own organizations, unconnected to the religious sphere.

The vast majority of Dutch and European culture lies beyond the realm of religion, and anyone joining or being active in a church has to explain why. Colleagues, fellow students, neighbors, and family routinely suppose one is not affiliated with a church. As any membership needs constant explanation, membership in a small and unusual group, such as the Mormon Church, demands double explanation. Explaining why one is religious is easier than explaining adherence to something often dubbed a "sect." This change has been obvious from the 1970s onward, when depillarization shook the foundations of Dutch society, changing the political landscape, health services, education and—yes—even broadcasting. It also coincided with a diminishing role for the Netherlands' age-old Calvinist culture, with its Bible scholarship and general scriptural proficiency. The values remained but more as general norms of a welfare-oriented society than as part of a religious legacy. In this society, large differences in wealth were intolerable, and tolerance of cultural and social

differences was the norm. The Netherlands became an anti-hegemonic society with deeply embedded values of social justice and equity.

Although this culture is changing, moving toward the political right in its confrontation with another hegemonic ideology, Islam, these are the values Dutch Mormons are not only familiar with, but also deeply share. The base culture for LDS membership is Dutch social culture, with compassion for the less fortunate, tolerance toward different opinions, and the notion that one not only has to cooperate but also to compromise to reach one's goals. Political parties never rule alone, but always in coalitions, often through long and difficult negotiations. No one stands out, and no one has the right to hegemony, since consensus can always be reached through constant consultation. No longer is the social model a multi-confessional one as in the past; rather, it is now called a "polder" model (the Dutch term for a reclaimed low flatland), suggesting a consensus reached where everybody has all relevant information and decisions are taken together, shouldered by as large a majority as can be found—perhaps a rather "flat" compromise.

Permissive Dutch society bears the stigma of drugs and other vices among some outsiders (especially for the French and Americans), but most Dutch do not experience any drug problems at all, and a permissive drug policy finds massive support in Dutch society, including among LDS members. The same attitude holds true for other social issues on which Holland is ahead of the European pack: the acceptance of homosexuality and same-sex marriages, the regulation of abortion, and the official regulation of careful practices for euthanasia. The Dutch sometimes are shocked to hear American evangelicals lash out against the "killer doctors" in Holland and almost never recognize their own legislative models and medical practices from the hyped-up accusations from across the ocean. The dignity of life has precedence, in Dutch eyes, over the absolute number of days of life.

The Domestic Church standpoint is much closer to the general American vision and finds little resonance in Holland, even among LDS Church members. For instance, the acceptance of homosexuality as merely a different form of sexuality is pervasive, for LDS members as for other Dutch; and tales of American institutions (BYU is mentioned sometimes) that tried to "heal" this "affliction" by deprogramming are whispered about with some horror by Dutch members. Also, the general LDS Church stance (one may be a homosexual but not practice it) is generally considered as less than satisfactory, a blatant denial of the mounting evi-

dence of sexuality's genetic basis. As many Latter-day Saints subscribe to Dutch cultural norms and government policy on these issues, they tend to avoid discussion about them in church since their collective stance would stand out against an LDS Church policy they find awkward.

One example: A few years ago, when the Domestic Church openly mobilized members in California against same-sex marriages, an apostle told European stake presidents to fight against legislation accepting same-sex marriages in European countries. All stake presidents listened dutifully and then conveniently forgot the advice. First, that debate had been completed years ago. America was running behind, a situation illustrating the satellite aspect of European stakes. No LDS voice was heard when those laws were passed in Europe. But more important, the stake presidents felt no reason at all to be against those laws; in fact, acceptance of same-sex marriages takes so much wind out of these fruitless debates that homosexuality becomes much less of an issue for Church members as for others. Finally, any political opposition by the satellite churches against legitimizing same-sex unions would be a public relations disaster for the Church in Europe; the general non-Mormon public would experience it as a "great leap backwards." Evidently, this situation is quite different in America—or for that matter in Africa—which more closely resembles the general U.S. opposition against homosexuality. In TV debates in Europe, the ironically humorous question of whether "America is really a modern country" is treated quite seriously.

The general European notion is that permissiveness diminishes the attraction of moral vices. One should not prohibit sinful behavior by law, and Europeans do have some powerful scriptural references in this regard—about forcing people to heaven. The deep European conviction is that alcohol prohibition stimulates drinking, prudishness generates teenage pregnancies, and the war on drugs produces addicts. A restrictive society is the least efficient way to combat vice. European Church members share these opinions, which run deeply against the American grain.

A similar movement in European society concerns the changing definition of marriage. Formerly, civil marriages, followed by a church celebration, were the norm, but with the erosion of religion, the civil transaction also declined. The large majority of Dutch couples start their life together by living together without a formal agreement and gradually move into a

more legal arrangement. One arrangement along the way is a cohabitation contract drawn up by a notary of state.[68] These contracts have full legal status, including in tax matters. Dutch society has learned that there is more than one way to contract a marriage, each having its own legal status and social acceptance. Here again, the American Church's definition of marriage (exclusively contracted at the civil registrar, for in Holland the temple ceremony and other religious rituals do not count as legal) is at variance with Dutch culture and, consequently, with the notions of Dutch LDS members. Most of them deplore this gap between America and Europe and see no compelling reason why people living in perfectly harmonious unions, solemnized by notaries, should be considered as living in sin.

For Dutch Mormons this difference, as well as the others mentioned, is first and foremost a question of culture, not a question of doctrine. They have the impression that the Dutch views as expounded here, could in large measure be accommodated within the restored gospel without losing any essential teachings. Some members argue that the proscriptions, like that against homosexuality, have a shallow Old Testament basis, not reinforced in either the New Testament or modern revelations, and that the LDS Church could learn from other Christian churches in this respect. But as these issues are viewed as mainly cultural problems, in fact as "Americanisms," most members have little tendency to engage in doctrinal discussions or debates on scriptural texts; they feel that the existing body of doctrine could allow for more leeway in the social practices of Latter-day Saints. But at the leadership level, some attempts to discuss, for instance, the definition of marriage in meetings with General Authorities were struck down quickly by the Domestic Church. As yet, there seems to be no room for such discussions. Thus, many members make some separation between doctrine and their evaluation of existing social practices, a cognitive compartmentalization that comes with the minority situation of being a non-European orthodox church in a secularized environment or, I might add, even a church on the road to fundamentalization.[69]

In conclusion, the members in Europe are not European Mormons,

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68. The Dutch "notary" is a more official, legal, and authoritative version of the American "notary public."

69. Van Beek "Pathways of Fundamentalisation: The Peculiar Case of Mor-

but definitely Mormon Europeans. One last reason will be discussed below: the diminishing status of the United States, the colonizer.

The U.S. Connection: From Asset to Liability

In the twentieth century, the expansion of the Domestic Church coincided with the expansion of U.S. influence and power, a situation reminiscent of the growth of the first Christian Church together with the Roman Empire. In the latter case, the empire provided the political and economic context for the spread of Christianity, but this relationship is more complicated in the Mormon case. Mormonism never was dominant in the United States, but the American political and security umbrella for the non-Communist world furnished a platform of political respectability for LDS expansion, enabling the Church to present an economic role model as well as a material success story underlying the spiritual message. With the specific role of America in LDS sacred history—a unique Mormon feature—Mormonism tied in well with a positive general evaluation of the United States. After World War II, the Mormons could bask in the sunshine of the successful pacifier (likewise, most colonizations in Africa started out as a pacification as well as a conquest) and deliver their message within a framework of political success.

However, colonization processes move ever faster, and likewise decolonization dynamics. Any colonizer inevitably faces the loss of prestige and status among its colonies, satellites, and other dependent entities. The status of France in West Africa, of Great Britain in East Africa, and of the Netherlands in Indonesia, has suffered severely because of their presence-in-power there. Decolonization comes with demystification of the former colonizing power, and the colonizers fall from grace. France is quite unpopular in West Africa, the Netherlands likewise in Indonesia, and the former French colony of Vietnam turned to the United States for protection. So, being a former colonizer is not an asset, but rather a liability.

The LDS Church is facing the same dilemma in many countries, especially those in Europe. Considering the fact that European Mormons are full members of their own native culture, the reputation of the United

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monism," *The Freedom to Do God's Will: Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change*, edited by Gerrie ter Haar and James J. Busuttil (London: Routledge, 2002), 111–43.

States in Europe is highly relevant, both for the membership and in explaining the lack of proselytizing success. The LDS Church is inevitably, and in many ways correctly, seen as an American church, and outsiders fully perceive the metropolis-satellite situation.

But the status of America has changed considerably over the past decades. U.S. status, in addition to secularization and adherence to national cultures, is the third factor influencing membership in Europe. The Church is not only American in culture, but politically clearly pro-American as well, with patriotism considered a major virtue. It is this U.S. connection that, in just a few decades, has shifted from an asset to a liability. The Domestic Church has also become a major player in the American political and religious arena, while almost never being seen as criticizing American actions or issues. The sole remaining superpower after the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, America views itself as the policeman of the world. Of course, the United States was instrumental in the liberation of Europe from the Nazi yoke, and of course most Europeans would rather have the United States patrolling the world than the former USSR. Yet one has to remember that gratitude is a fleeting feeling, one that cannot be cashed in on any longer.

Though few Europeans would prefer a different policeman, most would prefer none at all. Americans, though, prefer to be liked as nice people, an assessment that most of the time is correct; but then they forget that power can be envied, emulated, or admired, but never liked. A major power must flex its muscles from time to time to remain strong and be seen as such, and indeed, that is what the United States does. It has participated in, and recently even instigated, wars in other parts of the world and is now seen not as a peacekeeper but as a warlike nation.[70] In a recent survey in Holland among secondary school girls, George W. Bush came out as the major threat to world peace just ahead of Osama Bin Laden. True, the girls might have been mistaken or misinformed, but the sentiment is clear and pervasive.

In viewing the American proclivity for war—in sensing first of all the American idea that problems can be solved by war—Europeans with some historical memory reflect on the myriad wars made on their own continent, musing on how little effective change and progress all those wars brought.

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70. Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wynn Davies, *Why Do People Hate America?* (Cambridge, U.K.: Icon Books, 2002).

Three rules stand out in European history: (1) Colonial wars will always be lost, e.g., the Netherlands in Indonesia; (2) Wars of liberation will always be won by the population, e.g., Vietnam against the French and the Americans; and (3) Winning the peace is more important than winning the war—the lesson Germany taught England after World War II, as the Western allies failed to learn it after the First World War.

The European impression is that America is fighting a colonial war in Iraq, which might be turning into a liberation war and which definitely risks losing the peace. This kind of problem is seldom discussed in LDS Church circles, but the war is very unpopular with the general European public. Europe has seen enough of its own such drive to recognize it in someone else and has no drive to empire left. Europeans are comfortable not being part of a world power; in fact when traveling abroad, not being an American is much safer than being one. In United Europe, the notion of patriotism has lost much of its meaning, at least outside the soccer field. The flag of patriotism has been raised too often: "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel," said Samuel Johnson, an eighteenth-century English essayist. Talleyrand, the old French statesman-philosopher, when musing about patriotism and high treason, said: "Treason? Just a matter of dates!" Furthermore, the United States is not only the sole remaining superpower in the world, but it is also, to a great extent, the defining power of the world, attempting to define for the rest of the world what is a "terrorist" or a "fundamentalist," what is "democracy" or "liberty,"[71] and of course what are "weapons of mass destruction." This effort, again, has eroded the credibility of the center of power.

Dutch Church members of long standing have come to terms with this decline in American credibility, even though, for instance, the absence of LDS Church warnings against war and in favor of peace were sorely missed with the American decision to wage war on Iraq. Only *Dialogue* and *Sunstone* featured some discussion,[72] but these are out of reach for most Dutch members. Yet for new members, the status of America and the uncritical acceptance of any American policy by the Domestic Church defi-

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71. Ibid., 201–2.

72. I found the following articles in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2004) generally well reasoned and convincing: M. Diane Kranz, "Reflections on War of a Liberal Catholic in Mormon Utah," 136–45; Patrick Q. Mason, "The Possibilities of Mormon Peacebuilding," 12–45; Robert M. Hogge,

nitely is an added obstacle. Historically, through the 1980s, the status of America was quite high, as the vanguard of liberty and democracy, eventual defender against the Soviet presence, and of course the liberator of old. But things changed with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Soviet threat disappeared overnight and seemed to have been overestimated anyway. Europe was burdened with the colossal failure of a socialist Utopia, in fact the most dramatic failure of an ideological system the world has ever witnessed. Reunited Germany is still paying the huge price attached to that patriotic ideal.

The American role became unclear. With one superpower gone, the reason for the other evaporated. The liberator became the policeman, and the policeman then instigated colonial wars. It is during this period, the 1980s and the 1990s, that the numbers of Dutch converts declined, only partly replaced by immigrant conversions as European societies became immigration societies. It is with these immigrants, often from Suriname, Africa, and Asia, that the status of America is still high, and association with an American Church is still an asset. But for the native Dutch (and Germans and French), Mormonism's association with America has become a liability.

Thus, the United States in tandem with the Domestic Church makes its position as metropolis very clear by defining Europe as a satellite, both in geopolitical terms and in Church terms. The combination of factors at play—secularization, the continuing adherence to European culture, and the diminishing status of the United States—may be viewed as a silent rebellion of the satellite against the metropolis, in which the rebels simply vote with their feet.

"War Is Eternal: The Case for Military Preparedness," 165–79; Michael E. Nielsen, "Peace Psychology and Mormonism: A Broader Vision for Peace," 109–32; Robert A. Rees, "America's War on Terrorism: One Latter-day Saint's Perspective," 11–30; Richard Sherlock, "Rooted in Christian Hope: The Case for Pacifism," 95–108; and Bradley Cook, "The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Reconsidered," 1–7. But the voices of Church officials were nowhere heard.

A Marvelous Work and a Possession: Book of Mormon Historicity as Postcolónialism

R. John Williams

> *In the discussion period following a January 2003 presentation at BYU, a young Peruvian student named José summed up the dilemma. He told the audience and panelists how he grew up believing he was a Lamanite and now felt "overwhelmed with the surprise coming from science. . . . We don't know where the Book of Mormon took place. We don't know where the Lamanites are. If we don't know who the Lamanites are, how can the Book of Mormon promise to bring them back? It's an identity crisis for many of us that [must] be understood."*[1]

Introduction: 10,000 Parallelomaniacs

Part of this paper deals with a unique and complex book whose authenticity and historicity we are asked to accept on "faith." The book claims to arrive as the secondary translation of some magnificent testimonies con-

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1. Quoted in "Reframing the Book of Mormon" *Sunstone*, No. 121 (March 2004): 9.

taining the story of a family whose intercontinental travel takes them beyond the lands known in the Bible. It speaks of "great wonders." It recounts the story of Adam and Eve (slightly revised, of course). There are bloodthirsty, brutal people who threaten the faith of believers with certain death, thwarted at the last minute by divine intervention. At one point the day actually turns dark. At another, the land becomes "infested by robbers," and the more evil people even participate in cannibalism. It tells of great kings who offer to convert to Christianity. It demonstrates an uncanny knowledge of guerrilla warfare tactics. It has inspired stories of magical salamanders that turn white when placed in fire, and of course it speaks of wonders and magnificence "beyond description." It has even had an indirect influence on the manner in which we refer to Native Americans. But the original text, unfortunately, no longer exists on this earth, and we are left only with the assurances of a "translator" that the testimony contained in the record is "true," although we do not, in fact, have even the complete text as it left the hand of the translator/scribe.

I am speaking, of course, of *The Travels of Marco Polo,*[2] written by one Rustichello of Pisa, a romance-writer who spent time in jail with Marco Polo in 1298 and claims to have recorded Polo's narrative as Polo told it to him. But as I indicate above, there is considerable scholarly debate regarding the authenticity of Rustichello's report. In 1928 Professor L. F. Benedetto produced the first comprehensive version of the Polo manuscripts and, in his introduction, demonstrates that entire passages of the Polo narrative have been lifted verbatim from an Arthurian romance by Rustichello.[3] In Ronald Latham's 1958 introduction to *The Travels,* he addresses a "diversity of opinion" regarding the "actual words" spoken by Polo but concludes that this is "a diversity that need not, however, shake

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2. On the "intercontinental travel" of the Polo family, the creation of Adam, and "great wonders," see *The Travels of Marco Polo,* edited by Ronald Latham (New York: Penguin Books, 1958), 33–34. The trial of the faithful (54–59); "bloodthirsty," brutal people (61); day turns dark (64); land "infested by robbers" (65); salamander (which curiously refers in Polo's text to a type of metal) turning white in fire (89–90); guerilla warfare (101); cannibalism (110); the Great Khan offers to convert to Christianity (120); wonders and "magnificence" beyond description (151, 223).

3. *Il Romanzo Arturiano di Rustichello da Pisa,* Edzione Critica, Traduzione e commento a cura di Fabrizio Cigni; Premessa di Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso (Pisa, Italy: Cassa di Riparmio di Pisa/Pacini, 1994); see also Edmund G. Gardner,

our *faith in the authenticity* of the work as a whole."[4] Latham concedes, however, that "although manuscripts of Polo's work exist in most of the languages of western Europe, not even excluding Irish, not one of these can be regarded as complete; and even by fitting them all together like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle, we cannot hope to reconstitute the original text as it left the practiced hand of Messer Rustichello."[5]

Other scholars are even more skeptical. In *Did Marco Polo Go to China?* Francis Wood argues that Polo's narrative is riddled with inconsistencies and inaccuracies.[6] And regarding Polo's service as a "traveling reporter" for the Great Khan, despite the meticulousness of imperial Chinese historians, there is "no record anywhere of such service."[7] Furthermore, Polo fails to mention some of the most obvious and important Chinese landmarks, such as, for instance, the Great Wall.

But, more to the point, why have I introduced this complex medieval narrative in such a way that my readers are compelled to find parallels between Polo's *Travels* and the Book of Mormon? Of course, since I ask why "my readers" are "compelled" to find parallels between the Book of Mormon and the *Travels of Marco Polo,* I am speaking already of a certain horizon of expectations. To present that particular series of details, invoking key words like "faith," "miraculous," "scribe," and "guerilla warfare," while omitting other elements like "Marco Polo," "1298," "China," and "Emperor," I am playing a "trick" on "my readers" that works only because I am already intimately familiar with the discursive parameters of *Dialogue* readership. I am forcing a particular interpretation, based on my objectives within a particular interpretive community.

The Jewish scholar of the New Testament, Samuel Sandmel, has dubbed this type of selective interpretation "parallelomania," a term that Douglas Salmon then borrows to describe the type of Book of Mormon scholarship championed by Hugh Nibley and other scholars at FARMS. Samuel Sandmel's initial use of the term is clearly pejorative, defining it as

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Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2003).

4. Latham, ed., *The Travels of Marco Polo,* 26; emphasis mine.

5. Ibid., 24.

6. Francis Wood, *Did Marco Polo Go to China?* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998).

7. Ibid., 133.

"that extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction."[8] Thus, "parallelomania" is defined as largely pathological, connoting excess, as if the delineation of parallels were a kind of clinical condition, a "mania," like a phobia or a mental disorder. It is an "extravagance"; it "overdoes" the "supposed" similarity; it proceeds "as if" the connection were inevitable—all phrases that are intended to delegitimate the *a priori* acceptance of certain patterns within a text.[9]

The problem with the label "parallelomania," however, is that characterizing this process as a sickness implies that there are scholars, somewhere out there, for whom the finding of patterns is not tainted by preconceived notions of a given pattern structure. Such a fantasy is seductive but ultimately elusive. Human beings, by definition, are locked into systems of pattern recognition, whether we like it or not. We are, in effect, hard-wired parallelomaniacs, if you like, mega-powerful pattern-finding machines.[10] I recognize, of course, that not everyone will agree with this proposition and that some will complain that any postmodern rejection of positivist epistemology only opens the door to, at best, the potential le-

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8. Douglas F. Salmon, "Parallelomania and the Study of Latter-day Scripture: Confirmation, Coincidence, or the Collective Unconscious?" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 129–56. The Salmon quotation is on p. 131.

9. Salmon's discussion of the parallelomania in Hugh Nibley is equally critical, implying that Hugh Nibley's methodology always operates already under the predetermined authenticity of Joseph Smith's claims. The overarching assumption is that, for these overzealous apologists, certain interpretive communities (rather than the texts themselves) are what account for the identification of parallels or patterns and that the power of these interpretive communities is so strong that people will be able to find patterns in even the most random, absurdly irrelevant texts. This is also the implicit argument of Robert Patterson, "Hebraicisms, Chiasmus, and Other Internal Evidence for Ancient Authorship in *Green Eggs and Ham*," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 163–68, a parody of parallelomania in which the author satirically points to certain "Hebraicisms" and other ancient qualities in Dr. Suess's classic children's book, concluding with mock certainty that the text "must" (or "obviously") have been a translation of something ancient.

10. I am denying here the rather hard and fast distinction most positivist scholars would make between hard "evidence" and a structural "parallel." The

gitimation of all kinds of crazy theories and, at worst, to intellectual chaos. However, simply recognizing that all knowledge is the product of systems of power and culture is not to dictate that all forms of knowledge are equally acceptable. In fact, no one could accept such a proposition anyway. The fact that we are bound within the complex fluctuations of our own interpretive communities means that we will always find our own parallels more compelling and acceptable than those we find elsewhere.

Some have noticed that, in the debate on Book of Mormon historicity, we are witnessing a kind of battle of the parallels. Robert A. Rees has noted:

> It is fascinating that each group looks at the book and finds its own predictable set of parallels. The naturalists [those who reject Book of Mormon historicity] find parallels with the late decades of the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth centuries, and this convinces them that the book is a product of a modern American mind. Meanwhile the apologists [those who defend Book of Mormon historicity] find numerous parallels with the ancient world and conclude that the book could only have origi-

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problem with the supposed superiority of "evidence" over "parallels" has to do with a refusal to see how all epistemologies rely on the very natural human "feedback loop" of evidence and pattern creation. For a brief and fascinating introduction to this process, see Norbert Weiner, *Human Use of Human Beings* (New York: Avon Books, 1986). The basic positivist argument is that "parallels" are ostensibly inferior because they rely on a *text-to-text* relation rather than a *text-to-object* relation, a distinction that persists in most scientific discourse despite a long tradition in Western philosophy (at least since Kant) that denies the human possibility of comprehending any object "in itself." Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* is, of course, where most meta-critical discussions of the debate on Book of Mormon historicity end up. In the May 2004 issue of *Sunstone* alone, there are at least three references to Kuhn's study, even though there are several more interesting and rigorous articulations of postmodern relativity. See, for example, Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981); Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and, for a more rhetorical version, Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982). For a trenchant critique of some of these theories, see Christopher Norris, *Against Relativism: Philosophy of Science, Deconstruction, and Critical Theory* (Oxford, Eng.: Blackwell Publishers, 1997); and Terry Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (Oxford, Eng.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

> nated with ancient peoples. One often feels that the discourse concerning the Book of Mormon has been reduced to, "My parallel arguments are more sophisticated, more authentic, and more persuasive than yours!"[11]

I am inclined to believe that Rees is right, although I should confess that (if I were forced to choose between the two), as a scholar I find the ostensibly anti-metaphysical parallelomania of the naturalists more compelling than the necessarily supernatural parallelomania of the apologists. I am not sure, however, that I *am* forced to choose between the two, particularly in the wake of so many creative "third" options, which I will discuss below. But where I stand on the issue is perhaps less relevant to my discussion than the fact that we are currently witnessing an unparalleled proliferation of parallels. In fact, with Brent Lee Metcalfe's characterization of the current Book of Mormon crisis as a "Galileo Event," we have now entered the realm of *meta*-parallelomania—that is, parallels about parallels.

Metcalfe first introduced the phrase "Galileo Event" at the 2000 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium and defined it as follows: "A Galileo Event occurs when the cognitive dissonance between empirical evidence and a theological tenet is so severe that a religion will abandon the tenet, acquiescing to the empirical data."[12] The comparison entered the debate, then, in an effort to characterize the question as one of science versus religion—the connection being, above all, a *parallel.* That is, according to Metcalfe and others, the way in which the Catholic Church modified its doctrine according to Galileo's discoveries in astronomy is *parallel* to the way in which the Mormon Church has modified (and will continue to modify) its doctrine about the Book of Mormon according to recent scientific discoveries about the lands and people of the book's setting.

I personally find Metcalfe's meta-parallel rather provocative and interesting. However, I am somewhat hesitant to reduce the complicated and social issues of Book of Mormon historicity to the simple and "classic" conflict between science and religion. I wonder, in fact, whether in doing so we risk ignoring the important cultural and political consequences of the conflict. Time spent on picking apart the various geo-

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11. Robert A. Rees, "Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the American Renaissance," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 87.

12. Brent Lee Metcalfe, quoted in Thomas Murphy, "Inventing Galileo," *Sunstone,* No. 131 (March 2004): 58.

graphical and textual inadequacies in the Book of Mormon may actually obscure the more important question of what social *consequences* we can expect to see as a result of this particular battle between parallels. What are the consequences of reinterpreting (or otherwise abandoning) Book of Mormon historicity?

Consequences of Book of Mormon Parallelomania: From *Colónializing* Event to *Decolónialization*

Here I hasten to add that it is not my intention to dismiss the drawing of parallels. As I said before, I am convinced that we all operate within a universal human proclivity for pattern finding. And parallels about parallels can allow us to see aspects of a discursive structure that we might not otherwise have seen. In this sense, I am very much intrigued by the linguistic act of labeling our current situation a "Galileo Event." However, I would like to offer a somewhat different meta-parallel that I hope will draw our attention to some of the more political, cultural, and social consequences of abandoning Book of Mormon historicity. To illustrate what I mean, allow me to flex my own meta-parallelomaniacal muscles for a moment and return to my discussion of Marco Polo, whose *Travels,* you will recall, had something to do with the manner in which we refer to Native Americans.

Such a statement may seem counterintuitive. Marco Polo went to Asia, right? What does his account of those travels have to do with Native American Indians? Quite a lot, actually. *The Travels of Marco Polo* played an important part in inspiring Christopher Columbus to begin his voyage to the western hemisphere. Christopher Columbus had read Marco Polo prior to his voyage in 1492 and made "close to a hundred notations in the margins" of his personal copy.[13] So Columbus left the European continent under the influence of the dubious inspiration of Polo and Mandeville, arriving off the coast of Cuba, Jamaica, and Hispaniola in

13. Interestingly enough, these annotations illustrate a preoccupation with the more sensual elements of Polo's tale, since Columbus marked passages on the exotic sexual practices of those encountered by Polo, in addition to passages about trade and other financial possibilities. Jonathan Spence, *The Chan's Great Continent: China in Western Minds* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 16–17. It is also important to remember that Columbus thought that he had arrived in the "East." According to Stephen Greenblatt, whose book *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 57, "In the late fif-

1492, clearly under the impression that he had landed in the "East." What happened then is well known. The natives living in this "New" World were dubbed "Indians," their lands and possessions were seized, their cultures assaulted, and a campaign of ruthless genocide ensued.

Where, then, are the parallels? How to connect this jumbled mesh of historical events to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon? There are several parallels; and depending on where one stands in the debate on Book of Mormon historicity, one may emphasize a variety of things.[14] First, apologists may find parallels between the geographical confusion of Columbus and that of Joseph Smith. Columbus looked at the American hemisphere, and thought it corresponded to the text(s) he was reading (i.e., Marco Polo, Mandeville), just as Joseph Smith looked at the American hemisphere and thought that it corresponded to the text he was reading/translating (i.e., the

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teenth century that concept [of the "East"] depended principally on Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville, whose books Columbus read and quite possibly carried with him on his first voyage." As I have indicated, Polo's account has been widely discredited, though many scholars maintain that Polo did have some limited contact with the Asian continent; but Mandeville's story of his travels through the Holy Land, Mount Sinai, Babylon, and other places has fared even worse. By the early Victorian era, the authenticity of Mandeville's narrative had been definitively rejected. Mandeville, scholars revealed, was a total sham. As Greenblatt explains: "Intermingled with the extravagant fantasies [i.e., dog-headed men, the gravelly sea, the 'Indians whose testicles hang down to the ground,' etc.] were reasonably persuasive geographical and ethnographic descriptions, but the passages that were convincing seemed to derive from other travelers: William of Boldensele, Odoric of Pordenone, Giovanni de Pian Carpini, Albert of Aix, and others. Mandeville not only failed to acknowledge his sources; he concealed them—'coolly and deliberately,' as his great Victorian editor Sir George Warner puts it—in order to claim that he himself had personally undertaken the dangerous voyages to the Middle East and Asia. He was an unredeemable fraud: not only were his rare moments of accuracy stolen, but even his lies were plagiarized from others" (31).

14. I should note here that I am not the first person to connect Joseph Smith and Columbus. Orson Scott Card, *Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus* (New York: Tor Books, 1997), connects the two in fascinating ways. For an excellent reading of Card's novel as a "radical" critique of issues affecting Mormonism today, see Eugene England "Pastwatch: The Redemption of Orson Scott Card," *AML Annual 2002* (Provo, Utah: Association for Mormon Letters, 2002), 143–56.

gold plates). And, apologists could argue, the fact that Columbus was wrong about which lands were being referred to does not mean that those lands do not exist. The Indians were not from India, but India is, nonetheless a real place. Likewise, Joseph Smith might have been wrong in thinking that the North American Indians were "Lamanites," but that does not necessarily mean Lamanites did not, or do not, exist. We just have to shift our thinking a bit.[15]

And for naturalist scholars of the Book of Mormon, there are parallels too. The appearance ("prophecy") of Christopher Columbus in the Book of Mormon, along with the prophecies of the Revolutionary War, the white settlers' persecution of the Indians, and the protection of the United States as a free land all signal the necessity of reading the book through the lens of a hemispheric geography. The book could not have included all of these hemispheric mythologies, along with the hemispheric language of the "land northward," the "land southward," and the "narrow neck of land," without intending the kind of reading that current DNA evidence would contradict. Indeed, for these critics, the book demands to be read this way.

At this point, then, I have merely used the parallel between Columbus and Joseph Smith to demonstrate what Trent Stephens has already argued in an exchange with Dan Vogel: that the conflict between Book of Mormon apologists and naturalists "comes from the interpretation of texts and data rather than from the texts and data themselves." Stephens's position, which is that "the Book of Mormon story is still true . . . [but

15. Both Columbus and Joseph Smith were convinced that John 10:14–16 referred to the natives they encountered on the American continent. *The Libro de las Profecías of Christopher Columbus,* translated by Delno C. West and August Kling (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991), 229–30. Some non-Mormons remain skeptical of the current DNA narrative for the origins of the Native American Indians. Vine Deloria, for instance, in *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997) argues that much of the scientific "fact" regarding a prehistoric "land bridge" between North America and Asia is flawed and that Indian lore provides as many compelling narratives to explain Native American origins. Deloria's postmodern skepticism, read in the context of FARMS scholarship, makes for some rather interesting ironies, although Deloria's radical critique of Christianity in *God Is Red* (Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum Publishing, 1972), 200–201, did not extend to Mormonism, which he praised as closer to the communal, land-centered Christianity of the Amish than the exploitative hypocrisy of Christianity in general.

that] Middle Eastern colonization in the Americas may have been very small compared to the remainder of the population," is most likely infuriating to Vogel and other positivists for whom the retreat to theories of hermeneutic relativity seems facile and disingenuous.

In Vogel's words, "Scientific method was invented to override emotional biases and help us overcome our tendency to make subjective judgments."[16] Thus, Vogel's rather anti-postmodern faith in scientific objectivity leads him to what he believes is the "truth" about the Book of Mormon, while Stephen's apologetic hermeneutic tendencies allow him to maintain what he believes is the "truth" about the Book of Mormon. But there is one point on which both Stephens and Vogel remain virtually silent: the social and cultural *consequences* of their various "truths."

To allow my parallel between Columbus and Joseph Smith to articulate these potential consequences, let's abandon that particular question of scientific "truth" for a moment and turn to the more cultural and social aspects of the debate on historicity.[17] In a letter to Luis de Santangel regarding his first voyage, Columbus wrote:

> As I know that you will be pleased at the great victory with which Our Lord has crowned my voyage, I write this to you, from which you will learn how in thirty-three days, I passed from the Canary Islands to the Indies with the fleet which the most illustrious king and queen, our sovereign,

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16. Trent Stephens, "The Real Conflict," letter to the editor, *Sunstone*, No. 132 (May 2004): 3–4. The question of how DNA narratives have accumulated the kind of transcendental significance they currently enjoy in our legal system is discussed in Sarah E. Chinn, *Technology and the Logic of American Racism: A Cultural History of the Body as Evidence* (New York: Continuum, 2000), chap. 5: "Reading the 'Book of Life': DNA and the Meanings of Identity."

17. In this sense, I suggest that a description of Book of Mormon historicity that takes into account the various social and cultural consequences of such a concept will be more productive than one that remains caught up in simply "proving" the relative "truth" of the book. Inasmuch as the question of evidence in Book of Mormon historicity is a philosophical or literary question rather than scientific one, I agree with Richard Rorty's neo-pragmatism: "A fully humanist culture, of the sort I envisage, will emerge only when we discard the question 'Do I know the real object, or only one of its appearances?' and replace it with the question 'Am I using the best possible description of the situation in which I find myself, or can I cobble together a better one?'" "A Pragmatist View of Contemporary Analytic Philosophy," lecture at the University of California, Irvine, Humanities Center, April 8, 2005; photocopy in my possession.

> gave to me. And there I found very many islands filled with people innumerable, and of them all I have taken possession for their highnesses, by proclamation made and with the royal standard unfurled, and no opposition was offered to me [*y no me fué contradicho*[18]]. To the first island which I found, I gave the name *San Salvador,* in remembrance of the Divine Majesty, Who has marvelously bestowed all this; the Indians call it "Guanahani." To the second, I have the name *Isla de Santa Maria de Concepcion;* to the third, *Fernandina;* to the fourth, *Isabella;* to the fifth, *Isla Juana,* and so to each one I gave a new name.[19]

As Stephen Greenblatt has argued, the legitimacy of the act described here does not depend on cartographic "truths" but rather on a series of linguistic *acts:*[20] "declaring, witnessing, recording" all take place in this brief passage: "The acts are public and official: the admiral speaks as a representative of the king and queen, and [according to the extreme for-

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18. A more accurate English translation here would have been "and I was not contradicted."

19. Cecil Jane, trans. and ed., *Select Documents Illustrating the Four Voyages of Columbus,* 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1930), 1:2. For another translation of the same passage, see J. M. Cohen, *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), 115.

20. I use the phrase "linguistic acts" in much the same way that scholars in philosophy refer to "speech acts." Speech act theory was inaugurated with a series of lectures at Harvard University in 1955 by J. L. Austin, "How to Do Things with Words," 2d ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975). In these lectures Austin makes the simple yet provocative distinction between two different kinds of utterances: "Constative" utterances, Austin says, are those locutions that can be determined to be true or false, in other words, descriptive. For example, "the table is brown," or "the car is big." "Performative" utterances, on the other hand, are those that actually accomplish, "act on," or otherwise transform reality in the moment of articulation, that is, are a speech *act.* For example, to utter, in a marriage ceremony, the promise "I do" is to both describe and *do* the action described; or to say "I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*—as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem" [sic] (5) is to *accomplish* something beyond a simple utterance. According to Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 9–10, the "effect [of a speech act] upon the referent coincides with its enunciation." Austin's seemingly simple task in *How to Do Things with Words* is to articulate the various conditions under which an utterance can be determined to be either constative or performative, and whether a performative speech act can be considered "felicitous" or "infelicitous." The ensuing debate over Austin's project becomes the catalyst for much of postmodern and poststructuralist theory,

malism of Spanish colonialism] his speech must be heard and understood by competent, named witnesses."[21] Another important aspect of this passage is the rather conscious invocation of the "marvelous." In fact, throughout Columbus's writings, the New World is continually described in terms of "wonder," "marvel," and "magnificence." Indeed, the discourse of wonder becomes the central rhetorical refrain in European descriptions of their encounter with the New World, and the characterization of the natives' wonder is equally ubiquitous. But according to Greenblatt, there is a problem with these particular speech acts: "Why should words spoken in a language the native inhabitants had obviously never before heard be thought to constitute a valid speech act, transferring their lands to those whose utterly incomprehensible visual signs—a cross, two crowns, the letters F and Y—were printed on the Spanish banners? Why should the natives be thought capable, under the circumstances, of assenting or offering a contradiction?"[22]

The answer to that question is that they are *not* thought capable of doing so, and thus, there is a kind of inherent exclusionary logic in the formalism of the act. Furthermore, Greenblatt goes on to argue that Columbus seems to sense the illegitimacy of these acts. There is "an emotional and intellectual vacancy, a hole, that threatens to draw the reader of Columbus's discourse toward laughter or tears and toward a questioning of the legitimacy of the Spanish claim. Columbus tries to draw the reader to-

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particularly with regard to Austin's "bogging down" as he tries to enumerate the various conditions under which a given speech act will be felicitous. See J. Hillis Miller, *Speech Acts in Literature* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001); and Jacques Derrida, *Limited, Inc.* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Northwestern University Press, 1988). For a speech act to be "felicitous," Austin says, "there must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect." Thus, "a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend to so conduct themselves, and further, must actually so conduct themselves subsequently" (15).

21. Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 57.

22. Ibid., 59.

ward wonder, a sense of the marvelous that in effect fills up the emptiness at the center of the maimed rite of possession."[23]

Now, then, let us summarize and begin to draw some parallels: (1) Based on a rather vague and ambiguous geography, a man, who some consider to be "inspired," gave a name with real social effects to an entire group of people; (2) The agent responsible for this act knew that it would seem illegitimate and so he installed a "discourse of wonder" to "fill up" the vacancy of that act; (3) Certain systems of cultural power were added to that discourse of wonder to validate the original speech act. What I hope this parallel points to is that, whether we accept Book of Mormon historicity or not, the linguistic act by which an entire people are appropriated by a given discourse is not simply a matter of "science," "truth," or "facts." It is a question of power, of culture, and of language. In fact, the possession of a people's identity is rarely a question of truth.

Here, then, it may be useful to label the appearance of the Book of Mormon in the Americas a "*Colón*ializing Event," both because Columbus's name in the original Spanish is *Colón* and because I think the geopolitical implications are interesting.[24] I define such an event as occurring when a series of speech acts are employed in the characterization or taking possession of an entire people—a process that relies for its legitimacy on systems of cultural power. Naturally, the drawing of parallels is never without a degree of tension. One must recognize, of course, that there was an important difference between the militarized greed and racist ambitions of Columbus, and the utopian anti-capitalist, relatively anti-racist visions of Joseph Smith.[25] This difference is also important because it could affect the consequences of what I would like to call de*colón*ialization. De*colón*ialization, as I am using it here, is intended to re-

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23. Ibid., 80.

24. Although *Colón* makes for an apt pun, I should point out that the term "colony" did not originate with Columbus's name. "Colony" was a Roman term and referred to an imperial outpost, usually set up for purposes of future settlement. Several scholars of American Studies have employed this pun as well. See, for example, Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, "The Spanish Colón-ialista Narrative: Their Prospectus for Us in 1992," in *Mapping Multiculturalism*, edited by Avery Gordon and Christopher Newfield (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 215–37.

25. Of course, Joseph Smith was not an anti-racist in the post-civil rights sense we refer to today, but there can be little doubt that in identifying the Native

flect the scientific, social, and political changes that cause the speech acts of a given *Colónializing* Event to become gradually less authoritative and secure. According to this formulation, the current arguments to rearticulate Book of Mormon historicity (both critical and progressive orthodox), and the subsequent dislocation of Lamanite identity amount to a call for de*colónialization*. To put it simply:

1. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon = *Colónializing* Event, wherein a series of linguistic acts are employed in the characterization or taking possession of an entire people—a process that relies for its legitimacy on systems of cultural power.

2. The current redefinition of Book of Mormon historicity = de*colónialization*, wherein certain scientific, social, and political changes cause the linguistic acts of a given *Colónializing* Event to become gradually less authoritative and secure.

Naturally, then, the future use of the Book of Mormon in the LDS Church will involve some form of post*colónialism*, though it is not easy to predict what that future will look like. Will the relevance of Book of Mormon historicity be abandoned? Will the reinterpretation of the Book of Mormon lead to a new place for historical parallelomania in official Church discourse? Will all references to identities and "birthrights" become entirely metaphorical? And who will the Lamanites be?

Toward an Era of Book of Mormon Post*colónialism*

My purpose in characterizing the current debate this way is due to what I see as a failure to adequately articulate the kinds of cultural and political consequences that a reformulation of Book of Mormon historicity would entail. The anguish of the young Peruvian student in the epigraph to this paper reflects an aspect of this debate that many Anglo-Mormons involved in the debate have not yet taken into account. In this sense, I

American Indians as "Lamanites" and therefore as literal descendants of the House of Israel, the Book of Mormon offered a radically different vision of a millennial American empire—an anti-racist, multicultural form of Manifest Destiny very different from the capitalist trappings of Jacksonian democracy and also very different, I must point out, from what actually happened. Also, it is important to stress that there is an essential difference between the kinds of military coercion used by Columbus and the *conquistadores* and the more discursive, spiritual influence exercised by Joseph Smith.

would argue that the most important text we have at the moment for understanding the debate on Book of Mormon historicity is neither a textbook on the intricacies of DNA evidence nor the latest FARMS theory, but rather Armand Mauss's *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage.*[26] Mauss's book is important precisely because it emphasizes the historical consequences of identifying—or *de*identifying—a certain group of people as "Lamanites." Using Mauss's book as a springboard for discussion, then, I would like to speculate on some of the potential consequences of Book of Mormon de*colón*ialization, which may help articulate a more accurate understanding of the coming era of Book of Mormon post*colón*ialism.[27] Of course there would be consequences for both Mormons in general and Lamanite Mormons, though the latter is certainly underdiscussed in the current debate.

What, then, are the possible consequences of Book of Mormon de*colón*ialization for Mormons in general? First, and most obviously, a serious revaluation of the process of translation as revelation may be upon us. Mormons may turn to any number of "third" options for explaining the various historical anachronisms in the book, implying perhaps a redefinition of "scripture." Some of these theories (like those proposed by Blake Ostler and Robert Rees) argue that the Book of Mormon could be understood as *both* an ancient and modern document. Others argue (like Anthony Hutchinson) that the book is not an ancient record, but is nonetheless inspired "scripture." Some have even argued recently (like Jess Groesbeck) that the book is not an ancient history *per se* but that, through the transmission of a meaningful and collective unconscious, it becomes a kind of "symbolic" history.[28]

Second, depending on how thoroughly claims to Book of Mormon historicity are abandoned, claims to religious exclusivity (as the "only true

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26. Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

27. I emphasize "coming," since I believe the entire debate on Book of Mormon historicity remains outside the sphere, not only of Mormon Lamanites, but also of the general Church population everywhere. There is, of course, a very small group, an intellectual vanguard, if you will, that is currently paying attention to the reinterpretation of Book of Mormon historicity, but most Church members have yet to investigate the subject.

28. Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1987):

and living church") may be also reduced or deemphasized. Or, depending on the degree to which Book of Mormon historicity is maintained (and simultaneously relegated to the realm of irrelevance and speculative erudition), this new position may be simply yet another transformation in a church that continues to move away from its provincial, nineteenth-century beginnings toward a more global status in the twenty-first century, its religious exclusivity intact.

It is worth noting, however, that even if changes like these occur, Euro-American Mormon religious identity will not be greatly altered, mainly because, for these Mormons, the quasi-racial identification with the lineage of "Ephraim" has been important but not crucial to their sense of subjective empowerment. As Mauss argues, Euro-Americans "began without [this identity], made empowering uses of it during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but in recent generations have begun to deemphasize (if not ignore) it in favor of a more universalistic and metaphorical Israelite identity (as descendants of Abraham), like any and all others who embrace the gospel."[29] As Europeans or Euro-Americans, in other words, their sense of cultural power has never relied exclusively on their identification with Israelite lineage, which is why that identity has demonstrated a kind of social plasticity. David H. Bailey has recently written: "I have yet to hear anyone declare that solving the anthropological origin of Native Americans was central to their decision to change their life and accept baptism."[30] As a white, English-speaking, North American Mormon, Bailey is most likely telling the truth. For him, and those around him, such a question hardly matters. But his comments betray an appalling ignorance of how these issues affect indigenous populations and current proselytizing efforts throughout Central and South America.

66–123; Rees, "Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the American Renaissance"; Anthony A. Hutchinson, "The Word of God Is Enough: The Book of Mormon as Nineteenth-Century Scripture," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, edited by Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 1–20; C. Jess Groesbeck, "The Book of Mormon as a Symbolic History," *Sunstone*, No. 131 (March 2004): 35–45.

29. Armand L. Mauss, email to John Williams, 2005.

30. David H. Bailey, "No Discernible Trace," letter to the editor, *Sunstone*, No. 137 (May 2005): 5.

For the people heretofore identified as Lamanites, the consequences for the disarticulation of Israelite identity are much more far reaching. The more liberal among us may be tempted to feel that all of these transformations would be naturally healthy and progressive for those people formerly known as Lamanites. For example, these Mormon "Lamanites" may be empowered to finally cast off the possessive investment in whiteness (to borrow a phrase from George Lipsitz) that is endemic to receiving the Book of Mormon, rather than attempting to reconcile their own "darkness" with some promised future "whiteness." One wonders, for instance, whether Douglas Campbell's attempts to mythify the racialized color scheme in the Book of Mormon by explaining the use of these colors as "metaphorical" has ever really resonated with someone not identified as "white." How comforting is it, after all, to tell someone with darker skin: "God does not actually think the color of your skin makes you evil. He just likes to use that color as a metaphor for evil"?[31]

There is also the possibility that certain stereotypes about Native Americans in the Church may fall by the wayside. There are, of course, explicit promises in the scriptures about the Lamanites "blossoming as the rose" (D&C 49:24) in the last days; however, the description of the Lamanites in the Book of Mormon as a fallen, uncivilized, shiftless people has held much more weight in the Mormon conception of American Indians. On the contrary, as Mauss's book so carefully points out, the vast majority of white Mormons have considered the Native Americans to be first and foremost Indians and only secondly Lamanites. Even if Joseph Smith's radical utopianism encouraged a "convert-and-civilize" sequence for Mormon interactions with the Indians, Brigham Young and

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31. How do nonwhites feel, for example, when reading, "They were as *white* as the countenance and also the garments of Jesus and behold the *whiteness* thereof did exceed all the *whiteness*, yea there could be nothing so *white* as the *whiteness* thereof" (3 Ne. 19:25; emphasis mine). Even in a best-case, most faith-promoting scenario, a nonwhite has to actively metaphorize the passage, ignoring the links between the almost rhythmic repetition of "whiteness" and the modern racialized parlance that would locate their identification as the economic and cultural antithesis to such a formula. Douglas Campbell, "'White' or 'Pure': Five Vignettes," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 119–35.

most Church leaders since then reversed that formula, focusing overwhelmingly on the need for Indian assimilation into white culture.

But Mauss's book also demonstrates that Book of Mormon decolónialization may create a unique set of problems for those people currently and formerly identified as Lamanites. Keeping in mind that most white Mormons have failed to fulfill any special obligations toward the Lamanites that the Book of Mormon requires of them, there have been instances where the identification of Indians as Lamanites has led to more politically progressive possibilities for those Indians. For example, Mauss points out, in 1980 when the Canadian Pacific Railway was about to relinquish its hold on an area in the Indian reserve near Cardston, a controversy erupted between the Blood Indians, who had hoped the area would revert back to them, and some Cardston residents, who claimed to have already purchased part of the land (without the Blood tribe's permission). According to Mauss, Cardston's Mormons accounted for nearly 80 percent of the area's population. In a comprehensive survey among white Cardston Mormons, Mauss found evidence "that looking upon the Indians through a 'favorable' (if condescending) Lamanite label tended to be accompanied by a sympathetic outlook on the Indians' political exertions."[32] In other words, those Mormons who looked at the Indians and saw Lamanites were much more sympathetic to the tribe's political demands than Mormons who looked at the Indians and saw only Indians. One particularly insensitive respondent summed up the latter opinion rather well: "When asked directly if he thought that the Blood Indians were Lamanites, he declared 'Hell, no! These ain't Lamanites. Lamanites are down there in Mexico and Latin America . . . or maybe in Polynesia.'"[33]

There is also some evidence to suggest that the internalization of Lamanite identity among converts in Central and South America has often led to radical affirmations of ethnicity and culture. As Mauss argues, the "New" Lamanites in these areas (as contrasted to the "Old" Lamanites of North America) have converted under much different social circumstances, bypassing the assimilationist rhetoric of American racism, and allowing their identification as "Lamanites" to increase their sense of national purpose. Mauss writes, "LDS converts through-

32. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 125.
33. Ibid., 127.

out Latin America have been able to use the Lamanite identity to claim a special or divine distinction in contrast to both their Hispanic colonial conquerors and their Anglo-Mormon coreligionists."[34] The same could also be argued for Polynesians, Maori, and Tongan Mormons in the South Pacific.

What we are left with, then, is a complex set of social, political, and cultural issues that may all be affected by calls for Book of Mormon de*colón*ialization. The term "Galileo Event," while provocative and interesting, reduces these complex issues to the simple and "classic" conflict of religion versus science—an epistemological or cosmological issue. However, by characterizing the current debate as a moment of de*colón*ialization (forecasting, of course, a future era of Book of Mormon post*colón*ialism), we are forced to acknowledge the complex linguistic, cultural, and political matrix that surrounds such an event. If we are going to focus on one figure in this debate, let it not be Galileo, but Columbus, and the fraught and tortuous legacy he left behind.

34. Ibid., 149.

The Diverse Sheep of Israel: Should the Shepherds Resemble Their Flocks?

Devyn M. Smith

Recently, my wife and I became foster parents to two teenagers of Haitian ancestry, a fourteen-year-old girl and an eighteen-year-old boy. It is our first-time parenting experience, and "interesting" is not an adjective that does justice to it. It has been extremely rewarding, very challenging, very frustrating, and, often, just plain fun. One critical lesson I have learned is to be much more sensitive to matters of race and minorities, particularly the presence and current place of ethnic minorities within the Church. For example, when we go to church and see many white faces, but few of other races, even in metropolitan Boston, and when every single one of the Twelve Apostles and nearly the entire First and Second Quorums of the Seventy are of European descent, I am left to wonder what place ethnic minorities have in the Church. This preponderance of "whiteness" occurs in a Church in which over 50 percent of the members do not live in the

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United Sates,[1] yet the Church leadership is dominated by persons of European descent.

In this paper, I will analyze the membership of the Church (including both historical data and future projections), as well as the leadership in the Church, to determine the percentages of different ethnic groups in the Church at both the general membership level and at the level of the General Authorities. While earlier analyses have focused on projecting the growth of the Church as a whole, this study is the first attempt to quantify the numbers of different ethnic groups within Mormonism. I will then discuss some of the problems and opportunities that the Church faces, given the large increase in ethnic minorities into the Church.

Overview of LDS Membership and Ethnic Minorities

The Church has made few public predictions about its growth. However, in the sesquicentennial year of 1980, the Church estimated the number of members and units it would have in 2000 (estimated 11.14 million members, 3,600 stakes, 460 missions, and 29,000 wards and branches). These estimates proved to be fairly accurate for the number of members and local units (11.06 million members and 26,143 wards/branches) but significantly overly optimistic about the number of stakes (2,581) and missions (334) in 2000.[2]

Besides the limited projections made public by the LDS Church, a considerable body of published literature exists on estimating current and future membership of the Church. However, little of this research is focused on determining the number of members of particular ethnic groups, either retrospectively or as projected. Rodney Stark, a well-known sociologist, in 1984 predicted that the Mormon membership would reach between 65 million and 280 million in 2080, based on the then-current

1. Mormons living outside the United States outnumbered those inside as of February 25, 1996. "More Members Now outside U.S. than in U.S.," *Ensign*, March 1996, 76.

2. "A Statistical Profile: What Numbers Tell Us about Ourselves," *Ensign*, April 1980, 15.

growth rates of 30–50 percent per decade.[3] In 1995, Stark revisited his estimates and found they had held true through 1994. In 1985, he had estimated the Church would have between 6.7 million and 8.2 million members; the actual figure for 1995 was 9.0 million.[4] Even for 2000, his estimates were low compared to the actual number of members; he estimated 7.8 million to 10.4 million, but there were actually 11.0 million. However, his estimates were based on exponential growth rates, while other analyses, using the linear growth rate of a consistent 250,000–300,000 new converts annually, have challenged Stark's projections.[5]

David Knowlton and Mark Grover have both recently addressed the problems associated with determining the number of members of the Church in Latin America.[6] Theirs is the most specific demographic work done to date on Latin America. Darius Gray, speaking at the Mormon History Association annual meeting in 2003, said that "the number of

3. Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith," *Review of Religious Research* 26, no. 3 (1984):18–27.

4. Rodney Stark, "So Far, So Good: A Brief Assessment of Mormon Membership Projections," *Review of Religious Research* 38, no. 2 (1996): 175–87.

5. Richard Loomis, "Church Growth," unpublished paper presented at the Association for the Sociology of Religion, August 15–17, 2002, Chicago; Duwayne Anderson, "Estimates for the Future Membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," retrieved in November 2004 from www.lds-mormon.com/churchgrowthrates.shtml. See also David Stewart, "The Law of the Harvest: Practical Principles for Effective Missionary Work," unpublished manuscript, retrieved on November 2004 from www.cumorah.com/report.html; Glenmary Research Center, "Religious Congregations and Membership: 2000," 2002, American Religion DataArchive (2000), www.thearda.com; and Lowell C. "Ben" Bennion and Lawrence A. Young, "The Uncertain Dynamics of LDS Expansion, 1950–2020," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 8–32.

6. David Clark Knowlton, "How Many Members Are There Really? Two Censuses and the Meaning of Church Membership in Chile and Mexico," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 53–78; Mark Grover, "The Maturing of the Oak: The Dynamics of LDS Growth in Latin America," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 79–104.

black Saints in Africa now exceeds 154,000."[7] He did not say how he had derived this figure.

According to Jesse Embry, "There is no practical way to determine how many Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Polynesian Americans or African Americans are members (of the Church)."[8] One reason for the difficulty is that the Church does not collect ethnicity on membership, baptismal, ordination, or temple records—nor should it—except to predict that Spanish will be the most common spoken language in the Church by 2020.[9] Thus, my figures are estimated or calculated using available data. The value of such an analysis is clear and could benefit not only the Church leadership, but also the general membership and sociologists.

To begin analyzing the Church membership, one can look at the macro population trends over the last ten years.[10] In December 1992, the Church had just over 8.0 million members, 43.6 percent of them living outside the United States, while in December 2002, it had nearly 12 million members, with 53.8 percent living outside the United States. The shift in membership over this ten-year period is due to the high rate of convert baptisms outside the United States.[11] It also suggests that the number of nonwhite Mormons must be close to 50 percent since, outside the United States, there are just a few hundred thousand white members in Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other countries.

To evaluate the current ethnic makeup of Church membership today, I performed two different analyses, each using a different method and using available data sources with appropriate assumptions where necessary. For the purposes of this study, I chose four ethnic groups, a simplifi-

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7. Quoted in the *Deseret News*, online edition, May 27, 2003, available at www.deseretnews.com.

8. Jesse Embry, *Black Saints in a White Church* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 18.

9. "Historic Milestone Achieved: More Non-English-Speaking Members Now Than English-Speaking," *Ensign*, September 2000, 76.

10. I retrieved all membership data in this analysis in October 2003 from www.lds.org; these data are reported as year-end 2002 membership data or are from *Deseret News Church Almanac 1993–1994* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1993), which includes data from year-end 1992.

11. Bradley Walker, "Spreading Zion Southward: Part II," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 33–47, calculates that 75 percent of baptisms in the 1990s were in less-developed countries.

cation of the many diverse ethnicities within the Church and world. However, it makes the analysis simpler and reflects some of the current scientific thinking about racial groupings in the world.[12] The four ethnic groups are: Latin, black, Asian/Pacific, and European non-Latin (hereafter ethnically European).

Within the Latin grouping, I have included members whose ethnic backgrounds are either Spanish or Portuguese, including all Spanish-speaking members in South and Central America, Spain, Portugal, and the Caribbean. While South America, Central America, and the Caribbean are obviously different both geographically and economically from Spain and Portugal, the ethnic background of more than 80 percent of the people in Central and South America is European (predominantly Spanish and Portuguese). In addition, U.S. government agencies group Spaniards and Spanish-speakers of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean as Hispanic.[13]

Within the black grouping, I have included members of African ancestry including blacks in Africa, the United States, Canada, and Europe

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12. Hua Tang et al., "Genetic Structure, Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity, and Confounding in Case-Control Association Studies," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 76 (2005): 268–76, discusses DNA analysis of more than 3,600 individuals who were then classified into ethnic groups based on their DNA samples. Four categories emerged (black, white, Asian, and Hispanic) which correspond to the categories used in this analysis.

13. Several sources detail the ancestry of the Latin American countries. According to Los Medios y Mercados de Latinoamérica 1998 (retrieved in November 2004 from www.zonalatina.com/Zldata55.htm), the ancestry percentages for different ethnic groups in each country in South and Central America sum to: white/European 34 percent, mestizo (European/Indian mix) and mulatto (European/black mix) 57 percent, Indian (native indigenous people) 4 percent, black (African ancestry) and other 3 percent. Other sources with similar data include en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mestizo, www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0855617.html (checked in November 2004). According to Latin writer Emily Monroy, "Most Latin Americans have at least some European ancestry, . . . some nations are over 80 percent 'white,' and many others possess substantial 'white' minorities. . . . Setting 'white' inhabitants aside, the average mestizo or mulatto has more in common with his or her European forebears [than his or her] Indian or African ones." These data further solidify the combination of Spain and Portugal into the Latin ethnic group. Retrieved in November 2004 from www.analitica.com/bitblioteca/emily_monroy/western.asp.

as well as those of African descent living in the Caribbean or Brazil; I exclude members in these last two areas from the Latin group to prevent double counting. My reason for excluding South American blacks from the Latin group is because of the racial separation these members experienced prior to 1978; in essence, the priesthood ban created a different "Church" experience for black members. This exclusion affects a small percentage of the membership in South and Central America: 5 percent in this analysis, which maps nicely to the 6 percent of Brazil's population with black ancestry.[14]

The Asian/Pacific group includes members whose ancestors are from Asia and the Pacific Islands, including those living in the United States, Canada, or Europe who are of Asian or Polynesian descent. While the Polynesian culture is obviously very different from the Asian cultures, I include members of Polynesian descent in the Asian/Pacific grouping because the 250,000–300,000 total members of Polynesian descent in the Church are a small percentage of the ethnic minorities: 2 percent of total Church members, less than 5 percent of the total number of ethnic minorities in the Church, and approximately 23 percent[15] of the Asian/Pacific ethnic group in this analysis. Therefore, they do not warrant a separate ethnic group in this analysis.[16]

Finally, the ethnically European group includes all members of European descent from eastern, southern, northern, and western Europe except for Spain and Portugal; I count those members in the Latin group. This ethnic group is synonymous with the traditional "white" or "Caucasian" ethnic groups; however, "ethnically European" links their common

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14. "Racial Classification in Latin America," *Zona Latina*, retrieved in November 2004 from www.zonalatina.com/Zldata55.htm.

15. Hereafter, I will use ~ to mean "approximately," as in "~23 percent."

16. I calculated the total population of LDS members of Polynesian descent in 2002 as 180,000 Church members in the Pacific Islands. I estimated 100,000 members of Polynesian descent in western countries (mainly the United States in Utah, California, and Hawaii) based on the assumption that ~10 percent of all members in predominantly "white" countries are of nonwhite ethnicity and that ~15 percent of these nonwhite members are of Polynesian descent. Because of the high numbers of Church members in the Polynesian countries overall, Polynesians could be expected to represent a high percentage of Church members in the United States as well.

Table 1
Ethnic Group Populations Estimates, Comparisons by Decade and Method

	1992 Membership	
Ethnic Group	*Members*	*Percentage of total*
Latin	2,552,400	31.55
Black	166,920	2.06
Asian/Pacific	703,880	8.70
Ethnic European	4,666,800	57.69
Total	8,090,000	100.00

	2002 Membership					
Ethnic Group	*Method 1*	*Percentage of Total Members*	*Method 2*	*Percentage of Total Members*	*Difference Between Methods*	*Percentage Difference Between Methods*
Latin	4,187,242	35.72	4,162,000	35.51	25,242	0.60
Black	400,733	3.42	399,000	3.40	1,733	0.43
Asian/Pacific	1,216,619	10.38	1,155,019	9.85	61,600	5.06
Ethnic European	5,916,954	50.48	6,005,529	51.23	88,575	1.50
Total	11,721,548	100.00	11,721,548	100.00	—	0.00

ancestry to a distinct geographic locale, which simplifies the already complex analysis performed.

Ethnic Minority Population Estimates

The Church collects data on the number of LDS members in each country. For my first analysis, I used these data to calculate the number of members in each ethnic group. For 2002 data, I aggregated the membership numbers for countries with a common ethnic group. The Latin group included all of South America (with the exception of an estimated 150,000 black members in Brazil),[17] Mexico, all of Central America, and the Caribbean, excluding 15,300 members in Jamaica, Haiti, and six small islands whose residents are mostly of African descent.[18] The total for the Latin grouping was ~3.8 million from these areas plus ~52,000 members from Spain and Portugal and ~332,000 Latinos in predominantly ethnically European countries: the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.[19] Adding these figures of Latin (including Portuguese) Latter-day Saints yields a total of ~4.19 million members or 35.72 percent of the total Church membership. (See Table 1.)

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17. According to the Black Mormon homepage, there are "anywhere from 350,000 to perhaps 500,000" black members today. "About 150,000 black Mormons live in Africa, about 150,000 live in Brazil (~20 percent of all members in Brazil), about 20,000 in the Caribbean, anywhere from 20,000 to 50,000 in the U.S. and the rest live in other countries." Darrick Evenson, "Black Mormons Worldwide," *Black Mormon Homepage*, retrieved in November 2004 from www.angelfire.com/mo2/blackmormon/000H15.html. The 20,000–50,000 number could also be estimated based on the ~130 stakes in the sixty-seven largest cities in the United States. There would need to be 154 black members per stake (5 percent of the stake's membership assuming 3,000 members per stake) to have 20,000 blacks in the United States or 385 black members per stake (13 percent of the stake's membership assuming 3,000 members per stake) to have 50,000 blacks in the United States. These numbers seem reasonable based on my visits to multiple city wards in the United States.

18. Haiti has 8,100 members, Jamaica has 4,200, Trinidad has 1,600 (a population of mixed Indian and African ancestry), Barbados has 600, Bahamas has 500, while Antigua, Bermuda, and St. Kitts have 100 members apiece. I exclude the Dominican Republic with its racially mixed population.

19. Ethnically European countries are all European countries (excluding Spain and Portugal), Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. I calculated the number of Latin American Mormons in these ethnically European

I used the same method to estimate the number of Asian/Pacific members. I first calculated the number of members in Asian countries and on Pacific Islands (minus Australia and New Zealand). The totals were ~803,000 and ~181,000, respectively. I calculated an additional 133,000 Asians and 100,000 Pacific Islanders in predominantly ethnically European countries to produce a total of 935,000 Asians and 280,000 Pacific Islanders. The Asian/Pacific total thus stood at 1.22 million Asian/Pacific Mormons or 10.38 percent of the Church membership.

Although there are some ethnically European members in Africa, particularly in South Africa, I assumed, for the purposes of these calculations, that all African members are of black lineage because South Africa's ~29,000 members do not significantly alter the data output. Using the same methodology as in the first two groups, I calculated 136,000 black members in Africa, added Brazil's 150,000 black members, plus 5,300 members from Jamaica, Haiti, and the six small islands named above, and the ~100,000 black members in mostly ethnically European countries. (See note 18.) These figures yield a total of ~400,000 black members of the Church or 3.42 percent of the total membership.

I then calculated the number of ethnically European members by subtracting the number of black, Latin, and Asian/Pacific members from the total Church membership. The result was 5.92 million ethnically European members or 50.48 percent of the total members of the Church. Applying this same methodology to the membership in 1992 yields a total of ~2.55 million Latin members, ~704,000 Asian/Pacific members, 166,000 black members, and 4.67 million ethnically European members:

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countries by totaling their membership (~6.65 million) and assuming that 10 percent of the total membership in these countries is made up of minorities (~665,000). Of the 665,000 ethnic members, I assumed that 50 percent (~332,000) were of Latin descent, 35 percent (~233,000) were of Asian/Polynesian descent (including a large number of Maori members in New Zealand and a large number of Asians in Hawaii), and 15 percent (~100,000) were of African descent. This percentage breakdown among ethnic groups resembles my personal observations of the racial makeup in many urban U.S. wards.

31.55 percent, 8.70 percent, 2.06 percent, and 57.69 percent, respectively. (See Table 1.)[20]

My second method of analysis used the total number of members who speak a particular language; the top ten languages account for 91 percent of all Church members. The numbers from this method resulted in the following percentages for each ethnic group: Latin 35.51 percent; Asian/Pacific 9.85 percent; black 3.40 percent; and ethnically European 51.23 percent. (See Table 1.) These totals correspond very closely to those derived from the first analysis, suggesting that the two methods are similar enough in output to provide confidence that the figures represent each racial group's share of total Church membership with considerable accuracy.

Ethnic Europeans are rapidly becoming a minority ethnic group in the Church. In 1996, more members were found outside the United States than in it. In 2000, more non-English-speakers than English-speakers were Mormons.[21] To determine the approximate year when ethnic Europeans will comprise less than 50 percent of the total membership of the Church and when ethnic Europeans will no longer be the Church's largest ethnic group, I projected future membership numbers using an annual growth rate for each ethnic group based on the growth rate of that ethnic group from 1992 to 2002. Projecting these growth rates for twenty years for each group, then aggregating them to determine the entire Church membership, shows that ethnic Europeans comprised less than 50 percent of the Church membership in late 2003 or early 2004. When analyzed further, it shows that ethnic Europeans will be overtaken by the Latin group as the largest ethnic group in the Church in 2016 or 2017 (Figure 1) when Church membership will number ~20 million. At that point, ethnic European and Latin members will each comprise ~40 percent of the membership of the Church with ~13 percent Asian/Pacific members

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20. I performed the calculations for 1992 using the same methodology as for the 2002 calculations. The only difference was that I assumed the percentage of minorities in ethnically European countries as 5 percent of the total LDS membership in these countries with 50 percent of these members as Latin, 40 percent Asian/Polynesian, and 10 percent black. This lower percentage for black members in these countries is similar to the low numbers of African members in 1992, only fourteen years after the priesthood ban had been lifted.

21. "Historic Milestone Achieved," 76.

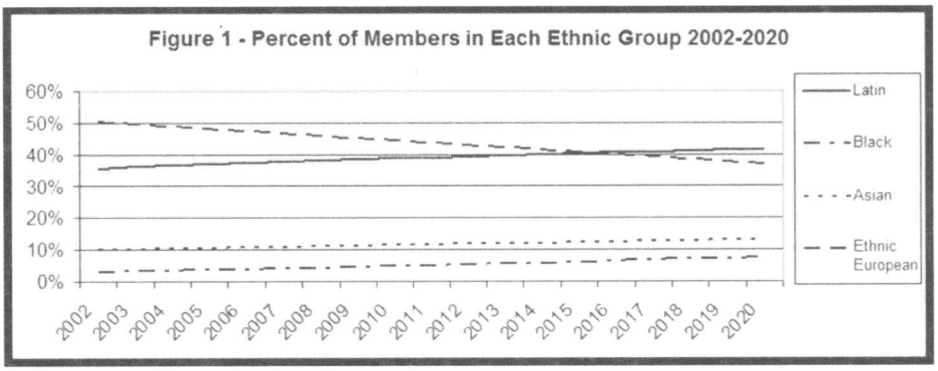
Figure 1 - Percent of Members in Each Ethnic Group 2002-2020
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
Latin
Black
Asian
Ethnic European

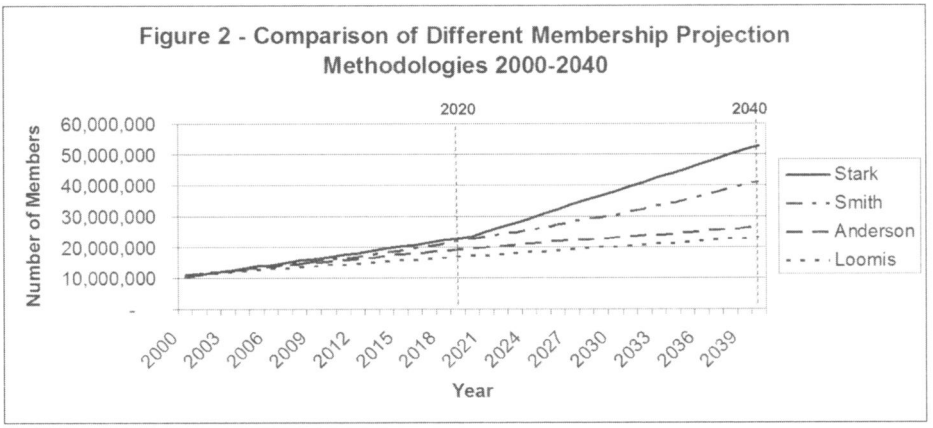
Figure 2 - Comparison of Different Membership Projection Methodologies 2000-2040
2020
2040
Number of Members
60,000,000
50,000,000
40,000,000
30,000,000
20,000,000
10,000,000
-
2000
2003
2006
2009
2012
2015
2018
2021
2024
2027
2030
2033
2036
2039
Year
Stark
Smith
Anderson
Loomis

and ~7 percent black members.[22] This projection compares favorably to the Church's 2000 estimate that Spanish would be the largest language group in the Church by 2020. Since my estimates include the Portuguese-speaking population as well, 2016 or 2017 nicely matches the Church's estimate.

Comparison to Other Population Estimates

As I mentioned above, several other methods have been employed for estimating future Church membership numbers. To appraise the validity of my methods in estimating total membership through 2040, I compared the results with three previous estimates. I projected calculated growth rates from 1992–2002 to 2020, then discounted these growth rates 20 percent to prevent exponential growth from occurring between 2020 and 2040. Figure 2 shows my method compared to the Stark, Anderson, and Loomis estimates. Figure 2 focuses on two fixed years (2020 and 2040) for comparison. Stark had the highest estimates at both points: ~23.5 million and ~52.8 million, respectively. Loomis and Anderson had similar estimates for both years: ~17.1 million in 2020 and ~23.1 million in 2040 for Loomis, and ~19.6 million in 2020, and ~26.8 million in 2040 for Anderson. My estimate fell between the three estimates with ~22.7 million in 2020 and ~41.4 million in 2040. My estimates are, thus, 3.5 percent lower than the highest estimate in 2020 and 24.5 percent higher than the lowest estimate in 2020 and 28.4 percent lower than the highest estimate in 2040 and 43.8 percent higher than the lowest estimate in 2040, using my numbers as the baseline.

Figure 2 shows significant divergence between the high exponential growth projected by Stark and the linear growth projected by Loomis and Anderson. My projection, a hybrid, is a good reconciliation between these

22. As these ethnic groups grow in size, the law of large numbers will result in a slower growth rate, but it is unlikely that the growth rates in Latin America, the Caribbean, parts of Asia, and Africa will slow considerably in the near future. Thus, the analysis should be useful through at least 2020. The law of large numbers means that, as a number grows larger, it is impossible to continue the same growth rate, given the large number of new converts required. For example, if the Church had 10 million members and a 5 percent growth rate, it would need to baptize 500,000 members each year to maintain that rate; but if the Church had 100 million members and a 5 percent growth rate, it would need to baptize 5 million members a year to sustain the 5 percent growth rate.

Table 2
Comparison of Ethnic Minorities among General Authorities, 1992, 2002

	1992				
Quorum	*Total Members*	*Total Minorities*	*Latin*	*Asian/ Pacific*	*Percentage of Quorum*
First Presidency	3	0	0	0	0.00
Quorum of the 12	12	0	0	0	0.00
Presiding Bishopric	3	0	0	0	0.00
Presidency of 70	7	0	0	0	0.00
1st Quorum of 70	35	4	2	2	11.43
2nd Quorum of 70	43	10	5	4	23.26
Total in Group	103	14	7	6	13.59
Percent of Total GAs	100	13.59	6.80	5.83	

	2002				
Quorum	*Total Members*	*Total Minorities*	*Latin*	*Asian/ Pacific*	*Percentage of Quorum*
First Presidency	3	0	0	0	0.00
Quorum of the 12	12	0	0	0	0.00
Presiding Bishopric	3	0	0	0	0.00
Presidency of 70	7	0	0	0	0.00
1st Quorum of 70	41	7	6	1	17.07
2nd Quorum of 70	42	1	1	0	2.38
Total in Group	108	8	7	1	7.41
Percent of Total GAs	100	7.41	6.48	0.93	

Note: There was one black General Authority in 1992 (.97% of total GAs) and no black General Authorities in 2002.

methods. Stark's exponential growth assumptions seem unlikely since they do not take into account the law of large numbers, while the linear-growth assumptions of Loomis and Anderson project a continuation of the current ~300,000 converts per year for the next thirty-five years. This assumption also seems unlikely, as the number of missionaries will undoubtedly increase, the Church will employ new ways of doing missionary work, and such events as natural disasters, terrorism, war, etc., will continue to push people to search for religion. Thus, an increase in the rate of convert baptisms in the future seems likely. In short, my projections, based on a bottom-up projection of membership growth compared to the top-line growth projections of Loomis, Anderson, and Stark, seem valid, accurate, and in line with these other membership projections.

While my analysis seems valid, certain caveats are in order: (1) The assumption that ethnic group growth rates will remain identical to the growth rates seen from 1992 to 2002 does not account for the different growth rates that will inevitably be seen in reality; (2) the decrease in all growth rates by 20 percent after 2020 also assumes that all ethnic groups will have the same relative decline in growth rates from 2020 to 2040—again unlikely; and (3) it is probable that the growth rates will decline at a faster rate for the larger ethnic groups (e.g., ethnic European and Latin) than for the Asian/Pacific and black ethnic groups due to the law of large numbers. However, even with these caveats, the analysis—the first with a bottom-up approach to membership projections based on differential growth rates of the major ethnic groups in the Church rather than top-line growth projections—is still persuasive.

Ethnic Minority Representation in General Authorities

I performed a similar analysis on General Authorities to assess what percentage of the male leaders (the First Presidency, Twelve, Presiding Bishopric, Presidency of the Seventy, and the First and Second Quorums of the Seventy) are from the four ethnic groups. A comparison between 1992 and 2002 quorums showed no ethnic minorities in the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, Presidency of the Seventy, and Presiding Bishopric in either 1992 or 2002. (See Table 2.) The First and Second Quorums of the Seventy had fourteen ethnic minority members in 1992 and eight in 2002 for a total of 13.6 percent and 7.4 percent of the total General Authorities, respectively. Thus, in the last ten years, the number of ethnic minorities serving as General Authorities has declined by nearly

half, while the total number of General Authorities has actually increased by five.[23]

In short, while the total number of ethnic minorities in the Church surpassed 50 percent in 2003–04, the number of ethnic minorities serving in the General Authority ranks has actually declined by half over the last ten years. Many members of non-European descent do serve in the Area Authority Seventy ranks; however, they are not considered General Authorities and, therefore, do not experience the same "popularity" and exposure (e.g., general conference presence and talks) as General Authorities. In addition, the Area Authority Seventy calling was not instituted until 1997.

Implications of This Analysis

As the Church has spread across the globe, it has encountered certain problems which might be ameliorated if more brethren of non-European descent were found among the General Authorities. These problems affect both the Church as an institution and the converts as individuals.[24] At the institutional level, the Church is widely regarded internationally as a "white American" denomination, an image which, in extreme cases at least, has made it susceptible to violence in the form of

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23. I determined ethnic status by noting each individual's facial features in his photograph and his country of birth. The minorities who were serving as General Authorities at the end of 2003 include (with their Quorum of the Seventy listed in parenthesis followed by their native country): Angél Abrea (1, Argentina), Carlos Amado (1, Guatemala), Claudió Costa (1, Brazil), Walter Gonzalez (1, Uruguay), Yoshihiko Kikuchi (1, Japan), Carl Pratt (1, Mexico), Francisco Vinas (1, Spain), and Adhemar Damiani (2, Brazil). Those who served from 1992 to 2002 and have been released include (with their native country and years of service in parenthesis): Horacio Tenorio (Mexico, 1989–94), Eduardo Ayala (Chile, 1989–94), Helvecio Martins (Brazil, 1990–95), Julio Davila (Colombia, 1991–96), Jorge Rohas (Mexico, 1991–96), Han In Sang (Korea, 1991–96), Sam Shimabukuro (Japanese American from Hawaii, 1991–96), Lino Alvarez (Mexico, 1992–97), Augusto Lim (Philippines, 1992–97), Tai Kwok Kuen (Hong Kong, 1992–97), Eran Call (Mexico, 1997–2000), and Athos Amorim (Brazil, 1998–2003).

24. For more information on ethnic minorities in the Church throughout the world, see Bradley Walker, "Spreading Zion Southward: Part I," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 91–109; Bradley Walker, "Spreading Zion Southward: Part II," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36,

church bombings and attacks on its missionaries.[25] Furthermore, I feel that this image has contributed to the fact that there has been no appreciable increase in convert baptisms around the world for the past dozen years.[26] Nor is a single change likely to alter this pattern. The more flexible missionary teaching approach seems promising, but a more ethnically diverse top leadership might give the Church a more appealing international image, both to its critics and to its potential converts.

At the individual level, members in most parts of the world do not remain active, go on missions, or marry in the temple at the same rates as in North America. Again, there are many reasons for such discrepancies.[27] One reason might be that members in those parts of the world must find ways to relate to official sermons, lessons, and hymns which, even when translated into local languages, do not necessarily translate effectively into local cultures with their own respective traditions, musical and poetical forms, heroes, symbols, and even "pioneer stories."[28] Furthermore, members, especially young members, in Africa, Latin America, and Asia face a serious shortage of high-level role models among their own local leaders, valuable though these local leaders might be, since they do not have the benefit of historic or contemporary apostles from Europe or North America available to ethnically European LDS youth. Many of the ethnic youth with whom I have discussed this issue say that they are not expected to serve missions, because they see only ethnic Europeans serving as missionaries and as Church leaders. While this information is clearly anecdotal, it does highlight the integration gap into the main-

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no. 1 (Spring 2003): 33–47; Henri Gooren, "Analyzing LDS Growth in Guatemala: Report from a *Barrio*," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 97–115; Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

25. "Image of Yankee Imperialism Hurting LDS in South America," *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 21, 1991, A-1.

26. The average number of new members per year from 1992 to 2002 was 360,000. This is due to ~280,000 converts and ~80,000 children of record baptized each year.

27. Walker, "Spreading Zion Southward: Part II"; see also notes 3–6 for additional references.

28. John-Charles Duffy and Hugo Olaiz, "Correlated Praise: The Development of the Spanish Hymnal," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 89–113.

stream Church that some ethnic minorities face. All these conditions for members at the grassroots might be mitigated with greater participation among the General Authorities of these ethnic groups.

As LDS membership has shifted demographically, largely to Spanish-speaking and other populations outside North America, Church leaders have not, of course, been oblivious to problems such as those mentioned above.[29] The challenges of administering a worldwide Church provided the theme of an *Ensign* article thirty years ago.[30] Since then (and even before), the scriptures and lesson materials of the Church have been translated into many languages; and lesson guides and materials have been simplified to allow for more focused adaptations to local needs. During President Hinckley's decade of leadership, greater emphasis has been placed upon member retention and upon local leadership development in priesthood training sessions televised around the world; three apostles have been sent to live among the Saints abroad: Elder Jeffrey R. Holland to Chile, Elder Dallin H. Oaks to the Philippines, and Elder L. Tom Perry to Europe. The creation of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Quorums of Seventy has brought many Area Authorities from Latin America, Asia, and Africa into higher levels of leadership.

These inspired and progressive measures will, in time, certainly enhance the image and effectiveness of the Church as a global institution. Meanwhile, however, we might look forward to some acceleration of these processes and to an even greater enhancement of the international and intercultural diversity and voice in the ranks of the top Church leadership. We might, for example, anticipate many more calls to the First and Second Quorum of Seventy—and even to the Quorum of the Twelve—from outside North America and Europe.[31] At these general organizational levels, leaders from Asia, Africa, and Latin America can provide models of spiritual achievement and leadership to the entire world, as well as to the Saints in

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29. Edward Kimball, ed., *The Teachings of Spencer Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984); Tina Hatch, "'Changing Times Bring Changing Conditions': Relief Society, 1960 to the Present," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 37, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 65–98.

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

31. While this manuscript was in revision, Apostles David B. Haight and Neal A. Maxwell died. These two vacancies were filled by David A. Bednar and

their respective homelands. To be sure, such calls might complicate communication across languages among the General Authorities, but that predicament is inevitable as Spanish gradually becomes the most common language among the Latter-day Saints worldwide. That kind of ethnic diversity at the most public general level of our leadership would emphasize the implicit message to the world, and especially to the world's Latter-day Saints, that all the General Authorities, and not just those who are ethnic Europeans, can relate to the experiences of the common members of the world and can speak for the Lord to those people.

As the Church reaches into the "grassroots" in various parts of the world, it could also increase the frequency with which non-European faces and experiences are depicted in Church magazines, lesson manuals, and videos, continuing an already noticeable trend. Another important form of the Church's reach into the grassroots takes place in the regular conferences, not only the annual and semi-annual general conferences, but also the various auxiliary conferences and women's conferences. Perhaps leaders from various ethnic groups can be called to executive and general board positions in the auxiliaries, and conferences might be held more often in locations other than Salt Lake City,[32] as well as in languages other than English, with interpreters rendering talks into English rather than from English.[33] We might even see large numbers of happily singing faces from various lands in the Tabernacle Choir!

Conclusion

We live in exciting and unprecedented times as Latter-day Saints. The change in our membership composition from predominantly ethnic European to predominantly Latin and other ethnic groups has presented

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Dieter Uchtdorf, both ethnic Europeans, although the latter, a German, is the first non-U.S.-born apostle called since John A. Widtsoe (born in Norway) was called in 1921. Marion G. Romney, called as an Assistant to the Twelve in 1941, was born in Colonia Juarez, a Mormon colony in Mexico.

32. For the 1980 sesquicentennial, the Sunday morning session of April conference was held in Palmyra, New York.

33. In May 1999, my ward, the Revere II, held its sacrament meeting in Cambodian with English translation. The feedback was mixed. Some members thought it was a fantastic idea, while others felt that they did not receive the full message due to the translation.

the Church with many new and enduring problems, as well as opportunities. As we look to the future, we should expect to see among our General Authorities and other general leaders, men and women drawn increasingly from parts of the world outside Europe and America, as the Holy Spirit directs. These new leaders will give the Church an increasingly international image and outlook, and will offer members from all cultures spiritual models with which they can readily identify. Then Church leaders will truly be "all alike" unto the Saints as we are now "all alike unto God" (2 Ne. 26:33).

Lehi on the Great Issues: Book of Mormon Theology in Early Nineteenth-Century Perspective

Clyde D. Ford

Introduction

Among its many interesting features, the Book of Mormon decides controversies in a number of areas, including those argued among early nineteenth-century American theologians. Indeed, the Book of Mormon itself predicts that when it shall come forth it "shall be of great worth unto the children of men" because it will reveal the false and true teachings of "the churches" and their "priests" that "contend one with another" (2 Ne. 28:2-4). And those outside and inside the Church immediately recognized that the Book of Mormon fulfilled these predictions. For example, Book of Mormon adversary Alexander Campbell famously noted in 1831 that the Book of Mormon resolves "every error and almost every truth discussed in New York for the last ten years."[1] LDS missionary Sylvester Smith in referring to the disputes he engaged in, pointed out that the Book of Mormon "speaks against unconditional election . . . teaches immersion for baptism . . . discards the baptism of infants . . . [and] reproaches the

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1. Alexander Campbell, "The Mormonites," *Millennial Harbinger* 2 (January 1831): 93.

creed [of Universalism]."[2] Thus, regardless of how one chooses to resolve the issues surrounding its origins, one must conclude that the Book of Mormon's theological arguments should be seen as designed to be read and understood by its early nineteenth-century audience.

But despite agreement that elements of Book of Mormon teachings are at home in the early nineteenth-century,[3] there has been sharp dispute about which early nineteenth-century theological persuasions the Book of Mormon seems to side with. Thus, Book of Mormon theology has been classified as "wholeheartedly and completely Arminian," as containing "elements of Calvinism and Arminianism," as "a volume of Disciple [of Christ] theology . . . beyond any reasonable question," or as emphasizing both "Methodist [Arminian] and Disciples" theology.[4]

Such disagreement, especially in the context of Campbell's observations, leads directly to several interesting questions: Which groups were arguing theological issues during the 1820s in New York? What specific issues were being disputed? In which of these issues does the Book of Mormon take an interest? How does the Book of Mormon resolve these issues? In its resolutions, does the Book of Mormon consistently adopt an existing theology?

Obviously, a great many issues were discussed among early nineteenth-century American theologians and a comprehensive review is beyond the scope of this work. Nevertheless, this brief study aims to shed additional light on the questions posed above by examining four selected controversies in greater depth. In doing so, this work neither addresses

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2. Sylvester Smith, Letter to the editor, Pleasant Grove, Illinois, May 25, 1833, *The Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (July 1833): 108.

3. See, for example, Mark Thomas, "Scholarship and the Future of the Book of Mormon," *Sunstone* 5, no. 3 (May-June 1980): 24-29; his "Revival Language in the Book of Mormon," *Sunstone* 8 (May-June 1983): 19-25; and Timothy L. Smith, "The Book of Mormon in a Biblical Culture," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 3-21.

4. Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), 28; Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1965), 81; Marvin S. Hill, "The Role of Christian Primitivism in the Origin and Development of the Mormon Kingdom, 1830-1844" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1968), 104; William Alexander Linn, *The Story of the Mormons* (London: Macmillan, 1923), 93; Timothy Smith, "Book of Mormon," 10.

nor presupposes answers to questions best left to personal faith such as Book of Mormon authorship, date of composition, and divine inspiration but rather asks how the Book of Mormon would most likely have been interpreted by its initial, informed readers.

The four early nineteenth-century controversies I have chosen were influenced, in part, by the observation of Alan Heimert that, concomitant with the ideas surrounding the American Revolution, American religions gave "new prominence" to "God's moral government and the propriety of His vindictive justice"[5] and by the Book of Mormon's obvious interest in divine justice. I shall argue that the Book of Mormon (1) agrees with the Calvinists/Arminians in their disputes with Universalism/Unitarianism, (2) resolves some disputes that arose between early nineteenth-century Methodists and Calvinists, (3) agrees with certain tenets of Arminianism but, overall, consistently reflects the theology of none of its suggested origins, but rather (4) presents a complex early nineteenth-century theology that integrates doctrines from a variety of preexisting theological perspectives and some apparently unique teachings, and (5) has a theological sophistication that has generally been underappreciated.

Some Old World Background

Until the sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church dominated Western Christendom. Catholicism affirmed the need of ecclesiastical ordinances for salvation; scripture, tradition, and Church leadership as authorities; and priesthood only for the ordained few. Thereafter, Protestant traditions emerged including Lutheran, Anglican, Calvinistic, and Anabaptist movements. Many Protestant reformers shared a belief in the doctrines of "salvation by grace through faith alone," the Bible as principal authority, and the priesthood of all believers.[6]

John Calvin's (1509–1564) successor, Theodore Beza (1519–1605), extended Calvin's teachings regarding the sovereignty of God into what has been called "high Calvinism." Some of the more important of these became popularly known as "the five points": (1) unconditional predesti-

5. Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 336.

6. Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 370.

nation (some humans, the elect, are selected by God's apparently arbitrary decree to receive grace and salvation while the remaining, the reprobates, are damned), (2) total human depravity, the inability to do any good unless influenced by God's grace, (3) limited atonement (Christ died only for the elect), (4) irresistible grace (the elect cannot chose to do evil), and (5) unconditional perseverance.

Not surprisingly, many Protestants had problems with the five points on scriptural, philosophical, and practical grounds. Opponents complained that the high-Calvinistic scheme made God the author of sin and "the most partial of all judges" and encouraged humans to break God's laws (antinomianism) by teaching that the elect who transgress "in the most flagrant instances, are richly *blessed with all heavenly benedictions.*"[7] In the Netherlands, the reaction against high Calvinism is most associated with Jacob Arminius (1559-1609) who taught that, through Christ's atonement, God's prevenient (literally, "coming before") grace, that allows the totally depraved to turn from sin, is available to all, although only those choosing to accept it would be saved.

Henry VIII (1491-1547) was no theological innovator when he broke with Roman Catholicism in 1534, so the new Church of England retained many features of Catholicism in polity, theology, and ceremonialism. Subsequent Lutheran and then Calvinistic influences resulted in the compromise *Thirty-Nine Articles* (1571), that described a more moderate Calvinism. It affirmed the doctrines of predestination and human depravity but not of limited atonement and perseverance. English Calvinists, the "low" church or Puritans, opposed the *Articles* and produced the *Westminster Confession* (1643) that was largely accepted by Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists. In the 1600s, some Puritans embraced the practice of baptism by immersion, becoming "Particular" Baptists. Others, the "General" Baptists, adopted an Arminian theology.

As for Methodism, John Wesley (1703-1791), an Anglican priest, did not intend to found a separatist faith when he organized his "societies." "What distinguished Wesleyan Methodism from the ordinary worship of the Church of England was its emphasis on personal spiritual growth [as opposed to ceremonialism] in the context of a small group of

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7. John Fletcher, *Checks to Antinominianism*, 2 vols. (3rd American edition; New York: J. Soule and T. Mason, 1819), 1:137; emphasis his.

like-minded folk under the supervision of a layman."[8] Wesley and his close associate, John Fletcher (1729–1785), taught an Arminian theology but with the new wrinkle of possible human "entire sanctification" through a continuing process of personal struggle. Following Wesley's death, his followers formulated Methodist teaching and practice in *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (1784) that reproduced many of the *Thirty-nine Articles*. Wesleyan Methodism's "first systematic theologian" was Richard Watson (1781–1833) whose *Theological Institutes* was "the standard textbook for Wesleyan ministers, in Britain and North America, for most of the nineteenth-century."[9]

Some New World Background

A remarkable diversity of Christian beliefs existed in the United States during the early nineteenth century. Keith Hardman has observed that "three distinct groups . . . emerged[:] . . . The Arminians . . . the Old Calvinists . . . and . . . New Divinity men."[10] According to Jesse Fonda, a New York Calvinistic pastor, the "Christian" theologies consisted of "Calvinists, Arminians, Universalists, and Socinians [Unitarians]."[11] In the Palmyra neighborhood of the young Joseph Smith, Calvinism, with a doctrine of total human depravity and limited atonement, was primarily represented

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8. Peter W. Williams, *America's Religions from Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2002), 137.

9. Richard Watson's *Theological Institutes* was "the first systemization of the theology of Methodism" and Watson was "the most distinguished of Methodist authors" in his day. The *Institutes* was published in Great Britain in six parts between 1823 and 1829 and was first published in New York in 1826. The *Institutes* rapidly became "the standard theological source in American Methodism." See W. J. Townsend, H. B. Workman, and George Eayrs, eds., *A New History of Methodism*, 2 vols. (London: Hadder and Stoughton, 1909), 1:398; and Emory Stevens Bucke, ed., *The History of American Methodism*, 3 vols. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 2:381.

10. Keith J. Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney, 1792–1875: Revivalist and Reformer* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 14.

11. Jesse Fonda, *Familiar Letters on Sacraments* (Newburgh, N.Y.: Ward M. Gazlay, 1824), 283. Calvinists preferred the term "Socinianism" (after the heretical Italian theologian Faustus Socinus, 1539–1604) to "Unitarianism" since the latter term implied belief in one God and "trinitarians profess also to be Unitarians." See Andrew Fuller, *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems* (Boston: Lincoln & Edmands, 1815), ix.

by the Presbyterians and Particular Baptists, and Arminianism, with a doctrine of prevenient grace allowing the totally depraved to turn from sin, was primarily represented by the Methodists.[12] In early nineteenth-century America, the fundamental problem giving rise to these differing theologies was "the most pressing question within Calvinism,"[13] namely, the apparently incompatible doctrines of the total divine sovereignty of the Calvinists, which did not include human participation in salvation, and the Arminians' insistence on human free will and accountability. Indeed, "during the 1820s . . . religious controversies" in upstate New York "revolved primarily around the issue of [human] free will" and "turned mainly upon the points at issue between the Calvinistic and Arminian theology."[14]

In the United States, the two major formulations of Calvinism (hereafter referred to as "Old Calvinism") were Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. The two were differentiated by church government (independent congregations versus presbyteries) and some doctrines. For example, Congregationalism had descended from Puritanism, that had adopted its own form of "Covenant theology" that committed its members to a personal "mission" in furthering the church, nation, and ordinary affairs. Those whom God had selected for election through "the covenant of grace" had a responsibility to incorporate the "means of grace" (church attendance, scripture reading, and prayer). Although fading by the early nineteenth century, "the covenant ideal, with its teaching about mutual obligation and communal responsibility, continued to influence American life."[15] A prominent, early nineteenth-century Congregationalist was Timothy Dwight (1752–1817), president of Yale University.

An even more rigorous derivation of late eighteenth-century Congregationalism was the New Divinity movement, whose adherents, also called

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12. Milton V. Backman Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 6.

13. "Calvinism," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, edited by Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley, and Harry S. Stout (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 211.

14. Curtis D. Johnson, *Islands of Holiness: Rural Religion in Upstate New York, 1790–1860* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 45–47.

15. Keith L. Sprunger, "Covenant Theology," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 324.

Hopkinsians,[16] traced their origin back to Jonathan Edwards (1703–58). Historian Allen Guelzo maintains that the New Divinity represented "the most vital and fecund intellectual movement in the early republic" differing from Congregational moderate Calvinism in a greater degree of moral absolutism, rejection of the means of grace for the unregenerate, fellowship only to the elect, and the governmental theory of the atonement.[17] Old Calvinists lamented the fact that Hopkins's text, *The System of Doctrines* (1793), which contained "many tenets which differ widely from the received faith" had become "the basis of the popular theology of New England."[18]

The second major formulation of Calvinism in America was Presbyterianism. Arriving in the English colonies in 1684, "Old School" Presbyterianism was the direct descendent of Beza's high Calvinism through the Scots churchman John Knox (1513–1572), and was championed in the early nineteenth century by Archibald Alexander (1772–1851), theology professor at Princeton, and his colleagues. As Old School theology had little changed, new editions of the works of past prominent Presbyterians like Thomas Boston (1677–1732) remained popular. But by the early nineteenth century, a large number of Presbyterian clergy, the "New School," had adopted a theology that was "substantially

16. Named for Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803), one of the movement's most prominent theologians.

17. Allen C. Guelzo, *Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 208, 112–39. See also Joseph A. Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards: Religious Tradition and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1995), and his *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Christian University Press, 1981). The governmental theory (probably derived from the moral influence theory of Peter Abelard, 1079–1142) opposed the substitutionary theory (the idea that Christ died for our sins to satisfy the demands of the law) by characterizing the atonement as "merely an exhibition of the wrath of God against sin." See Zebulon Crocker, *The Catastrophe of the Presbyterian Church in 1837, Including a Full View of the Recent Theological Controversies in New England* (New Haven, Conn.: B&W Noyes, 1838), 93–95, and Frank Hugh Foster, *A Genetic History of New England Theology* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), 249–50.

18. William Bentley, *The Diary of William Bentley* (Salem, Mass.: Essex Institute, 1905–14), 1:160, as quoted in Guelzo, *Jonathan Edwards*, 93; "Review: A Warning against Hopkinsianism, and Other Allied Errors, Addressed by the Associate Reformed Synod of the West," *Hopkinsian Magazine* 3, no. 5 (May 1828): 110.

that of . . . the New England divines" (New Divinity Calvinism or Hopkinsianism).[19] By the 1820s, the more rigorous New School Presbyterians outnumbered the Old in central upstate New York.

Another group that emerged within Calvinism, the Universalists, resolved the conflict between God's sovereignty and justice by teaching that everyone would eventually be saved. Universalists criticized both the Old Calvinists for teaching that "God is a respecter of persons" for consigning reprobates to eternal misery and the Arminians for teaching a doctrine of human free will which presents a God who is "unable to control events" and which leaves humans "a prey to fatality."[20] The Universalist adaptation of Calvinism is clearly opposed by the Book of Mormon, as evidenced by its polemics against the Universalist doctrines of limited punishment (2 Ne. 28:7-9), universal salvation (Alma 1:4), and "restoration" of the evil person to a good afterlife (Alma 41).[21]

Turning now to Arminianism, we encounter challenges in definition because "this label [included] multiple tendencies" and became a generic term "for a wide variety of moral thinkers who objected to strict Calvinism."[22] If there is a common theme, it would be an emphasis on human free will and the resulting personal responsibility and accountability for ethical conduct. Three groups of American "Arminians" are especially notable in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The first group of American Arminians consisted of liberal Congregational preachers like Charles Chauncy (1705-1787), whom some have labeled "rationalistic Arminians." A major trajectory from eighteenth-century rationalistic Arminianism was what we may term "rationalistic Unitarianism." Influ-

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19. Crocker, *The Catastrophe of the Presbyterian Church*, 80.

20. Henry Fitz, "Sermon XXX," *New York Gospel Herald and Universalist Review* 2 (December 4, 1830): 397. See also Elhanan Winchester, *The Universal Restoration Exhibited in Four Dialogues between a Minister and His Friend* (Bellows Falls, Vt.: Bill Blake, 1819).

21. Dan Vogel, "Anti-Universalist Rhetoric in the Book of Mormon," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, edited by Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993): 21-52; and Thomas, "Revival Language in the Book of Mormon," 21.

22. H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), 1:374; *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 78.

enced by "reason," persons of this persuasion rejected the entire Christian scheme of original sin, human depravity, and the infinite atonement as "irrational" and of the nature of [constituting a] a "fallacy;" and placed Christ "upon a level with other inspired men."[23] These beliefs are clearly refuted throughout the Book of Mormon which affirms original sin (2 Ne. 2), human depravity (Mosiah 16:3), the infinite atonement (2 Ne. 9:7), and the divinity of Christ (Mosiah 15).

A second group of American Arminians was the Methodists, whose faith might be termed conservative, evangelical, or pessimistic (because of their acceptance of human depravity). Methodist Arminianism was introduced into the English colonies in the 1760s and grew rapidly[24] through the efforts of Francis Asbury (1745–1816) and his itinerant horseback preachers, the "circuit riders." Some of these largely self-educated preachers, including Fletcher Harris (1790–1818) from North Carolina and Nathan Bangs (1778–1862) from New York, have left us their works.

A third group of American "Arminians" included some Calvinists, most notably the Congregationalist, Nathaniel William Taylor (1786–1858), founder of the New Haven Theology, and New School Presbyterian Charles Grandison Finney (1792–1875), the foremost American evangelist of the early nineteenth century. Both proposed theologies that moved in an optimistic and "Arminian" direction. Both emphasized human free will, rejected a physically inherited irresistible human depravity, insisted that only free moral agents who actually sin can justly be held accountable, and accepted a governmental theory of the atonement.

Another influential development in early nineteenth-century America was the "Restoration" movement, whose goal was to restore primitive Christianity through the study of the Bible. The Restoration movement

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23. William E. Channing, "Unitarian Christianity" (1819) and "Christianity a Rational Religion" in his *The Works of William E. Channing, D.D.* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1882), 245, 375; Nathaniel Emmons, *Sermons on Some of the First Principles and Doctrines of True Religion* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1815), 127. See also Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America* (Boston: Starr King, 1955).

24. By the 1820s, Methodists were the predominant Arminians in America with a third of a million members. In contrast, the Arminian Freewill Baptist churches had an estimated 16,000. See "Literary and Philosophical Intelligence," *Christian Spectator* 6 (December 1, 1824): 656; William F. Davidson, *The Free Will Baptists in America, 1727–1984* (Nashville, Tenn.: Randall House, 1985), 205.

consisted of two major groups: the "Christians" (or Christian Connection) and the followers of Alexander Campbell (1788–1866), founder of the Disciples of Christ.[25] The former rejected the Christian creeds, including Trinitarianism, although, unlike the "rationalistic Unitarians," the "Christian" Unitarians elevated Christ above humanity. Campbell also rejected the Christian confessions, with their "speculative theology," "metaphysical" doctrines, and "Babylonish terms and phrases" in favor of the Bible which "contains a full and perfect revelation of God and his will" and sought to free Christianity of "all corrupt baggage added during nearly two thousand years of Catholic and Protestant domination."[26]

A final aspect of the background to the religious environment in which the Book of Mormon appeared was the political legacy of the American Revolution, which, as noted earlier, gave "new prominence" to "God's moral government and the propriety of His vindictive justice."[27] Even the Calvinists agreed that, although completely sovereign, God should be viewed as a moral governor. As Timothy Dwight put it, God is "infinitely just" and did all "on the ground of law."[28] Likewise, Methodist Fletcher Harris noted that "God is the moral, as well as the physical Governor of the universe."[29] And the Book of Mormon agrees. For example, in 2 Nephi 2:13–14 the Book of Mormon presents a logical proof that

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25. Informative histories of the movement are contained in James DeForest Murch, *Christians Only: A History of the Restoration Movement* (1962; reprinted Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2004); and Michael W. Casey and Douglas A. Foster, eds., *The Stone-Campbell Movement* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 2002).

26. Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System in Reference to the Union of Christians, and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity as Plead in the Current Reformation* (1866; reprinted Salem, N.H.: Ayer, 1988), 4–5, 15; Alexander Campbell, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things," No. IV, *The Christian Baptist* 2, no. 11 (June 6, 1825): 223; Mont Whitson, "Campbell's Post-Protestantism and Civil Religion" in Casey and Foster, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 180.

27. Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*, 336.

28. Timothy Dwight, *Theology: Explained and Defended in a Series of Sermons*, 4 vols. (New Haven, Conn.: S. Converse, 1825), 1:194–5.

29. Fletcher Harris, *Sermons on Important Subjects* (Granville County, N.C.: Abraham Paul, 1825), 149.

God's moral government must operate according to law. The basic argument is in the form of *modus tollens:*[30]

If there is no law, there is no creation.

There is a creation.

Therefore, there is law.

2 Nephi 2:13 then demonstrates the validity of the first assertion by a chain of hypothetical syllogisms. Better educated early nineteenth-century individuals would have recognized these formal arguments.[31]

Some Early Nineteenth-Century Disputes

The foregoing review of the Book of Mormon's background implies a great deal of religious ferment and controversy. Not surprisingly, Arminians pressed the Calvinists to show how their sovereign Deity, who controlled everything including human behavior, could justly hold humans accountable for their sins, while the Calvinists responded that the Arminians disrespected and robbed God of his sovereignty. Such disputes led to many discussions on the nature of human freedom and moral agency. As the New Divinity's Asa Burton (1752–1836) noted: "Very different opinions concerning [human] moral agency . . . have prevailed among the learned. This has occasioned very warm disputes, and numerous treatises."[32] This article has already noted several of the controversies on which the Book of Mormon speaks. It will move now to a more detailed consideration of four major disputes in which the Book of Mormon clearly takes an interest.

Issue 1: Are Humans Free to Act according to Their Own Wills?

Faculty psychology, the division of the mind into the understanding, the will, and the affections (or inclinations) was frequently utilized by

30. *Modus tollens* is a form of valid inference as follows: "If proposition P is true, then proposition Q is true. / Proposition Q is false. / Therefore, proposition P is false."

31. See, for example, Isaac Watts, *Logic or the Use of Reason in the Inquiry after Truth* (London: T. Purday & Son, 1809).

32. Asa Burton, *Essays on Some of the First Principles of Metaphysicks, Ethicks, and Theology* (Portland, Maine: Arthur Shirley, 1824), 94.

early nineteenth-century theologians.[33] On the one hand, for Old Calvinists, the will of humans had been corrupted by the Fall so that evil choices were inevitable. Thus Timothy Dwight attributed sin to "the corruption of that Energy of the Mind, whence volitions flow"[34] and the Presbyterians to the loss of "all ability of will to any spiritual good."[35]

On the other hand, for New Divinity, Methodists, Nathaniel William Taylor, and Charles Grandison Finney, any doctrine that compromised the ability of humans to be free and independent moral agents would be incompatible with a just God. However, even among this school, there were major disagreements over the nature of human freedom. New Divinity David Haskel and Methodist Nathan Bangs argued over such issues in an interesting exchange of books in New York a decade before the Book of Mormon. The strategy of the New Divinity was to make humans accountable for sin by proposing that only human inclinations were affected by the Fall. New Divinity men then ingeniously argued that, despite the fact that humans continuously sin because of their inborn inclinations (preserving the Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity), because the will is unaffected, because there is no external coercion to sin, and because the ability to distinguish between right and wrong (a function of the understanding) was retained, humans should be regarded as accountable moral agents subject to a just punishment. Moral agency, argued Haskel, requires only that a human be a "free agent," i.e., "one that acts according to his inclination" and has the ability "to distinguish between right and wrong."[36]

The Methodists also accepted total human depravity resulting in "no power to do good works" but argued that, because of the atonement, "*free preventing grace* . . . visit[s] all men" restoring "a measure of

33. For a brief review of the application of faculty psychology by early nineteenth-century theologians, see "Faculty Psychology" in Herbert W. Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University, 1963), 202–9.

34. Dwight, *Theology*, 1:488.

35. *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church* (Elizabeth-Town, N.J.: Mervin Hale, 1822), 47.

36. Nathan Bangs, *An Examination of the Doctrine of Predestination as Contained in a Sermon Preached in Burlington, Vermont by Daniel Haskel, Minister of the Congregation* (New York: J.C. Tatten, 1817), 87–88.

free-will"[37] to choose good. Thus, Bangs replied to Haskel that, if humans are acting under the determining influence of evil inclinations, they could not be true moral agents because moral agents must have "the power to *choose* between right and wrong."[38] Key to the dispute is defining the terms "act" and "acted upon." As the New Divinity's Asa Burton had noted: "All things which exist either act, or are acted upon."[39] The Methodists and other opponents had charged that, under the Calvinistic scheme, humans could be seen only as acted upon. Wesley had argued that "every *unfree* being is purely passive, not active in any degree" and Fletcher insisted that the Calvinists made God "the only *free agent.*"[40] The New Divinity answered that humans who are free to respond to their inclinations, are "agents" who "act, and produce effects."[41] This argument failed to impress Bangs, who charged that "it would seem then, that [according to New Divinity teaching] it is utterly impossible for man to will, or to act."[42]

The Book of Mormon can be seen as dividing the mind according to faculty psychology. It speaks of the understanding (1 Ne. 13:29; 2 Ne. 31:3; Alma 32:28, 34; Eth. 3:5), the will (Mosiah 2:21, 16:11-12; Alma 12:31, 42:7) and the "affections of the heart" (Alma 37:36; 2 Ne. 4:12) which would have been interpreted according to faculty psychology. As for issues relating to human free will, the Book of Mormon resolved them by noting that a human becomes a moral agent only when he becomes "free" to "act for himself" rather than be "acted upon" (2 Ne. 2:16, 26). As we have seen, however, the dispute was not about whether men are free but about the definition of freedom; nor was it about whether men can act but with the definition of action. Therefore, the Book of Mormon further

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37. *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church,* Article VIII; Harris, *Sermons on Important Subjects,* 285, 75; Fletcher, *Checks to Antinomianism,* 169; John Wesley, "Predestination Calmly Considered" (1752) reprinted in Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford, 1964), 447.

38. Bangs, *An Examination of the Doctrine of Predestination,* 87-88; emphasis his.

39. Burton, *Essays on Some of the First Principles,* 95.

40. Albert C. Outler, ed., *The Works of John Wesley,* 24 vols. (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1985), 2:475; Fletcher, *Checks to Antinomianism,* 1:113; emphasis theirs.

41. Burton, *Essays on Some of the First Principles,* 95.

42. Bangs, *An Examination of the Doctrine of Predestination,* 101.

clarifies its position: "And they [i.e., humans after the Fall] are free [or have the power] to *choose* liberty and eternal life . . . *or* to *choose* captivity and death" (2 Ne. 2:27; emphasis mine). The Book of Mormon's teachings are strikingly similar to Bangs's: "Life and death are set before them . . . all who choose life . . . shall live, and . . . all who choose death . . . shall die" and to Campbell's: "Therefore, life and death, good and evil . . . are placed before man . . . and he is commanded to . . . take his choice."[43]

The Book of Mormon teaches that because totally depraved humans "are redeemed from the fall, they have become free . . . to act for themselves . . . to choose liberty and eternal life" (2 Ne. 2:26-27). In this, the Book of Mormon supports the Arminian theology of the Methodists. But unlike the Methodists, the fundamental idea of prevenient grace is absent, although rare passages in the Book of Mormon may imply such a doctrine. An example is Alma 16:16: "The Lord did pour out his Spirit . . . to prepare the minds of the children of men, or to prepare their hearts to receive the word." Thus, in the debate over human freedom, the Book of Mormon tends to resolve the issues similarly but not identically to the Methodist brand of Arminianism.

Issue 2: Is Moral Evil Desirable?

As noted in an early nineteenth-century theological dictionary: "Evil is distinguished into natural and moral. . . . Moral evil is . . . acting contrary to the . . . revealed laws of the Deity, it is termed wickedness or sin."[44] Theologians agreed that the creation must be good because God is good, but there was disagreement over the necessity and origin of moral evil. Timothy Dwight summarized the three prevailing views: either God (1) "permitted" evil for his own unknown purpose(s), or (2) does not desire evil but "could not, without destroying the free agency of his creatures, prevent them from sinning," or (3) desires evil and "creates . . . sinful volitions."[45] For the Old Calvinists like Dwight, who preferred the

43. Bangs, *An Examination of the Doctrine of Predestination*, 62; Campbell, *The Christian System*, 33.

44. Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary* (Philadelphia: James Kay Jr., 1831), 135.

45. Dwight, *Theology*, 1:412.

first option, God's reasons are unknowable but "necessary" to His purposes and contributing to His "own glory."[46]

The New Divinity men chose the third option and proceeded to various speculations over how and why God created sinful volitions. Nathaniel Emmons (1745–1840) argued: "Were there no such distinction . . . between virtue and vice, there could be no real harm in calling good evil, and evil good," and God could not "justly punish";[47] and Joseph Bellamy (1719-90) suggested that God had willed evil because the total amount of happiness in the creation would be heightened due to an increased appreciation by God's creatures for God's grace and justice.[48]

The Methodists adopted Dwight's second option. John Wesley had noted that the God-given free will of humans had resulted in "numberless irregularities in God's government" and the resulting "sin and pain" of the world.[49] Nathan Bangs denied "that God brings good out of moral evil" and also denied "that God primarily willed that sin should exist at all . . . that it [moral evil] was any way necessary for the perfection of man's happiness, or for unfolding the glory of God."[50] Likewise, Fletcher noted: "It is nowhere promised, that *sin* shall do us good."[51] Interestingly, Nathaniel Taylor seemed to agree with the Methodists. He criticized the New Divinity for accepting the "groundless" assumption that "*sin is the necessary means of the greatest good*" and rejected the notion "*that God could in a moral system have prevented all sin.*"[52]

The Book of Mormon resolves this dispute in a complicated and unique way that incorporates some positions from both the Calvinists

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46. *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church*, 30; Dwight, *Theology*, 1:415.

47. Nathaniel Emmons, *Sermons on Some of the First Principles and Doctrines of True Religion* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1815), 49–50.

48. Mark Valeri, *Law and Providence in Joseph Bellamy's New England: The Origins of the New Divinity in Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 110–39.

49. William Ragsdale Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1974), 172; Wesley, *Works*, 2:434.

50. Nathan Bangs, *The Reformer Reformed or a Second Part of the Errors of Hopkinsianism Detected and Refuted* (New York: John C. Totten, 1818), 37; Bangs, *An Examination of the Doctrine of Predestination*, 35–36, 118, 125–26.

51. Fletcher, *Checks to Antinomianism*, 1:231; emphasis his.

52. *Nathaniel William Taylor, Concio ad Clerum: A Sermon on Human Nature, Sin, and Freedom* (1828), reproduced in Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *Theology in America:*

and Arminians. Like the Calvinist belief, evil in the Book of Mormon serves a useful purpose and is desired in God's creation. Thus, God permitted moral evil to enter the creation in order "to bring about his eternal purposes" (2 Ne. 2:15). The Book of Mormon suggests two purposes. First, moral evil is necessary in the world for human moral agency to exist. Thus, a human cannot "act for himself" unless he could be "enticed by the one or the other [good or evil] (2 Ne. 2:15). Second, humans cannot truly experience good if they have not experienced evil. Had it not been for the introduction of evil, humans would be "doing no good, for they knew no sin" (2 Ne. 2:23). Conversely and more characteristic of the Arminians, the Book of Mormon emphasizes that the important purpose of God in the creation and atonement is promoting human freedom and moral agency (2 Ne. 2:26-27).

In agreeing with the New Divinity regarding the desirability of moral evil in the creation, the Book of Mormon shares a theological difficulty with these Calvinists. How can a just God give laws to moral agents that prohibit moral evil and yet desire moral evil to occur? Nathaniel Taylor recognized this paradox in New Divinity teaching: "If sin be the necessary means of the greatest good, who can reasonably regard the commission of it with sorrow or even regret?"[53] In the Book of Mormon, God desires the first humans to partake of the "forbidden [by God]" fruit "to bring about his [God's] eternal purposes" (2 Ne. 2:15). And while humans cannot experience good without sinning (2 Ne. 2:23), they are also encouraged not to sin (2 Ne. 2:27-29).

Issue 3: Do Infants Commit Sin?

The deaths of infants and the common practice of baptizing infants presented special challenges to early nineteenth-century theologians who defended the concept of God's moral government. For on the one hand, Paul had declared all humans to be guilty of sin and, for that reason, susceptible to death (Rom. 5:12), but on the other, the moral culpability of infants seemed in question. Heated arguments ensued over whether infants are sinful and how to interpret their deaths.

For high Calvinists who accepted the imputation of Adam's sin

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The Major Protestant Voices from Puritanism to Neo-orthodoxy (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), 243; emphasis Taylor's.

53. Taylor, *Concio ad Clerum*, 244.

(Adam's descendants share equally in his guilt), the culpability of infants was clear and the question of moral agency was moot. The Book of Mormon condemns this view on the grounds that it makes God unjust (Moro. 8:12). Thus, as Eleazar Fitch (1791–1871) explained: "most Calvinistic writers . . . have denied that moral agency commences in infancy."[54]

However, by the 1820s, as Nathaniel Taylor pointed out, "most Calvinistic divines, not to say all in New-England, have long since, rejected this tenet [imputation]."[55] The New Divinity's Seth Williston noted: "We do not hold . . . that any of them [infants] shall be finally and eternally miserable, *merely* because Adam sinned."[56] For these theologians, two alternatives could rescue God's moral government from the charge of injustice: Either infants are moral agents capable of sinning, or they are innocent of personal sin and the death of infants is explainable through another mechanism. Calvinists chose the former and Methodists the latter solution. Timothy Dwight declared that "it is with the highest probability" that humans "are also sinful beings in their infancy"[57] and the New Divinity's Leonard Woods (1774–1854) that "the various declarations of Scripture as to the universality of sin . . . must . . . be understood as in some sense including little children. . . . Children are . . . moral agents from the first."[58]

In contrast, Methodists rejected the idea that little children are accountable moral agents and, thus, sinners. According to Richard Watson, the only thing that could be said of infants is that "they inherit a corrupt and depraved nature from Adam."[59] For Watson, infants are "innocent as to all actual sin" but still suffer from a "corrupt nature or spiritual death"

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54. Eleazar T. Fitch, *Two Discourses on the Nature of Sin* (New Haven, Conn.: Treadway and Adams, 1826), 47.

55. Taylor, "Review: Views of Calvinism, by Professor [Andrews] Norton," *Christian Spectator* 5, no. 4 (April 1, 1823): 218.

56. Seth Williston, *A Vindication of Some of the Most Essential Doctrines of the Reformation* (Hudson, N.Y.: Ashbel Stoddard, 1817), 61; emphasis his.

57. Dwight, *Theology*, 1:177.

58. Leonard Woods, *An Essay on Native Depravity* (Boston: William Peirce, 1835), 21, 169, 171.

59. Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes* (1823; reprinted New York: Lane & Scott, 1850), 2:230–31.

as a result of "original sin." But, through the "merits of Christ . . . God . . . will ultimately save them all."[60]

Alexander Campbell, Nathaniel Taylor, and Charles Finney seemed to move toward a similar solution. For example, Campbell explained that infants had "never violated any law" but inherit, through Adam's sin, "a sin of our nature."[61] Nathaniel Taylor hypothesized that "infants were depraved but not sinful" and "may be saved . . . through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."[62] For Finney: "All that can be justly said . . . is, that if infants are saved at all, which I suppose they are, they are rescued by the benevolence of God."[63] Rationalistic Unitarians rejected all these notions by refusing to characterize infants as depraved by nature.[64]

To summarize, early nineteenth-century opinion regarding the possibility of guilt, sin, and moral accountability of infants included these positions: (1) Infants justifiably die and deserve damnation because of the imputed sin of Adam; (2) Infants are moral agents and justifiably die and deserve damnation because they have personally sinned; (3) Infants are not moral agents and have no personal sin but have inherited a moral corruption because of the Fall that renders them ineligible for salvation apart from the Atonement; (4) Infants have no sin or moral corruption and no redemption is necessary.

The Book of Mormon resolves this dispute in favor of the third option, arguing that "little children . . . are not capable of committing sin" (Moro. 8:8); and because of the atonement, "little children" are automatically pardoned under God's moral government (Mosiah 3:16). Yet the Book of Mormon acknowledges that little children are still under the "curse of Adam" and, thus, "fall" because of Adam or "by [receiving a depraved] nature" (Mosiah 3:16).

As an interesting aside, it may be noticed that understanding how the Book of Mormon resolves early nineteenth-century controversies can be useful in hypothesizing how the early Church might have interpreted difficult Book of Mormon passages such as the incomprehensible verse in

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60. Ibid., 2:57, 345.

61. Campbell, *The Christian System*, 28.

62. Taylor, *Concio ad Clerum*, 233.

63. J. H. Fairchild, ed., *Finney's Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship, 1976), 185.

64. *The Works of William E. Channing, D.D.*, 377.

Mosiah 3:16: "And even if it were possible that little children could sin, they could not be saved; but I say unto you they are blessed; for behold, as in Adam, or by nature, they fall, even so the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins." This passage likely would have been interpreted as follows: "And even though little children cannot commit personal sin, they are still not automatically saved from death and damnation without the Atonement because they have inherited a corrupted nature due to the Fall; but, I say unto you they are blessed; for, behold, because of Adam's sin they have a corrupted nature that renders them ineligible for salvation; even so, the blood of Christ atoneth for Adam's sin, reverses the effects of their corrupted nature on their salvation, and saves them all."

Issue 4: Are Those Who Have Never Been Exposed to Christian Teachings Accountable?

There was general agreement in the early nineteenth century that essential features of God's moral government are the establishment of divine laws, consistent administration of the laws, and the revelation of the laws to humans, views with which the Book of Mormon agrees (2 Ne. 2:5; Alma 42:17–22). But acceptance of the idea that the law must be understood in order for a moral government to hold a moral agent accountable results in a problem: How does one reconcile the doctrine that all have sinned and are accountable (Rom. 5:12) with the observation that a great many individuals have not been exposed to the teachings of the Bible? To rescue God's moral government from the charge of injustice, several solutions are possible including: (1) Humans not exposed to the Bible's teachings are still individually accountable because they have learned of the laws through other mechanisms; (2) Humans not exposed to the Bible are not accountable and are not punished; or (3) Humans not exposed to the Bible are accountable but are rescued from punishment.

With the exception of the rationalistic Unitarians, almost all early nineteenth-century theologians included in this study adopted the first solution, although the specifics varied. Thus, the New Divinity's Nathaniel Emmons proposed that the accountability of humans arises from a natural ability "of discerning the difference between moral good and evil" even by "those who never heard of the Bible."[65] Similarly Presbyterian Archibald Alexander declared that the ability to understand God's law is intrinsic to man since God's "own righteous law . . . is written on the heart of man, or

65. Emmons, *Sermons on Some of the First Principles*, 52.

interwoven with the principles of his constitution, as a moral agent."[66] For the Methodists, Wesley taught that "every child of God has had, at some time, 'life and death set before him,' eternal life and eternal death; and has in himself the casting voice."[67] And Richard Watson insisted that those who "had received no revealed law" were considered to have the law "written in their hearts" and "consciences." Through this mechanism, it is "possible" that obedience could lead to salvation for all.[68] John Fletcher argued that because "grace" or "light" is given to all humans, a "heathen" who "never heard of Christ" would still be saved if he "feareth God, and worketh righteousness, according to the light he has."[69] Finney considered the heathen subject to God's law and punishment and encouraged his listeners to "send them [heathens] the gospel . . . for their salvation."[70] New Haven theologian Eleazar Fitch suggested that ignorance of the law is no excuse since each person is under the obligation of "acquainting himself with the law"[71] and sins by not doing so.

But while all these groups sought ways to justify the accountability and guilt of all humans, the Book of Mormon resolves the issue by the relatively novel adoption of the third alternative: that those not exposed to the Bible or Christian teaching are accountable but are rescued from punishment. Like the other theologies, the Book of Mormon teaches that God has given laws, the violation of which places all humans under condemnation (Alma 42:17-22). But unlike the others, the Book of Mormon teaches that those who are ignorant of the teachings of the law cannot in fairness be held accountable by a just moral governor; such persons, like infants, are automatically rescued by the Atonement. Thus, all humans "who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned" will receive no punishment. This is because "the atonement satisfieth the demands of his [God's] justice upon all those who have not the law given to them" (Mosiah 3:11; 2 Ne. 9:26).

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66. Archibald Alexander, *A Treatise on Justification by Faith* (Philadelphia: Wm. S. Martien, 1837), 11.

67. Wesley, *Works*, 2:490.

68. Watson, *Institutes*, 2:446.

69. Fletcher, *Checks to Antinomianism*, 1:50-1.

70. Charles Grandison Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (1835; reprinted, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1960), 43.

71. Fitch, *Two Discourses on the Nature of Sin*, 8.

Some Conclusions

This study has examined only a small number of the many theological issues addressed in the Book of Mormon and in early nineteenth-century America. More in-depth studies of specific Book of Mormon teachings in contemporary context, such as attempted here, are challenging for several reasons, especially because the Book of Mormon does not present an organized systematic theology; thus, interpretation of scriptural passages may be ambiguous. Missing and fundamental concepts must often be hypothesized.

Although the Book of Mormon contains teachings that are similar to those to various early nineteenth-century groups, clearly Book of Mormon theology does not consistently reproduce any existing early nineteenth-century theological perspective. Indeed, I would suggest that previous scholars who have attempted to "pigeonhole" Book of Mormon theology create a methodological problem for themselves as they are forced to emphasize the similarities and minimize the differences between Book of Mormon teachings and their presumed early nineteenth-century source. As this study shows, it is often a close examination of the differences that can provide some of the more interesting insights. Thus, the Book of Mormon presents neither a completely early nineteenth-century Arminian nor Calvinistic theology but sometimes offers, as its resolution of the problem of moral evil shows, a compromise between the two and at other times, a unique perspective, such as the question of accountability for those not exposed to Christian teaching. In its approach to contemporary problems, the Book of Mormon was not out of step with other early nineteenth-century strivings. For example, as we have seen, compromise approaches were proposed by Taylor and Finney, who were viewed by their more orthodox Calvinistic peers as "slipping over into Arminianism,"[72] while the Restorationists rejected the orthodox received religion altogether.

There are other relatively novel theological ideas in the Book of Mormon. One example is the notion that the creation was entirely static prior to the Fall. A corollary of this concept is that the first humans could not have children (2 Ne. 2:23). Contrarily, moderate Calvinist Timothy Dwight taught that if Adam had been obedient, his "posterity . . . would, like him, have lived forever;" high Calvinist Thomas Boston, that without

72. Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *Charles G. Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 31–32.

the Fall, Adam's original "blessing" would have been "diffused into all the branches" (of his posterity); the New Divinity's Nathaniel Emmons that, prior to the Fall, "God presented him (Adam) with the delightful prospect of a numerous and happy posterity;" and Methodist Richard Watson that had Adam not sinned, "the felicity and glory of his (original) condition must . . . have descended to his posterity for ever."[73]

Thus, when viewed in larger context, Book of Mormon theology, as interpreted against the background of the early nineteenth century, appears to contribute an addition to the theological spectrum of the period. Given the interest of many scholars in the considerable theological diversity of early nineteenth-century America, one may wonder why more attention has not been paid to the Book of Mormon. Undoubtedly, an important reason is that, in the early nineteenth century, "the theologians who staffed the seminaries and produced the quarterlies were the country's most respected intellectuals."[74] Conversely, as Alexander Campbell and Jan Shipps have suggested, Joseph Smith, the presumed author of the Book of Mormon, has not been considered scholastically worthy since he was "very ignorant" and delivered "the theology of the Latter-day Saints . . . through found scripture and prophetic voice."[75] I suggest that the analysis presented in this study calls into question the conclusion that Book of Mormon theology is uninteresting and not up to par scholastically. Rather, additional studies will likely produce further valuable insights for students of both early Mormon history and early nineteenth-century American theological diversity.

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73. See Dwight, *Theology*, 1:398; Thomas Boston, *Human Nature in Its Fourfold State* (Philadelphia: Ambrose Walker, 1814), 30; Emmons, *Sermons on Some of the First Principles*, 222; Watson, *Institutes*, 2:19.

74. Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 232.

75. Campbell, "The Mormonites," 93; Jan Shipps, "Joseph Smith," in *Makers of Christian Theology in America*, edited by Mark G. Toulouse and James O. Duke (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1997), 212.

Critique of Alma 36 as an Extended Chiasm

Earl M. Wunderli

In 1967, John W. Welch, now a professor of law at Brigham Young University, discovered chiasmus in the Book of Mormon while on a mission in Germany. He wrote an article about it in 1969 and has been its foremost champion since then.[1] LDS scholars have acclaimed chiasmus as strong in-

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1. John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10, no. 1 (Autumn 1969): 69–84. Although Welch's scholarly efforts have not been limited to chiasmus in the Book of Mormon, he wrote his M.A. thesis, "A Study Relating Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon to Chiasmus in the Old Testament, Ugaritic Epics, Homer, and Selected Greek and Latin Authors" (Brigham Young University, 1970), on the topic and the following articles, among others: "Introduction" and "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, edited by John W. Welch (Hildesheim, Germany: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981), 9–16, 198–210; "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, edited by Noel B. Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 33–52; "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, edited by John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [FARMS], 1991), 114–31; and "What Does Chiasmus in the Book of Mor-

ternal evidence for the Hebraic origin of the Book of Mormon.[2] Other scholars disagree.[3] Few scholars have published critical analyses of Book of Mormon chiasms.[4]

Although Welch and others have found a number of extended chiasms in the Book of Mormon, including the entire books of First and Second Nephi and Mosiah,[5] I will limit myself in this paper to a critique of Welch's Alma 36 chiasm. He calls it a "masterpiece of composition," one of his favorites, and "one of the best" from among hundreds he has evalu-

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mon Prove?" in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, edited by Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1997), 199–224.

2. See, for example, Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline," in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, edited by Noel B. Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 53–74; Donald W. Parry, "Climactic Forms in the Book of Mormon," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, edited by John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992), 290–92; Davis Bitton, "B. H. Roberts and Book of Mormon Scholarship; Early Twentieth Century, Age of Transition," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8, no. 2 (1999): 60–69; Hugh W. Pinnock, *Finding Biblical Hebrew and Other Ancient Literary Forms in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999); Robert A. Rees, "Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the American Renaissance," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 83–112; Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 125, 133, 173, 222.

3. See, for example, John S. Kselman, "Ancient Chiasmus Studied," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17, no. 4 (Winter 1984): 146–48; Brent Lee Metcalfe, "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions about Book of Mormon Historicity," *Dialogue, A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 153–84; Dan Vogel, "The Use and Abuse of Chiasmus in Book of Mormon Studies," Paper delivered at Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, August 2001; David P. Wright, "Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: Or, Joseph Smith in Isaiah," in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon*, edited by Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 157–234; David P. Wright, "The Fallacies of Chiasmus: A Critique of Structures Proposed for the Covenant Collection (Exodus. 20:23–23:19)," in *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 10 (2004): 162–63 note 37.

4. Vogel, for example, "The Use and Abuse," examines in detail Parry's 1992 chiasms of 1 Nephi 1:20–2:1 and 1 Nephi 15:25.

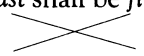
5. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1969); Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1981); Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline"; and Noel B.

ated.[6] He has written about it at least four times.[7] It reflects most of the problems with all of his extended chiasms. My argument is that he has imposed chiasmus on the Book of Mormon where none was intended.

What Is Chiasmus?

According to Welch, chiasmus is inverted parallelism. The term *chiasmus* derives from the Greek letter *chi* (χ) and from the Greek word *chiazein* ("to mark with a χ"), because χ is descriptive of the chiastic form.[8] For example, "The last shall be first, and the first shall be last" (1 Nephi 13:42//Matt. 20:16) is a chiasm[9] because if written thus:

The *last* shall be *first*, and



The *first* shall be *last*,

and a line is drawn between the *last*'s and another between the *first*'s, as shown, a χ is formed. There are many other simple chiasms in the Bible, such as:

For *my* thoughts are not *your* thoughts,
Neither are *your* ways *my* ways, saith the Lord.
(Isa. 55:8)

This is a simple chiasm because it contains only two elements, *my* and *your*. Simple chiasms, which are most characteristic of those written in western languages such as Greek, Latin, and English, are distinguished from extended chiasms characteristic of Hebrew and other ancient languages, in which there can be any number of elements written in one order and then repeated in reverse order, e.g., a-b-c-d- . . . -x-x- . . . -d-c-b-a.[10] For example, Psalm 3:7–8 is an extended chiasm with five paired elements:

Reynolds, "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates," in *BYU Studies* 27, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 15–37.

6. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," 116.

7. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1969); "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1981); "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1982); and "A Masterpiece: Alma 36" (1991).

8. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1982), 35.

9. This particular chiasm is also found in Ether 13:12//Matthew 19:30, although the order is *first, last, last, first.*

10. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1982), 36.

Save me
O my God,
For thou has smitten
All my enemies
On the cheek-bone
The teeth
Of the wicked
Thou has broken.
To Yahweh
The salvation.[11]

Welch notes that chiasmus is a rhetorical device that has been used sporadically in poetry and prose for nearly three thousand years but doubts that Joseph Smith knew of it at the time he dictated the Book of Mormon.[12]

Analysis of Alma 36

Welch has constructed an impressive chiasm out of Alma 36. His rendering of it has changed each time he has written about it, and his latest (1991) version follows (verse numbers in parentheses):

a My son give ear to my *words* (1)
b *Keep the commandments* and ye shall *prosper in the land* (1)
c Do *as I* have done (2)
d *Remember the captivity* of our fathers (2)
e They were in *bondage* (2)

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11. Ibid., 36-37. The King James translation does not form a chiasm. It reads: "Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies *upon* the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation *belongeth* unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people." Welch explains, ibid., 51-52 note 3, that many chiasms have not survived the King James translation but are clear in Hebrew.

12. John W. Welch, "How Much Was Known about Chiasmus in 1829 When the Book of Mormon Was Translated?" *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): 47-80, acknowledges that Joseph Smith could have known about chiasmus but insists that there is no direct evidence that Smith, in fact, did. He states: "Today, I acknowledge that people in Joseph Smith's environs [in] 1829 *could* have known of chiasmus, but I still doubt that Joseph Smith actually did." Ibid., 75 note 107.

f He surely did *deliver* them (2)
g *Trust* in God (3)
h Supported in *trials, troubles, and afflictions* (3)
i Lifted up at the *last day* (3)
j I *know* this not of myself but *of God* (4)
k *Born of God* (5)
l I sought to destroy the church (6–9)
m My *limbs* were paralyzed (10)
n Fear of being in the *presence of God* (14–15)
o *Pains* of a damned soul (16)
p *Harrowed up by the memory of sins* (17)
q I remembered *Jesus Christ, a son of God* (17)
q' I cried, *Jesus, son of God* (18)
p' *Harrowed up by the memory of sins* no more (19)
o' Joy as exceeding as was the *pain* (20)
n' Long to be in the *presence of God* (22)
m' My *limbs* received strength again (23)
l' I labored to bring souls to repentance (24)
k' *Born of God* (26)
j' Therefore *my knowledge* is *of God* (26)
h' Supported under *trials, troubles, and afflictions* (27)
g' *Trust* in him (27)
f' He will *deliver* me (27)
i' and *raise me up at the last day* (28)
e' As God brought our fathers out of *bondage* and captivity (28–29)
d' Retain in *remembrance their captivity* (28–29)
c' Know *as I* do know (30)
b' *Keep the commandments* and ye shall *prosper in the land* (30)

a' This according to his *word* (30).[13]

There is much to challenge in this chiasm, including the unexplained asymmetry of element **i'**. One has only to highlight these thirty-four elements in Alma 36 to see how much text—more than 80 percent of it—Welch has ignored in constructing his chiasm. Alma 36 is full of repetitious language, and the language Welch selects for an element is often only one of two or more occurrences of the same term or phrase. Selected language and ignored language often work together to create false symmetry. Some paired elements are imbalanced in size, and some are creatively labeled to convey precision. Nearly all of the paired elements have these or other problems; the following nine are illustrative.

1. Elements **a** and **a'** pair "my son give ear to my *words*" (v. 1) with "this according to his *word*" (v. 30). As in verse 1, Alma also counsels his son to hear his *words* in verse 3: "And now, O my son Helaman . . . I beseech of thee that thou wilt hear my *words*." Welch has selected *words* in verse 1 for the chiasm but ignored *words* in verse 3. Likewise, as in verse 30, Alma refers to the Lord's *word* in verse 26: "For because of the *word* which he has imparted unto me." Again, Welch has selected the Lord's *word* in verse 30 and ignored the Lord's *word* in verse 26.

Welch explains simply that elements **a** and **a'** "introduce and conclude the chapter by referring to Alma's 'words' and the 'word' of God."[14] But if Alma's *words* in verse 1 and the Lord's *word* in verse 30 qualify as elements, it is not clear why Alma's *words* in verse 3 and the Lord's *word* in verse 26 do not also qualify as elements (not to mention the angel's *words* in verse 11), except that to pair them with each other would create asymmetry and thus Welch ignores them.

2. Welch pairs element **e**, "they were in *bondage*" (v. 2), with element **e'**, "as God brought our fathers out of *bondage* and captivity" (vv. 28–29). Element **e'** exhibits not only the typical selectivity and ignored text, but also creative labeling and imbalance. Element **e'** is derived from verses 28 and 29:

> Yea, and I will praise him forever, for *he has brought our fathers out of* Egypt, and he has swallowed up the Egyptians in the Red Sea; and he led them by

13. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," 117.
14. Ibid., 124.

> his power into the promised land; yea, and he has delivered them out of *bondage and captivity* from time to time. Yea, and *he has also brought our fathers out of* the land of Jerusalem; and he has also, by his everlasting power, delivered them out of *bondage and captivity,* from time to time even down to the present day.

In these verses, "he has brought our fathers out of" is used each time with a place, i.e., Egypt or Jerusalem, while "he has delivered them out of" is used each time with the condition of bondage and captivity, but Welch has combined one of two occurrences of "he has brought our fathers out of," not with a place, but with one of two occurrences of the condition "bondage and captivity." This creative combination makes the best match with **e** ("they were in *bondage*") without repeating the key word in the adjacent **f'** ("he will *deliver* me"). Element **e'** does use *captivity,* which is used in the other adjacent element, **d'** ("retain in *remembrance their captivity*"), but it can hardly be avoided because it is half of the phrase *bondage and captivity.* Thus, Welch has italicized *bondage* in **e'** but not *captivity.*

Elements **e** and **e'** are also imbalanced. *He has brought our fathers out of* (v. 28) . . . *bondage and captivity* (v. 29) comprise seventy-four words, which are paired with a single four-word clause ("they were in *bondage*") in verse 2.

As with many other elements, Welch ignores much language in **e'**: Alma's praising God; and God's bringing Alma's fathers out of Egypt, God's swallowing up the Egyptians in the Red Sea, God's leading Alma's fathers into the promised land, and God's bringing Alma's fathers out of the land of Jerusalem.

3. In elements **f**, "he surely did *deliver* them" (v. 2), and **f'**, "he will *deliver* me" (v. 27), Welch uses only two of the six occurrences of *deliver* in Alma 36. In verse 2, *deliver* occurs twice; he uses the second one. *Deliver(ed)* occurs twice in verse 27 and once each in verses 28 and 29. Welch uses the second one in verse 27. The first one in verse 27 is out of order. The two occurrences in verses 28 and 29 each appear between the two phrases that Welch has selected to create element **e'**, "as God brought our fathers out of" and "bondage and captivity." This would make element **f'** somewhat asymmetrical, so Welch uses neither *delivered* in verses 28 and 29, even though they pair well with **f** because all four *delivers* in verses 2, 28, and 29 relate to Alma's fathers, while the two *delivers* in verse 27 relate to Alma.

4. Welch pairs **l**, "I sought to destroy the church" (vv. 6–9), with **l'**, "I labored to bring souls to repentance" (v. 24), in the first of a series of paired elements that express contrasts. This is because **l** and **l'** begin and

end the story of Alma's conversion. Alma's account of his conversion proceeds chiastically, from his rebellion against the church to his epiphany and his embrace of the church. In such a story, it is not difficult to find contrasting elements (e.g., rebellion against church versus embrace of church; physical effects versus relief from physical effects).

Element **l** comprises four verses, which begin and end with seeking to destroy the church of God. In between, much is ignored, which creates an imbalance in the two elements. The two occurrences of *seeking to destroy the church of God* and all the ignored language in between comprise ninety-seven words. Element **l'** contains twelve words.

5. The contrasting elements **m**, "my *limbs* were paralyzed" (v. 10), and **m'**, "my *limbs* received strength again" (v. 23), pair the only two uses of *limbs* in Alma 36 while ignoring language that does not work chiastically. Element **m** ignores Alma's falling to the earth in verse 10, which matches or contrasts with "we all fell to the earth" in verse 7, "I arose and stood up" in verse 8, "I fell to the earth" in verse 11, or "I stood upon my feet" in verse 23. Element **m** also ignores Alma's being unable to open his mouth for three days and nights, which are the same three days and nights in verse 16. And **m'** ignores Alma's being "born of God," which is used in **k** and **k'**. None of this matching or contrasting language works chiastically and Welch ignores it.

6. There is more ignored language between **m** and **n**—all of verses 11, 12, and 13—than between any other two elements. Elements **n**, "fear of being in the *presence of God*" (vv. 14–15), and **n'**, "long to be in the *presence of God*" (v. 22), are both creatively labeled.

Verse 14 reads in part: "the very thought of coming into the presence of my God did *rack* my soul with inexpressible horror." Welch reduces this clause to "fear of being in the presence of God" for **n** and avoids using *rack*, which occurs four other times in Alma 36 but all in the front part of Welch's chiasm with **n**: verses 12 ("I was *racked* with eternal torment" and "*racked* with all my sins"); 16 ("was I *racked*"); and 17 ("I was thus *racked* with torment"). None of these matches chiastically with *rack* in verse 14, and Welch ignores them all.

Presence of God occurs twice in verses 14 and 15 (**n**), but not at all in verse 22 (**n'**). Welch simply adds *presence of God* to **n'** and it becomes a literal match with **n**.

7. Welch pairs element **o**, "*pains* of a damned soul" (v. 16), with ele-

ment **o'**, "joy as exceeding as was the *pain*" (v. 20). His key word is *pain(s)*. On the front side of his chiasm, *pains* appears twice, in verses 13 ("I was tormented with the pains of hell"), which he ignores as out of sequence; and 16 ("was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul"), which he selects. In the second half of his chiasm, *pain(s)* appears three times, in verses 19 ("I could remember my pains no more"), which he ignores as out of sequence; 20 ("joy as exceeding as was my pain"), which he selects; and 21 ("nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains"), which he ignores.

Welch's selection of the language in verse 20 is the worst match with **o**. Indeed, the language in any two of the other four verses is a better match than the language in verses 16 and 20 because *pains* is plural in all four rather than singular as in verse 20, and all four deal only with pains rather than contrasting pain with joy as in verse 20.

8. Element **p**, "*harrowed up by the memory of sins*" (v. 17), and element **p'**, "*harrowed up by the memory of sins* no more" (v. 19), illustrate once again the selectivity behind Welch's chiasm. Between **o** ("*pains* of a damned soul") (v. 16) and **p**, the clause "I was thus racked with torment" is ignored; but read in combination with **p**, this part of verse 17 reads, "I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins." This language pairs better with other ignored language from verse 12 than with **p'** in verse 19. Verse 12 reads, "But I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins." Verses 12 and 17 thus have two phrases in common: "racked with torment" and "harrowed up with sins." In contrast, **p** in verse 17 and **p'** in verse 19 have only one clause in common: "harrowed up by memory of sins." Welch, however, ignores verse 12 as out of sequence.

9. Elements **q**, "I remembered *Jesus Christ, a son of God*"(v. 17), and **q'**, "I cried, *Jesus, son of God*" (v. 18), are the turning point in Welch's chiasm. Welch notes that "the main idea of the [chiastic] passage is placed at the turning point."[15] One problem is that Welch has changed his mind over time about what the turning point is—that is, what Alma's "main idea" is. In 1969, he had a one-line turning point:

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15. Ibid., 114. See also Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1982), 42. In Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1969), 76, he states: "The thoughts which appear at the center must always be given special attention." Wright, "The Fallacies of Chiasmus," 145 note 5, points out that the first and last elements of a chiasm may be the most important.

Called upon Jesus Christ (v. 18);

in 1981, he added a matching element:

Alma remembers one Jesus Christ (17)
Alma calls upon Jesus Christ (18);

in 1982, he included the atonement, which became a one-line turning point:

Alma remembers one Jesus Christ (17)
Christ will atone for the sins of the world (17)
Alma calls upon Jesus Christ (18)

and in 1991, he returned essentially to his 1981 turning point:

I remembered *Jesus Christ, a son of God* (17)
I cried, *Jesus, son of God* (18).

If the turning point really is as important as Welch affirms, then it should, logically, be less difficult to identify.

A related problem is that Welch ignores some text between **q** and **q'**: "to atone for the sins of the world. Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart." He explains: "At the absolute center stand the words 'atone,' 'mind,' and 'heart,' bordered by the name of Jesus Christ. The message is clear: Christ's atonement and man's responding sacrifice of a broken heart and willing mind are central to receiving forgiveness from God."[16] However, the omitted language says nothing about a "responding sacrifice" of a "broken heart and willing mind." Furthermore, the consistent requirement throughout the Book of Mormon, as articulated by Lehi, Jesus, Mormon, and Moroni, is of a "broken heart and a contrite spirit" (2 Ne. 2:7, 4:32; 3 Ne. 9:20, 12:19; Morm. 2:14; Eth. 4:15; Moro. 6:2). This new formulation of a "broken heart and willing mind" is not Alma's "clear message" (or "main idea") but Welch's invention.

In short, Alma 36 seems hardly to be a carefully crafted masterpiece by Alma but a creatively fashioned chiasm imposed on the text by Welch.

Efforts to Defend Alma 36 as a Chiasm

In his 1991 article on Alma 36 as a chiastic masterpiece, Welch does two additional things of interest here. First, he divides Alma 36 in its entirety into eleven paired units and labels them **A** through **K** to pair with **K'**

16. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," 127.

through **A'**, thus creating a "full text" chiasm.[17] Welch refers to the eleven paired units as *sections.* These sections are "panels of text filling in the gaps" between the "main girders of the structure," which are the seventeen paired *elements* in his Alma 36 chiasm, which I examined above.[18]

Second, Welch defends Alma 36 as an extended chiasm using fourteen of a set of fifteen criteria he proposed in 1989 for identifying and evaluating the presence of chiasmus.[19] He republished these criteria in 1995 with slight modifications, using Alma 36 to exemplify nine of them.[20]

The "full text" chiasm is, if anything, even weaker than Welch's "main girder" chiasm. It has an extra **A** section comprising the first twenty-eight words of verse 3 and appearing asymmetrically between **D** and **E** with no matching **A'** section. Welch does not explain this absence of a chiastic pairing, but by one of his fifteen criteria (length), "an extended chiasm is probably not much stronger than its weakest links."[21]

The extra **A** section is only one of many weaknesses. For example, under the criterion of "balance," Welch asserts that Alma 36 is balanced because "the first half of the structure contains 52.4% of the words, and the second half, 47.6%. Even minor words like 'behold' (six times in each half) and 'my' (eighteen times in the first half and seventeen in the second) occur equally in the two halves."[22]

Welch's inclusion of minor words like *my* and *behold* is not only a stretch but invites a look at analogous words that challenge his chiasm's balance. *I*, for example, is analogous to *my* but is used thirty-five times (57.4%) in the first half and twenty-six times (42.6%) in the second half; and *yea* is analogous to *behold* but is used only four times in the first half and fifteen

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17. Ibid., 119–24.

18. Ibid., 118.

19. Welch, *Criteria for Identifying the Presence of Chiasmus* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1989).

20. Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4, no. 2 (1995): 1–14.

21. Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," 6. He notes that there are degrees of chiasticity. If the researcher intends to use the analysis for a specific purpose other than to simply identify orderliness or balance in the text, "the analysis must be more rigorous. The bolder the implications to be drawn [e.g., the Hebraic origin of the Book of Mormon], the greater the support the analysis needs" (10).

22. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," 130.

times in the second half. Of more importance, however, Welch's eleven paired sections range in length from seven to 213 words. Section **E'** (sixty-six words) is twice as long as **E** (thirty-three words); **D'** (ninety-two words) is two and one-half times longer that **D** (thirty-six words); **B'** (fifty-eight words) is nearly three times longer than **B** (twenty-one words); and **H** (213 words) is more than four times longer than **H'** (forty-eight words). As "panels" between "main girders," the sections are so unbalanced, and the "main girders" are so unevenly spaced within the sections, that they fail not only Welch's "balance" test but his "aesthetics" test as well.

Welch's "purpose" criterion looks for "an identifiable literary reason why the author might have employed chiasmus," and his "boundaries" criterion specifies that a chiasm operates "across a literary unit as a whole" and does not "unnaturally [chop] sentences in half."[23] To examine this last point first, Welch divides sentences in half between sections **A** and **B**; **C** and **D**; the second **A** and **E**; **G** and **H**; **J** and **K**; **H'** and **G'**; **G'** and **F'**; **E'** and **D'**; and **D'** and **C'**. Some of these mid-sentence divisions may be a function of punctuation, and not all of them may be unnatural, but some of them are. **G'**, for example, ends, "For because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been *born of God*"; and **F'** begins, "and have tasted as I have tasted . . . ." This is clearly an unnatural mid-sentence division but was apparently done to keep *born of God* out of **F'**, where it would weaken the chiasm under another of Welch's criteria called "mavericks."[24] (*Born of God* does occur in **H'** as a maverick, however). This mid-sentence division keeps *born of God* in **G'** where there is another *born of God*, both to pair with a single *born of God* in **G**.[25]

Regarding the purpose and boundaries of Alma 36 as a chiasm,

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23. Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," 5, 6.

24. Ibid., 7. According to Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," 129, "A chiasm is less convincing if important words in the structure appear elsewhere in the text outside the suggested arrangement [e.g., mavericks]."

25. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," 128–29, explains away the weaknesses of Alma 36 as an extended chiasm by observing: "If an author uses chiasmus mechanically, it can produce rigid, stilted writing. . . . Alma, however, does not simply stick a list of ideas together in one order and then awkwardly and slavishly retrace his steps through that list in the opposite order. His work has the markings of a skillful, painstaking writer, one completely comfortable with using

Welch notes that "an understanding of chiasmus will also greatly enhance interpretation of Book of Mormon scriptures."[26] In other words, recognizing a chiasm will help us to understand better what the writer is saying. But the imposition of a chiasm on chapter 36 may actually obscure the message, which suggests that no such chiasm was intended.

To Welch, Alma 36 is where "Alma tells his son Helaman about his dramatic conversion."[27] But it seems strange, if this is what Alma 36 is about, that so much of Alma's conversion experience is ignored in Welch's "main girders" chiasm. Indeed, most of what is omitted from Welch's "main girders" chiasm occurs in verses 6 through 19, which comprise Alma's actual conversion experience.

What, then, is Alma's real message? Alma 36 begins the first of three talks that Alma gives to his three sons, to Helaman in Alma 36–37, to Shiblon in Alma 38, and to Corianton in Alma 39–42. If we consider Alma 36 apart from Alma 37, we arguably lose what Alma was trying to accomplish in speaking to his son Helaman. Alma 36 seems to be about preparing Helaman to receive the sacred records that Alma turns over to him in Alma 37. The two chapters go together; indeed, they are a single chapter (XVII) in the first edition of the Book of Mormon. If Alma 36 should be read together with Alma 37, then by imposing a chiasm on Alma 36 alone, Welch creates a chiasm that does not operate "across a literary unit as a whole," viz., Alma 36 and 37 together, contrary to his "boundaries" criterion, and he misses Alma's main purpose, which was to prepare Helaman to receive the sacred things.

Nevertheless, two physics professors, W. Farrell Edwards and his son, Boyd F. Edwards, claim to have demonstrated statistically the intentionality of Alma 36 as an extended chiasm. They use the four of Welch's fifteen criteria that can be "quantified numerically, namely: length (number of chiastic elements), density (the fraction of the passage that is devoted to chiastic elements), mavericks (the number of extra ap-

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this difficult mode of expression well." But Welch apparently wants it both ways. In his 1995 article, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," 7, he wrote that "tightness in the text is indicative of greater craftsmanship, rigor, focus, intention, and clarity."

26. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1982), 42.

27. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," 116. See also his "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon" (1982), 49.

pearances of chiastic elements . . .), and reduplication (the extent of repetition of nonchiastic elements)."[28] They distill these four quantitative criteria into a single quantity *L*, which they use in their algorithm to calculate *P*, the chiastic probability that a chiasm could have appeared by chance. Their algorithm "establishes with 99.98 percent certainty" that "the strongest chiasm in the Book of Mormon, Alma 36 . . . appeared in this book by design and rules out the hypothesis that it appeared by chance."[29] Their "quantitative judgments regarding the intentionality of chiasmus," however, "are based only on the order of words and ideas and disregard the overall integrity and literary merit of chiasms." Thus, they recognize that their tools "may add to, but not replace, Welch's nonquantitative criteria and other indices of chiastic strength."[30]

For their analysis, Edwards and Edwards created two "full text" chiasms from Alma 36, both differing from Welch's. (See their Appendix L.) One has ten paired sections, at least half of which are unbalanced, and the most unbalanced of which is **G** with 213 words and **G'** with fifteen. Furthermore, there are two extra sections without matching sections, a second **E** between **F** and **G**, and a second **I** between **G** and **H**.

There is much more to challenge in their ten-section chiasm. For example, they pair **F'** (120 words) with a much shorter **F** (twenty-one words), each reflecting the idea that "I (and others) were born of God."[31] *Born of God* occurs once in **F** and three times in **F'**, but Edwards and Edwards permit multiple occurrences of key words in a section by their Rule 4, which is one of "a set of strict selection rules" they followed to guide their construction of their chiasm.[32] **F'** is long because it begins with *born of God* in verse 23b, picks up *born of God* in verse 24, and ends with *born of God* in verse 26a, and thus there is no *born of God* maverick.

To avoid a *born of God* maverick, however, **F'** begins in the middle of a sentence. **G'** comprises the first fifteen words of the sentence: "But behold, my limbs did receive their strength again, and I stood upon my feet," and **F'**

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28. Boyd F. Edwards and W. Farrell Edwards, "Does Chiasmus Appear in the Book of Mormon by Chance?" in *BYU Studies* 43, no. 2 (2004): 103–30, esp. 107; retrieved in February 2005 from http://byustudies.byu.edu/chiasmus.

29. Ibid., 123.

30. Ibid., 111.

31. Ibid., 122.

32. Ibid., 112.

begins with the last thirteen words of the sentence: "and did manifest unto the people that I had been born of God." To include the entire sentence in **G'** would create a maverick of *born of God* so it is forced into **F'** in the middle of a sentence.[33] Thus, their long section **F'** avoids a maverick.

The long section **F'** ignores the exceeding joy that Alma experiences in verses 24 and 25, which is also permitted by Rule 4 "as long as [such nonchiastic elements] . . . do not appear outside this section."[34] Thus, Rule 4 permits any amount of extraneous language in a chiastic section as long as it stays within the section. But Alma also experiences joy in verses 20 (expressed twice) and 21 outside **F'**, and it is not clear how, under Rule 4, Edwards and Edwards can ignore Alma's joy, which he expresses five times.

The long section **F'** also ignores the language, "I labored to bring souls to repentance," which is Welch's element **I'** in his "main girders" chiasm. Welch contrasts this language with "I sought to destroy the church," which occurs twice in his ninety-seven-word contrasting element **I**. Edwards and Edwards ignore this language, too, even though it occurs three times in their much longer, 213-word section **G**. They ignore it because by their Rule 2, the literary elements must share the same essential word or words, and Welch's "I labored to bring souls to repentance" and "I sought to destroy the church" do not share the same essential words. Thus, language that Welch includes in his "main girders" chiasm is ignored by Edwards and Edwards, which suggests some flexibility in constructing chiasms.

While this survey by no means exhausts the problems with the ten-section chiasm, Edwards and Edwards also developed an eight-section chiasm with the same imbalances between sections and many of the same problems but with one notable advantage: it eliminates the extra **E** and **I** of the ten-section chiasm. They did this by simply combining both **E**'s ("I received knowledge of God") with **F** ("I (and others) were born of God") into a single section **e** ("I (and others) received knowledge of God, and were born of God"); and both **I**'s ("I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins (no more)") with **H** ("I feared (longed) to be with God") into a sin-

33. It is not clear why this occurrence does not violate their Rule 1, which requires that "chiastic boundaries . . . be located at the ends of sentences or significant phrases" to preclude "contrived boundaries . . . without regard to interruptions of grammatical structure." Ibid.

34. Ibid., 113.

gle section **g** ("I feared (longed) to be with God and was harrowed up by the memory of my sins (no more)").

The "full text" chiasms of both Welch and Edwards and Edwards simply swallow up ignored language in their large sections and avoid mavericks by including multiple chiastic elements in these sections, but their "full text" chiasms also reveal the amount of repetition in Alma 36, the flexibility in fashioning a chiastic structure, and the consequent uncertainty about just what it was that Alma supposedly crafted with such care.

Conclusion

The existence of extended chiasmus in the Book of Mormon seems far from proved by Alma 36. While the inverted parallelism developed by Welch is impressive on first reading, on closer analysis it is Welch's creativity that is most notable. By following flexible rules, he has fashioned a chiasm by selecting elements from repetitious language, creatively labeling elements, ignoring text, pairing unbalanced elements, and even including asymmetrical elements. His efforts to defend it with a "full text" chiasm and fifteen criteria only highlight all the problems as well as his own creativity.

As for Edwards's and Edwards's analysis, they acknowledge that their "quantitative judgments" are based "only on the order of words and ideas" that they themselves select. They explicitly "disregard the overall integrity and literary merit" of the chiasm, which, as shown above, has little "chiastic strength" under Welch's own criteria.[35]

Rust Bucket, Bill Laursen, watercolor, 22" x 28", 1995.

PERSONAL VOICES

My Belief

Gail Turley Houston

In 1831 at the same time that Joseph Smith was receiving visions and establishing a new church because no contemporary religion was true—they had all become dead relics with no prophecy in them—Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle wrote his famous *Sartor Resartus*, a complex, visionary text declaring much the same thing. Carlyle's metaphor for this reformation was to be found in the title *Sartor Resartus*, a phrase meaning "the tailor retailored." Suggesting that political, social, philosophical, and religious systems are exterior frameworks that represent unmediated truth, Carlyle argues that, because these institutional systems are the outer forms, or "clothing," of transcendent reality, such systems inevitably fall away from the original truth they were meant to signify.

In other words, Christianity, or any belief system, was like a beautiful, powerfully symbolic piece of clothing when it was first established; but after years of rote, ritual, and bureaucracy, it had become so tattered as to be almost useless. At that point, it was time for reformation, for the cloth to be retailored, so that the eternal meaning that it manifested would become apparent (apparel) again.

Carlyle was considered one of the great sages of the Victorian period because, metaphorically, he was a tailor who was powerfully retailoring the language used to describe belief. Finding Christianity of the early nineteenth century exhausted of its deep spiritual meaning, he looked at the world (the garment of God) and produced visionary language to revi-

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talize Victorian spirituality. Describing his main character, Professor Diogenes Teufelsdrockh, as experiencing "The Everlasting No," a devastating period in which "the loss of his religious Belief was the loss of everything," Carlyle figures an escape from suicidal despair into "The Everlasting Yea."[1]

In the chapter on "The Everlasting Yea," Carlyle's alter-ego acknowledges that "the Mythus of the Christian Religion looks not in the eighteenth century as it did in the eighth," but he goes on to assert that this condition makes it even more necessary to "embody the divine Spirit of that Religion in a new Mythus, in a new vehicle and vesture, that our Souls, otherwise too like perishing, may live." Furthermore, Teufelsdrockh realizes that, even though the nineteenth century was nineteen centuries removed from the presence of Christ on the earth, there was still a "perennial continuance of Inspiration."[2]

Carlyle's new "Mythus" includes the powerful concept of Natural Supernaturalism: why, he wondered, did we keep asking for miracles or signs of God in the modern world when all we had to do was look at the world around us—at Nature—to see God in every manifestation. And they *were* to be considered spiritual manifestations in Carlyle's unsystematic system. Nature was a living, breathing sign of God, with its living water and living earth, sky, animals, plants, etc. Thus, Professor Teufelsdrockh "first becomes a seer" when he "has looked fixedly on Existence, till, one after the other, its earthly hulls and garnitures have all melted away; and now, to his rapt vision, the interior celestial Holy of Holies lies disclosed."[3] Attuned to the "infinite depth" and "infinite expansion" of Nature and reality, Teufelsdrockh obtains through Natural Supernaturalism the power to "*transcend* the sphere of blind Custom, and so become Transcendental."[4]

In my fifth decade of life, I have realized that for me Mormonism has become a cloth in tatters that must be retailored. That does not mean that it is without merit; indeed, it means that the gospel of Jesus Christ as artic-

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1. Thomas Carlyle, *A Carlyle Reader: Selections from the Writings of Thomas Carlyle*, edited by G. B. Tennyson (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 236.

2. Ibid., 258.

3. Ibid., 300-301.

4. Ibid., 303; emphasis Carlyle's.

ulated by the LDS Church has so much merit and has proven itself against the test of time so often that it must be reincarnated, reformed, and retailored, ironically, to maintain its universal Word. No longer living water nor a protective garment, it has taken on so many worldly, human-created accretions that the essence of Christ is all but hidden.

The height of the Church Office Building, towering as it does over the Salt Lake Temple, is indicative to me of this need for retailoring: there is more bureaucracy to the Church now than there is spirituality; there are more Marthas than there are Marys; there is more rote and ritual than there is profound, holy connection to God. The sheer number of bureaucratic layers and jobs represented by the many stories of the building and the many bureaucratic job profiles in the building indicates to me that corporate sensibilities now trump the spiritual nurturing that the faithful so yearn to receive.

Remembering the times I have been spiritually filled, I know that wisdom is wisdom whoever says it. Prophecy is prophecy whoever speaks it; a visionary is visionary whatever position she speaks from; a blessing is a blessing whoever pronounces or enacts it. Even the least of us, even I, have claim to hear God's voice.

Trying to become a seer of the holy in the mundane, I have learned, with Teufelsdrockh, to understand that daily life holds an "infinite depth" and "infinite expanse" if I will but have the eyes to see the sacred there. And as I seek the exquisite knowledge of God in my daily encounters with other persons, the natural world, or even the very unnatural institutions of the modern society in which I live, it is as though God reveals the Savior to me in these encounters and I am quite literally succored through these seemingly "customary" meetings to enter the field of the transcendent. I am struck more and more by the daily awareness that every minute of my life is a site of the holy, whether I am waiting in a boring line, writing a memo, or conversing about work matters with a colleague: that each moment, because God has created it and all life, can be a site for my encounter with the sacred. The Holy Spirit has taught me to be infinitely reverent before the tiny bird whose yellow throat trills out its song, an experience which stirs so much gratitude in me to God for the very beingness of this seemingly trivial entity.

It is difficult to articulate my joy in the beingness of God's creations, but a few examples might illustrate the transformation.

Recently, I was engaged in a fascinating conversation with a gradu-

ate student about her dissertation, a study of the theories and strategies informing radical, leftist groups opposed to globalization. She included in this study her own first-hand experiences as a participant in mass protests. To all appearances not a "spiritual" person, this student became a seer to me as she described her deep moral commitment to saving Mother Earth. Describing her involvement in the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization, she suddenly moved into a different mode of expression, noting that she wasn't sure how to write about a particular event during that protest, a moment that she considered to be a most amazing experience of her life. In her mind, writing academically about this experience would not do it justice, and she admitted that she did not yet have a language for putting it into her dissertation even though it was central to her study.

As she explained, at the literal crossroads comprised of a busy six-way intersection in downtown Seattle, the protestors stood, barring members of the WTO from traversing the opposite road leading to the convention site. Meanwhile, coming up the other road to meet the protestors were legions of Seattle police officers. When the militarized police in their ominous riot gear threatened to disperse the thousands of protestors by discharging tear-gas into their midst, the protestors were unsure which road to take, as it were. As my student described it, there really wasn't a leader among them directing their actions; and so at this point the protestors had no one to turn to who could provide a single, organized plan for response to the heavily armed, menacing police. Nevertheless, at the moment the police officers raised their rifles to shoot the tear gas into the crowd and perhaps produce mass hysteria, without any preconceived strategy the protestors spontaneously knelt on the ground as a unified body and began repeating in unison the mantra of "OHM" (part of an Eastern religious chant). In the face of this completely unorchestrated peaceful response, within minutes the police withdrew without firing one pellet. As my student finished telling of this experience, the Spirit of God was aflame within me, and I knew that something spiritual had happened to me—that this student had given me a gift I have not yet fully absorbed because of its "infinite depth." As she described the event, our souls recognized their sisterhood, and God immersed me in the profound yearnings for good felt by a group of people who, in times past, I might have viewed as strange or secular.

On another occasion, I was driving to work listening to National

Public Radio as white noise and thinking about all the many tasks I had to accomplish at school that day. Suddenly the voice of the speaker seemed to demand my spiritual attention, and I entered a kind of cocoon in which it was just me and the radio speaker sharing his story. The voice on the radio talked about how a forest ranger in 1912 became one of the first American environmentalists. Fulfilling the policy of the national government at the time, this forest ranger carried a rifle so he could kill wolves on sight. On one occasion, deep in the uncharted territory of primal mountain peaks and after days of being out in wildest Nature with just two other rangers, he espied some wolf pups, then immediately afterwards the mother wolf, who was there to protect her offspring. Following policy, he lifted his rifle and first shot the pups and then the mother wolf. He then went to investigate his downed prey. The pups were dead. But as he looked into the green, fiery eyes of the dying she-wolf, there he saw the eternality of God. When I heard this, I felt as though the ranger, gazing into the flames of the dying wolf's eyes, understood for the first time that she and her pups had been a part of the living garment of God. The speaker concluded his story unexpectedly: with the piercing howl of the wolf. That primal "amen" struck me to the heart, and I wept uncontrollably, hoping that my own love for the garment of God might some day be expressed to God face to face in such an unmediated, pure fashion. At the end of this visionary moment, I also knew that I had been led by the Holy Spirit to encounter the "infinite expanse" of Nature and the transcendent behind it through the story of the forest ranger and the mother wolf.

A third epiphany came recently in the midst of a discussion at lunch with a visiting professor from the Canary Islands who wanted to talk about how to institute a Women Studies Program at her university. Out of nowhere, we suddenly entered that cocoon, as I like to call it, in which two people, often strangers, commune in a sacred way about their deepest beliefs. When this happens, I can almost feel a gauzy, warm aura enveloping the other communicant and me as our spirits seem to be drawn upward to a higher sphere.

In this case, my colleague told me that, when her son was born, there was a lot of pressure from her family to christen the baby in the Catholic Church. However, she and her husband felt that they just could not do a traditional Catholic blessing for their baby son because the tradition had become so rote and ritualistic. They thought a great deal about it and finally decided instead to create their own christening ceremony by inviting

friends and family to one of their most beloved places, the seashore. Though their guests were all traditional Catholics, none of them objected to the couple's ceremony. The young father and mother brought toys and other personal items as gifts for their baby, as well as to indicate gratitude to a God who could give them so much joy. Each person in the circle of blessing, made up of men and women, spoke his or her love and blessings to the child. In my friend's words, uttered in the midst of our mundane work day as we walked back to the campus, I knew that I was hearing about a retailored form of spirituality that was trying to get back to the original, glorious garment of God. As she described the blessing, it was almost as though I could touch that retailored garment—and it was touching me, for my own spirit felt electrified, elated, pure.

I have come to believe that LDS sacrament, Sunday School, Relief Society, and priesthood meetings as well as Mormon prayers have all but become ritual, with rote responses required of the laity to catechisms drawn up by male leaders who have added their own cultural and political dressings to the garment of God.

This change in my spiritual life has been occurring since I was fired from BYU in 1996. Though I did not receive unanimous approval from the BYU English Department or the College of Humanities when I applied for tenure after six years at the Church's flagship university, the majority of my colleagues voted in favor of my application. Given the expectations of my department, my scholarship was excellent. My dissertation on Charles Dickens had been published by a reputable university press strong in Dickens studies, and I had written a number of articles that had been published in major scholarly venues. My teaching was also above average: Student evaluations put me in the top 8 percent of teachers at BYU. I enjoyed teaching, and many of my students went on to become fine university scholars and teachers.

At most credible universities, when an assistant professor receives a vote of approval from the majority of her department and college peers, it is virtually assured that she will receive tenure from the university, the assumption being that the department and college have the best understanding of what is considered excellent scholarship and teaching in the candidate's particular field. For a university committee, provost, or president to overturn the positive evaluations of the candidate's department and college peers would be highly suspect and unusual. But that is what happened when my application for tenure went to the next level for ap-

proval. The university committee, provost, and president rejected my application for tenure after focusing heavily on my feminism and their perceived attitude that I was a heretic. I still do not know what was going on behind the scenes that caused the administration to interpret me thus. The following statements were included in the letter informing me that I was being fired from BYU:

> You have made public statements, orally and in writing, that approvingly and positively describe the practice of praying to Heavenly Mother as well as Heavenly Father. Your public affirmations of this practice contradict fundamental Church doctrine that we should pray only to Heavenly Father. . . .
>
> In addition, you have engaged in a pattern of publicly contradicting fundamental Church doctrine and deliberately attacking the Church. . . .
>
> We feel that not only have these activities failed to strengthen the moral vigor of the university, they have enervated its very fiber.[5]

In my appeal of the negative decision, I rebutted these charges with long written statements that attempted to explain my rather complicated, impassioned spiritual belief. These statements are part of the public record in the age of the internet and blogs, and I still maintain the "testimony" these statements lay out. What has been difficult for me to resolve—indeed, what has become more rather than less painful to me since then—is that I have not been able to find a rational or spiritual reason for the subsequent actions of BYU and the Church in regards to my Church participation. Indeed, I cannot be reconciled to the university's actions after they essentially "excommunicated" me from BYU. For at the same time that I was being fired from BYU, the university made no effort to stop me from teaching my last class there. I had to wonder, then: Was I really so "enervating"? If so, why did they let me contaminate these vulnerable students? Likewise, during and after the time that BYU very publicly stated its reasons for firing me (heretical beliefs and the enervation of an entire university), Church leaders in my ward continued to have me teach Sunday School or Primary to the youth, the most vulnerable of the membership, and those for whom quite commonly Church leaders say they want the best teachers. Here again, I wondered: If I am a heretic, then why

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5. James D. Gordon, Associate Academic Vice President; Randall L. Jones, Dean of Humanities; and C. J. Fox, English Department Chair, Letter to Gail T. Houston, June 5, 1996.

did the bishop receive inspiration to have me teach among the humblest and most vulnerable of the flock? Furthermore, after leaving BYU and Utah, I wondered how the stake president, area president, and on up (if we truly believe in the hierarchical line of prophetic authority) could approve of further callings among the youth.

For myself, though I was having a crisis of faith in the Church because of its participation in such hypocrisy, my faith was purer, more attached to the garment of God *because* I was teaching the youth, those who were just learning to taste the pure and living water, who were just learning to put on the garment of God. And every lesson was a prophecy to me, not because I was necessarily prophetic, but because the people I was teaching were children through whom I could once again see the gospel through pure, innocent, new eyes. I did not need the male authority figures to tell me what was truth; I was directly rubbing elbows with it as I mingled with the children in Primary every week.

We have become jaded in our ritualized acceptance that priesthood is male and a thing or a product and that blessings can only come through this mantle of male authority. I now know differently. Blessings are not pronounced exclusively upon the bowed heads of the laity by men who lay their hands upon us. God's powerful, spiritual, life-changing blessings occur more often than not without this ritual. The mother who carries her child in her womb for nine months daily blesses the child with nourishment, with song, with her very personhood and its holy meaning. The friend who listens in our time of desperation, the stranger who smiles at us when we are on the verge of suicide or in the depths of depression, the acquaintance who repeats a story or tells us about an event that stuns us with spiritual meaning, the cat that puts out her paw to us when we are ready to lose patience with a bratty child, these are all very real, very material blessings that do not require the Church's hierarchical validation because they are not a product—a blessing pronounced at a specific time and place by men with authority.

The blessings I have received from my female relatives and female friends and colleagues are so intuitive, so time intensive (they spend so much time and lavish such care on my every need), so attuned to me as an individual, so full of unconditional and abiding love that they far outweigh the brief products (blessings) given to me by men in authority who never thereafter spent any time or effort on blessing me with their presence, daily concern, or listening ear. Aside from a handful of kind and lov-

ing men in my life, truly, it has mainly been the women in my life who have had God's authority to bless me; and they, in real, material fact, have carried the priesthood, not as a patriarchal emblem of their power over me, but as the literal garment of God that uplifts everyone around them in a continuing, lifelong process. The patriarchal order is no order of God if it can conceive of offering blessings only as products from men in authority who disappear from one's life the minute that "blessing" is pronounced. It is something like the notion of a man being a "father" if he merely sires a child as opposed to the idea that a "father" is a parent who emotionally and spiritually nourishes—blesses—the child on an intimate daily basis throughout the child's life.

So now I am recreating the garment of God, retailoring my spiritual clothing every day of my life rather than waiting to go to church once a week to be ritually dressed in the same uniform as everyone else and which I have always been assigned there—even though I have grown out of it or even though it might be a winter garment and I am living through a summer of unprecedented heat. It is more difficult to live my spiritual life this way; there are no signs to the outside world, to my husband, daughters, family, friends, or acquaintances that I am an "active" member of some church. My spiritual life is made up now of Natural Supernaturalism, of blessings given to me every day of my life by strangers in my midst whom I encounter during the course of my day, by the radio show or TV show I listen to, by the child or sister or husband who says something that is manna to my needs, by the biblical verse that speaks directly to my soul. And I pray every day that I might provide such a blessing to those I meet or work with, that I might be a savior in small or large ways to those around me.

This is the garment of God, the living water, the Bread of Life that clothes, nourishes, and feeds me now. The Mormon Church of my youth gave me wings to fly in spirit to my heavenly home, but the Church of my adulthood clipped those wings and asked me never to speak of my visions. When I soar, I know that my childhood Church first taught me to do so, and I have given up the one to hold on to the other, for whither God leads me, there I go.

Drying Out, Bill Laursen, watercolor, 22" x 28", 1995.

The Man Lying in the Grass

Henry L. Miles

Capturing a Conscience in Writing

We're in Ogden, Utah, on the second day of May, heading home to Orem after a Sunday afternoon with grandchildren. Carol is driving south on Washington Boulevard passing low business buildings whose shadows are covering the lawns and reaching out into the street. Up ahead, I spot a man lying in the grass maybe twenty feet back from the curb. A drunk sleeping himself sober? I wonder. Probably drunk . . . But what if he's a diabetic whose sugar is low and he can't get up?

Nearby on the sidewalk, an older man in cap and long overcoat ambles along, his hands locked together against his spine and his head down, as if he is looking for ants in the cracks. As we drive by, the man in the grass seems to stir. I look back, eye on the ambler, hoping he will walk over to the man. But he ambles right on by the black heap in the grass. I say to myself, "The man is just drunk."

But saying, "just drunk," does not ease my angst as I recall our son when he was two years into his diabetes and a student at Utah Valley State College in need of money. Joey let himself be rushed off campus to fill in for a friend before eating lunch. On reaching the cinder-block warehouse, he took a place on the assembly line. As each cardboard box rolled in front of him on the conveyor, Joey handed in two books and three cas-

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HENRY L. MILES retired from the Foreign Service, entered a graduate writing program at George Mason University, and completed it at Brigham Young University in 1994 with Darrell Spencer as his thesis chair. He comments: "Gene England said a personal essay must dig into enough detail to show a conscience at work. I doubt I grasped the complexity of his assertion before encountering the man on the grass and began, only minutes after the event, to create this essay."

settes and pushed the box to the next person on the line. In two hours, he was falling behind and realized his reactions were slowing. Noting candy in the vending machine, Joey searched his pockets for money and found only his meal ticket for the college cafeteria. He tried to borrow money from his co-workers on the line. None of them knew Joey and none lent him money. Joey began to sweat and told them he was diabetic and needed sugar in a hurry to remain conscious. They just looked at him askance. Maybe these minimum-wage workers had no money to lend or knew nothing of diabetes. The boxes were jamming up and the last thing Joey recalls is the boss saying something like, "Hey, you need to keep the line moving along or leave."

Meanwhile, Carol was driving her sewing machine to the repair shop for the second time that day. Along the University Mall, she glimpsed a familiar figure walking toward her on the sidewalk. It was Joey. She pulled into the right lane and called to him through the window; he walked on. She turned into the mall parking lot, drove up along side, and asked him to get in. Joey stopped and looked at Carol; he didn't know her. Carol, 110 pounds, got out and cajoled her 200-pound son into the car. She sped home and left Joey sweating in the car while she ran into the house and stirred up orange juice from concentrate. She returned and coaxed the juice down Joey while he could still swallow. In minutes his eyes came into focus and later he was able to talk. He had left his backpack at work and felt too embarrassed to go back for it. Carol went for the backpack and had a talk with Joey's boss, who had thought Joey was on drugs.

I say to Carol, "Did you see the man back there in the grass?"

"No."

We talk and she says, "Should we go back?"

"Yes."

Carol turns around, and soon I am pointing to the dark heap in the grass two blocks ahead. We pass the man and return on his side of the street. I open my window and say, "Are you all right?" He doesn't move. I shout, "Hey, you over there!"

He lifts his head and I see the black collar of his overcoat, his black beard, his black stocking cap down over an eye. One hand is grasping the yellow, eighteen pack of Miller's High Life on the lawn beside him.

"Everything okay?" I wave. He blinks and mutters. He is only drunk.

Relieved, I begin to close my window and turn my thoughts to the

eighty miles we want to cover before dark. I've got no time to get involved with a drunk, nor am I inclined to do so.

What Would Jesus Do?

A voice? A thought? . . . At Sunday School the question doesn't bother me like this. The question is not fleeting. It clings, screwed in my mind to the sticking point, liminal and unwanted. I do not know this drunk, and I am not the Good Samaritan; sometimes I help relatives; sometimes I help friends—but a drunken stranger. . . ? I find myself out of the car and walking over the grass to the man, resisting the prompting to take him to his home. "Where do you live?" I say.

He looks up at me, struggles to his knees, one hand pushing down on the carton of beer. He says, "You'll take me home?"

I evade his question, say, "Do you know where you live?" He mumbles "2210 Jefferson" as he labors up to his feet and stands in front of me, holding the carton of beer.

"Can you guide us there?" No answer. He stumbles toward the car carrying the beer. I hesitate, but he doesn't need an invitation. He opens the door and then he's in the back seat with his beer, entangling himself in the seat belt behind Carol. Awareness strikes; he's in the car. We don't know him nor where he lives, and what if we can't find his home? What if we find it and he won't get out of the car? He is helpless but in control. I feel uneasy and imprudent, especially for seating him behind us; then I ask myself where else I could seat him?

This man unlocks memories. Are they ruling my response? I was about eight when Dad drank beer on Saturday nights to get courage to dance. He'd pour a glass and leave it on the table, and I'd watch the foam dissipate from the golden liquid. Dad would stand in front of the wash-basin with his yellow straight razor, looking into the only mirror in our three-room house with no bathroom, while he cut swaths down his foamy face and trimmed his black mustache. I'd sip from Dad's glass and he'd see me in the mirror and smile and say to Mother, "Look at that little devil," and I'd smile, too. Driving home from the dance one night, the front wheels of the Model A Ford began to shimmy crossing the railroad tracks at the edge of Blackfoot and Dad and Mother ended upside down in the barrow pit. Next morning I overheard Dad say, "What'd happen to the kids if we got killed?" He quit drinking and dancing.

My awareness of alcohol grew. Mother's parents lived eighteen miles

from us. During one visit, Grandpa and Uncle Al went to town a mile away to buy something and left Grandma to visit. In two days they returned. Mother was angry and said Grandpa was a poor excuse for a husband and Grandma cried, glad to have him back.

Drinking made Uncle Pete thirst for a fight. Drinking made Bert, a high school buddy, prefer sinks to urinals. And my friend Al insisted I drive him around all night, until he sobered up. I have been uneasy around liquor since my teens, but I drank anyway—until almost age twenty when I became a practicing Mormon.

I sit sideways to watch the man in the seat behind Carol. The stocking cap droops down the side of his head as he clutches a dollar bill in his right hand. We are driving south again on Washington Boulevard and the man's disjointed phrases and unsteady arms tell us Jefferson Street is just two blocks east. I doubt the message and watch the man grasp two bottles from the carton coddled between his ankles. He holds up one for each of us. We say we don't drink.

"More power to you," he says. His tongue is thick and difficult to control. I wonder if he'll vomit. The man offers us beer again and we say we don't drink and he says, "More power to you." Before he can repeat his offer a third time, Carol distracts him, asking if he works.

"Sure I work."

"Why were you away from your house?" Carol says.

"I bet a friend I could buy beer and get back to the house." He adds, "Why did you stop for me?"

We mention our diabetic son and his comas, which can bring death in hours unless he gets sugar into his system. The man says something about diabetics having identification tags but ends the thought in mid-sentence. At 21st Street we stop for the light; it changes, and we turn left. The second street *is* Jefferson, and we turn right. I feel relief fused with growing concern; will the man get out of the car, or will he be like my high school chum and insist on driving around until he is sober?

In the middle of the 2100 block of Jefferson, the man yells, "Stop!"

Carol brakes. We are in front of a church. "Do you live by a church?" I say.

"Yes."

"This is not 2210," Carol says and drives on and turns around and pulls up in front of 2210 Jefferson, which we had passed. It is a large blue apartment house, or maybe a large house, which has been converted into

apartment units. The man muddles out of the seat belt and out of the car, clutching the pack of beer. I'm relieved, almost grateful. The man gives Carol the wrinkled dollar bill he has been clutching since he left the lawn. She tries to give back the dollar, but he rejects her effort saying, "It's all I have." Our task is over, but I'm so thankful I climb out of the car to steady the man on his walk across the lawn to the house. He keeps thanking me and asking me why we stopped.

Someone shouts, "Hey, there." We look around. Across the street a shaven man is faltering our way and mumbling, and the bearded man responds. The two unsteady men are sidekicks, and the shaven man is walking our way, asking his bearded friend how he got a ride home in a car. And he keeps repeating the question. The two get together and talk. I walk back to the car unnoticed and get in, ready to head home. Carol hands me the wrinkled dollar bill and says, "He'll need this; give it to him."

I'm out of the car and over the lawn to the two men, who are leaning against one another in slurred conversation. I extend the bill to the bearded man and he refuses it. I stuff the bill into his chest pocket and turn toward the car. He stumbles after me, holding out the bill and saying something about getting back into the car.

Carol is watching us and shouts, "Okay, we'll keep the bill. We'll keep it."

I grab the bill from the man's hand; he stops before stumbling forward again. I run the few steps and jump into the car, hitting the electric lock before he can reach the door. Carol stomps the gas, the car lurches forward, and the bearded man—hands reaching out—stands transfixed, watching us drive away.

Soon, Carol is entering the on-ramp to Interstate 15, and seconds later, she is pushing past seventy-five on the speedometer. I am not believing we did what we just did. Why did we stop for a drunk? Why did we take him to his home? I ruminate and write.

Carol is watching three lanes of traffic, and I am looking out my window at the Great Salt Lake in the distance. On the lake's far side, the sun is behind a mountain, shafting light around its mass—through a canyon to the lake, and upward to each cloud—like God beholding from afar but connecting with the earth, the lake, and each plant and animal, and a man lying in the grass, and Carol and me, and tutoring me to take His son home when I would not.

Napoleon Dynamite, Priesthood Skills, and the Eschatology of the Non-Rational: A Nonwarranted Physiotheologic Analysis

Cetti Cherniak

Napoleon fever has struck. Thousands of young girls are adorning their walls with posters of the nerdy hero in the sweet brown suit and scrambling to learn the womanly art of weaving key chains from plastic cord. Thousands of young boys are adorning their rides with "Vote for Pedro" bumper stickers and reasserting their native right to wear chapstick and be nice. Sales of hip-hop instruction videos have tripled and beef consumption is down by two-thirds over the previous quarter. What does it all mean?

The wild popularity of the movie among members of the Church as well as the general population should come as no surprise to alert theologians. No better theological statement has come out of tinsel town since *The Ten Commandments*. For postmodern Christian theologians who have looked on the antifoundationalism of the times as an opportunity to reinstate a Christian order but who have found themselves shipwrecked on the rocks of dogmatism, this movie is a quiet, if radical, answer to prayer.

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In the introduction to his book on the work of Protestant theologian Karl Barth, Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar explores the sentiment, poignantly expressed in both his own and Barth's theology, that the current state of schism among Christians is "a sin."[1] The division of the household of God that occurred during the Great Eastern Schism and the Reformation/Counter-Reformation, as well as the continued splintering of Protestant sects, is a serious matter that puts all parties at odds with the Founder of the faith. The inability to offer a unified front in the effort to reestablish a Christian society has led to spotty results. Alas, what has happened cannot unhappen, and there is no way out but through. Many theologians' hearts fail them at the thought.

Underlying the historical bickering over dogma are fundamental differences in perception and cognition. Catholic theology as a general rule favors a right-brain approach. Meaning is mediated by subjective sensory and extrasensory experience with attention to pattern and relationship. The individual is a microcosm of the whole of creation and the whole of creation is a revelation of the divine. By participating in a revolving cycle of multi-sensory rituals, the believer reconciles himself to the whole, becoming one with the cosmic pattern. Through a tempero-spatial reality (the Eucharist), the believer assimilates the perfect tempero-spatial embodiment of that pattern, the flesh of the Word, the gestalt of eternity-in-time, Jesus Christ.

Thinking of Catholic theology in terms of right-brain preference allows us to understand many Roman and Orthodox peculiarities: the doctrine of transubstantiation; the high value placed on mysticism and the nonanalytic, nonactive surrender of contemplation; expressions of cyclic time, such as "Christ is born" instead of "was born," along with timeless theological entities such as "the Christ Child"; the use of art as worship and worship as art; the importance of the visual and tactile presence of icons, statues, relics and rosaries and the use of incense; the employment of right-hemisphere, alpha-wave-inducing chant harmonics and the empty and reverberant qualities of the cathedral; the insistence of the Council of Trent that tradition is coequal with scripture in determining doctrine; the Catholic cult of the feminine; and Catholic reverence for the order of the natural world.

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1. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 4.

Protestant theology as a general rule favors left-brain functions. As opposed to the givenness of the Catholic appositional-holistic model, Protestantism takes the heuristic approach of the propositional-analytic. Meaning is mediated by written and spoken language and reason (however faulty) rather than through intuition or proprioceptive/spatial relationship, and processing is sequential rather than parallel. Hence, the Reformation emphasis on the Bible as sole determinant of doctrine and the insistence that text conveys objective truth. God is experienced more in the abstract or the formulaic than in the concrete and the particular. In contrast to the Catholic priest's enacting of rituals, the Protestant preacher mediates the divine by stringing together a succession of words. The divisive nature of left-brain rationalism cannot but result in splintering as first one and then another attempt is made to construct an internally consistent system based on partial data and partial cognitive tools. In other words, not only is the Bible partial but so, typically, is our usage of the human brain. Protestant sects that have reacted against the stoicism of a reasoned approach or the intellectual fascism of a historical-critical one have only replaced them with an equally partial and unbalanced emotionalism. Selective use of the limbic system is no better way to access God than selective use of the frontal cortices.

Enter Napoleon on a winged horse.

The sign on Napoleon's bedroom door is both a warning and a prophecy: "Pegasus X-ing." The sign of the cross here does not suggest a negating, but a meeting of trajectories, a kind of optic chiasm. Pegasus, as we will remember from our grade school days, is the symbol of earthly strength (and specifically male virility), elevated and purified by heavenly strength. The gods, lest man in his hubris should ascend too high, sent the mighty and loyal Pegasus to tramp down the top of Mount Helicon. Out sprang a fountain, to drink of which would make a man's right cerebral hemisphere become dominant and interface symbiotically with his left, with a simultaneous neogenesis of neuronal pathways between the cortices and the limbic system—that is, he would become a poet, the quintessential artist-priest.

Napoleon has had to taste of this water to produce his drawings of magical beasts. His is not the draftsmanship of military-industrial mechanization nor is it the romanticized portraiture of Enlightenment sophists. One cannot say that he paints his prospective prom date as inherently good in the tradition of the Transcendentalists, but neither does he paint

her as inherently evil in the style of certain mystical ascetics. His is a child-like vision that may simply be termed "frank"—in a manner reminiscent of Catholic novelists like Flannery O'Connor whose characters have sometimes been referred to as "grotesques." He would save Nessie from nuclear fission but resents feeding that bourgeois beast of leisure, Tina the "fat lard." He is neither silent nor verbose, neither passive nor aggressive, neither leader nor follower. He is unselfish yet fully endowed with selfhood. We can make sense of the figure of Napoleon only by using both sides of our brains at once and in concert with our hearts; and for many of us raised in western modernist culture, that may mean learning to use the right half for the first time.

The culture in which Napoleon finds himself represents the bitter last gasp of Marx, Freud, Darwin, Nietzsche, and Descartes—but not only that. It also represents the bitter last gasp of Babylon, of ancient Greece, and of the land of Nod. It is a culture emptied of all sense of mystery and reverence, a culture in which the physical and the emotional have been desacralized and made the slaves of utility. A cow is shot without conscience. Chickens are kept without reverence, without care. Boys are beaten while witnesses walk by on the other side. Manhood has been perverted into competition, intimidation, aggression, and consumption. The school principal lusts after young girls as he watches Summer's "skit." Rex of Rex Kwon Do preaches the gospel of enmity. Uncle Rico longs to return to the ignorant bliss of the Enlightenment dream that man is self-sufficient and capable of succeeding on his own terms. He longs for the imagined day when men could irreverently consume and compete with and intimidate whatever and whomever they wanted without having to count the long-term costs or consider their responsibilities to the rest of creation. He longs to be his own boss, his own creator, to be the sole actor in a video made solely for his own pleasure and judgment. Napoleon instantly recognizes the futility of such a plan—"This is pretty much the worst video ever made"— but the left-brained Kip disallows intuition and insists on objectivity—"Napoleon, like anyone can even *know* that."

Perhaps Kip does not consciously admit it. Perhaps in his compartmentalizing and decontextualizing, he can temporarily forget the analogical significance of his life. He can miss the metaphor, the parable, the alphaton and the eschaton. But the psyche of man today is faced with the collective guilt of the long, sad history of the race because this is the end-time. Our souls, somewhere deep down, cannot help but know it.

* * *

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints arose out of two complementary cultural forces: the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the nonrationalism of the American visionary tradition. Historians have written much on the former but little on the latter, so that some may even be unfamiliar with the term. It refers to the mystical current in American religious experience that bubbled up most noticeably in the First Great Awakening of 1720–50, and again in the Second Great Awakening of the early 1800s. These were times when nonrational avenues to truth and God were pursued widely in the culture: dramatic emotional and physical conversions, healings, natural dietary and herbal practices, visions and dreams, speaking in tongues, prophesying, and angelic visitations, among others less savory. Right-brain holism manifested itself in utopianism and millennialism. That these values and practices formed a large part of the religious experience of Joseph Smith and the early Saints is a matter of record.

In the ensuing decades and up through the 1950s, what we saw both in American popular culture and in American LDS culture was the devaluing of the nonrational in favor of the rational as scientific positivism came into vogue. In the 1960s, nonrational avenues once more began to be widely sought as humanist social programs and rationalist theories in the physical sciences began to break down. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, nonrational approaches to truth and God—spiritualism, herbal healing, vegetarianism, interest in angels, yoga, meditation and other Eastern practices, etc.—are once more flooding the American experience to the extent that some scholars are on the verge of christening a Third Great Awakening.[2]

Astute observers of Mormon sociology note a corresponding trend. They mention, for instance, that in the 1980s, emphasis on a "personal relationship" with deity and salvation by grace began to enter the rhetoric, supplanting the former emphasis on works and salvation by Church

2. Eugene Taylor, *Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1999), 4.

activity.[3] About the same time, the Church changed its logo to emphasize "Jesus Christ" over "Latter-day Saints," and there was an increase in nondiscursive mediation of the gospel message—specifically, images of the Savior—in Church publications. There has also been an increase in talks by General Authorities advocating for women and emphasizing their status as "equal partners" with men. This last is significant because women are associated with the nonrational realms of emotionality, physicality, and intuition. The focal point of the Atonement is beginning to shift from the Garden of Gethsemane to the Cross.[4] The new missionary program which replaces rote memorization of text with "teaching from the heart"[5] is further evidence of a left-to-right modal shift. All of this is fairly obvious.

Astute observers of Mormon theology (what few there are) note what is less obvious: that this change does not represent a step forward, but a step back. That is, it represents a return, or the beginning of a return, to Mormon doctrine as it appears in the Church's canonical "standard works" of scripture and the teachings of its founding prophet, Joseph Smith. Chief among these teachings is that God has "a body, parts, and passions,"[6] a statement that radically restores the cracked foundations of Christian theology. If indeed "the glory of God is intelligence" (D&C 93:36), then it is a comprehensive and cohesive intelligence involving body and emotions as well as intellect. The major theological and philosophical contribution of the Book of Mormon and other latter-day revelation is in showing that concepts previously held to be mutually exclusive—one being rational and the other nonrational—are in actuality complementary: justice and mercy, faith and knowledge, physical and spiritual, time and eternity, male and female, the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, works and grace; even (as testified by Moses 7) omniscience/omnipotence and physiologically expressed grief. The fulness of

3. Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003), 191–92.

4. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Symbol of Our Faith," *Ensign*, April 2005, 3–6.

5. "Teaching from the Heart," *Ensign*, June 2004, 6–11.

6. Joseph Fielding Smith, comp. and ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002 printing), 185; see also 357–58.

the gospel of Jesus Christ clearly promotes the marriage of rational and nonrational aspects of experience and the balanced utilization of the full brain, left to right as well as top to bottom. The fact that the scriptures themselves do not follow a linear logic but are a pasticcio of historical, literary, and theological elements is itself a testament to the metahuman order issuing from the mind of God.

I have been using "nonrational" to distinguish it from "irrational," which has connotations of destructive chaos. If God and his doctrines encompass the nonrational and if he is a God of order, then it follows that the nonrational has order. It is simply a different kind of order with which many of us have not become familiar. It represents, if you will, a constructive form of "chaos." As if the story of Nephi slaying Laban were not enough, Joseph Smith explicitly taught the nonformulaic aspect of righteousness: "That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another. God said, 'Thou shalt not kill'; at another time He said, 'Thou shalt utterly destroy.' This is the principle upon which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire."[7]

Napoleon Dynamite, the movie as form and the character as microcosm of the form, exemplifies a nonformulaic order. There is a distinctly nonlinear aspect to the plot. There is not much in the way of logical nexus; the left brain searches in vain. Yet there is one thread in the movie—the one on which Napoleon maintains Adam, pulling him along the rough road of history unbeknownst to all the drivers of all the buses. Napoleon also pulls Kip, his brother, the autoless embodiment of postmodern techno-impotence, tethered to his muscle- and sweat-powered bike by a thread, a bond, a seal. This is because Napoleon without them cannot be made perfect. What is it that can save this post-everything society of high school students and people who never matured beyond that age (Kip, Rico, the dune-buggying Grandma)? Certainly not Napoleon, the nonhero. Providence must intervene.

Can it be an accident that Mexicans and African Americans are moving into Utah and Idaho? Can it be an accident that Mexicans are predominantly Catholics and African Americans are predominantly Bap-

7. Ibid., 263.

tists? Can it be an accident that these two cultures have been the most successful of all Christians at retaining their native nonrational approach to religion and sustaining the values of the American visionary tradition?

* * *

In the school for the training of the left frontal lobe, Napoleon and Pedro are two of a kind: bench-warmers. Yet Pedro is the one with the skills. He has a sweet bike in order to act and not be acted upon; and if someone should dare to act upon him, he has two male relatives endowed with even greater agency (an animated and viscerally pulsating low-rider) who stand by him in solidarity. Contrast this situation with Napoleon's abandonment by his two male relatives. Pedro, because he knows the ways of the heart (his cognitive centers communicate with his limbic system, probably somewhere in the vicinity of the cingulate gyrus), is really good at hooking up with chicks. Third, and perhaps most important, Pedro possesses the capacity to grow a moustache, signifying his capacity to mature as a male. When Napoleon attempts to ride Pedro's potent "Sledgehammer," he is pained in his manhood. He has a few things to put under his feet before he can fly. Maturity requires patience. With statues of Mary and Jesus looking on from the front porch of Pedro's home, he (and we with him) is reminded of the emasculation he suffers at the hands of his own artless culture. He is again reminded to stay away from technology's false promises of power when he tries out Rico's time machine. Time is God's prerogative. A real man humbly takes it as it comes.

The culture of Greece/Babylon/Preston High wishes to subjugate Time and its maddening relativity, to be, in the words of the song playing at the dance, "forever young," to avoid the cosmic cycle of death and rebirth and have "summer all year long." (When Napoleon and Deb dance, the song is a cyclically responsive "Time after Time.") It is a culture that has substituted the quantitative values of survival for the qualitative values of life. Summer promises glitter and pop dispensers. Rico and Kip peddle plastic for money. Even when Napoleon makes an effort to enter the military-industrial value system, his right-brain dominance prevents him from succeeding. He is concerned with the God-created concrete particulars of the chickens (their talons), a matter unintelligible to the survivalist farmers. Their artless, survivalist food, consisting of quantities of chickens-before-they're-hatched and entirely lacking in the qualities of taste and smell that "please the eye and gladden the heart" (D&C 59:18) gags him. He

cannot understand their garbled, partial language. Despite his hard work, the artist-priest in such a society must be content with the loose change that falls from Master Mahan's table.

Napoleon cannot fit in, not so much because he doesn't desire to become a Babylonian—witness the tall tales of Alaskan wolverine hunts and hot blonde girlfriends and being able to make hundreds of dollars in, like, five seconds—but seemingly because he cannot be untrue to his nature. Perhaps he has sipped the waters of Helicon from before his birth and is foreordained to this calling. Deb, too, it turns out, has sipped the waters. She, however, by virtue of her substantial corpus callosum (larger in the female brain than in the male), is able to put left-brain technology (a camera) to use for right-brain ends (visual art). She would redeem the commercial images of Rico and Kip with tiny little sea horses and pink billowiness. Unlike the appearance-oriented Summer and Trisha, she accepts her body just the way it is and has no desire to buy in to Babylonian sexonomics.

Pedro begins to suffer the adverse effects of living in a Nietzschean power web. In a reenactment of the Iconoclast Controversy, he is reprimanded by the principal for creating a piñata in the image of Summer, and using it vicariously to win the election. It is the way of things in Mexico. The concrete and the particular, the physical and the emotional, will make him a winner there. But here he is forced into abstraction. With no culturally acceptable outlet, the godlike passion begins to build. Pedro feels his heat now as it stands out in contrast to the cold white way. He wants to be a winner. Unwilling to relinquish his FFA medal—after all, it is a symbol of the task given to Adam to maintain stewardship over nature and of his tie to Napoleon—the conflicted Pedro tries to bathe his heat away, surrounded by the purifying magic of holy candles. But they are not magic enough. He must remove part of his identity.

Napoleon transcends the cultural mandate to ridicule another to exalt oneself, and together Napoleon and Deb repair the damage society has collectively wrought and restore Pedro to respectability. Pedro stands now as the New Peter, ready to reassume his role. He dons the coif of a medieval warrior, defender of an age of passion and unified faith. The drums announce his prophesied return.

Napoleon has been thinking about Deb ever since she left her crap on his porch. It was the devalued crap of womanhood, womanhood reduced to salesmanship and trinkets or, as in the case of the spartanesque Starla, androgyny. Deb has no keys but provides the necessary means of se-

curing others'; without her, all keys would be forever lost. She will use this talent in the service of the New Peter, who will distribute the sacrificial gift ecumenically to all the faithful. As male and female link hands to restore the rightful Law to their society, we recognize that Napoleon has skills too. They aren't bowhunting skills or numchuck skills or computer hacking skills, which would enable him to control and dominate others of God's creatures. They are priesthood skills: kindness, long-suffering, gentleness and meekness, and love unfeigned. He is the leading man in this movie by virtue of his bold decision to act from a higher law than his fellows. The two acts of violence he commits—throwing to the ground the campaign button of the whore of all the earth and returning Rico's steak-upside-the-head with an orange-upside-the-van and an elbow to the chest—serve mainly to make a statement and indicate a righteous indignation. In the swing of his arm, we can almost see the arc of a braided cord.

Meanwhile, Kip is about to have his god/manhood restored through the mutual love and acceptance of his "Soul" mate LaFawnduh and the culture she represents. She will divest him of his intellectual trappings (glasses, ugly clothes) and bless him with the gifts of beauty and physicality. He is freed from the prison of his left frontal and parietal lobes and awakened to the deeper reality of occipital lobes, cerebellum, pons, medulla, the whole nine yards—he is in love. What his soul had lost in the apostasy of a man-made, text-based, virtual reality is now restored through facial expression, gesture, and physical touch in the eternal *pas de deux.* The experience of the nonrational cures him of his self-defeating self-consciousness and opens him to the plight of others ("Napoleon, I'm sure there's a babe out there for you, too.") Though LaFawnduh's brother is less than enthusiastic about the wedding—can a thousand years of culture be healed overnight?—and Kip admits his lingering love for technology, there is hope for better days.

As for temporal lobe involvement, music enters the soundtrack infrequently, because emotion enters the culture infrequently. Napoleon becomes associated with music early on in the movie as the only male in an all-female group. The Happy Hands Club represents the female cross-brain function. Sign is a language that is not processed solely in one hemisphere but requires coordination between the two. Sign is a visual, tactile, kinetic language, and Napoleon handles it with grace, as entranced as St. Teresa of Avila. But even this power can be prostituted, as in the campy cheerleader skit, as herbal products can be made to serve baser

instincts. Visions can lie, tongues can deceive, and angels of darkness can masquerade as angels of light. As Hagrid explains to Harry Potter in *The Sorcerer's Stone,* "Not all wizards are good."

It would seem that, in addition to foreordination, there is an element of choice involved in erecting and utilizing one's priestly neuronal circuitry, and perhaps this is why we never see or hear of Napoleon's father. Napoleon must utilize the right-hemisphere dishabituation function and discover today anew, as if he were not the last man on earth but the first. It would also appear from the transformation of Kip and Rico that neither biology nor history is necessarily destiny. The final ego blow comes to Rico in the form of Rex, king of Sparta, who renders his right arm useless, thereby forcing him to develop the left arm, which, as we well know, is controlled by the right half of the brain. As he attempts to develop his left throwing arm, his estranged girlfriend visits him in his field of loneliness and his illusion of independence; and soon, if garters can be relied upon, he will follow Kip to the altar. Even Tina is redeemed by love, by an act of love that sets all others in motion and makes the world alive with music.

Although we witness the spark of inspiration light Pedro's eyes as he looks up from the fountain of the knowledge of good and evil, we do not see Napoleon's first taste of paradox. But we do witness him slug down more of it in the form of gatorade (red, for sacrifice) as he practices for his ritual rain dance, his laying down of his life for his friend. It is the act which will seal his election—his own as well as Pedro's. When the disheartened novitiate hesitates to give his speech, Napoleon advises, "Pedro, just listen to your heart. That's what I do." He also listens to his body and speaks with it to the cerebrally self-conscious, partial-brained masses, who decide to throw waking reason to the wind and vote for the man who will make all their wildest dreams and visions come true. This dance of dreams, primitive in its longing, universal in its scope, perfect in its innocence, brings the history of enmity triumphantly to a close. In this show of true priesthood power, Napoleon transcends his megalomanic namesake and explodes his monstrous legacy. Deb, the unsanitized and innocent new Eve, lets her hair down and plays. Behind their tethered game is the jubilant spray of fountains.

History scrolls its credits. But the end is not yet.

In the final scene, man will face his Maker in the clear light of dawning day. Napoleon rides into the middle of this marriage of the lion and

the lamb on the wild horse of passion which he has bridled. He rides it as he rides his life, with dignity and with the clumsiness of humility. And what does he do with the horse he has rightly earned? He gives it to his brother. He blesses someone else's life with it, even someone who has refused him comfort (the chapstick incident) and has taken pleasure in his pain and humiliation (the time-machine episode). He does this as a matter of course and doesn't even take credit for his magnanimity, ascribing it instead to the Divine Order. ("Luck-y!") He does nothing but what he sees the Maker do.

It is doubtful that the writers of this movie have ever read Urs von Balthasar or Barth. It is unlikely that its director is familiar with split-brain research or Gödel's incompleteness theorem. But as Albert Einstein said, "The problems we face will not be solved by the minds that created them." It is up to the artist-priests among us. *Napoleon Dynamite* has taken the greasy, nutritionless, factory-processed monotony of corndogs and tater tots and fed us with loaves and fishes. Let us give thanks and praise, and—with a deep and patient exhale—go and do likewise.

Householding: A Quaker-Mormon Marriage

Heidi Hart

The scene: my house on any weekday evening. The table's scattered with toy airplanes, homework, books, the orange-eyed cat that's recently adopted us, and several chewed-up pencils. I'm hunting for my keys on my way out to teach a class. Our nephew, who's been living with us since he started college, hunts for pizza in the fridge. My husband, Kent, is negotiating with our seven-year-old son, who says there's absolutely nothing in this house that's fit to eat. Our oldest son is reading and declares that he needs silence. The dog is circling each of us in turn and yapping for attention. The phone rings. Neighbor girls appear at the front door, fund-raiser envelopes in hand. Someone's left the water running in the bathroom sink. The dryer buzzes again and again, as if annoyed at us for not responding instantly.

My home's as fragmented as anyone's in middle-class America. Add to this our split along religious lines: I've become a Quaker, while my husband has stayed faithful to the LDS Church that raised us. Our boys still go to church with Kent; sometimes they all come with me, more or less willing to adjust to the silence and the fact that we sing Beatles songs sometimes. Kent prepares his Gospel Doctrine lessons amid a pile of notes in the basement family room; in our kitchen, I post notices from the computer about a monthly Quaker peace vigil. Kent puts on a dress shirt

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and a tie for stake priesthood meeting; I host the Ministry and Counsel Committee, which has spiritual care of our congregation, over tea in the dining room. Often our worlds intersect. Quaker friends come to our house for dinner, and we attend ward socials as a family. I go to sacrament meeting when I can, loving my boys' presence next to me but squirming during militant hymns about "the righteous" and "the wicked." Our former family life has broken into pieces; our challenge is to make a home to hold them all.

During my transition out of Church activity, we had a family home evening that involved a bowl of broken glass. We discussed the creation story handed down from Rabbi Isaac Luria in which God's divinity is shattered into pieces at the beginning of the world. I told our boys that our job as human beings is to gather the pieces of goodness scattered all around us. We washed our hands to prepare for the object lesson. I let the boys drop two glasses into a deep mixing bowl. As the clear glass crashed into fragments, the boys held their breath. We held the bowl in our hands. Light glanced off a dozen slivered edges. I wish I'd used the word *Tikkun* to describe the Jewish belief in mending what is broken; I wish we'd talked about the violence in Israel and the religious divide in our own community. At the time, my view was concentrated on our own small house. We all sensed, as we reached into the bowl to touch the shattered glass, that our family was about to come undone.

It hasn't, at least not in the way I feared. Kent and I are still together. We still make choices prayerfully and come to similar conclusions, whether we have listened to the "Mormon" Holy Ghost or the "Quaker" Inner Light. Our boys are still the curious, fun-loving creatures they have always been. But every day I wake up knowing there are gulfs among us that will take attention, love, and honesty to cross. When my seven-year-old Evan came into my room one day and said, "I know you're a peace-lover, Mom, but I really love lethal weapons," I didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Then he asked me, "Can we be different about this?" I swallowed my impulse to preach and told him that of course we could—though a toy tank and a Nerf dart-launcher are the only "lethal" items in his room. After I shared this story with my Quaker community, a Friend shared hers: she and her husband took their son to every weapons museum in Europe until, at twelve, he sat for two hours contemplating Goya's paintings of the day before and the day after a battle, and began to form his own social conscience. I'll have to trust my boys to do the same.

I don't know if we're putting pieces back together as we negotiate our differences every day, but maybe we can make them into something beautiful. Since attending a concert at Los Angeles' Disney Hall, I carry the image of its gleaming rose-shaped fountain made from shards of Delft china. I also carry the words of Quaker Judith Brutz: "Out of our brokenness make us a blessing."[1] Maybe we can learn how to let go of those expectations that might harm each other. Maybe we will find that we share a core gospel: *Love each other.* Though Kent often hears, "This must be really, really hard for you," and though some people ask me how I can allow my children to attend "such a controlling, patriarchal church," I know there's common ground, and good, in both traditions. I'd rather spend time finding it than live in the cold war Kent and I fought for the first decade of our marriage.

Recently I found myself back in a room that held a memory of those hostile years. The week before his fortieth birthday, Kent was ordained a high priest. His family and mine gathered at a nearby church building. We sat in cushioned folding chairs and spoke in whispers, a habit I have not forgotten. I took in my surroundings as the bishop came to "card" the men in the room, checking to be sure their temple recommends were current before they stood in the blessing circle. Kent and I shared a laughing look. He knew I'd think this practice more than bizarre after leaving Mormonism for a spiritual community that values "that of God in everyone." I did. But even stranger was the realization that I'd spent a hundred angry Sundays in this very room the first two years that Kent and I were married.

We attended church here back in student days. In this room, I heard deflated-looking mothers read words by Church patriarchs about the sacredness of women. In this room, I heard that none of us could do enough to merit Christ's atoning sacrifice; and yet if we repented of our sins, we had a chance at heaven. In this room, I was admonished to pay tithing, say my prayers, attend the temple, conduct family home evening, do my family history, perform service projects, wear my sacred undergarments night and day, and make a happy home for children growing in the gospel. The pictures in Church magazines of well-groomed families in their muted living rooms did not appeal to me. There had to be a way to

1. Judith L. Brutz, *In the Manner of the Lord's Prayer,* quoted in *Plain Living: A Quaker Path to Simplicity,* edited by Catherine Whitmire (Notre Dame, Ind.: Sorin Books, 2001), 78.

make a home that felt alive and real, but I had no idea how to go about this. Week after week, I went to church and listened to the usual requirements for perfection. In this room, I heard that some day Christ would separate the wheat and tares, the sheep and goats, the ones who followed meekly and the ones who "kicked against the pricks." Like me. I came home fuming every week. Kent didn't like to hear such "prideful" words from me. He wanted to protect his testimony of the Church. I shut my mouth and cried in the bathroom, night after night. The tub became a bowl to hold my splitting self.

Ten years later, I had had enough. Kent and I had moved across the country and then returned to Salt Lake City. Our boys were two and almost five. Kent had found his passion as a public defender, and I my own as a writer and musician. I'd done my duty in the Church, and while I loved the people I associated with, I could no longer say that I believed in Mormon doctrine. I felt that I was being kept in an eternal childhood, told in soothing tones what to believe and how to act. I was tired of living in a church that made me so preoccupied with my own righteousness—or lack thereof—that I had never learned to care about the world. And worst of all, I didn't feel that I could speak my mind or heart at church. Kent knew all this. His work had shown him how an institution based on power can do damage to the soul; and while he hadn't given up his testimony of the Church, he had at least become a Democrat. He'd also learned to listen to my ranting after church without the wall of judgment I had felt in our first years together. So when I told him that I'd like to go to Quaker meeting, just to see what it was like, he didn't shut me down. He listened. He held his breath, holding a space for me. He knew my Mormon days were over. Slowly, with many long pauses, he told me he'd support me, if I'd do the same for him.

That conversation was only the beginning. It had been easy to cry in the bathroom and then tell Kent that I was fine when I came out. It had been easy to rant about the Church in private and then smile falsely as I taught what I did not believe. It was harder to tell Kent, "I love you but can't go to church with you." And it was even harder, a month later, to inform our Mormon bishop, "I love the people in our ward, but I can't stay here and be honest with myself." As I became acquainted with the Salt Lake Friends, I saw that, although Quakers have no formal creed, they try to walk the walk of truth and peace. These values often seem to contradict each other. Living in the open space between them takes more grace and

courage than I have sometimes. A Friend quoted a traditional Quaker proverb in Meeting recently: "Quakers are known for speaking truth to power. But I believe the whole phrase is 'Speak truth to power with love.'" Or, as Muriel Bishop puts it, "Truth without love is violence. And love without truth is sentimentality. We do need both."[2] In our marriage and in the relationships that surround it, Kent and I are learning the balance of plain speech and peacemaking that Quakers try to live by. The culture of niceness still hangs on me like a film of lace. It still takes nerve for me to say exactly what I feel. To name my hurt or loneliness, and do it without blame, may take a lifetime to learn well.

Our first steps into interfaith marriage felt like waking from an anesthetic. Day after day, we let out words we'd been too scared to say. They often hurt on the way out, and yet we found new energy in saying them. Kent asked me once, "Do you believe in God at all?" I looked at him and answered, "I don't know. Not in the white-robed, white-haired sense, at least. But I believe that there's a spark of good in all of us." He swallowed hard and tried to take this in. We talked about the afterlife, our temple covenants, and what would happen to our sons. We talked about our families and how they would respond to my decision. At the same time, Kent was trying Prozac, hormone therapy, and sleep aids to relieve his deep, inherited depression. At one point, we sat on the couch and dared to utter words like "separation" and "divorce." Once we'd spoken them, we could attend to what these words might mean for us, our children, and our families.

We chose to stay together. We went to see my therapist. She spoke a word that's helped us more than any other: "structure." She said, "Create a time and space each day to check in with each other." This sounded obvious, but when we heard it, we knew we had work to do. At night we'd found ourselves at odds: Kent was still depressed and panicked if I wrote for long hours after our boys were asleep. We were literally passing in the night. After several years of medication, therapy, and couples work together, we have found a way to balance time together with the time I need to work. Now, as soon as we have put the boys to bed, we sit together and review the day. We relax into the space we've made down in the family room. We sit on the sofa that we called the Story Couch in our old house, the place that still holds stories from our early marriage until now. Kent

2. Muriel Bishop, quoted in *Plain Living*, 146.

turns off the TV. The cat curls up between us. The dog arrives and noses us. I'm learning not to let my mind run off into the project waiting on my laptop. We talk about our boys, our spiritual communities, Kent's work, my questions about how to spend my time. When we release the space we've made, Kent doesn't mind my going back to work, and I no longer feel ashamed of my creative trance. This is radical home-making: not the soft-focus living room but a space that can be anywhere, a bowl to hold the pieces of our lives.

On Sundays, we make time to talk together as a family after church. The boys jump on the bed, we interrupt each other, and our pets get tangled in the conversation. The boys tell us what happened in their classes; Kent reports on who bore testimonies during fast meeting or asked questions during Sunday School; I tell about the vocal ministry in Quaker Meeting or about the silence that helped me work through a problem. Sometimes we go deep into a troubling subject, such as Mormon views on homosexuality. Our sons are learning that their parents may not see the world through the same lens but that it's possible to love each other anyway.

Some conversations rise up unexpectedly and call us to attention: *Hold a space for this.* Our son Anders came upstairs one night, appalled because he'd found R-rated DVDs down in the family room. "How dare you!" he intoned. He was only nine but well aware of Mormon standards for dress, media, and drink.

"What matters is a movie's quality, not just what it's rated," I responded.

"Hm!" he said, and tossed his head. "There might be a good message, but you can get the same thing in a movie without all that icky stuff."

"But movies aren't just about messages. Some films are works of art. Some help you see the world in a new way."

"Now it's *Mystic River.* What next? Wine? Spaghetti straps? NC-17?"

"Now do you really think that people who drink wine or wear spaghetti straps are bad? What do you think is more important—what we wear or whether we can treat each other kindly?"

"Both!" he cried, eyes flashing.

Kent came in and said, "Now I believe in following the prophet, but I understand where Mom is coming from. There are good movies out there that may be R-rated, and sometimes ratings are misleading anyway."

I added, my voice rising, "There are really stupid PG-rated movies, too."

"Evan," said Kent to our seven-year-old, who sat twirling his noodles at the other end of the table, "do you know what we're talking about?"

"Oh, yeah," he said. "The ego and how it can make people fight."

We sat in silence for at least ten seconds. How did he remember our discussion of the ego, months before? How did he perceive the pride in us tonight? I sat back in my chair and wondered what my boys would learn from me, or not. I still wonder. Though we read a "spiritual story" every night, whether *Stone Soup* or a picture book on Gandhi, soon my boys will have to choose their lives. That's what I want most for them, really, to become themselves. One might remain a Mormon and the other turn to Buddhism. They both might stay or go. One might protest war; the other might decide he still loves lethal weapons and sign up to serve. A mystery. I didn't try to solve it when my son discovered *Mystic River* on the shelf. Instead we went downstairs together and watched *Master and Commander.* Anders protested the PG-13 rating, then forgot his argument amid the ship's groans and the ocean's swells. By movie's end, both boys were asking "Will the captain let his friend go?" and "Will he get his specimens?" as if their lives depended on the answers.

Several months later on a trip to San Diego, our family visited the ship used in filming *Master and Commander.* We'd been listening to Marshall Rosenberg's CDs on nonviolent communication in the car; and while we'd learned a lot about voicing our truth without aggression, the boys were ready to burst from so much wisdom imparted from an invisible speaker. They ran up and down the deck, looking for anchors and cannons. They turned the ship's wheel with gusto. Down below, we saw the captain's quarters with Russell Crowe's costume on display. Recorded string music filled the small walkway where we stood; there were the cello and violin the captain and the doctor had used in their more peaceful scenes together. I pictured these fictional friends, the man of war and the man of science, making music in their temporary, floating bowl. Later that day my family went sailing on the Pacific with my father, all our differences balanced for a while on the rocking water. We sat in silence for most of the trip, not an awkward silence but a gentle yielding to each other's presence.

It's one thing to accept religious difference in my family. It's been another matter to confront the anger and bewilderment around us.

When I first left the Church, we had a meeting with Kent's family that erupted into slamming doors and trembling voices. Kent's parents had had no idea what I really thought and felt about the Church. His family loves him fiercely and came rushing to defend him, even as he did the same for me. Since then, we've talked more gently with each other. My sister-in-law said, not long ago, "We don't know what to do with you. You stopped going to church and yet you haven't left your kids, you're comfortable around us, and you still have Mormon friends. You don't fit in the usual box."

My parents, who've had their own struggles with the Church, were not surprised at my decision. Others in the family have been deeply disappointed. Some have chosen to engage with me in conversation; others have pretended nothing's changed. I was surprised and hurt when a beloved uncle breezily dismissed my memoir *Grace Notes*—and even more surprised weeks later when he said, "I need to apologize to you. I found myself turning into my patriarchal father." A cousin's told me that my story sounds exactly like her own. It's taken more resilience than I knew I had to make room for these varied, personal responses.

When my memoir started circulating in our neighborhood, the rumors started swirling, too. The bishop had to field a number of "concerns" brought to his office. He found no reason to enact Church discipline—despite the worry of an outgoing stake president. When I met with the new stake leader, the youngest in the Church but well-traveled and willing to listen, I spoke without apology. I was amazed to hear him say that he respected my decision. I still appeared in church once every month, as painful as this was, to show that even an "apostate" had a face my neighbors recognized. Though some responses hurt me, most of my friends in the ward remained as close to me as ever. And even though my family's moved into another neighborhood, more because of growing boys than out of fear of gossip, we have stayed in touch. Some of these friends have even started to confide their own religious doubts and struggles in a culture of conformity.

When I first made my break with Mormonism, Kent faced sympathy on every side. Many people were convinced I'd trampled his eternal hopes. I felt the pain of this as well: If Kent believed his exaltation hung on covenants we'd made together in the temple, then I'd broken the contract and he'd be a lone man in the celestial kingdom. Sometimes, after taking in a flood of sympathy at church, Kent would come home weighted

down. "I don't want people to feel sorry for me," he would say. "It makes me doubt what we're doing, which I know in my heart is right." Sometimes he'd add, "What do they want me to do? Divorce you?" His answer now, when people question him, is that he doesn't know what to expect in the next life, but he has faith that things will work out for our good. He also teases me about the "other wives" he may be given as a consolation prize. He speaks with confidence that what we've chosen isn't a mistake. He also speaks with gentleness.

Now, when I sit in a Mormon Church and watch a group of men get up to bless my husband, I feel foreign and at home at the same time. I know the language spoken here. I know that other women in the room will not say, "Why can't I join in?" Although I'm tempted to say this myself, just to make people aware of what they take for granted, I don't. Maybe I lack courage; maybe I don't need to preach to others about what I think is right. I hope my choice to move toward a new spiritual life speaks for itself, even when I join with Mormons in a pastel room. What I really want to do is hold a space for Kent and for our boys, for his family and for mine, as we make room for each other in our noisy house. Sometimes I wonder if the act of showing up may be enough.

The day of Kent's ordination as a high priest, we hosted a gathering for both our families in our house. Kent's family sat together in the living room. Mine gravitated toward the kitchen. Though both sides get along and feel affection for each other, I also felt unspoken judgment crackling back and forth from room to room. This was the weekend following the Bush-Kerry election. One could say our families formed a microcosm of the cultural divide that dominated current headlines: "religious conservatives" versus "skeptical seekers," "down-to-earth folk" versus "educated elite," et cetera. But there were other complications: my sister who enjoys making caustic comments in a crowded room; my brother-in-law, bishop of his ward in Idaho, so diligent he never rests, who had come down with shingles; a nephew who gets so unnerved in social situations that he called ahead to make sure he arrived exactly when the food was served. I understood his feelings. As our families met with slight unease around the table, my whole body shook with tension. I fretted over forks and napkins. I could not sit down. I snapped at my sister for asking where a bowl was. Later, when I told my father what an awful hostess I had been, he said, "It's no small thing to get us in one room at all." He was right, but maybe next time I can think more consciously about the space I make for us. I

can show up, yes, but also recognize the hot point of convergence. I can meditate beforehand. I can hold our families in the Light, as Quakers do, remembering the worth of every person.

In our marriage, Kent and I attempt to do this for each other. I know he's loyal to the Mormon creed, even if he has private doubts sometimes. He believes if he has faith and follows what he's told to do, the cloudy things will all come clear some day. I disagree but can respect his feelings. Kent understands that I no longer have a firm belief in the atonement or the afterlife, let alone the three degrees of glory. He finds this very sad but sees how my life grows more vibrant as I learn to love the here and now. These days, our hardest conversations may seem trivial compared to questions of the Great Beyond, and yet I sometimes think they teach us more.

Several months ago, I came home from my book club hot with tears. The other women in the group had talked about their partners and their husbands, how instinctively connected they had been from the beginning, how they worked together, how they read each other's minds. I thought of Kent at home, watching his beloved Yankees on TV. I remembered how I'd broken up with him in college when I realized that he didn't like to read. I wondered if, for all his kind support of me, he'd really thrive with some nice Mormon girl who liked to go to ballgames.

Back at home, I shut myself in the bedroom. I cried long and hard. Were we missing something? I shared books and music with my close women friends, but should I try to share them with my husband, too? Should I be paying more attention to the baseball scores? How could we find true reciprocity? I didn't know. I started leafing through the books on the low shelf in front of me. One was Margaret Wheatley's *Turning to One Another.* I flipped to a page that held only three lines of writing: "It's not our differences that divide us. It's our judgments about each other that do."[3]

I sat back on my heels. Here I'd been, crying in solitude as I had done so many times before, and feeling powerless to act. My life was not as impossible as I believed. So we were different. So Kent liked to watch a game on TV after work. Even my closest friend and I were opposite in more ways than we were alike. Our differences had drawn us toward each

3. Margaret Wheatley, *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2002), 47.

other. There was nothing wrong with this. But if I started thinking Kent would never understand me or I him, we'd be in trouble.

I pulled myself up and walked downstairs. I sat down on the sofa next to Kent. We'd talked before I left for book club, and he seemed surprised to see me. "Can we talk some more?" I said.

"About what?"

"Well, I wonder if we should be doing more together."

"Aren't we fine the way we are?" This from the man who, in the depths of depression, could not bear for me to go out in the evening without him.

I told him what the women in my book club had described. He asked me which ones in particular; I realized there were only two who'd spoken rapturously about their relationships. The women without kids. One had lived with her new partner for six months. I leaned back, relieved, and we kept talking. No, we didn't have to grow more like each other. Quaker/Mormon, poet/lawyer, singer/baseball fan, we realized that we spanned a world between us.

Soon our conversation turned to other people in our lives. Kent described the tenderness he'd felt when seeing an old friend that day. I found words to tell him more about my own close friend and the childhood hurt she's helped to heal in me. Soon I found myself confiding more about my vulnerable self. Words formed that I'd never thought I'd utter. Kent received them gently, asked more questions, and I found that I felt safe enough to answer. "I didn't realize that there's always more to say," I told him as we faced each other on the sofa.

"Truthfulness anywhere means a heightened complexity," writes Adrienne Rich in her 1975 essay "Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying." This essay addresses women's relationships with each other, but I often read it when preparing to speak truth to my husband, to my friend, to my mother, or to a person who's offended me. Rich goes on, "It isn't that to have an honorable relationship with you, I have to understand everything, or tell you everything at once, or that I can know, beforehand, everything I need to tell you. It means that most of the time I am eager, longing for the possibility of telling you. That these possibilities may seem frightening, but not destructive, to me. That I feel strong enough to hear

your tentative and groping words. That we both know we are trying, all the time, to extend the possibilities of truth between us."[4]

When the Quaker William Penn wrote, "Let us then try what love will do,"[5] he was speaking to the question of brute force. He meant these words as an experiment, to test love as a softener of enmity. But even in what Adrienne Rich calls "an honorable relationship," our judgments can make enemies of lovers. My husband and I lived in this cold war for years. And then, when I approached him about leaving Mormonism, he decided to try love. I tried it back, and we're still in the laboratory, every night when we sit down together on the couch.

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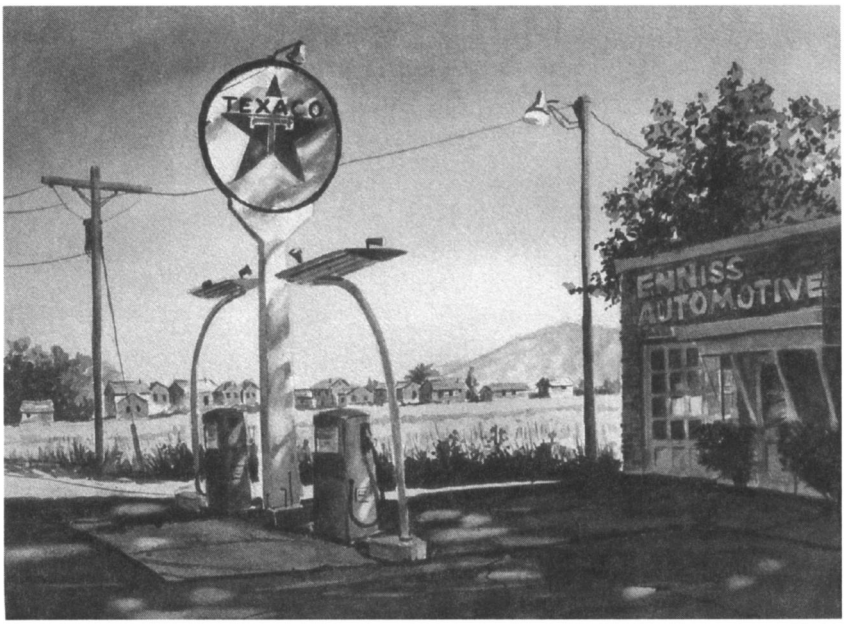
4. Adrienne Rich, "Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying," in her *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose, 1966–1978* (New York: Norton, 1979), 185.

5. William Penn from his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, Part 1, Maxim #545, 1693, quoted in *Faith and Practice* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1997), 172.



Morning Sun, Bill Laursen, watercolor, 22" x 28", 1993.

Going Nowhere, Bill Laursen, watercolor, 22" x 28", 1995.

FICTION

White Shell

Arianne Baadsgaard Cope

There are pieces of white shell sifted with the sands and soils of Dinetah that confuse newcomers and outsiders. Tourists look at the shells like puzzle pieces, trying to force them into what they know. A gift of the ocean in the depths of a parched desert? "If they looked past themselves, they would realize the place they stand was once covered by a shallow sea," Mary's grandfather said. "And it is they who do not belong."

Even those who do belong on the reservation survive only if they are able to adapt to the desert's hostile personalities that push forward, turn under, circle overhead like vultures. Few things survive the grip of the sacred land. Grandfather is one of them. His skin is soft and warm like worn denim, the same color as the lofty mesas. His limbs are like the branches of lone twisted trees. His gray hair is as soft as owl feathers. His eyes are patient, slow-moving clouds. Like coyote, spiders, yucca, Grandfather lasts. Mary does not.

Like high passing storm clouds, Mary is forced beyond by encroaching winds before her time. She watches the sacred land retreat from view, afraid it will forget her, knowing her footprints on canyon floors and atop mesas have already blown away.

Mary steps gingerly into her new land from a small gray bus with sagging, rusty bumpers. The bus's engine idles impatiently behind Mary,

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waiting for her to go inside her new home. But Mary only touches her toes to the greenest grass she has ever seen, just off the sidewalk, as if she is testing the temperature of unfamiliar pond water. There are boys with painted faces playing with bows and arrows and slings in the front yard of the new-looking house. It is a long brick house with a low-pitched gable roof. Bigger than the trailer in Snowflake and much bigger than the round hogans Mary is most used to. Up and down the street are houses of similar shapes but different colors. Mary wonders if there are really people in all of them, living so close together.

"Hey!" one of the boys yells. "She's here!" They all run over to Mary, stop a couple yards away. One light-haired ambassador continues closer. He is wearing smears of red face paint and carrying a plastic tomahawk. "We were just playing cowboys and Lamanites. You wanna join? You'd be the only *real* Lamanite we've ever played with." Mary has no idea what Lamanites are. She studies the freckles on the boy's face and figures he is two or three inches taller than she and two or three years older.

Just as the boy opens his thick chapped lips to say something else, the front door of the brick house opens, and a woman steps out, wiping her hands on a white and green checkered apron. She catches one of her black pumps on the top porch step and nearly falls face first into the concrete path leading to the street. "Whoa!" she yells in surprise, then turns and keeps walking, muttering death upon her shoes.

The woman's grimacing face suddenly lights up with what Mary perceives as put-on pleasantness when she makes eye contact. "How *are* you, sweetie?" she asks when she reaches Mary. The woman's eyes examine Mary from top to bottom. With a wave of her hand she signals for the bus driver to leave. "Thank you for your trouble of dropping her off directly, Brother Bean!" The bus driver nods before putting his engine in gear.

As the bus pulls away from the curb with a grinding sound, the woman stoops down to Mary's eye level. She is wearing lipstick the color of blood, and her light hair is done in shiny waves. After a moment or two Mary has not said anything, and the woman speaks again. "Well, Mary. My name is Diane Jensen, and my husband's name is Walter, although he's not home from work yet. He's no doctor, but what we have is yours. We've been looking forward to this day for the *long*est time! Have you eaten? We've already had our supper, but I saved you some. You like meatloaf?"

The woman pauses for a moment, awaiting a response from Mary.

She continues cheerfully when she does not get one. "Just wait till you meet the girls. You're going to *love* it here. Come in and I'll show you all your new clothes and your room." The woman pauses again. "Well, sweetie. Do you like red? I figured you'd have . . . *dark* hair, you know, so a lot of your jumpers are red. Won't that be nice? And the boys, don't worry about . . ." Words bubble faster and faster out of the woman like the jumping of a jack rabbit oblivious to an approaching truck before . . . crunch!

Silence.

The woman's mouth closes and her eyes squint a little. Mary sees it on her face. First confusion, waiting for some kind of response—a "yes," a "hello," a smile even. The woman repeats herself, then becomes concerned. Finally, she says, "Can you *hear* me, dear?"

The woman whispers about it with her husband that night. Mary hears through the barely open door of her new bedroom. "Nobody said she couldn't talk. Should we call her mother? Maybe she's deaf and nobody notified us."

"Would her being deaf make any difference in us keeping her? What would the Savior do?"

"Well . . . *no*," the woman says after a moment of thought. "It won't make *that* kind of difference." Then she pauses. "She does respond," she continues slowly, thoughtfully, "in a kind of *way*, with her eyes . . . when you speak to her. What if . . ."

"Don't worry about it," the man's deep voice jumps in. "She'll come 'round. Don't need to cause her more trauma. She's pretty young. Maybe too young for this kind of thing. Already left her mother and father and home and has to swallow all eleven of us in one shot. It'll just take time for her to . . . adjust, you know, for us to teach her the gospel and good manners. Best if we do it real slow, and . . . "

The man's voice becomes softer now, too soft for Mary to hear. So she climbs into her bed and lies there, staring at the dark ceiling until she hears the radio come on, and the sound of the announcer replaces the woman and her husband's whispering voices.

Mary turns from her side to her back on the fold-out bed, tunes out the radio announcer, and tries to think of something else. The mattress's coils squeak under her weight. She has never slept on a bouncy mattress like this before and feels strange lying up so high. All she had were rolled sheepskins on the floor in hogans with her grandparents or even with Mommy in the trailer. And the bed she used at winter school in Chinle

was made of fencing wire that barely bent at all even when Mary jumped on it.

Mary watches arrowheads of light from a passing car's headlights dance across the ceiling. She is alone in the room. "Just for tonight," the woman told her. "To help you ease into things." But Mary suspects it has more to do with her scraggly hair and the way she smells. A doctor at the bus stop in Richfield extracted a handful of lice from Mary's hair and gave her a shot, pronounced her healthy. But even after giving her a bath, Mary's new mother seems hesitant. She touches her only when necessary and at arm's length, the way Mary imagines one would treat soiled, reeking underpants.

Tomorrow the two sets of bunk beds on the other side of Mary will fill with her four new sisters. For now the girls are giggling in sleeping bags on the floor of the next room with the boys. The woman said Mary would have five new sisters and four new brothers. One of the girls is a toddler who sleeps in a cradle next to the woman's bed. "I won't trouble you with all of them at once till morning rolls around," the woman told Mary when she tucked her in.

Mary plays with the buttons on her new pajamas—a red and white plaid flannel top and matching pants. The buttons feel cool and smooth in her fingers and click clack when she taps two together. She turns onto her side. The bed squeaks again. Someone shuts the radio off, and she hears her new parents' voices progressing down the hall to their bedroom. The rhythmic sound of the man's hoarse laugh penetrates the wall near Mary's bed before she hears the creak of a closing door. The man's face is still foreign to Mary. He has brown hair. That is all she knows because she could not bring herself to look at his face when she was introduced.

A moment later the toddler cries. The sound is muffled through the walls, like a distressed kitten. Violet is the little girl's name. Mary remembers because it matched the pureed plums smeared across Violet's face and high chair when she first saw her.

Mary falls asleep much later, after all the noises—the water running in the bathroom, someone coughing, the baby grunting—slowly quiet like a dying fire and she can no longer even strain to hear anyone's breathing. But she jerks awake after barely slipping into the other side of consciousness. Her body is covered with a film of cold sweat, and her legs and arms are twitching. She is unable to relax again and find the secret place of sleep

without the sound of Mommy's shallow puffs next to her, leading her there with some sense of safety.

* * *

"Mary, I want you to call me Mother as soon as you feel comfortable," the woman says over breakfast the next day. Mary does not like how casually this new mother uses her given name. In Arizona she had been called simply *awee* or "baby." Nearly everyone on the reservation went by a nickname to protect the sacredness of their given names. Mary turns her face from her new mother's smile and looks at the large oak table. There is more food spread out than Mary's used to seeing in a month. Things Mommy and she would have been lucky to find while scrounging in the garbage piles of even the richest Arizona white men. There are two cold bottles of milk, a ceramic saucer filled with country gravy, two plates stacked high with cream-colored biscuits, and a bowl of ripe pears and peaches.

Mary's new mother slides a fried egg on Mary's plate and hands her a pear. "Eat." Mary holds the fruit to her nose and pulls the sweet rainwater smell of its thin, yellow skin into her nostrils. She has the urge to slip it into her pocket and grab another in case there is no food later, but she is worried someone will see her and become angry.

"These are all your new brothers and sisters," Mary's new mother says, introducing each of her children quickly. Mary looks around the table at the communal stare of nine pale, freckled faces. "You may call them your brothers and sisters." Mary feels the almost tangible heat of the children's inquisitive expressions burn rings of embarrassment on her cheeks. She has never had a sibling and cannot imagine calling anyone "Mother" but her own . . .

Mommy.

Mary looks down at her fried egg, stares at the asymmetrical shape of the broken yellow yolk until it blurs, but she cannot keep her thoughts from rolling away like a dropped ball of yarn. Mary remembers Mommy's warm kiss on her cheek before she had boarded the bus in Arizona. A burst of wind had turned the wet, red lipstick mark instantly cold. "It's a long ride to Utah, Awee," Mary remembers Mommy saying in Navajo while holding back tears. Then Mommy changed to English, which better masked her emotions. "Be a good girl. They say you'll change buses in Richfield and a nice man will bring you to your new fam-

ily. You just used the bathroom, right? Don't want you making them make any special stops."

Then the bus's folding door closed softly between them and that was all. Mary found a window seat near the front as the bus lurched into gear. She lifted her hand and caged the kiss mark on her cheek as if it were a startled moth. Her other hand reached up and pressed against the window pane as she watched Mommy's body—her arm raised in a motionless gesture of goodbye—shrinking smaller and smaller until it was a dark speck merging with the horizon.

Another child who was going to Utah on the same bus, a boy a couple of years older than Mary, ran to the door after his parents slipped from view. He banged his small fists on the door. Rattle. Rattle. Rattle-rattle-rattle. No one responded. His lost, shiny eyes, like a frightened fawn's, seemed to look right through Mary as he found a seat in the back of the bus. Mary shivered as he passed.

Mary and the boy were two of nine children going to Utah for the school year. Mommy had explained it all to Mary a dozen times before she sent her away. "It's the chance to get educated and get ahead. To fit into the modern world outside the reservation." This was after weeks of exasperated attempts to find out why Mary had lapsed into what Mommy called a "vocal coma" after the return of her daddy from the war.

Mommy left Daddy sleeping on the gold sofa and brought Mary back to the reservation for a few days so that Grandfather—the *Hataalii*, or medicine man trained in healing methods passed down over centuries—could perform the hand-trembling chant used to diagnose ailments. Mary kept her eyes closed through the entire ritual. "It is not her head, her fingertips, her limbs, or the tip of her tongue. She is hurt deep in her spirit," Grandfather said when the ceremony was finished. "Beyond even the reach of the Holy People for now."

So when Mommy returned to the trailer house and two overweight, pimple-faced *Gaamalii* missionaries knocked on their door and explained how the Mormons were in the tentative stages of starting a placement program for Navajo children, Mommy immediately volunteered Mary to be shipped north. "I think they want them to be at least eight years old, and, well . . . *bap*tized," the missionary explained tugging on the knot of his thin red tie. "Honestly, I brought it up only as a way to start talking to you about other things. Have you ever heard about Christ's coming to the Americas? A record left by ancient peoples witnesses that He is the light

and life of the world." The missionary held up a set of scriptures before he continued. "Christ said, 'I am the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.'"

But Mommy said she was not interested in Christ's coming to America or anything else about a religion preached by young white men unless it could give her daughter food and clothes and education and save her from whatever had frightened her to silence. "She'll be seven this year. She's really bright," Mommy said softly, so as not to wake Daddy and risk chasing off the missionaries.

"Well, seven's still not old enough to be *bap*tized," one of the missionaries said, punching his leather scriptures with his right fist to punctuate his pronouncement. "I'm *pretty* sure they're going to require that she has to be eight."

Mommy's eyelids lowered and her chin began to quiver. "Please."

He would see what he could do.

Three weeks later, that turned out to be good enough. Mary remembers Mommy using an artificial voice of cheery English from then on. "You know, even Snowflake is named after two Gaamaliis with the last names Flake and Snow. And your father's father's sheep still graze on Mormon lands in Aneth. You don't remember when we lived there, do you? Well, you were born on the state line under a half moon with your head in Arizona and your feet in Utah. That was a way to bring opportunity and peace to your life." Mommy stopped speaking for a moment and smiled sadly. "Then we wrapped your little body in sheepskin and placed you next to the fire with your head facing the flames . . . to warm you." Her voice cracked. She paused again, then quickly shook her head as if the memories filling it were marbles, easily rearranged. "They're going to pay for your food, you know, your clothes, and your school. It'll give me a chance to save some money and get out of . . . and come for you." But the only thing that made the news sting a little less to Mary was the promise of summer visits. And Mary's promise to Mommy was to never forget her own family and *Kiiyaa'áanii,* the Towering House Clan.

On their way to the bus stop, Mommy repeated in Navajo "The House Song of the East"—not in the smooth, seamless chant-singing that Grandfather used. She spoke the Navajo words plain, naked. "Far in the east, far below, there a house was made; Delightful house," Mommy said. "God of Dawn, there his house was made; Delightful house. The Dawn, there his house was made; Delightful house. White corn, there

its house was made; Delightful house. Water in plenty, surrounding, for it a house was made; Delightful house. Corn pollen, for it a house was made; Delightful house. The ancients make their presence delightful; Delightful house."

Then Mommy added something not repeated to her by her elders, her voice breaking and her eyes unblinking and shiny. "My daughter leaves me now for better things, a new home; Delightful house." Mommy stopped and looked at Mary, gestured with the raising of her eyebrows for her to join. But Mary remained silent, speaking the words only in her mind. "Before me, may it be delightful. Behind me, may it be delightful. Around me, may it be delightful. Below me, may it be delightful. Above me, may it be delightful. All, may it be delightful."

But now Mary is here at the Jensens' breakfast table with her new Mormon family, and she does not want to remember Mommy any more. She turns her attention toward anything that can snag her thoughts on the present, like the tight feeling of her scalp from the two braids her new mother has made of her hair, how she is unable to wiggle her toes in her new rigid shoes. She watches Violet drop her bottle off her high chair, then cry for someone to pick it up. "Rat-tle, rat-a, rat-ling," Violet says when her bottle is retrieved, shaking it so hard milk comes spraying out the nipple.

The way Violet says the last word, with a glottal in the middle, is like the Navajo consonant sound meaning "grass." This turns Mary's gaze out the window on the other side of the kitchen through which she can see the small half-acre backyard. It is well into September but the grass is still green. She thinks she sees a walnut tree in the back corner of the yard. Grandfather planted a walnut tree near his summer hogan as soon as he received word of Mary's birth. It was her tree, inching up with her over the years.

Mary looks over the Jensens' back fence at the mountains—*nahasdzáánbikáá' niilyáii*. They are splattered with dull patches of rust and copper. It is still a desert here in Utah like in Arizona—Mary can tell by the sparse vegetation in the foothills—but nothing like the sheer rock on the reservation and the parched land that breathes in puffs of orange dust. Mary thinks of her grandparents who are in Canyon de Chelly. They are probably preparing themselves and their small sheep herd for winter. Grandfather's teeth look like the varying shapes and shades of the white and yellow *naadáá* kernels they have finished har-

vesting. The memory of his partly toothless smile sends an aching pang up Mary's spine. But even if she were on the reservation, she tells herself, she would be leaving Grandfather to go to school during the cold months.

Mary pulls her eyes back to the table and cuts a tiny bite of the white of her egg. She holds the fork awkwardly in her fist, it being her first attempt at eating with utensils. Fry bread served as fork and spoon at home. And suddenly, even with all this food in front of her, a piece of fry bread is all Mary feels like eating.

"You excited for school, kids?" Mary's new father asks. He wipes his mouth on the rolled sleeve of his red flannel shirt.

"Yeah!" some of Mary's new younger brothers and sisters say enthusiastically. The older girls sigh with teenage aversion. "That's my gang. Now let's gather in the front room."

The younger children run from the table and through the kitchen's open doorway. Mary's new parents and the older children follow. "Come on in with us, Mary," her new father calls over his shoulder. Mary leaves her nearly untouched breakfast behind and walks cautiously after her new mother into the living room. Everyone is kneeling in a circle and folding their arms across their chests. One of the boys elbows one of the girls, and their father orders him to stop. Then it becomes silent and Mary's new father smiles at her. "Come. Join us, Mary." Mary kneels where she is, in the doorway. "No. Over here," her new father says, holding back a laugh. He scoots sideways on his knees to make a spot for her. "I'll say the prayer today." At that, everyone bows their heads and closes their eyes.

Mary has not heard the word prayer before but quickly realizes it is similar to *sodizin* in Navajo. The others close their eyes. Mary copies their posture but keeps her eyes open. "Our kind and gracious Heavenly Father," her new father says before clearing his throat.

Mary does not know whom he is addressing but imagines it is perhaps a grandfather who is deceased. The boy elbows the little sister next to him again. The girl does not yell but scoots out of range. "We kneel before thee today as a family with grateful hearts," the father continues. "We thank thee for this new day and the good meal we've enjoyed together. We thank thee for providing us with a good home in which to live."

The mischievous boy has opened his eyes, unfolded his arms, and is inching toward his sister again. Because her eyes are now sealed with reverence, she does not see him approaching. "We thank thee for each other

and for the opportunity we have to share our blessings with Mary who has come to us from Arizona." Mary's face becomes hot at the mention of her name. One of the older girls peeks and smiles at her, then quickly, guiltily, closes her eyes.

Mary's new father continues, "We thank thee for the gospel and for Jesus Christ and for the atonement." Mary does not know who Jesus Christ is. She has heard the name before and knows it has something to do with Christian churches. Perhaps it is white people's name for First Mother. "We ask thee to send thy spirit to be with us this day." The boy has reached his sister now and yanks her hair. By the time she screams, he has darted back to his place and is closing his eyes tightly.

Mary's new father does not open his eyes or stop the prayer as she suspects he should. He just pauses and clears his throat before continuing with louder, slower words. "*Help* us to keep the spirit of con*ten*tion out of our home. The spirit that Lucifer would wish to prevail here. Help us to know thy will, Father. Again we thank thee for all that we have. And we say these things in the name of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, amen."

Mary's new brothers complain all the way to school. The two older girls are in junior high, and the other girls are too young for school. So it is just Mary and three boys heading to the local elementary behind Mary's new mother. They are all in a row at first, like a parade of little ducks, the boys walking stiffly in their new clothes as if their legs are encased in denim casts.

"Will you still let us play night games?" the youngest boy asks. Mary's new mother is staring off into the street, her thoughts on something else.

"Fat chance," the oldest boy says. Then he turns his attention to Mary. "So who is your teacher, Mary? Are you going to be in the same class as Tom? He's a first-grader, too, you know." He points to Tom, the youngest boy who is behind them, untucking his starched collared shirt from his dark jeans. The boy keeps speaking even without an encouraging response. "Do you remember our names yet? I can say them all really fast. Listen." The older boy dives into a list of his brothers' and sisters' names, his own, Bobby, included in one streak of breath. "SherryEvelynBobbyGregTomLindaJohnNancyVioletBobby." He dramatically gasps for breath when he is finished. Mary nearly smiles, and this seems to satisfy Bobby. During the rest of the walk to school, they are comfortably silent.

Mary's new mother brings her directly to the office at the front of

the red brick schoolhouse. A short man in a green suit greets her and says, "I'm Principal Douglas. Welcome to Spanish Fork's Reese Elementary." He takes off his glasses and steps uncomfortably close to Mary, squatting down to her level. "It's a great idea the Church is developing. You're definitely the youngest I've heard of, though." He pauses for a minute with a warm, concentrated smile. "Maybe many more students will follow in your footsteps next year, eh?" He stops and rubs his shiny bald scalp as he waits for Mary to nod or shake her head, but she does neither. Mary's new mother smiles nervously. "Well, thanks for bringing her down. I think I can take it from here, Mrs. Jensen."

"Yes. Thank you. Let me know if there are any problems."

Principal Douglas nods, then turns to Mary as if her new mother is already gone. "Let me introduce you to your teacher, Mary. I think you'll really like her."

Mary is in the same class as Tom. Mrs. Minor's little classroom has green tiles for a floor except for one corner where a large red carpet is spread, curled up at the corners. Every student's name is printed on little pieces of blue or pink paper taped to the top of each desk. Mary's name, in pink, has a little blue bird drawn on the top of the "a." She likes it very much. All the boys in class are dressed much like Tom in new collared shirts and dark jeans or pleated tan pants. The girls' scabby knees peek out from under dresses or jumpers, and they wear white knee-length or lacy ankle socks.

Mrs. Minor starts out the day with what she calls singing time. "How about reviewing our ABCs?" she asks, then begins singing the letters of the alphabet. Mary has never heard of things called letters. She knows language orally only, English or Navajo.

"A, B, C, D . . ." Mrs. Minor begins singing animatedly. Her gray curls bob slightly every time she drops her flaccid right arm on the down beat. ". . . W, X, Y, and Z. Now I know my ABCs . . ." Mrs. Minor stops the song early. "Mary, won't you sing with us?" She gives her an encouraging smile. Mary stands silent, her bladder suddenly throbbing with a desperate need to urinate. "Now let's *all* sing."

Mrs. Minor starts another song Mary has never heard. "My Bonny lies over the ocean. My Bonny lies over the sea . . ." When Mary does not join, Mrs. Minor looks at her with raised eyebrows. She stops the singing mid-sentence again, and says, "Mary, when I tell you to *do* something, I expect you to *do* it or there will be consequences." The song starts again, but

Mary does not open her mouth. She feels the warmth of her urine slowly spreading down her white tights and into her shiny black Mary-Janes. Mrs. Minor does not stop the song again.

For the rest of the day, the lower half of Mary's body is engulfed in a hot, itchy sensation as her urine dries. The boy who sits next to her plugs his nose in disgust when the strong odor of old pennies reaches him. Mary holds her legs together as tight as she can to try and keep the smell from spreading further.

"Mary?" Mrs. Minor asks while all the children are picking up their bags and papers at the end of the day. "Do you think you could ask your . . . *parents* to come with you tomorrow morning, a little early. Your mother perhaps?" Mary stares blankly at the wall. Mrs. Minor scratches her wrinkled cheek with one of her painted fingernails. "Or . . . maybe . . ." She sighs. "*I'll* just try to *call.*" Mrs. Minor pats her short stiff curls and pulls her lips into a tight red bud for a moment as if she is considering saying something else. But after a moment she says, "You may go now."

Mary picks up her bag and begins to walk toward the door where Tom is waiting for her, picking his nose ineffectively with his thumb. "Oh, wait!" Mrs. Minor calls as Mary walks out the door. "You forgot your picture, Mary. It's still sitting on your desk. All the other students are taking theirs home." Mary turns and looks at the picture she has drawn with crayons, a black circle swirling like a dust devil around a little blue bird. Then she turns silently and walks away with Tom as Mrs. Minor waves it after her.

That night the telephone rings after Mary has been put to bed. Mary's new sisters are busy having a pillow fight and she cannot hear what is said. But Mrs. Minor pretends not to notice when Mary does not verbally participate in class the next day or any day after that.

* * *

Mary hears the word *Lamanite* again on Wednesday afternoon in a light brick church several blocks from the Jensens' home. Only this time the word is not used in reference to her directly but as part of the lesson in the Primary class where her new mother has brought her. The elderly woman teaching the class—Sister Paulson, she asks to be called—instructs Mary's new brother Tom to read a verse from a plain, black book. Everyone in class has an identical copy.

"And it came to pass that the Lamanites came up on the north of the

hill, where a part of the army of Moroni was concealed." Tom reads slowly and with difficulty. Sister Paulson has to help him with many of the words. Mary does not follow his words, only gathering that they are explaining some major war. Mary has seen churches before but never been in one. She used to wonder what they were doing inside. Dancing? Singing? Eating, perhaps? But she never imagined congregations meeting in musty classrooms to learn about wars, the worst thing she can think of, taking away daddies and sending them back angry.

Tom finishes the verse and the teacher reads a paragraph from her lesson book. No one listens. Two boys are leaning back in their chairs and trying to push one another over. A red-headed girl is prying open the classroom's tiny window. Tom is staring at a large, yellow booger clinging to the end of his pointer finger. After a thorough examination he rolls the sticky snot between his thumb and finger until it dries and crumbles onto the carpet. Sister Paulson sets her book down and asks the children a question about what they have been reading. No one even looks at her, much less raises a hand to respond. The large white clock measures the silence. Mary counts one, two . . . forty-six, forty-seven, before Sister Paulson repeats the question.

Mary is ashamed for the children. On the reservation, she was taught that elders are wise, and when they speak, you listen. Sister Paulson stares at the class with baleful blue eyes. No one notices the warning but Mary. Suddenly Sister Paulson raises her voice, angrily. "Class!" Everyone instantly sits straight and looks ahead. "Do you listen to a word I say?"

"Yes, Sister Paulson. We listen," says one of the boys who had been fighting.

"All right, Wally, then what have you learned today?"

"We're supposed to read our scriptures, say our prayers every day, go to church, and act like Jesus."

Sister Paulson scratches her graying hairline and sighs. "And what does Jesus *act* like, Wally? If he were here, would he make noise in my classroom? *Wal*ter?"

"Yes!"

All the other children burst out laughing.

"That's *it*. You can sit in the corner until class is over. The rest of you can open your scriptures and take turns reading the lesson's verses over again." Sister Paulson crosses her legs, sighs, and says under her breath, "You'd think you have no religion at all, let alone the truth."

Mary watches the children open their books and pretend to read for a few moments until they revert to their earlier behavior. She is confused by their conduct and even more by what Sister Paulson is teaching. The word "religion" that Sister Paulson used does not exist in the Navajo language. Grandfather told Mary she was expected to keep her life in harmony with nature, but he did not use words like good and evil.

"Why can't you act more like our new student?" Sister Paulson says near the end of class, surprised when her students listen. They all quiet and turn to Mary, whose face grows hot. "It is her first week here and she has more reverence than all of you." Sister Paulson looks at Mary and smiles with crooked, yellow teeth. Mary folds her arms and looks down with shame, away from the faces of her classmates. Like most Navajos, Mary hates being singled out, especially with praise. At least Sister Paulson did not use her name directly.

While Mary tries her best to seem invisible, Tom leans over and whispers something to Wally. They both giggle.

"What's so funny, Tom?" Sister Paulson asks, adjusting her large brassiere under her blue suit jacket. Tom looks sheepishly at his feet. "What's so *fun*ny, Wally?"

"Tom said Mary doesn't even know how to take baths."

"That's it! Both of you, stand in the corner," Sister Paulson says heatedly, raising her painted eyebrows. "I'm *sorry*, Mary."

And there it is. Her name.

Mary is more troubled by the teacher's direct approbation than Tom's words. After all, it is true. She had never seen a bathtub with running water before this week. The water that comes out of the silver faucet with such force frightens her.

Just then the bell rings and Sister Paulson sighs in relief. "No running in the halls!" she calls as the boys dart like desert roadrunners out of the classroom. Mary is the last to leave.

* * *

The Jensens are back at the same church on Sunday afternoon for what Mary's new mother calls sacrament meeting. Three older men in suits, white shirts, and ties greet a line of people waiting to enter a large room filled with wooden benches. Mary joins the rest of her new family in line but does not look at the men or shake their hands when she reaches the front. Not just because the men frighten her, but because the

idea of shaking hands as a greeting is intimidating. People don't shake hands with strangers on the reservation. They only touch palms with good friends. Luckily time is short and the men quickly turn their attention elsewhere.

Mary files into one of the front benches with her new family just as the meeting is about to start. They fill the long bench from end to end. An old woman with puffy white hair at the front of the room plays a large wooden instrument. The way her fingers move reminds Mary of Grandmother's fingers working wool through her loom. The younger children immediately pull out coloring books and little bags of corn flakes to entertain themselves.

After a few moments, the three men who stood at the doors greeting the congregation walk up to the front of the room. The congregation's whispering slowly begins to quiet. One of the men, a short, bald man in a black suit and blue tie, steps up to the podium and begins speaking. "Welcome, brothers and sisters. We are pleased to see so many here today. We'd also like to welcome any visitors." He looks directly at Mary, making her heart strike against her rib cage like an attacking rattlesnake.

This same man stops Mary in the hall after the meeting. He gives her a copy of the same book Tom read from in class on Wednesday. "It's yours, Mary," he says smiling. "We're glad to have you with us. I'm Bishop Barlow. Let me know if you need anything, anything at all." He thrusts his hand out and holds it in the air in front of Mary, waiting for her to reach out and take it. She does not. Instead she turns the black book over in her hands. On the spine of the book Mary sees words in gold, but she cannot read them. She is uncomfortable and does not like how the man steps up so close to her and speaks so loudly.

After dinner that evening, Mary's new mother reads from the black book. She explains a little about it to Mary in slow, loud words before they begin, as if Mary is hard of hearing. "This is the Book of Mormon. It's an account of the people in ancient America—your people. You'll probably love learning about their history. The book tells us how to live, and it tells about when the resurrected Savior came to visit the Americas after he died in the old world. We've only just started reading it again as a family. We read from it as often as we can, like the prophet tells us. It's divided into different books that are an account of different times. We're just now getting into the second book."

Each child takes a turn reading a few verses out of the book except

for Mary and the baby, Violet. Even the second to youngest girl, Nancy, who cannot be more than two, repeats the text after her father whispers it into her ear. They read about how a group of people led by a man named Nephi separate themselves from another group of people led by Nephi's wicked brother named Laman.

It seems strange to Mary that this fair-haired, fair-skinned family thinks they know more about her people than she does. She has never heard of the men they are reading about: Nephi, Lehi, Jacob, Laman, Lemuel. They are not Navajo names. There is no mention of First Man or First Woman, the four sacred mountains or the four worlds.

Mary's new brother Greg reads about what God did to the wicked brother Laman and his followers: "And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their in . . . in . . ."

"Iniquity," Mary's new father jumps in when Greg cannot decipher the word.

"Iniquity," he continues, "for behold, they hardened their hearts against him that they became like unto flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them."

Greg looks up from his scriptures. "That's where your dark skin comes from, Mary."

"Hush," Mary's new mother says, her cheeks pinking with mild embarrassment. She looks into Mary's confused face and explains, "This happened a long time ago. It was because of this people's wickedness. It's nothing *you* did exactly, dear."

Mary does not understand why her new mother is acting ashamed for her. Mary's skin color is commonplace on the reservation. Of course there were certain places off the reservation that would not serve Navajos, but that was as much for fear of fleas as skin color. Yes, she has already noticed that her skin is different here. It causes the children at her new school to turn and look at her, the adults to whisper. But she has never thought of it as a mark of wickedness like this book says.

That night while Mary brushes her teeth awkwardly, copying the motion of her new sisters, she remembers the words "exceedingly fair and delightsome." She compares her dark skin to the reflection of her new sisters' light skin in the mirror. Mary's top lip is thicker than her bottom. She has no lines on the smooth plane of her face except for a single shal-

low crease on each eyelid while her sisters have dimpled cheeks, lines under their lower eyelids, and two curves connecting the corners of their mouth to either side of their noses. Mary's nose is longer than theirs, flatter. Her eyebrows are dark, straight lines with only a finger's width between them while one can hardly tell her new sisters have eyebrows at all. Mary's eyes—like polished obsidian in the bathroom's bright light—are nothing like the transparent blue of her new sisters' eyes. Mary's high cheekbones are lost in the child fat of her face, less pronounced than those of her new sisters, yet more dominant. She has such a round face. Like Daddy's face, she realizes. An icy feeling pricks the back of her neck and ears. And she feels a little uncomfortable and confused, wondering if these girls' milky skin *is* something that would belong to her if not for her people's sins. Why did she not look more like Mommy, at least, if not like these girls?

Mary remembers how Mommy tried to act like white people. The way she used to talk about the customs and culture of her parents as outdated. She went by Lily instead of her Navajo nickname, Girl of Slight Form. Mommy said by the time she was fourteen she was wearing red lipstick and short, fitted dresses instead of long flowing skirts like other Navajo women. Mommy hitchhiked to Phoenix every year or so and came back with bags of stylish shoplifted clothes. She called them Betty clothes. "Don't I look like a real Betty in this?" she would ask Mary when she tried something new on.

Mary went to Phoenix with Mommy a couple of times. She helped sneak things out of stores by shoving silk stockings in her underpants, tubes of lipstick in her ratty socks. "Everything in this world belongs to everyone," Mommy explained to Mary. "No one can own anything. Everything should be shared. I help people share their nice things with me. That is the fair way."

It takes Mary a moment on her way to her new bed, but she is still able to recall Mommy's appearance in detail. Her big, brown eyes. Skin that glowed with a golden undertone. She curled her hair, kept it shoulder length unlike the straight, long, windblown locks of other Navajos. Mommy tried to curl Mary's tangled hair once. The black ringlets were straight again within an hour.

Mary runs her tongue over her clean, crooked teeth. Mommy had naturally straight, white teeth—a reservation rarity. "You are the prettiest mother," Mary told her once, reaching out to touch her hair. Mommy

pulled her hand away. Then she told Mary the story of Changing Woman, the lost baby who became *Asdzáán*, the spiritual mother of Navajos. "Changing Woman was constantly becoming new," Mommy said. "So I knew if I was really her daughter, I could change into anything I wanted. Even a Betty."

The only thing Mary remembers about Mommy's appearance that is at all unsettling is her eyebrows, plucked away and painted on in little forged arcs that make her look permanently, unnaturally happy. She thinks of Mommy's long neck, tiny nose, and painted lips, then hangs the pretty conjured image on the wall of her mind and falls asleep gazing at it.

* * *

Mary awakens just after six, immediately alert. Something seems different. The house is strangely still and bright and cold. Safe. The air smells fresh like cold milk. Mary shivers as she pulls back her covers and swings her thin legs over the bed's edge and feels her dark hairs stand at attention to the cold. She heads to the window to discover three weeks of dry November now suffocated in winter. Behind the parted purple curtains, there is half a foot of fresh snow dispersed equally over everything as if it fell as a blanket of bleached wool in one collective thump. Its whiteness is washed silver with the light of a half moon.

Mary tiptoes out of her bedroom, careful not to wake her sisters. She slips out of her pajamas, leaves them in a heap in the kitchen, and slides out the back door. She staggers down the concrete porch steps while bitter bolts of cold shiver up and down her naked body, then pauses for a moment, smiling, as she looks at the backyard transformed. The sun is just beginning to rise over the peaks of Maple Mountain with a hopeful glow of pink and green, outclassing the moonlight with greater glory.

Mary ventures out into the fenced yard and stops near the walnut tree. She bends over and scoops up a handful of snow and starts rubbing it into the goose bumps on her skin. A ritual snow bath. When Mary was too small to scrub herself, Grandmother used to wash her with snow like this to clean her and bring her blessings from the Holy Ones. Mary could never stop shivering. Even when she was old enough to bathe herself, she still hated the coldness.

After her whole body is rubbed red and dripping, Mary stands directly under the walnut tree and showers herself with shards of freezing snow by shaking its branches. She spins—arms open—dancing under the

snowing tree, trying to catch the glinting white flecks on her tongue. Her ear tops, toes, and fingertips burn crimson with cold.

The tree is bigger than Mary's walnut on the reservation. She used to sit under it every morning after completing the age-old childhood custom of running to the sun. The earth seemed alive beneath her, a kind of friend and protector. Mary feels a connection to this tree, too, as if the branches above are reaching to scoop her up and take her back to the sacred land.

After the tree's arms are emptied of their snow, Mary sprints eastward the way she used to on the reservation, with her open arms greeting the new morning sky and its weakening stars. Her lungs suck in icy air and exhale it warm back to the world. And Mary feels for a moment that she is back in the middle of the endless Dinetah instead of on a half-acre plot of patchy, frozen sod. She runs as fast as she did one year before, at first snow, scissoring through the reservation with tiny legs. The sun rising like a bright stringless balloon in the . . .

Thud!

The Jensens' back fence suddenly stops Mary's flight. She clutches a wet wooden post to keep from falling. But she wants to keep running. Until her heart is beating in her thighs and temples. Until her legs buckle under her.

"MARY!" a voice suddenly screams. Mary's heart jumps from the second startle, and she loses her footing. She falls on her bare bottom in the powdery snow and looks up to see her new mother's figure on the back porch. "What are you *do*ing? You're totally *naked*!" Mary is frightened by the shocked stare of her new mother's face as she pulls her pink robe tightly around her body and marches across the yard in her slippers. "Give me your hand," she orders when she arrives at the fence. Mary sits still with her arms wrapped around her body.

"GIVE me your HAND!" There is a hush, just for a moment before Mary sees her new mother's arm raise high above her head. Then a hot burning smack slams onto Mary's cheek. Her new mother draws her hand back and rubs it slowly. Her words come out in a heavy wave, "Mary, I can *only* put up with certain *things*. But this is just . . . out*land*ish! Don't ever let me find you sneaking out of this house alone *ever* again. With or with*out* your clothes on." She takes a deep breath that slows her outburst. "Look. I'm sorry. I don't know what they do on the . . . just don't do it here. Here

we *never* take our clothes off where other people can see us." She looks around to see if any neighbors have witnessed the morning's surprises.

Mary's new mother's face is still flushed and frenzied, but she does not yell when she says again, "Give me your hand." Instead of waiting for a response, she simply grabs Mary's icy palm and leads her into the house and down the hall to the bathroom.

Mary is left standing naked next to the toilet while her new mother disappears for a moment. She returns holding clean white underwear and an outfit under her arm. Mary's hand is rubbing her burning cheek. Her new mother sees this and her eyes soften. "Now, honey," she says warmly, repentantly. "Just climb in the bath and you'll feel much better. I'll have a nice hot breakfast for you when you're finished." She hesitates by the doorway for a moment as if on the border of two worlds, while her pink slippers leak puddles on the floor. Then she walks briskly back to Mary, tenderly kisses the top of her head and rubs a big circle on her back. It is the first time she has shown Mary physical affection. But it is the lingering sting on her cheek from the slap—not the tingle on her scalp from the kiss—that tells Mary this woman really is her mother now.

* * *

"How about a haircut?" Mary's new mother asks cheerfully. Mary has just come home from school and knows her hair is tangled from the harsh January wind at recess. "I think all that hair is getting to be too much for you to take care of." Mary has feared this moment for months. She does not want short bobbed locks like her new sisters but dares not protest. Her new mother spreads sheets of newspaper out on the kitchen floor and sets a chair on top of them. "Sit here." Then she puts a large bowl on Mary's head and quickly cuts around it with the same black scissors from the kitchen drawer she uses to cut fat off chicken and coupons out of magazines.

Snip. A clump of soft darkness falls and curls on the ground. Snip. Another. Mary's eyes fill with tears. Grandmother never cut her hair shorter than her shoulder blades. She would be furious if she saw the growing pile of hair lying on the linoleum like a faceless, dead animal.

The whole thing only takes five minutes. "You're done," Mary's new mother declares, pulling the bowl off her head and dusting a few hair clippings off its rim. Then she looks at Mary, and the slits of her smiling eyes pop open in surprise. "Oh, no."

Mary reaches up to feel the fresh, feathery ends of her hair. She realizes suddenly what went wrong. "The bowl must have tipped or something," Mary's new mother says, pulling each side of Mary's hair to her chin. There is at least three inches difference in their length. "Well. Let me even it out. This will just take a second, dear."

Mary begins breathing rapidly as the scissors circle her head again. How much hair is she going to lose? She wonders if she should have run and hidden before this all began.

But then it is over. Mary's new mother dusts clippings off the scissors, then her hands. Mary nearly gasps when she sees this. She jumps down on her hands and knees and begins frantically gathering up the cut hair off the newspaper. Her new mother laughs. "Just fold it up like this and toss it in the trash," she says pulling the newspaper away from Mary. As she lifts it, some of the hairs fall onto the floor. Mary starts picking them up one at a time. "What are you *do*ing, Mary? Here. Just use the broom. If you don't get every single one, it's okay."

Has she not heard of the *'yee naaldlooshii?* Mary wonders. Skinwalkers. They look like regular people by day, wear dark cloaks at night while doing their dirty work. Their alliances with evil spirits make them tricky foes. If they find Mary's hair, they will work their evil magic on her. Grandmother always told her, after trimming her hair with a knife, "Just one piece of hair overlooked, carried off with the breeze, can mean your destruction."

Mary watches her mother toss the trimmings in the garbage can. Several hairs fall like shredded feathers. But when her new mother says, "Go play while I get dinner ready. I don't need you crawling around my feet," Mary leaves, filled with trepidation.

She goes straight to the bathroom. Staring back at her in the mirror is a girl with a ridiculous bob just below her ears. The girl in the mirror lifts her hand and brushes her fingers across the blunt strands. Their ends turn out in different directions like spliced wires. The girl's hand drops. Her dark eyes are distant and unreadable. But her heart is humming like a frightened desert swallow.

That night Mary hears a dog bark in the distance and is sure the skinwalkers are coming for her. She pulls her blankets up over her head, but the tiny tent's oxygen supply depletes quickly. Mary tries to breathe deeply to make up for it, but her fear has tightened her throat. In. Out.

Destruction. Disharmony. In. Out. She listens for a long time for the skinwalkers.

Finally Mary cannot take it anymore, and she emerges for fresh air. She opens her eyes and looks around. A little moonlight is filtering in through the curtains. Everything seems still outside. It is quiet except for the breathing sounds coming from her sisters' beds. The water heater rumbles and hisses from down the hall. Mary nestles up against the wall and listens for something else.

Maybe they have not found her hair yet. She still has time.

Mary sneaks out of bed, opening the door slowly so the hinges do not squeak. She tiptoes down the hall and into the kitchen where she gets down on her hands and knees, searching for hairs. Her new mother swept after dinner, but there are still a few trimmings against the wall. Mary opens the pantry door and spends several minutes pulling hairs out of the broom. Then she lifts the lid of the garbage can and peers inside. She sighs, her fear returning. Someone has taken the garbage out. How many hairs could have been scattered on the way to the street? Mary considers venturing outside to search for them, but one look out the back window into the cold darkness is enough.

Back in bed, the gathered trimmings now safely hidden in her pillowcase, Mary wonders why the skinwalkers have not come. The rest of her hair could be blown anywhere by now. Then she remembers her new mother's cool oblivion to Mary's horror after the haircut. Maybe skinwalkers do not trouble white people. The idea is comforting. Perhaps her being in the same home as the Jensens is some kind of protection.

But her mind lurches again. What about when she is wandering alone at recess? Or walking home from school? Will the skinwalkers come for her then? How will she ever be safe?

Mary's question is answered the following week in Sunday School. Sister Paulson reads a passage of scripture about the Lamanites. "And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them," she reads. "Wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers. And then shall they rejoice; and their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes; and they shall be a white and a delightsome people."

The other students seem oblivious to the passage, but Mary feels as if a large weight is lifting from her. Lamanites can become white. So maybe if she is good enough, she will turn white. Then the skinwalkers will never

again be a worry. And then, maybe, she can grow roots strong enough to keep from being plucked up and transplanted again.

Mary is not sure what "delightsome" means, but imagines that a delightsome person is someone everyone likes. She would like to be that too. Mary imagines her new mother introducing her to strangers. "This is Mary. Isn't she delightsome?"

Then Sister Paulson's voice interrupts her thoughts. "Why did Heavenly Father take the curse away from these people?"

A girl answers without raising her hand. "Because they stopped acting like their moms and dads." Mary turns and looks at her.

"That's right, Cindy," Sister Paulson says. "They let go of all their old, evil ways."

* * *

Mary is in the bathroom studying her reflection as she has done every night for months. She pulls back her hair, pinches her cheek, squints her eyes. But even under the bright lights, Mary still looks like the darkest person in Utah. Her forehead wrinkles with confusion.

"Mary!" her new father calls from down the hall. "Are you done in there? I'm taking the other kids to get some milk. You can join us." Mary thinks of the rows of candy at the grocer's and excitedly flips off the bathroom light.

They do not stay long. Mary's new father seems anxious to return home. When Mary is about to exit through the store's double glass doors into the early spring air behind her brothers and sisters, a store clerk follows her and taps her on the shoulder. "I don't believe this belongs to you," the clerk says, pulling a bag of M&Ms out of the pocket of Mary's jacket. Mary's new father turns around and frowns.

"Mary?" her new father asks sternly. "Where did you get this? Did you pay for this?" Mary studies the buckles on her shoes.

The clerk thrusts his hands in the pocket of his apron and says, "I saw her take it off the shelf but didn't want to say anything until I saw you leave the store."

"I'm *so* embarrassed," Mary's new father says nervously. "I can promise, though, it *won't* happen again. Mary, say you're sorry." He pauses. "*Mary*, say you're *sorry*." The store clerk looks at Mary with lowered eyebrows. Nearby shoppers have stopped pushing their carts now to stare at

the confrontation. Everyone, even Mary's youngest brothers and sisters, are quiet, waiting.

Finally Mary's new father apologizes for her. "She really is sorry. She's just scared. She's new here and doesn't even speak to *us*." He pats Mary on the back like a disobedient puppy.

When Mary gets home, her new father orders the other children to bed and asks Mary to come in the kitchen. "Mary. What you did was *wrong*. Taking things without paying for them with money is against our Heavenly Father's teachings. I wish you would have apologized. Why is it you still won't speak? You're safe here."

Mary clasps her hands behind her back and looks down. No. She is not safe here. Not yet. Her new father sighs. "Now I hate to do this. I really do. I don't want to hurt you. But I spank the other children when I really need to teach them a lesson. So this is only fair." He takes Mary by the shoulders and pushes her face down over a chair, then rolls up the sleeve of his red flannel shirt, and with a swift smacking sound, spanks her bottom with his large hand.

When he raises his arm to strike again, a memory flashes in Mary's mind of her own daddy, two days after he came home from the war. Mommy was gone. Daddy paced in front of the gold sofa with torn cushions. His thin legs hardly looked up to the task of supporting his thick torso, especially when he was drunk and wobbling. Mary watched him closely. He seemed to have the outside world clinging to him like an odor with his new American accent and swear words, the way he moved quickly, jerking, like an irritated soldier instead of a nice Navajo father. Even his name had changed to Harv, a loose-fitting English nickname for his given name, New Heaven.

"You have no idea!" he yelled at Mary. "No idea about my work in Saipan. You think anybody else notices? Hell, no!" He swatted the air in front of him. "Those stinking codes. Everything in the whole stinking world is written in stinking code. I don't know why they needed me to make it worse. Are you listening? Are you listening to me!"

Then Daddy raised his hand above Mary, but she had not had the sense to do what she does to her new father now. Mary turns and sinks her teeth into the arm holding her down. She bites deep but does not break her new father's skin. She runs.

"Ahhh!" Mary's new father screams just as she darts out the back door. "Oh, Mary! Oh, gosh." Mary looks back over her shoulder long

enough to see the curve of little pink marks she has left on his white forearm.

Mary flies down the steps and across the yard. But before she reaches the back fence, she trips and belly flops on the grass under the walnut tree. She does not cry, but her body is shaking. She remains face down on the ground, like a human star, as if she is trying to stretch her limbs enough to sense the earth's roundness.

Mary opens her mouth to say something, but then closes her lips. She looks up at the kitchen window and shudders. Even though she is alone outdoors, she does not want to go back inside, skinwalkers or not.

After a few minutes, the rapid beating of Mary's heart on the rawhide drum of her chest begins to slow. Or is it her heart at all? For a moment, Mary cannot decipher if the beating is coming from her body or the earth upon which she lies prostrate. Th-thump. Th-thump. Mary breathes in deeply and fills her lungs with as much air as she can. Holds it. The ground inflates against her body and the walnut arms overhead bend lovingly towards her. The ground smells like wet newspaper and is cool where it touches Mary's skin. The pointed tips of grass blades tickle her chin and right ear. Mary exhales, and the land heaves in sync as they rotate together a thousand miles an hour towards sunset. Mary closes her eyes and holds on for the ride, her fingertips curling into the soft soil as if gravity has been momentarily suspended.

The night sky slowly unrolls itself protectively over Mary like a thick sheepskin. She does not turn over to see the emerging stars, but their outreach to earth leaves pinpricks of light on her back, like points on a map. Grandfather said the stars were placed on a blanket and flipped into the sky where they stuck in all the right places—a guide to all the laws one must obey to walk in harmony. Mary wonders if the law of taking things when you have no money is written in the stars and if she failed to read it. How many other laws has she unknowingly broken? The sky must have been rearranged on her trip to Utah, and she will have to relearn it before she can transform like the Lamanites in the Book of Mormon.

Mary's mouth opens again. She moves her lips silently as if priming a pump, then presses out a barely audible prayer. She tries to speak the words the way her new family does when they kneel together. "We ask thee . . . we ask to help me be delightsome. And we ask thee to please keep me safe from skinwalkers until I change." The prayer is addressed to no

one specifically—God, Jesus, or the Holy People. Mary just releases the words like a kite to get tangled in whatever heaven they reach first.

She imagines what it will be like to get her new white skin. Maybe she will crawl out of her brown covering like a rattlesnake out of its scales, leaving behind a delicate sheath to dry in the sun and crackle under the feet of some later wanderer.

Until her skin does change, Mary decides even her new God will not detect a glint of her old, evil Lamanite ways. She will hide them so deep that if a fragment ever emerges, anyone, even Mary herself, will see it as only a confusing puzzle piece from eons ago, bleached anonymous and sifted in the sands of her mind.

Mary rolls onto her back expecting the confusing canon of the Milky Way to greet her. Instead, shining straight above is the moon like a fragment of white shell in a sea of darkening navy. The same moon she was born under. The same moon she gazed at on the reservation while Grandfather sang. Mary tries to push these thoughts out of her consciousness. It is not hard. Hovering in her mind is her new father's disappointed expression from the market, his pale face eclipsing the past.

Mary reaches toward the heavens with her right hand, wanting to pluck the lunar shard from the sky. Silvery moonlight kisses her outstretched hand. She bends and straightens her fingers several times like the accelerated motion of primrose petals opening and closing to days and nights. From wide to tight. Changing from dark to light. Brown to . . .

White. Mary smiles.

Homecomings

Larry Day

At Eastside School in Idaho Falls, they gave us a full hour for lunch; and like most of the kids, I went home each day. Mom always had my lunch ready. I'd gulp it down and then hightail it back to play in the schoolyard until the bell called us back to class.

One noonday, just after I finished eating, I ran out the door. On the sidewalk I almost bumped into a big kid wearing a Western Union Telegraph cap.

We never got telegrams.

"Is this the Martin house?" he said, looking up at the house number.

"Yes."

He shifted his gaze downward. "Is your mama home?"

"Yes."

"Telegram," he said.

I walked back through the house to the kitchen. Mother was standing over the sink, washing the lunch dishes. "I thought you'd gone back to school," she said. "Hurry along now."

I said, "It's Western Union."

A lunch plate plopped back into the dishpan and water splashed onto the drain board.

Mother moved sideways to the kitchen counter and took two deep breaths. She put both hands flat on the counter. It seemed a long time be-

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fore she straightened up. Then she put her arm around my shoulder. We walked to the front door.

"It's a telegram from the War Department, Ma'am." The Western Union kid shifted his weight from one foot to the other and stared at the door frame about two feet above Mom's head.

"How bad is it?"

"Killed or wounded, ma'am," the kid said. "Do you want me to call anybody?"

Pause.

"No. I'll take it."

He handed Mom the yellow envelope and backed away. He turned just in time to avoid falling backward off the porch.

Mom and I stood there and watched him hop on his bike and ride away.

I was almost nine, but I didn't understand exactly what was happening. I knew the Western Union boy was talking about Rob, my older brother. He'd left for boot camp when I was seven and had come home on a furlough before they shipped him overseas. Mom wrote to him every day.

Rob used to read to me. He'd finished *Treasure Island* when he left for boot camp. We read part of *Kidnapped* when he was home on furlough. I still didn't know what happened to David Balfour.

The boy from Western Union pedaled down the street and out of sight. Mom and I moved inside and sat on the couch. Mom took her hand off my shoulder.

She opened the envelope and took out the telegram, but she didn't unfold it.

"Killed or wounded," she said. Mom stared across the room. There was an old upright piano with pictures of the family on top.

She rubbed the telegram between her thumb and forefinger. Then quickly, in one smooth movement, she unfolded the telegram and held it up. I leaned over to see the words printed on the thin strips of paper pasted on the telegram.

"We regret to inform you that your son, Robert Charles Martin, has been wounded in action . . ."

"He's . . . alive. He's alive!" Mom smiled and whispered, "He's alive," about twenty times. Then the joy and relief began to drain from her face.

"Wounded," she said. "What does that mean? Rob's wounded. Where? How bad? Why don't they say more?"

I said, "I don't know."

Mom must have forgotten I was there. She sat up, composed her face and said, "Hon! You're way late getting back to school. Run fast." I walked to the door. "Wait," she called, "I'll write a note for Mrs. Stevenson."

* * *

We learned later that Rob's unit had crossed the Remagen Bridge during the Battle of the Bulge. He'd been fired on and took three bullets in his left arm.

One night several weeks later, the phone rang, and Mom answered. Dad was out doing church work. He was the high priests' group leader for our ward.

"Hello. Yes, we'll accept the charges. Rob? Rob!"

Rob was calling from Bushnell Army Hospital in Brigham City. "I want to talk to him," I said.

"Wait!" she said.

I tried to listen in on the conversation; but as they talked, Mom's voice became very quiet. She hung up the phone and stared at the pictures on the piano. "Rob's in an amputation ward."

I went out and sat on the front steps. After a few minutes, Mom came out and sat beside me. We looked at the night sky.

Mom said, "When he's an old man, he still won't have a hand." Then she cried. After that, Mom wrote to Rob at the hospital, and Rob called home some. Once I heard Mom tell Dad that Rob was having trouble learning how to use his prosthesis. I didn't know what she meant.

* * *

Months later Rob came home from the hospital. It was cold. Mom, Dad, and I shivered outside the Greyhound depot as people got off the bus. The motor rumbled, and a white cloud billowed from the exhaust. A fat woman heaved herself from the bottom step and moved away from the door.

Rob was standing behind her on the second step.

My eyes went immediately to his left arm. His left hand was thrust into the front pocket of his Levis. A short stainless steel rod protruded

above the seam of the pocket. A thin cable, attached to the steel rod, disappeared beneath the sleeve of his denim jacket.

Mom hugged Rob hard. She kissed him, then buried her face in his chest. She just held on.

Rob's right arm was around her, but his left hand was still thrust into the top of his Levi pocket. Then his left arm was around Mom too, and I saw the hook.

I was standing right in front of Dad. I heard a kind of blowing sound like you make when you're trying to warm your hands, but Dad's hands were gripping my shoulders.

A rod, a cable, and a stainless steel hook were part of Rob now.

Mom let go of Rob, and Dad and I hugged him. People got on the bus, the engine roared, and the bus pulled away from the depot.

Mom asked, "Would you like something?"

"I could use a short beer," Rob said, and pulled a pack of cigarettes from the front pocket of his jacket. With his thumb on the opening, he popped up a cigarette and took it between his lips. He replaced the pack and fished a lighter out of his right-hand Levi pocket.

I stared. I had never seen Rob smoke before. As we walked to the car, I kept sneaking guilty peeks at Rob's right hand, holding the cigarette, and his left, stuffed into his Levi pocket. Dad drove. Rob got in the front seat, Mom and I sat in the back. Before we pulled away from the curb, I heard a "scruuutch." Rob had pulled open the ashtray on the dashboard. Nobody had ever used it.

"You've picked up some pretty bad habits, son," said Dad.

"I've been in some pretty bad places, Dad," said Rob.

There was a long pause.

"It's sure to snow by morning," said Dad.

* * *

After he came home, Rob and I slept in surplus army bunk beds out on the closed-in back porch.

When he got up, Rob would put his arm through a leather upper sleeve and insert it into the prosthesis. With a wool sock on it, the stump fit snugly. Rob would put a harness over his head. One side went across his chest and the other across his back. They met under his right armpit like a policeman's shoulder holster. He put his shirt on over the harness.

When Rob flexed his right shoulder muscles, the movement pulled

the cable that ran behind his back and down his arm. That's how he opened the hook. He could hold a matchbook with the hook, extract a match with his other hand, and light a cigarette.

I expected I'd enjoy sleeping on the back porch with Rob. I slept on the top bunk, and he took the bottom, and I hoped he'd tell me about his life.

Rob had lots of girlfriends in those days, and I guess he drank a lot of drinks and smoked a lot of cigarettes, but he didn't tell me anything about it. He went "pub crawling" almost every night, and he slept real late in the morning.

One day we had a Primary lesson on the Word of Wisdom. That night I made an effort to redeem Rob. I took *Kidnapped* to the back porch where he was dressing. He held out his right arm and I buttoned the sleeve for him.

"Stay home and read to me," I said. "Don't go drinking tonight."

Rob looked down at me holding the book. He paused. Then he smiled and mussed my hair.

"I've got to see a man about a dog," he said, and left the house.

* * *

Rob had been a good Mormon boy before he went away to college. My great-grandparents crossed the plains with the Utah pioneers. Mom and Dad had expected Rob to go on a mission. He kept putting it off. Then the war came. Dad blamed the atheist professors up at the U of Idaho for leading Rob astray.

Dad had hoped that, when he got home from the war, Rob would pray and read the scriptures and go to church like he had before he went away. But Rob was different now. He told Dad that life was like a bunch of kids walking through a graveyard at night. Religion was like the kids whistling in the dark trying to keep the ghosts away. When Rob said things like that, Dad just shook his head and turned on the radio.

* * *

Sometimes Rob would take our car when he went pub crawling. Sometimes he'd walk downtown, and occasionally some guys would come by and pick him up. One Friday night Rob took the car and didn't come

home until five in the morning. I woke up when he opened the back door and went into the house.

Rob went to the bathroom. I had to pee. Rob was in there rinsing his hand with cold water. Jagged scratches ran across the back of his hand. His knuckles had been bloodied.

Dad came from the bedroom and stood at the bathroom door. Then he stepped past me and looked closely at Rob's hand.

Dad said, "What does the other guy look like?"

"It wasn't a fight," Rob said.

"Well, it sure looks . . ."

"Dad, I wasn't in a fight. I was driving home from Ammon about 2:00 A.M., and I got a flat tire."

"You walked all the way home from Ammon?"

"No, I drove home, but it took me long time to change the flat."

Dad whispered, "Dear God." It was a prayer, not an oath.

Dad had pictured Rob kneeling on a lonely country road trying to force a jack under the axle of our 1936 Plymouth with one hand, gripping the tire iron, and trying to wrench the lug nuts loose, wrestling the spare tire out of the trunk, and trying to hoist it onto the wheel.

Dad looked away and wiped his eyes on his pajama sleeve. He touched the back of Rob's hand, and went back to the bedroom.

Rob finished washing up a few minutes later and came out to the porch. It was still dark outside.

He hung his prosthesis on a big nail on the wall and slid into his bunk.

"Rob?" I said.

"I'm tired," Rob said. "Let me get some sleep."

I hung over the edge of my bunk so I could see his face. "You used to read to me before."

Rob didn't answer.

"Will you read to me after you wake up? I want to find out what happens in *Kidnapped.*"

No answer.

"Rob, will you read to me when you wake up?"

I heard the springs squeak, and Rob swung his legs over the side of his bunk and stood up. He rested his right arm on my bunk and looked at me. I looked back at him. I started to tear up and turned away. He'd think I was a sissy.

When he spoke, his voice was quiet. There was no ridicule.

"Okay. Here's the deal. If things stay nice and quiet around here and I get some sleep, I'll read to you, all right?"

"This afternoon?" I asked.

"Yes, this afternoon. We'll read *Kidnapped.*"

I lay there staring at the ceiling. Dad got up and left for work. Mom was still asleep.

I drifted off, and then awoke with a start. Mom was on the back porch, opening the door to the basement. I waved frantically at her from my bunk. I put my finger to my lips. She quietly closed the basement door and went back into the kitchen. I climbed down over the back end of the bunk bed and joined her.

"Mom, we have to keep things quiet so Rob can sleep."

"I've got three loads of wash to do, hon," she said.

"Rob had a flat tire last night. He's really tired. When he wakes up he's going to read to me."

"I'll be real quiet, darling," she said.

"But Mom," I said. I began to cry. Mom knelt and hugged me. After a moment, I pulled back from Mom's embrace and drew my forearm across my nose. Mom handed me a hanky from her apron pocket, and I blew.

"I'll start the wash after Rob wakes up," she said. "If I can get the whites washed and hung today, I can finish the rest on Monday."

After breakfast I went outside and patrolled the back yard. About noon I heard the weekly garbage truck. The men were lifting trash cans and banging them on the side of their big dump truck. I ran up the middle of the narrow alley waving my arms. The truck stopped. I walked to the driver's side.

"There's an old lady dying down the block," I lied. "They asked if you could please be as quiet as possible."

One of the men had lifted a garbage can and was about to bang it on the side of the truck to shake the contents loose. Instead he raised it higher and dumped it into the truck without banging it.

"Thank you," I said and put on a pious face. "She's real old and real sick."

It was blessedly quiet. The next-door neighbors weren't making noise for once. Mrs. Chandler wasn't out in the back yard beating her carpet, and Mr. Stevens wasn't working on his old jalopy. Mom and I had lunch, and Rob snored on.

After lunch Mom said, "I'm going to Sister Wilson's house to help her with the Primary children's program. When Dad comes home, tell him I'll be back in time to fix supper."

The house was quiet. At one-thirty I raised the glass door of the tall bookcase in the living room and took out the frayed copy of *Kidnapped.* I carried the book out to the back porch. I sat on the floor with my back against the wall and listened to Rob snore. A couple of times I went back into the house to check the old pendulum clock hanging on the wall in the living room.

At two o'clock I went back out to the porch and stood beside the bunk. Rob was lying on his back. Holding *Kidnapped* in one hand, I touched Rob's shoulder with the other. He snorted, coughed, and turned on his side, away from me. I reached out and shook his shoulder.

"Rob, it's two o'clock," I said.

"Lemme alone," he mumbled.

"It's two o'clock. I kept everyone quiet. You said you'd read to me. It's two o'clock."

Rob turned over and propped himself up on his good elbow. His face was grayish and the black stubble stood out. There was dried slobber on his jaw. His eyes were bloodshot.

"God," he said.

"I kept everyone quiet," I said.

Rob pulled back the covers, swung his legs over the side of the bunk and sat up. He looked at me.

He took *Kidnapped* from my hand.

"Get me a drink of water," he said.

When I came back with the water, Rob was sitting sideways on the bottom bunk with his back against the wall. The book was open. He waved me onto the bunk beside him, and began to read. "'Chapter Twenty-three. We came at last to the foot of an exceeding steep wood . . .'"

* * *

As time passed, Rob gave no indication that he intended to move on. Dad said that it was time for him to make plans for the future, to go back to college. Rob had wanted to be a doctor. Before the war.

I remember their conversations. Dad kept insisting that Rob do something. Rob kept ducking and weaving—trying to avoid a nasty confrontation. Spring came, and with it, the planting season. Idaho Falls is

potato country, but they grow sugar beets in the valley too. It was beet-thinning time. Back in Preston, where we used to live, Rob was the fastest beet thinner in Oneida County.

One morning Rob got up early. Dad was sitting at the kitchen table reading the paper. It was his day off.

"I see they're calling for beet thinners," Dad said.

"How much are they paying?"

Dad told him.

Rob looked at me. "You wanna thin some beets?"

"You bet," I said.

"You've got school," Mom said.

"Let him go," said Dad.

Mom put some sandwiches in Rob's old lunch bucket, and Dad dropped us off at the curb in front of the employment office.

It was after nine o'clock, and no one was there except for a couple of seedy-looking characters lounging against the wall.

At thinning time, farmers drove into town and picked up the good thinners by 7:00 A.M. Even latecomers and the not-so-good thinners were almost always gone by eight.

These two had either arrived very late or were the dregs.

A pickup truck stopped, and the driver looked at the four of us. He leaned out of the truck window.

"You fellas know how to thin beets?" he asked.

"You bet," said the tall seedy guy.

"Yes, sir," said the short one.

Rob had his hook stuck in his front Levi pocket. He didn't say anything. The farmer's eyes followed down from Rob's left shoulder to the stainless steel rod sticking out of his pocket.

"What happened to your hand?"

"It got caught in a wringer," said Rob.

The farmer scowled and looked back at the other two.

"Get in the truck," he said.

The two seedy characters climbed into the back of the pickup.

"How about me?" Rob said. "I'm right-handed."

"You ever thinned beets, city boy?" asked the farmer.

"More than those guys," said Rob.

"What about the kid? I ain't gonna give him a hoe."

"He'll run water to the rest of the crew for free."

The farmer frowned. "Okay, climb in."

We got into the back of the pickup. The two seedy characters were sitting with their backs against the cab. That left the spot near the tailgate for Rob and me. In the middle of the truck bed were some short-handled beet hoes.

As we headed out of town, Rob picked through the hoes, hefting them, and looking at the blades. He selected a hoe and picked up a file that lay among the hoes. Rob put the hoe blade in his hook, held it against the inside of his thigh, and began to file the blade with short, even strokes.

We bounced along gravel roads. After awhile we started to pass beet fields with thinners spread up and down the long rows.

By fall the beets would be thirty inches long and weigh six or eight pounds each. But these beets were small and growing close together. The beet thinners chopped space between each beet. That gave the beets room to grow.

The farmer drove into a yard and stopped.

"Wait here," he said. He trotted to the house and came back with a bucket and a long-handled dipper. He handed the bucket and dipper to me.

"Fill it up over there," he said.

I jumped down and filled the bucket at the pump. Then I climbed over the tailgate and sat next to Rob just as the farmer drove off. We drove on two-track roads until we came to a dead end. Ahead was a big field of beets. The farmer got out and yelled to Rob and the two men.

"Come on. I'll step off your sections. You stay there," he said to me.

I looked at Rob.

"He's going to have you carry water to the other thinners," Rob said. "Just make sure you walk between the rows, and don't step on the beets."

He gripped his hoe and jumped down from the truck. The two other men were already following the farmer, who counted off fifteen rows for each of them.

"That'll keep them busy," he said.

* * *

I ran water to the men in the other fields for an hour or so. The farmer drove up as I was at the pump filling the bucket.

"Let's go see how the latecomers are doing," he said.

I jumped in, and we careened up the narrow track toward the field where Rob and the two seedy characters were working.

As the truck slowed down, I could see that the man nearest the fence was working on the third or fourth row of his section. The short guy, who had the middle section, had thinned about six rows, it looked like. Rob was in the middle of a row a long way over from where he had started. He was working at least ten rows beyond the original fifteen in his section.

The farmer jammed on the brakes, and through the open window I heard him curse a blue streak. He leaped out of the truck and began running across the field toward Rob, shouting, "Stop! Stop, you dumb sumbitch. Stop right where you are. Stop, gawdammmit."

Rob straightened up and turned. The farmer came lumbering up, waving his arms and cursing.

I couldn't hear what they were saying, but the farmer would point toward the rows of beets that lay between where they were standing and where the short guy was working. Then he'd wave his arms. He was yelling right in Rob's face.

Rob raised his hoe. The farmer flinched and stepped back. But Rob just used the hoe to point down the row he was working on.

The farmer turned and started walking back down the row, bending low and examining the beets every few feet. He straightened up, and looked back at Rob. Then he started walking across the field toward Rob's original section. Every couple of rows he'd walk up twenty feet or so, inspecting the beets. Then he'd walk over some more rows and walk down, bending and looking, bending and looking. Finally he reached the beginning of Rob's original section.

The other two thinners had stopped working and were staring. The farmer yelled, "Get the hell back to work."

Rob was back on his row, bent at the waist, his hoe moving rhythmically.

The farmer walked back toward the truck where I was.

"Dammit, boy," he yelled, "Take those men some water."

Then he walked slowly across the field to where Rob was working. Rob straightened up. The farmer took off his hat, and bowed his head. Rob dropped his hoe, and they shook hands.

By the time I got the bucket and dipper out to Rob, he was nearly at the end of the row.

He smiled. "I guess that man had never seen anybody thin beets before," he said, and he took a long drink from the dipper.

POETRY

Carol Took the Call

Henry L. Miles

Al had tethered me to the class of '53,
webbed me to classmates before the web,
invited me back every ten years.

Last summer, at our fiftieth reunion,
Al devoted a wall to our twenty-nine eternal absentees.
Reading the wall, we empathized

with organ recitals of our surgeries and such,
decided to gather next in five,
not ten years.

Chukar calls and darting lizards distract me from Al
as I hike Slate Canyon. In a grove of scrub oak,
I meet two oncoming hikers. One says, *Are we glad*
to see you. They were lost too.

Blackfoot High School 1953: it was 12:58.
I was walking up stairsteps to class,
saw smoke upping behind a cardboard notice on the wall,

saw Brent, Tom, Ray, Orlan, and Al, lurking.
Al whispered, *It has a 20-inch fuse.*
We ran to class; the bell rang; in minutes, a blast echoed.

Fireball (Mr. Ferrin) saw ripped cardboard on the floor,
a burn mark on the wall, no one in the hall, and
discovered no one out of class. Next morning

he saw thirteen surprised faces.
Fireball said, *I don't know how*
but I know you guys did it. I want it stopped.

My friendship with Al was constantly tense:
our parents wanted us alcohol and tobacco free,
Fireball wanted us in school,

the police wanted quiet cars,
bouncers demanded our ID.
It was as if the guardian gods of Blackfoot

unleashed all their bonding forces on us.
Acting surprised, we survived.
Two years after my diplomaless graduation,

I got religion, missionaried, and married.
Thirteen years after his diplomaless graduation,
Al met Joyce, got religion, married her and became a Mormon bishop.

My neighbor asked why I was going to Idaho.
To attend the funeral of an old drinking buddy.
He said, *You drank?*

I hike through Bear Flats, pass a rotting wall—a lean-to of pine logs,
enter the mountain's shadow,
the dusk of tall trees, an eerie space of solitude.

I kneel and feel for the freshness of a boot print,
choose a dim path up a draw of pines and aspens,
sit on a large flat rock,

pull a page of poetry from my shirt pocket.
In primal silence, I say, *Al, I feel you're here,*
and I read him Yehuda Amichai's "Near the Wall of a House."

. . .

And he who was lost like a dog
will be found like a human being
and brought back home again.

. . .

One wintered leaf rustles in a scrub oak tree,
one fork withered and one fork barked.
A pair of crows sports over, caws echo back.

White threads of flora rising up out of mud
at the edge of melting snow,
surprise me.

HENRY MILES was an economic development officer in the Foreign Service, mainly in South America, before retiring into an M.A. program in creative writing at George Mason University, which he completed at Brigham Young University, where Darrell Spencer was his thesis advisor. He has published in *The Wasatch Review International, Touchstones, Irreantum, Inscape,* and *Dialogue.* He and his wife, Carol, have five children and twenty grandchildren.

Old Rodeo Man

Lee Robison

The ground is an absolute, the air lets
you down. The way you leave your bronc sustains
a conspiracy of violence you embrace
the way you mean an oath. Forever.
Without fault forfeit or regret—
a repossession
of what you will never let go, even
when you lose stirrup
grip and (if ever) your life.

Some say God's not in heaven, but
in the fling of self into chaos,
and He's there not to stop
your fall, but to join in
the glory of your need to make every ride—
if often much harder to ground
than bone prefer—always as
close to the whistle as will will provide.

LEE ROBISON lives in Maryland with Kathy, his wife of twenty-seven years. Before Kathy, home was his parents' ranch in Montana.

Brooklyn: City of Churches

Russell Moorehead

At the OTB, men "cross" themselves
as their horses race across TV screens
double-checking their stubs
before dropping them on the floor

At Grace's, women bow their heads
in supplication under hair-dryers
while singing verses to each another
from beauty magazines

At Greenpoint Savings and Trust,
The stevedores pray their paychecks
will last the week, and that the banks
and their backs have a few good years left

At St. Alphonsus, people leave evening Mass
with fingers still warm from lighting candles
and from writing grocery lists in the margins
of the Book of Revelation

RUSSELL MOOREHEAD's poetry first appeared in *Dialogue* in 1993 after being chosen for a New Writers award. He holds an MBA from Brigham Young University and currently manages an e-business division for Estee Lauder Companies. He lives, reads, and writes in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife, Robin Marshall.

My Brother Was Buried Wearing a Red Jacket

Mark Bennion

Walking up to the coffin
(a little larger than a viola case),
I see his jacket lying stiff
as baseball card gum.

Compact, vermilion. I take the thick cloth
in my hands and touch the fake gold
of buttons above the navel and wrists:
swirls of new pennies, video game tokens
beaming.

But a tan smear on the collar,
lint small as sand leaves no smile
for the undertaker. Bulging coat pockets.
Mannequin smell. Cuffs slightly askew.
Wrists white as the skull of Yorick. Hearing
the gravedigger sneeze, I wait

for the culpable thing. All those Sundays
I should have noticed the red dye,
the fuzz clinging to his turtleneck,
Mom's lipstick running down his jaw,

and what should I say of the wool
in his jacket, the lamb bleating there,
nose down and grazing? Each minute
he grows fatter, chews grass
near the side of a road.

My Brother's Bed

To wake up remembering his empty bed
is serene as touching the walls of a cave,
is to believe you can keep that Friday in mind
and heft Galilee on your back.
To hang up the night's smock
and oil the lamp, to see through
a blinding tear is to step outside of a day
and allow whoever knocks on the front door
to visit you in this stone room
you call your life. This place
that returns today and on a Friday ten years hence,
occupied now by a ransomed brother
who makes that room his windowed attic,
his foyer of the sky.

MARK BENNION graduated with an MFA in creative writing from the University of Montana. His work has appeared in *Aethlon, Tailwind,* and *Rhino.* He's married to the stunnng Kristine Karen Rios, and together they have two girls, Elena and Karen.

Scriptum Est

Tom Riley

He read us stories from a book as blank
as a white sky. (He couldn't read the sky,
however.) Words marched forward, rank on rank:
he read us stories from a book as blank
as any deity we'd ceased to thank,
as hard and empty as a raven's eye.
He read us stories from a book as blank
as a white sky. (He couldn't read the sky.)

The Elect

The righteous pagans cursed our easy grace.
We shrugged and smiled and knew salvation well.
Looking our wounded savior in the face,
the righteous pagans cursed our easy grace.
We strolled away—a calm, unhurried pace—
and were pleased when we heard their fury swell.
The righteous pagans cursed our easy grace?
We shrugged and smiled—and knew salvation well.

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Triple A's

He himself is the present he is wrapping
under the starlit branches of the sky.
This, of course, is a truth that needs no trapping:
it is apparent to the naked eye.
Only the clever and the doubly sly
can figure ways around this solid fact.
Most of the rest of us don't even try:
that blinding star we dare not counteract.
But with the truth we make a subtle pact:
acceptance doesn't mean acceptance—quite.
We have believed: now can't the truth show tact?
Why must that one star shed such piercing light?
Why can't Incarnate God leave us at ease?
Why can't his stars be run on batteries?

TOM RILEY teaches literature and languages at Trinity Grammar and Prep in Napa, California. He is the author of *A Beautiful Lie*, available in e-book format at http//www.newformalist.com/ebooks/riley.html.

The Orchid Grower

(Clinton F. Larson, 1919–94)

Patricia Gunter Karamesines

Clinton F. Larson's use of the "baroque style," a style he said he intended to "reveal the sinew of intellectual accuracy and proportion, besides spiritual elevation," imbued his poetry with a level of difficulty that perhaps placed his meanings beyond the reach of general audiences. Yet as a BYU professor he influenced many who count him as the spiritual father of their literary strivings, the author of this poem among them.

He sought to grow rare orchids up bright air
On theory they were closer to the sun.
Such trailing gardens of the blue compare
To virga with refractions overrun.
And since these curious blossoms manifest
Some edgeless artifice their vines conceal,
All fanciers must their clayey stuff divest
To see what Sol his tropic buds congeal.
His mazes trellis on the light's pure ease,
Where petals, nearly colorless from glare,
Distill all hours estranged eternities
That tease the tethered eye's myopic stare.
Such speeches of flower to heaven's plots aspire,
Bind root twixt worlds and hang exotic fire.

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. She has also published a folk-mystery novel, *The Pictograph Murders* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004).

Churchgoers

Shelley Grose

My brother dumps raw
sugar into his
mouth from a small
plastic tube he hides
in his pocket. Dad's singing
can be heard
even in the front row. I
stare at the Cheerio
on the floor and wonder
if it would be
safe to eat. Church
carpet is holy
so it must not
have germs. Worried
that my mom will
see, I
leave it there.

The clock hands climb
slowly uphill, they drag
like my tired
eyes and my dad's
tired eyes. I nudge
him awake. Next week
I will sit on
the end, suck sugar,
eat holy
Cheerios, and nap outside
of my mother's
view. But this week Stephen beats
me to the end and I,
the smallest, am stuck
between my parents. Her
eyes pinching me reverent. His eyes
unopened, dreaming
until it is
time to sing.

SHELLEY GROSE is finishing a degree in English at Utah Valley State College in Orem. Along with writing poetry and prose, she is a knitting instructor and enjoys traveling, gardening, and cooking.

Faith Healing

Michael Hicks

And there she was, Kathryn Kuhlman* strolling the stage at the Civic,
parting a sea of applause, her gown like an angel that got away,
so pure it might have been empty but for the Holy Ghost preening
in her body as she paced the floral proscenium, lifting her hands
in a sign language I knew only God understood.

Sinners ascended on heavy legs, a janitor, a waitress, then more,
stark and drooping till Kathryn said the word and illness stripped
from their bones like skin from an apple and clean praise ran
from our mouths, the aisles breaking into dance jagged as levees
in a storm washing us down to Jesus' enormous boat.

It was the night she became the miracle I believed in the way a bird
believes in air and branches, all the premises of life and limb.
She was open windows blowing in my blood, a lake of promises
you might only reach by falling into them.

That summer I lived in my father's trailer, slept on a fold-out bed
beside a line of rustler boots, the allemande left and "Oh, Johnny, Oh!"
being the stray passions he took up with wife number three, who cajoled
me one night into coming to a regional square dance where I sneaked
out with a blonde freshman who was ditching her mom.

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*An American evangelist who held massive healing services throughout the West, mainly California.

We wandered through porchlights, her cheeks perfect crescents
under the slouching moon, sky crossing its legs all around us, her chest
sloping in white angora, a silver cross playing in her fingers, grace raining
from the stars, our words and the quiet between them as balanced
as planets, a private equinox we presumed to live in a two-hour walk.

And there I was, at fourteen, wondering if she and this sentiment
would apportion the shape of my life from then on. They might have
—who knows—but for her mom waiting, arms crossed, at the double doors
and my dad with a broken boot-heel, sitting out the late dances,
cursing and drinking black coffee from a thermos.

That night,
fifteen miles from the Civic, the shadows let go of my shoulders
and the angels settled in my eyes, a gauze I could barely see through,
and everything I knew went up in a cloud of hope, which seemed
the world's way of relinquishing the thought that I should ever die.

Family Tree

Adam: The wind hissed
in the branches,
green tongues
whispering
a secret I could
never peel open.

Moses: When I raised my staff
the sea split like a log
opening its chapters
into a story
a whole nation could
walk through.

Elijah: Ravens gathered berries
and dropped them
into my mouth
as if to plant
their dark cries
in my voice.

Jesus: Come closer.
Taste the wood,
feel it splinter
your tongue
into praise.

Joseph Smith: I bowed my head
onto a stump,
as if to a martyr's axe
and when I looked up
I saw the whole grove
burning down.

MICHAEL HICKS is a professor of music at Brigham Young University. Author of three books and many published articles and poems, he also writes avant-garde chamber music.

REVIEWS

Between Suicide and Celibacy

Fred and Marilyn Matis and Ty Mansfield, *In Quiet Desperation: Understanding the Challenge of Same-Gender Attraction* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 270 pp.

Reviewed by Robert A. Rees, co-author of A Guide for Latter-day Saint Families Dealing with Homosexual Attraction *(2002)*

It is difficult to know how to review this book, which is really two books loosely connected, although both deal with homosexuality and both share similar points of view. The first and shorter part is written by Marilyn Matis, the mother of Stuart Matis, a Latter-day Saint who committed suicide in 1992 on the doorstep of the LDS stake center in Los Altos, California. The second part of the book was written by a young, gay, Latter-day Saint man who has chosen to remain celibate for the duration of his life. Suicide and celibacy represent two dramatically divergent responses to the challenge of being homosexual in a religious culture that does not permit homosexual bonding or expression.

The title and cover of the book suggest something about the ambiguous nature of these two treatments of homosexuality. *In Quiet Desperation* seems an unapt title for a book that includes responses to homosexuality that call for attitudes and behaviors that are the opposite of desperation—honest, open acknowledgment of same-gender attraction, including courageous acceptance of the restrictions placed on expressions of homosexuality within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The title, which comes from Thoreau's *Walden* ("The mass of men live lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation"), actually relates to a section of Ty Mansfield's narrative in which he associates desperation with those who live openly homosexual lives, and yet I believe it relates ironically to both parts of this book as well, for Stuart Matis's decision to take his own life was clearly a desperate act (his mother calls it his "last desperate act" [40]), and Ty Mansfield's commitment, as he expresses it in these pages, although countered by what he terms "quiet inspiration," ultimately could also be seen as desperate, an attempt to suppress all desires for romantic and erotic expression.

The ambiguity of the title is also seen in the cover illustration in which the title is placed across the eyes of a decidedly handsome young man in a way that suggests a blindfold. A more apt title would have been "In Quiet Acceptance," with the person in the photo looking confidently at the reader.

There is a disconnect in these pages that ought not to be ignored—the conflict between a spiritual ideal, expressed in the words from a prefatory statement entitled "The Refiner's Fire," by an anonymous writer that "Our trials do not

come at random, and he [God] will not let us be tested beyond what we can endure," and the story of Stuart Matis who apparently *was* tested beyond what he could endure. It is also expressed in Ty Mansfield's quotation from Elder Neal A. Maxwell that "Saints reach breaking points without breaking" (129).

When I met Stuart Matis some months before his death I was impressed that, as I stated in a memorial piece dedicated to him,[1] he was an example of the finest that Mormonism produces, a true Latter-day Saint (a friend described him as "a Christlike leader" [37]). It was also evident that he was nearing the breaking point in his attempt to reconcile his homosexuality with his religion when, during our meeting, he spoke of his self-destructive impulses. He reached that breaking point just a few months later when he took his life. The sometimes intense homophobia one encounters in LDS culture and in American society in general, coupled with a quest to live a saintly life, can prove fatal, as it did for Stuart Matis and far too many other LDS homosexuals.

Part 1, "A Parent's Spiritual Journey toward Understanding," was written by Marilyn Matis, Stuart's mother, even though both she and her husband are listed as authors. Their story is a familiar one to those who know something of the history of homosexuality in the Church over the past three or four decades when it became increasingly acceptable to acknowledge at least the reality of "the love that dare not speak its name," if not the name itself.[2]

Like the parents of many Latter-day Saint homosexuals, the Matises went through an arc of confusion, denial, embarrassment, and finally acceptance of their son's homosexuality, which included their courage to face the challenges of having a gay son in a church and culture basically hostile to homosexuals. The story they tell about their son is also a familiar account of the arc that is, unfortunately, characteristic of too many Latter-day Saint homosexuals: denial, repres-

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1. "Requiem for a Gay Mormon: In Honor of Henry Stewart Matis," (www.beliefnet.com); also see my "'In a Dark Time the Eye Begins to See': Personal Reflections on Homosexuality among the Mormons at the Beginning of a New Millennium," available at the Family Fellowship website: http://www.ldsfamilyfellowship.org/resources.htm.

2. Semantics and homosexuality are a subject apart. What seems strange is the reluctance (perhaps even fear) some Mormons have of using the term "homosexual," let alone "gay" and "lesbian." Marilyn Matis reflects a common point of view when she states, "We have come to the conclusion that it is unwise for them [homosexuals] to refer to themselves as *being homosexual* or *being gay.* Fred and I feel that the terms *homosexual* and *gay* are negative labels that people use to *define them[selves]*" 43–44; emphasis hers). In my opinion, if "heterosexual," as opposed to "opposite-gender attraction" and "straight," is acceptable, then "homosexual" and "gay" and "lesbian" should also be.

sion, acknowledgment, sustained and desperate attempts to change one's orientation, vacillation between the impulse to express homosexual feelings and the desire to conform to Church standards, feeling unaccepted by the Church or loved of God, and finally abandoning all hope of finding a peaceful resolution in mortality.

To lose a child to suicide is among the most devastating experiences of parenthood, especially when parents feel the futility of doing all they can to prevent the suicide, yet not being powerful enough to counter all of the forces that lead to it. Unlike many LDS homosexuals who take their own lives, Stuart was blessed with loving parents who were trying to help him find some way out of the labyrinth in which he felt trapped.

The Matises are clearly people of faith, and their commitment to the Church is unwavering. Marilyn Matis reveals that she "called twenty temples across the United States every two weeks to put [Stuart's] name on the prayer rolls" (11). Her son also prayed often and fervently to be free of the burden he felt his homosexuality placed upon him. A couple of years before Stuart committed suicide, he informed her that he had purchased a gun. She was unable to dissuade him from attempting to take his life, yet she was sustained spiritually through this period by the "great feeling of peace" (14) both she and her husband felt. Later in the temple Stuart's father received a personal revelation, a "strong impression not to worry about Stuart, because he would be all right" (18).

In light of Stuart's continuing decline into deep depression and ultimate suicide, it is difficult to know how to interpret such impressions, especially in the face of what Stuart himself reveals about his emotional state during his last months. In the letter he wrote to his parents the night before he took his life, he said, "My life was actually killed long ago. . . . I simply could not live another day choking on my own feelings of inferiority. For the first time in over twenty years I am free from my pains" (19).

It is a terrible indictment of our attitudes toward and treatment of homosexuals that for some suicide is seen as the only avenue to peace. Unfortunately, there are still some Mormon parents who believe that it is better for a child to commit suicide than to commit sexual sin. What the Lord said regarding the saying, "The fathers have eaten grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer. 31:29), is appropriate for such belief: "As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For every living soul belongs to me" (Ezek 18:1–4). To idealize any suicide as acceptable not only sets a dangerous precedent but also manifests a fundamental misunderstanding of the gospel.

Yet there seem to be some sentiments that affirm suicides like that of Stuart Matis. In his essay on suicide, the philosopher William H. Gass observes, "It was dangerous for Donne to suggest that suicide was sometimes not a sin. It was still daring for Hume to reason that it was sometimes not a crime. Later one had to

point out that it was sometimes not simply a sickness of the soul. Now it seems necessary to argue that it is sometimes not a virtue."[3]

It was in this last letter that Stuart expressed the hope that somehow his parents could turn the tragedy of his life into something positive: "Perhaps your action to help others understand the true nature of homosexuality might help to save many young people's lives" (19). The Matises have taken their son's desire as a mission and have (along with others) successfully petitioned the Church to change some of the language about homosexuality in at least one publication ("For the Strength of Youth"), have shared their experience openly with other families, and have counseled a number of young Latter-day Saints who are wrestling with this issue. Instead of despairing over their son's death, they have worked arduously to prevent similar deaths.

Perhaps the most positive contributions Marilyn Matis makes are her acknowledgment of the complexity of same-gender attraction—"Until we have a definitive understanding of what causes same-gender attraction, all therapy becomes a guessing game" (10)[4]—and her modeling for other LDS families to be open in their discussion of homosexuality. It certainly took boldness on the Matises' part to take the declarative position that homosexuality is not a choice and that, at least for the majority, is not changeable. The importance of this contribution cannot be overestimated in Mormon culture where the orthodox (and most commonly believed) position is that homosexuality is chosen and changeable.

I believe that Stuart took his life because, in spite of the unwavering love and support of his parents and his own sustained heroic efforts to prove to himself otherwise, he felt abandoned by both God and the Church. This is evidenced not only by statements he made during his conversations with me ("If God loves me, why hasn't he answered my prayers that he change me?") but also by two symbolic statements he made at the end of his life. The first took place a few weeks before he took his life when he placed his scriptures outside his bedroom door. His mother writes, "Stuart's scriptures in the hallway told me that he had completely given up fighting his anxiety and depression" (20). The second symbolic act was an ultimate one. He deliberately chose as the site of his suicide the front steps of an LDS stake center. Stuart was a bright person and I am certain that, in spite of his troubled state of mind, he intended these dramatic, symbolic statements as an indictment of a Church culture which he found destructive to himself and his fellow homosexuals.

The most heartbreaking part of Marilyn Matis's account of her family's com-

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3. William H. Gass, "The Doomed in Their Sinking," *The World Within the Word* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1976), 5.

4. It should be acknowledged that some therapeutic approaches, especially those that do not focus on reparation and which honor individual choice, have proved more effective.

ing to terms with their son's homosexuality is her portrayal of his state of mind, especially the first time Stuart went to therapy with his parents. She quotes Stuart as saying, "The reason I have never told you I love you is that I haven't allowed myself to express feelings for anyone" (12). This is an astonishing statement. It reveals a person who is striving so earnestly to control his emotions, so fearful of controlling his same-sex feelings, that he can't allow even the most normal of affectionate expressions.

I couldn't help wondering as I thought about Stuart how negatively he might now be viewed if, instead of taking his life in a desperate attempt to end his pain and suffering, he had instead chosen to live in a committed, monogamous same-sex relationship and was a productive, contributing member of society. Stuart truly was an outstanding man, and I have no doubt that he would have done enormous good had he been capable of choosing life instead of death. In his more coherent moods, he did consider such a choice as he revealed during our meeting and which he said was encouraged by one of his ecclesiastical leaders. During our meeting he told me that he had met someone to whom he was seriously attracted and that he wished for a permanent, loving relationship. Although his mother said Stuart "never made such a statement" (26), my remembrance of our conversation is quite vivid.

Most of us look for fulfillment in another person. Co-author Ty Mansfield suggests that for him, such fulfillment is found in Christ: "We should not look for someone who completes us as only Christ can" (212–13). But for most of us, these are not mutually exclusive desires or choices. We can and do seek spiritual fulfillment in Christ and social, emotional, and physical fulfillment in a loving relationship with another human being.

Mansfield's section of the book, "A Young Person's Search for Purpose and Peace," is an articulate, confident, even passionate argument in favor of celibacy for Latter-day Saint homosexuals. Mansfield devotes nearly two hundred pages to laying out the rationale for his position, marshalling scriptures (of which he demonstrates a deep understanding), and copiously quoting General Authorities and others in support of his argument. In many ways, it is an impressive statement, not the least because Mansfield lays bare his own soul in making it. He does not flinch from the challenge this represents. While acknowledging that it will take a "miracle" for him to succeed, he also affirms: "I am a living miracle. . . . I am a miracle of God" (89).

Obviously such a choice requires an ultimate commitment. It isn't that it is impossible for one to make oneself a "eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt. 19:12), but the demands of doing so require a heroic sacrifice of so much that we tend to associate with being fully human that, realistically, few are able to achieve it. I don't by any means disparage the wish to try to live such a life, but to do so in the absence of a religious philosophy that elevates celibacy to a high order

of spiritual living (which the Mormon Church has never done) or a social and spiritual community that supports and rewards it (as Catholics and a few other religious orders do), is, to say the least, extremely challenging. If one could withdraw from the world with its "cauldron of unholy loves" to a cloistered world where, to use Gerard Manley Hopkins's lines, "no storms come," where "springs not fail,/ [and there] flies no sharp and sided hail," and find deep fellowship with other celibates, celibacy would be a more realistic alternative. However, the serious problem the Catholic Church is currently facing over many priests' inability to sustain celibacy reveals that, even with a strong support system, it does not seem to be a realistic life choice for the majority of homosexuals—or heterosexuals. It is one thing to live a life of pure holiness in a cloistered world (such as that exemplified by the fourteenth-century German monk Thomas à Kempis in his *The Imitation of Christ*), but it is far more difficult to do so in a culture in which one tries to maintain one's erotic poise while confronted daily with a thousand images of desire.

Mansfield acknowledges the tension in his own life between the real and the ideal: "I approach it [same-gender attraction] as one who has felt the feelings of being torn between an ideal belief system and the reality of experiencing longings that make the thought of conforming to that system almost unbearable at times" (72). In another place he states, "It has been difficult for me . . . a challenge that often seems impossible to bear and remain faithful" (107).

Mansfield's text reveals a clear Calvinistic rhetoric. He speaks of our being "less than the dust of the earth" (188). He emphasizes our fallen natures: "We live in fallen, mortal bodies in a fallen society in a fallen world" (73). He goes so far as to suggest that homosexuality itself is "simply the fruit of living in a fallen world" (98). Extending this idea, he quotes theologian Richard Hays as arguing that "Paul's choice of homosexuality as an illustration of human depravity is not merely random: it serves his rhetorical purposes by providing a vivid image of humanity's primal rejection of the sovereignty of God the creator" (168). Mansfield adds, "Paul uses homosexual sin as a type for all sexual sin because it clearly contrasts the creative power of God with the noncreative sin of homosexual actions" (170). But the creative/noncreative argument is weakened by the fact that 99 percent of heterosexual intercourse is also noncreative—i.e., is not intended to produce children. Such rhetoric and appeal to biblical sources tend to reinforce the images of depravity that society traditionally has associated with homosexuality.

Mansfield is ambiguous and perhaps even contradictory when it comes to the matter of marriage. While acknowledging that "marriage should most certainly not be viewed as a 'cure' for same-gender attraction" (207), he also believes

"that the idea of marriage should [not] be entirely abandoned" (207).[5] In spite of his own complete lack of bonding to women, he still holds out the possibility that he might be able to marry in the future. Particularly problematic is his statement, "I have come to feel that to love another person completely has little to do with our sexual orientation but rather entirely to do with our hearts and our commitment to our spouse and to Christ—regardless of the nature of our attraction" (209). He bolsters his argument by quoting from a letter from a woman married to a gay man: "As long as my husband is committed to the Lord and me, I don't care if he has feelings of attraction to other men" (209). Unfortunately, a long string of broken hearts and broken families is among the results of such a belief.

Mansfield shows a certain naivete when it comes to sex in marriage, which is understandable since he has never been married. He states, "Though the physical expression of intimate love between married couples is not solely for the purpose of creation, those sacred powers—*and all expressions of them*—must be viewed with reverence" (170; emphasis mine). He further argues that "when we use those powers in any form that is self-serving—whether married or unmarried or with another person or singly—we are abusing that sacred gift and must repent" (170). Most married couples recognize that sometimes sexual desire is self-serving and that sexual expression is often viewed more as pleasurable than sacred. Sexual expression in marriage tends to run the gamut from the spiritual to the comic. Eventually, it simply takes its place along with a variety of other experiences that make for a healthy marriage.

One of the most significant conclusions from both authors is that, as a Church and culture, we all bear a responsibility for the deaths and disaffection that characterize the lives of many of our homosexual brothers and sisters. Marilyn Matis asks, "When will the suicides stop? When will we, as members of Christ's church, begin to realize the pain that so many young men and women experience because of the challenge of same-gender attraction?" (45).

It is important to recognize that the anguish and despair homosexuals experience is less related to their orientation than to the way our culture responds to them because of their orientation. The homophobia in Mormon culture is

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5. The issue is complicated by the fact that the risk of marriage is different for homosexuals than it is for bisexuals. The latter tend to have greater success in bonding with partners of the opposite sex, although the risks of marriage are still great since their same-sex attraction persists. What is especially tragic is that many young women marry homosexuals believing (because they have been told so) that marriage will change their spouse, only to find that it does not. They then are faced with the choice of trying to stay in the marriage at the cost of their own needs for intimate nurturing or terminating the marriage, an extremely difficult choice in a religious culture that tends to see divorce as a significant failure.

real and it is deep. In a letter to the BYU *Daily Universe* written not long before his death, Stuart Matis wrote that his own "internalized homophobia, immense self-hatred, depression and suicidal thoughts" were directly related to the kind of sentiments expressed in an earlier letter to the editor that "equated my gay friends and me to murderers, Satanists, prostitutes, pedophiles, and partakers of bestiality." He adds, "Imagine having to live with this hateful rhetoric constantly being spewed at you" (37).

The responsibility for the negative attitudes toward and treatment of homosexuals is shared by all of us—General Authorities, local and regional ecclesiastical leaders, family and friends, and lay members alike. It is also shared by many in the LDS therapeutic community which, to some degree, has not served Mormon homosexuals well by doggedly persisting in emphasizing reparative or change therapy, by encouraging homosexuals to marry, by marginalizing therapists who have taken a broader view of homosexuality, by simplifying the issue in not recognizing the range of sexual attraction, and by attempting to control the dialogue about treatment. Many homosexuals report finding standard treatment by LDS Family Services therapists not only unhelpful, but counterproductive, and in some instances even destructive. The Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists (AMCAP) has seemed particularly resistant to any challenge to the standard position. There are, of course, examples of courageous therapists who have been willing to consider different points of view and employ alternate therapeutic treatment.

Church leaders also bear a special responsibility for the climate in which homosexuals are regarded in the Church. While it is an extreme example of the failure of such leadership, I recount the following experience of a friend who, many years ago, prior to his mission, felt it important to tell a General Authority about his same-sex attraction. He went to the Church Administration Building and was sent to see a particular General Authority. That man, without stopping the work he was doing at his desk and without even looking up at my friend, said, "Elder, I wish you were coming in here to tell me you were dying of cancer [rather] than that you are homosexual."

Fortunately, such attitudes are changing. On December 26, 2004, when Larry King asked President Hinckley whether homosexuality was an inherited or a chosen condition, Hinckley replied: "I don't know. I'm not an expert on these things. I don't pretend to be an expert on these things." President Hinckley and Elder Oaks have both counseled homosexuals against consider-

ing marriage as a solution to their same-sex attraction.[6] Such attitudes suggest that all of us need to be humble in the face of what we do not know about homosexuality or what we do not understand about how to deal with it. It also suggests that we should not be so dogmatic in our proclamations or so unquestioning in our attitudes that we surrender our responsibility as individuals to be as intellectually and spiritually informed as we can be.

It is important in this as in other matters that we do not equate all criticism of the Church and its leaders with "evil speaking of the Lord's anointed," or all challenges to conventional thinking as "murmuring" and "fault-finding," or respectful disagreement as unfaithful heresy. Mansfield seems to suggest that we accept official pronouncements and attitudes unquestioningly. I agree with President George Q. Cannon (as quoted by Mansfield) that God alone will judge the General Authorities: "He claims it as his prerogative to condemn them, if they need condemnation. He has not given it to us individually to censure or condemn them" (204). However, I also believe that God will hold us as individuals accountable if we do not humbly and respectfully challenge thinking and even policies and practices when, in our opinion, they are destructive to his children.

Mansfield says, "Even though we have all covenanted to mourn for [sic] and comfort and be the saviors of men for each other, the kingdom of God is a kingdom of order, and those who have stewardship over us—primarily our parents and ecclesiastical leaders—should be our first line of resource for guidance and counsel" (236). Later, he quotes President Cannon as stating, "Your bishop will have all the wisdom needed to give you the counsel you require" (239).

My experience over the past several decades in counseling with a number of LDS homosexuals is to be more cautious. While many families and Church leaders are wise and compassionate in these matters, far too many homosexuals have experienced condemnation, rejection, and hostility from family members and from bishops and stake presidents. One Latter-day Saint couple whom I know has been forbidden from attending annual extended family gatherings by the family patriarch (who is a bishop) because they have a gay son.

In Quiet Desperation seems to offer little acceptable choice between Stuart Matis's suicide and Ty Mansfield's celibacy. In a way this seems strange in a Church that historically has rejected both options. That is, suicide traditionally has been considered a major transgression, and celibacy (certainly as it has been practiced by Catholic priests) disparaged as a conscious life choice. The historic encouragement that LDS homosexuals marry is evidence of the rejection of celibacy. The fact remains that most Latter-day Saint homosexuals do not find either suicide or celibacy acceptable choices. Most choose a place somewhere in be-

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6. Dallin H. Oaks, "Same Gender Attraction," *Ensign*, October 1995, 13, quotes President Hinckley's statement on this topic and reinforces it.

tween, a choice accompanied, despite accusations of their "selfishness," by great anguish of soul and their personal sacrifice of intimate involvement in the life of the Church and often of closeness to their families.

From discussions I have had with many homosexuals over the years, I know that not a few are broken-hearted over the Church's estrangement from them. And while some have found fellowship in more gay-friendly churches, many homosexuals remain so deeply connected to Mormonism that they can't find satisfactory fellowship in any other faith tradition. This represents a loss for them and, to my mind, a significant loss for the Church as well.

Both parts of *In Quiet Desperation* reveal a quest for perfection. What emerges from these pages is a portrait of a good man, Stuart Matis, who was tortured by his desire to prove to God and others that his homosexuality did not disqualify him from their approval or their love. His fear that he somehow would not be acceptable to his family and church motivated him to try and live as perfect a life as possible. This quest for perfection may have coincided with his earliest awareness that he was attracted to other males (by his account, when he was seven years old), for his father reports one of Stuart's Sunday School teachers telling him to tell his son that he didn't have to be perfect. Marilyn Matis writes, "Stuart's entire life was spent striving for perfection. He reasoned that if he were perfect, he would find God's approval" (9). Such striving for perfection exacts a cost, for as his mother writes, "The harder Stuart strove for perfection, the more he hated himself" (9).

Stuart Matis's life was so intensely focused on perfection that, ultimately, he could not sustain the stress of trying to live such a life. While Ty Mansfield does not specifically address the idea of perfection, the life of sanctified devotion and sacrifice that he articulates as the ideal for Latter-day Saint homosexuals seems to require an almost perfect adherence to the highest standard of Christian behavior, a standard which, by the way, those who treat homosexuals as less than fully human fail to reach! The irony, of course, is that it was striving to live Mansfield's recommended life—strict, sanctified, and celibate—that drove Stuart Matis (and not a few other Mormon homosexuals) to commit suicide. One hopes for a different outcome for Mansfield, not only because he seems so dedicated to achieving it, but because the success of such a devoted, committed Latter-day Saint may give hope to those homosexuals who wish to stay within the fold of the Church.

What is clear to me is that, as a church and as individuals, we must do everything we can to prevent the conditions that lead people like Stuart Matis to take their own lives. At the same time, we must give moral support to those who, like Ty Mansfield, are committed to a life of celibacy. And, we must continue to love and support those who find neither suicide nor celibacy the answer to their homosexuality.

The Un-Hagiography

Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), 544 pp.

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The term "hagiography" refers to writings indicating that an individual is worthy of sainthood. Chiefly produced by Catholics during the Middle Ages, hagiography takes many forms. The most common is the vitae—biographies that document the saintly miracles their subjects performed and the love their subjects inspired in all the good people they met. Mormons don't really need hagiography, since everyone is—theoretically—a saint already, but Mormon biographers have produced fine examples of hagiographic vitae recently. Most biographies of General Authorities published for a mainstream LDS audience strive to document their subject's worthiness to be seen as the Lord's anointed. While serious historians or cultural critics may not enjoy these books, they serve the needs of their audiences well. After all, people who already believe that, say, Gordon B. Hinckley is the only person on Earth authorized to speak for God want to read a life story that presents him in as saintly a light as possible.

Given this popular genre, it is difficult to write an intellectually responsible biography of an LDS General Authority that would also be commercially viable in the LDS market. If the work evidences too much kinship with its hagiographic cousins, it will be dismissed by serious thinkers within and outside of the Church. If the work is too critical or reveals too many of the subject's human failings, the author risks alienating a relatively large potential audience.

This is the rhetorical tightrope Wm. Robert Wright and Gregory A. Prince walk in *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*. An account of McKay's tenure as president of the Church from 1951 to 1970, it deals with a time of rapid growth and an increasing, albeit controversial, national and international reputation for the LDS Church. A close look at the administration of a Church president during such times necessarily reveals decisions made and opinions held that would, if exposed, create a less than flattering portrait. But instead of glossing over controversial information or adopting the shrill tone of exposé, Prince and Wright employ argumentative strategies that allow the biography to appear both faithful and intellectually honest, both hagiographic and probing. While this combination may strike some as an impossible contradiction, the biographers have come close to realizing their vision and have crafted a biography of an LDS prophet accessible to as broad an audience as possible.

Before examining its rhetorical project, however, *David O. McKay and the Rise*

of Modern Mormonism deserves to be evaluated for its contribution to Mormon historiography. As a synthesis of previously unavailable primary documents and original interviews, this book is impressive. It is the first distillation of the extensive papers kept by Clare Middlemiss, McKay's personal secretary and Wright's aunt. These papers, which were in Wright's possession and have since been donated to the University of Utah, consist of 40,000 typescript pages of diary entries and 10,000 pages of transcripts of addresses given by McKay. Of further interest are more than two hundred interviews that the authors conducted with people who worked with McKay during his presidency. Strikingly, these interviewees include Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, and Boyd K. Packer. With this magisterial assembly of previously untouched primary source material, it would be difficult not to produce an interesting volume. The biographers' careful synthesis of their data has surpassed the imposing nature of their material, however, producing the most complete portrait yet of McKay's presidency. That said, however, we must remember that this is a very carefully painted portrait.

Of course, Prince and Wright's rhetorical structure will not work if it is made explicit, and they wisely choose to present themselves as faithful Latter-day Saints who happen to be writing a rigorous, scholarly biography. According to Wright, faithful Mormons should not be concerned about their decision to "scrutiniz[e] the details of a prophet's life" because meticulous research revealed that McKay "impressed . . . greatness on all he met" (xi). Prince affirms that their research "has been enormously faith-promoting" (xviii) but also suggests an inclusiveness that is usually lacking in the typical LDS hagiography. According to Prince, he and Wright "have taken pains to tell the story of David O. McKay with sufficient care and context to take what we hope will be a broad spectrum of readers to a position of comfort with 'things as they were'" (xviii). In other words, they address a readership ranging from devout Mormons who fondly remember Ezra Taft Benson's denunciations of Communism to secular academics approaching McKay as a historical figure.

Prince's and Wright's decision to organize the book by topic rather than chronologically allows them to satisfy this radically divergent audience, neatly separating the respectful from the controversial. There are hagiographic chapters like "Prophet and Man" that feature section headings such as "Tributes from Around the World" (27) and "Developing a Noble Character" (11). The chapter also describes McKay's "impressive physical presence" (18) and notes that many found him "striking and glamorous" (19). It draws conclusions like the assertion that "McKay would be a bridge uniting the LDS and non-LDS communities" (9).

Of course, the opening chapter and others like it aren't irresponsible. In "Prophet and Man," Prince and Wright go into great detail in their discussion of McKay's sometimes problematic stubbornness (13) and relate an anecdote about the prophet deliberately eating a piece of rum cake that might make orthodox

Mormons uncomfortable (23). On the whole, however, this chapter, along with chapters on McKay's efforts to increase the number of temples, use modern broadcasting technology to expand the reach of the Church, and give the Church a more international outlook, are deferential enough that most observant Mormons will feel at home reading them.

Yet there were times when McKay dealt with divisive political issues in ways that may trouble some members of the broad audience that Prince and Wright envision. Additionally, McKay made some operational decisions, like authorizing a massive building program that caused a serious cash crunch, which may appear in hindsight to most readers as managerial mistakes. While there is not space in this review to discuss all of the critical chapters, an examination of two intensely controversial issues will illustrate Prince and Wright's method for laying all of the problematic material bare while still distancing McKay from direct responsibility.

"Blacks, Civil Rights, and the Priesthood" examines the impact of the Church's refusal to ordain or give temple ordinances to people of African descent. Here, Prince and Wright defend McKay's attitudes through historical contextualization. Contemporary readers might interpret McKay's beliefs as signs of racism, and the biographers forthrightly discuss incidents that would strengthen this impression. They dutifully note that, when McKay as a young missionary heard the Fiske Jubilee Singers, he wrote in his diary that although he did "not care much for a negro" (61), he was nevertheless impressed. Later, readers learn McKay believed that "the Lord, himself, created the different races and urged . . . they be kept distinct" (65). For explanation, Prince and Wright reasonably offer that the prophet was "a product of his time and locale: resistant to change and unprogressive" (60) and remind readers that, in that context, "his views were mainstream" (104).

Yet while McKay's ideas may have been a product of his times, his biographers suggest a pragmatism that was either prescient or prophetic. For example, McKay ended the practice of having converts in South Africa prove they had no black ancestry through submitting extensive genealogies (78). This gave tacit permission for those with remote African ancestry to fully participate in the Church, softening "the ban" on priesthood ordination "around the edges" (105). As this policy change would suggest, McKay himself did not feel bound by the ban and hoped for its demise. Prince and Wright note that the prophet once told Sterling McMurrin, an outspoken critic of the ban, that it was "a practice, not a doctrine" that would "someday be changed" (79–80). The biographers also observe that McKay often "sought unsuccessfully to call down the revelation that would have changed the ban" (105).

In addition to historical contextualization, Prince and Wright also use McKay's insider-dependent leadership style to explain many of his administration's controversial decisions. According to Paul H. Dunn, if McKay "trusted

you, you couldn't do any wrong" (250). Furthermore, the biographers note that when trusted subordinates went too far, McKay had difficulty reining them in. When attempting to address the problem these subordinates caused, McKay often "made statements that were not always consistent, sometimes leading to major conflicts" (292). Consequently, in chapters dealing with topics ranging from the financial crisis triggered by an overambitious building program to the negative publicity surrounding the baseball baptism scandal, a pattern emerges in which McKay places unwarranted faith and responsibility in a subordinate who then uses that faith to circumvent the spirit of the prophet's delegation of duties.

This pattern is best seen in "Confrontation with Communism"—a misleading title since there was no direct conflict between the LDS Church and the American Communist Party, nor has there ever been any evidence that a statistically significant percentage of active Mormons were also active party members. In fact, the content of this chapter suggests that a more accurate title would have been "Confrontation with Ezra Taft Benson over the John Birch Society." McKay, who trusted Benson in the sense that Dunn describes above, "gave his special blessing to Ezra Taft Benson as an opponent of Communism." According to Price and Wright, this blessing allowed Benson to "propagate his ultra-right-wing views among Church members" (279). Benson, in turn, became highly active in the John Birch society and continually pestered McKay to endorse the society. McKay refused but often "implicitly endorsed Benson's position" (286) when the apostle drew criticism for delivering politically charged talks in Church meetings or attempting to use his position to influence Church members to join the John Birch Society.

Because the society's views are so far to the right—its founder, Robert Welch, did not stop short of claiming that U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower was a Communist plant—Benson's advocacy was incredibly divisive within the Church. Despite the negative publicity Benson generated and despite the complaints of more moderate apostles, McKay did nothing for a long time. For example, after Benson gave a conference talk in which he claimed that the Communists were using the civil rights movement to "promote revolution and eventual takeover" of the United States (304), McKay merely remarked in a heated post-conference meeting with the Twelve that he "had told everyone not to mention the Birch society but let the matter die out" (305).

Later, Benson attempted to trick McKay into appearing on the cover of *American Opinion*, the John Birch society's magazine, by grossly misrepresenting that periodical's purpose and readership (310). Nevertheless, the loyal McKay later tacitly endorsed Benson's bid to be Strom Thurmond's vice-presidential candidate, observing that "this nation is rapidly moving down the road of soul-destroying socialism" and that Thurmond and Benson could help stem that tide (315). By 1969, however, McKay finally grew tired of Benson's shenanigans and agreed

with second counselor N. Eldon Tanner that "Elder Benson should discontinue" his activism, "particularly in stake conferences, and should limit himself to talking about the gospel and its applications" (321). Prince's and Wright's implication in this chapter is that Benson abused the trust of an increasingly aging and ill McKay until the apostle simply had to be stopped. This approach shifts much of the blame for the bad publicity and hard feelings to Benson's shoulders. Enough of McKay's overmastering fear of an ill-defined Communist threat is preserved, however, to allow for other conclusions.

As the above examples illustrate, Prince's and Wright's biography allows readers to draw the conclusions they would have drawn anyway. Even though *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* routinely employs faith-promoting conclusions, it is honest and thorough in its treatment of its subject. Consequently, readers who believe that the Church's policy of excluding blacks from the priesthood was evidence of a systemic racism will find much support for that position. Readers who believe that McKay's administration was divinely inspired to pave the way for President Kimball's revelation, as Price and Wright imply (105), will also find their views validated. Readers who see the connection between the Church and the John Birch society as symptomatic of its far right orientation will find vindication, while those who see McKay's toleration of Benson's activities before eventually reining him in will find confirmation of the promise that a prophet, even one committed to tolerance and free agency (43), will never let anyone lead the Church astray.

There are some Mormons who cannot tolerate even a hint of criticism of their prophets, and Prince's and Wright's un-hagiography is not for them. And there are some whose antipathy toward the LDS Church will not let them countenance this book's positive tone. Almost everyone else who is interested in David O. McKay, however, will appreciate Prince's and Wright's deft handling of an impressive amount of historical data and will enjoy their ability to speak directly to them.

Tending the Desert

Alan K. Parish, *John A. Widtsoe: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), xvi, 677 pp.

Reviewed by Samuel Brown, a staff physician at Massachusetts General Hospital who studies severe infections and religious history

We have waited five decades for a biography of one of our most prominent apostles, and I am grateful to Alan Parish for bringing the volume into existence. He is to be congratulated for returning to our awareness the life of a remarkable

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We have waited five decades for a biography of one of our most prominent apostles, and I am grateful to Alan Parish for bringing the volume into existence. He is to be congratulated for returning to our awareness the life of a remarkable

Church leader and scientist. Over the course of his eighty years, Widtsoe was an internationally recognized expert in low-rainfall agriculture and irrigation, president of two Utah universities, a prolific LDS apologist, and a devoted and effective apostle.

At age twelve, Widtsoe immigrated to Salt Lake City with his widowed mother, a Norwegian convert. His excellent record at the Brigham Young College (BYC) in Logan secured his place in a group of young Mormons headed for Cambridge, Massachusetts, under the direction of Dr. Joseph Marion Tanner. This professor secured a house for the group and guided them through the entrance exams for Harvard College: two of the boys matriculated. The history, dynamics, and day-to-day life of the so-called "little flock" (81) are fascinating but unexplored in this review.

After graduating with highest honors from Harvard College in 1894, Widtsoe took a position at the Agricultural College of Utah (ACU, later Utah State University) with its Experimental Station, where he flourished until moving to Germany to complete a Ph.D. in food biochemistry as a Parker Fellow at Gottingen University. By 1900, he had returned to Logan as president of the Experimental Station, whence he moved to BYU to found that school's agricultural program. In 1907, he was invited back as president of the ACU, where he served until 1916, when he took the helm of the troubled University of Utah. His full-time service to the state and academy ended in 1921 with his appointment to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, though he continued to be active and influential in his scientific fields of expertise.

Life as an apostle involved two stints as the Commissioner of Church Education (1920s and 1930s), two consecutive terms as president of the European missions (1928–34), time on the Church publicity committee (1934–44), a long period as an editor of the *Improvement Era* (beginning in 1935), brief service on the Church's welfare board, and a year as a professor of religion at the University of Southern California (thereby founding the LDS Institute program). He died at eighty from complications of "prostate disease" at his home in Salt Lake City in 1952. Throughout his tenure as an apostle, Widtsoe served on the board of the Genealogical Society and was a major force for its modernization and expansion in European, particularly Scandinavian, countries.

Widtsoe's devotion to genealogical work was forged in a furnace I do not envy. He married Leah Dunford, a match made by her mother, Susa Young Gates, while John was in college. Of their seven children, three died of congenital anomalies and two from childhood diseases. Their only adult son died at twenty-five of pneumonia (381–83). I can imagine no stronger bond with the LDS doctrine of eternal families than these tragedies, though this connection remains undeveloped in Parish's somewhat superficial treatment (148).

In this biography, Widtsoe is presented as something of a Mormon Aquinas,

a position I suspect Widtsoe would have supported. His approach to the reconciliation of science and religion appears to be the same proposed by many other religiously committed scientists: steadfast loyalty to religious principles formed in childhood (a personal testimony of Brigham Young because "a boy's feelings are not easily fooled," 47), *ad hominem* rejection of atheists (64), and benign neglect of contrary scientific evidence. While such an approach to these tensions may be healthier, it can lead to muddled interim solutions, such as the unclear discussion of evolution (371), a reminder that such a reconciliation is tentative and fleeting.

Unfortunately, Parish (and the Widtsoes) chose one of the most faddish and mutable intersections of religion and science as their intellectual and spiritual *cause célèbre*. Leah's arguments for proper nutrition (422-23), including the Widtsoes' almost phobic distaste for cola products and chocolate (583, 586, 671), recall her near contemporaries J. H. Kellogg, Sallie Rorer, and Horace Fletcher. Little of their dogma remains current in the field of nutrition. Even the much maligned alcohol—in moderate amounts—is being resuscitated by medical epidemiologists. Leah's devotion to the Word of Wisdom—nicknamed "Word of Widtsoe" in Utah (418)—may have arisen from her experience with illness in her children. At ninety-one, she claimed, "If we're sick, it's our own fault, because we don't know any better" (581) and boasted that her longevity was a result of her diet (581). The perceptive reader (though not the biographer) hears echoes of self-doubt over the premature deaths of five of her seven children. In large measure, this is all we hear of Leah's reaction to her personal tragedy. Unfortunately, Parish does not explore this emotionally rich area, attributing the obsession with nutrition to Leah's training in home economics and John's chemistry background. The lack of an emotional overlay leaves their nutritional campaigns sounding faddish and dated rather than poignant and meaningful.

Several personal anecdotes make Widtsoe endearing: early practical jokes based on explosive (52) or malodorous (53) chemicals; his habit of taking his grandchildren for ice cream, countering Leah's nutritional decree with the claim that the car steered itself into the parking lot (670); sneaking bites of waffle with syrup or chocolate éclairs at his grandchildren's homes (671-72); and a speech to win over Utah's farmers delivered before an audience of two—a deaf man and the venue's weary custodian (124).

A prolific writer (thus redeeming his C in freshman English),[1] Widtsoe was insightful and occasionally aphoristic: "The world is organized for the average, not the exceptional person" (10). "One does not need to be intolerant to cling to one's beliefs" (87). "The earth appeals to me most in the contradictory phases of

1. Transcript of grades, John A. Widtsoe file, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

ocean and desert" (90). "Businessmen in a college town usually value the institution because of the money it brings to the town. Only occasionally does the shopkeeper raise his eyes to the true meaning of education" (162). "Education should . . . help us to earn our bread and butter in the midst of intelligent joy" (166). And "War is of the devil" (243).

While Widtsoe's life is compelling, this biography is somewhat rough around the edges. Parish's stated goal, according to the foreword by Widtsoe's grandson, is that "the family would be pleased" (ix). The author's efforts in that direction result in language that is often sunny, hyperbolic, and overstated (xiii, 45, 121, 135, 405, 411). This fawning prose ultimately detracts from Widtsoe's engaging life, though its target audience may find the approach consistent with their tastes. Otherwise, the biography is smooth and readable, without difficult words or syntax.

Despite the adulatory tone, Parish quietly allows Widtsoe's honesty to shine through. He is not afraid to mention the marital confusion of Anna Widtsoe, the oldest daughter, the emotional dependence and depression of her younger sister Eudora (479), a controversy between James E. Talmage and Joseph Fielding Smith over evolution (480–86), the implications of polygamy (22, 55), glossolalia (38), the negative consequences of income inequality (207), and other issues. Parish notes these potentially controversial elements in an overall framework of positive language and abiding faith in the LDS Church and its leaders, without caustic asides or criticism of the enterprise. While some may find this book insufficiently balanced, I was pleasantly surprised by the author's attempts at honest storytelling. I am hopeful that other biographers in the LDS tradition will learn from Parish's example.

On a technical level, the biography suffers from the author's lack of history training, insufficient editing, and the resulting excessive length (400 pages would have easily sufficed), a bizarre claim that the Vikings are Hebrews (5), citation of a PBS documentary instead of a text (255), and duplication of quoted material (199 and 225; 133 and 188; 78 and 285; 451 and 510; 458–59 and 575; 599 and 602). On the other hand, the work benefits from Parish's obvious fascination with all aspects of Widtsoe's life, Widtsoe's own forthright voice, and the intriguing mélange of Widtsoe's life-experiences. I found myself in this biography wishing we still had Widtsoe around, a chemist who loved science, a straight-talking, practical intellectual who loved experiments, the truth quest, and engaging exploration of ideas.

Unfortunately, the biography is too taken with Harvard (see especially 57–59). While there is evidence that Widtsoe suffered from the same flaw (61, 236), Parish takes it too far, even quoting Derek Bok (Harvard president, 1971–91) as if he were Widtsoe's contemporary (137). There are frequent superfluous references to Harvard (xiii, 37, 299, etc.), and some of Widtsoe's later

successes are framed in Harvard terms (266, 269). This emphasis makes the volume (and Widtsoe's life) seem more provincial than by rights it should. As it is, the reader is distracted by the starry-eyed wonder of parochial Utahns overcome with the grandeur of Eastern academe. This problem is compounded by claims that Widtsoe was "Harvard's prize student (3)," achieving the "highest accomplishments [of] any student [at] Harvard in its 365-year history (xiii)."[2] While Widtsoe's *summa* degree in three years is impressive, as is his completion of a Ph.D. in fourteen months (114), Parish's statements are distracting and hyperbolic.

Ultimately, though, this volume is a readable biography of an inspiring life. The Saints should be glad to dust off Widtsoe's place in our pantheon of religious forebears. The scattered problems in the text ought not to detract from the significance of Widtsoe's life, and I believe that the volume deserves a place on most LDS bookshelves.

2. Parish is apparently reiterating a claim that Widtsoe won a graduation prize. My review of graduation prize records and Harvard alumni class reports for Widtsoe's class at the Harvard Archive revealed no such official prize. I suspect he received an informal recognition from his peers, hardly the accolade Parish believes.

NOTES OF INTEREST

An Open Letter to the *Dialogue* Board

Nathan Oman

Editor's note: This letter was first published as the lead article on the Times & Seasons blog site, where it generated more than 130 comments. Dialogue's readers are invited to view that thread in the archives of Times & Seasons at http://www.timesandseasons.org/. The letter is republished here with the permission of its author.

I hope that you will not find an unsolicited letter presumptuous, but I wanted to give you my thoughts on what I see as *Dialogue*'s problems and some things it could do to improve. First, let me say I wish *Dialogue* well, and I want it to succeed. I am very heartened to see the appearance of important works on Mormonism in places like Oxford University Press or the *Harvard Theological Review*. However, while there may some day come a time when the publishing of Mormon studies can occur entirely outside the ghetto of wholly Mormon venues, that time has not yet come. Furthermore, for certain topics I don't think that it will ever come. That being the case, I care a great deal about the health and public reputation of Mormon intellectual fora.

NATHAN OMAN graduated from Brigham Young University and Harvard Law School, where he was an editor and officer of the *Harvard Law Review*. He has published articles in the *Harvard Law Review*, *Michigan Law Review*, *Brigham Young University Law Review*, *University of Denver Law Review*, *Pace Law Review*, *BYU Studies*, and the *FARMS Review*. He practices law in Washington, D.C., and lives with his wife and son in Springfield, Virginia.

I think that *Dialogue* has some serious problems. My thoughts on this are based on many hours of conversation about Mormon intellectual life with LDS grad students and other young people who care about such things. I hope that you are under no illusions: There are any number of talented young intellectuals who will be the leading Mormon scholars of this generation who are unwilling to publish in *Dialogue* because of the perception that it is the in-house journal of the disaffected Mormon community, and they have no desire to be associated with it. I think that this is unfortunate. However, it is a reality, and I understand the concerns of young Mormon scholars who shy away from *Dialogue*. Frankly, I share some of them. The problem is that for younger scholars in particular, the professional rewards of publishing in Mormon studies are virtually nil, and the belief that publishing in *Dialogue* will create a negative perception among the broader Mormon community leads them to think that it simply is not worth it. (*Dialogue* publications—as is true for all publications in explicitly Mormon fora—have very little professional value to tenure committees.) I realize that this perception of *Dialogue* is not entirely fair. You publish a lot of stuff that has little or no discernible ideological content, and pieces that are thought unduly critical of the Church or of Mormon belief no doubt get a disproportionate share of attention. Nevertheless, *Dialogue* has an image problem that is a substantial barrier to participation by many younger Mormon intellectuals. I doubt that any of this is news to you.

It is too easy, I think, for *Dialogue* to write off its image problems as evidence of Mormon anti-intellectualism and wash its hands of the issue. First, the concerns that I have heard about *Dialogue* are coming from those who are intensely interested in Mormonism, consider themselves intellectuals, and frankly have the scholarly credentials to back up the claim. However, they also consider themselves loyal and faithful Latter-day Saints. In other words, these are the concerns expressed by the people who should be your core author pool and audience. My impression is that you are losing them. Second, such a response is a recipe for increased marginal- ization and ultimately for institutional suicide. It transforms the perception into a self-fulfilling prophecy and would guarantee that ultimately *Dialogue* will, in actual fact, simply become the in-house journal for disaffected Mormondom. When this happens, *Dialogue* will have completely failed in its original mission. Third, washing your hands of the issue is too

easy. I believe that there are things that *Dialogue* can do to improve its situation. What is needed is not self-pity but a solution.

I think that the best way of mitigating these problems would be for *Dialogue* to solicit articles aggressively from well-known, established, conservative scholars arguing for overtly conservative positions. For example, you could ask Lynn D. Wardle to write an extended article on why same-sex marriage is a bad idea from both a policy perspective and from the perspective of LDS theology. Another possibility is to ask Daniel Peterson to write an article on why viewing the Book of Mormon as inspired fiction would be spiritual suicide for the Church. Perhaps you could get Louis Midgley to write a defense of excommunicating Mormon intellectuals who attack the Brethren. In other words, publish articles that are going to make aging, liberal, cultural Mormons who have been loyal *Dialogue* subscribers since the 1960s absolutely furious. You need to be thinking in each and every issue whether or not you have published something offensive to this group. *Dialogue* has shown a willingness to offend conservative or orthodox Mormons. I would work explicitly to make it a two-way street. Obviously, no one expects *Dialogue*'s board to agree with everything that the journal publishes, but consistently publishing one article in every issue for several years that took a recognizably conservative position on a theological or political issue would do much to signal that *Dialogue* was serious about . . . dialogue. However, doing this will require that you aggressively solicit pieces from those who have otherwise written *Dialogue* off as a lost cause. I assume that you are not publishing these articles because the manuscripts are not coming in. If they are coming in and you are refusing to publish them on ideological grounds, then *Dialogue* is a lost cause. I hope and believe that this is not the case.

Ultimately, I don't know if the suggestions here can help *Dialogue*. I am a sometime subscriber and consistent reader of the journal. I think that I have at least thumbed through every single issue of *Dialogue* ever published. I wish you well, and I think that it is very important that Mormonism have a place for scholarly discussion. I hope that *Dialogue* can make the changes necessary for it to become a vibrant part of that discussion. Without changes, however, I think that its future is bleak.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

William Kenneth Laursen

Born in 1948, Bill Laursen grew up in Salt Lake City and Brigham City, Utah. He graduated from Utah State University in 1972 with a BFA degree in art and art education. While at Utah State, he studied with Harrison Groutage and Everett Thorpe. He served as an art teacher at Cottonwood High School in Salt Lake City from 1972 to 2005. During most of that period, he served as chairman of the art department and a set designer and painter. In the classroom, he taught drawing, painting, calligraphy, design, and art history. During the summers, for many years he conducted student fine art tours to New York City. He has been the recipient of many awards as a teacher, including in 1996 a "Golden Apple Award" presented by Utah Governor Michael Leavitt and an Outstanding Service to Education Award from the Utah State Board of Education. Recognition of his painting includes Best of Show, Brigham City Museum Gallery, 1972; Park City Arts Festival Award of Merit, 1974; and Oneta J. Thorne Memorial Art Award—Outstanding Watercolor, 1993, 1994, and 1995.

Artist's Statement

My current interest lies mainly in landscape painting and my approach is not so much the representation of actual locations as the interpretation of my personal observations and experiences. Regional landscapes provide a fascinating challenge and opportunity to explore their endless combinations of colors and moods. Inspiration and ideas for my compositions come from the interpretation of personal photos, drawings, places I have visited, and my imagination. I find interest in the curvilinear forms and colors of old, abandoned vehicles and the abstract forms created by light falling on man-made structures.

I have been influenced greatly by Impressionism and especially the colors of the American Impressionist Childe Hassam. John Singer Sargent represents a personal hero in the history of art for his style and complete mastery of painting in watercolor and oil. I fully subscribe to

James Whistler's philosophy of "art for art's sake," and the works of Edward Hopper have inspired me since discovering him during my high school years and appreciating his genius for his use of light, strong composition, and subject matter. Some time ago, a woman told me she found my paintings to be "very evocative." I have come to realize that her comment represents the very essence of what my art is about and, to my mind, the nicest of all compliments.

Front Cover: *Rural Landscape II,* Bill Laursen, watercolor, 13¾" by 16½", 2005.

Back Cover: *A Morning in Fall,* Bill Laursen, watercolor, 13" x 16", 2004.

New Yorker, Bill Laursen, watercolor, 22"x28", 1991.

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 afterlife; to the everyday struggles of 'enduring to the end.'"

To initiate this proposal, *Dialogue* sponsored two sessions on the disabled at the Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium of 2004. An essay from one of these sessions, treating the faith of a young woman severely disabled by cerebral palsy, will appear in our summer issue. We will publish other accepted submissions in later issues.

Authors are particularly invited to submit articles and essays addressing aspects of these questions:

- Given that persons with disabilities and their caretakers are often sensitive, what terminology is appropriate?
- What different problems face the physically disabled and the mentally impaired?
- What are the theological implications of persons with disabilities? What are the moral implications?
- What programs and social services for persons with disabilities does the Church provide? Which seem successful and which less so? What is missing?
- What attitudes do Mormon folk show toward persons with disabilities?
- What is being done to improve the lot of persons with disabilities among the Mormons? What more could be done?

Submissions

Send articles and essays to the *Dialogue* Submissions Office. In formatting and documentation, submissions should follow the 15th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Electronic submissions are preferred. Send attachments in Word or WordPerfect to dialoguemss@aol.com. Please provide mailing address and phone number. Submissions may also be made in printed copy. Mail three copies to *Dialogue* Submissions Office, 704 228th Ave. NE #723, Sammamish, WA 98074. Phone: (425) 898-9562. For *Dialogue's* publication policy, please see www.dialoguejournal.com.

CALL FOR PAPERS ON INTERNATIONAL MORMONISM

During 2005 and 2006, *Dialogue* expects to publish a series of articles on the Mormon experience and identity outside the usual Anglo-American cultural realm.

Guest edited by Ethan Yorgason, this series will feature articles on a variety of topics from the perspective of various scholarly disciplines, including history, literature, and the social sciences. Each paper may focus in depth upon a particular cultural setting or offer cross-cultural comparisons among two or more settings.

As the Church continues to grow, cultural-geographic distinctions promise to assume greater significance in both doctrine and practice. We would therefore welcome papers that examine the following questions.

What are some of these possible distinctions?

How might the Church respond to an impetus toward varieties of Mormonism?

How do these distinctive varieties of Mormonism contribute to the relationship of Mormonism to the host society/culture?

We are also interested in the interpretations given Mormon history by both members and nonmembers within cultures beyond the Anglo-American sphere. Articles could also treat the level of historical "literacy" among Church members, the aspects of Church history that are best and least well known, the purposes to which historical knowledge is put, and the relationship between Mormon history and Mormon identity.

Submissions

Manuscripts for this series must be received no later than June 1, 2005. In formatting and documentation, submissions should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (15th ed.). Electronic submissions are preferred and should be sent as attachments in MS Word or WordPerfect to yorgasoe@byuh.edu. Please provide mailing address and phone number. Paper copies, if unavoidable, may be sent in triplicate to Ethan Yorgason, BYU-Hawaii, Box 1970, Laie, HI 96762. Manuscripts should be sent as soon as possible up to the deadline. Address queries to Yorgason at (808) 293-3617; fax: (808) 293-3888. For *Dialogue's* publication policy, please see http://www.dialoguejournal.com/.

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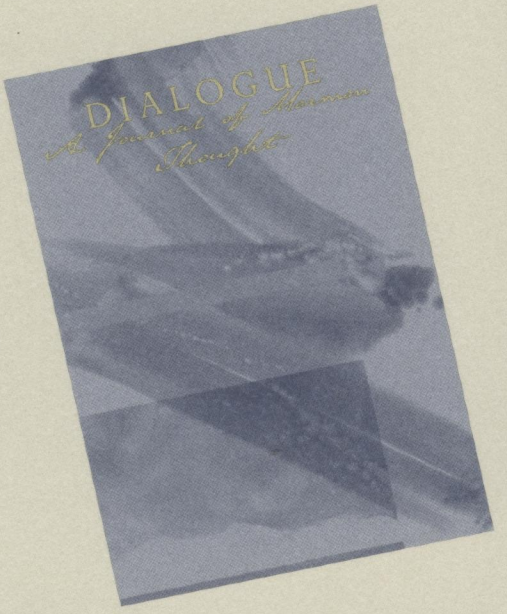

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