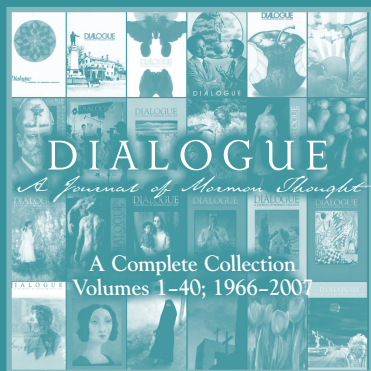


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D I A L O G U E

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sharing a Poem

You *Dialogue* folks have always seemed too smart for me—too rational—too, er, lofty!

When the fall 2007 issue arrived in early September, I began reading it tentatively. After more than twenty years, I had resubscribed, beginning with the summer issue, but which still remains unread. I feared I wouldn't understand much.

So the first article that caught my eye was Mack Patten's personal essay ("Depression and the Brethren of the Priesthood," 40, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 194–200). It amazed and touched me with its honest, simple eloquence. I felt pressed to contact the author, to hear his voice, to feel his spirit. When I telephoned him, he hadn't yet received his own copy, so he was glad to learn it was in print.

I recited my poem "Night," written during a difficult period in April 1965, to meet him in the state we'd shared. He seems to represent a lot of older LDS men. We exchanged email messages. I hope to hear from him again. Here is my poem, inspired by Howard Salisbury:

Night

The North is silent
Uneasy lull awaits
As darkness gathers

Dry rot unseen
In lofty places
Un-shored structures
Hid by Blackness
Sand and Stone
Appear as one

Who beckons travelers?
Whose voice is clear?
Why are the sounds unsure?

Gusts disturb
This tortured sleep
Words in flooded streams
Still rage!
And Desperation
Strips my soul
Before Abyss—
Or Hope

April 1965

San Diego, California

Eugene Kovalenko

Los Alamos, New Mexico

Obligated to Believe about Noah

The Clayton White-Mark Thomas treatment of the story of Noah's flood was persuasively accomplished ("On Balancing Faith in Mormonism with Traditional Biblical Stories: The Noachian Flood Story," 40, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 85–110.) I thoroughly enjoyed reading how these authors could present the facts in such a convincing fashion. Their ending in particular was noteworthy: "Without facts from science, religion struggles for direction in its stewardship. Without the values that are the essence of religion, science and economics may become prisons of meaningless and heartless facts. If it is to succeed, the covenant of life articulated in the Noah story must be honest to the fundamental message of the text, guided by the light of science and inspired by the music of religion" (103).

As good as their presentation was, I was nevertheless a little disturbed that

they failed to point out some particular points that tend, in my mind, to make their presentation at least out of date. For example, they start with a quotation from John Taylor, who described the Latter-day Saints as being “open to truth of every kind, no matter whence it comes, where it originates or who believes in it. . . . A man in search of truth has no particular system to sustain, no particular dogma to defend or theory to uphold” (85). This is clearly behind the times. President Boyd K. Packer, a leading candidate for becoming a future president of the Church, has on many occasions said that Mormons should say only things that are faith-promoting. He stated: “In the Church we are not neutral. We are one-sided. There is a war going on, and we are engaged in it.” He proceeded by calling objective, impartial, and scholarly writing the evil that should be fought in this “war” (“The Mantle Is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect,” *BYU Studies* 21, no. 3 [Summer 1981]: 267). He frequently states that scholars and intellectuals are a danger to the Church. Messers White and Thomas did not point this out. In my opinion they should have done so.

As another example, White and Thomas justify the holding of a variety of beliefs by Mormons concerning the historicity of the flood story: “As authors, we choose to follow the general rule apparent in the LDS Church which is to acknowledge respectfully the freedom of expression of, and tolerance for, those with differing conclusions regarding the flood. We consider this approach part of our joint Latter-day Saint quest to find the truth”

(99). That particular point of view is not possible for believing Latter-day Saints. The problem is that the story of Noah and the flood is told virtually the same as it appears in the Bible in LDS scriptures as well, including the Book of Mormon and the book of Moses. White and Thomas seem not to be impressed by that point. But Mormon readers of the scriptures must certainly be.

And finally, White and Thomas say, in essence, that slavery was abolished in the United States because of the strong religious values held by many abolitionists (101). Although true enough, this statement should not stand alone. It should be accompanied by mention of the fact that Brigham Young was not one of these abolitionists. In an interview with Horace Greeley on July 13, 1859, he told Greeley that slavery is of “divine institution.”¹ Brigham, perhaps the greatest colonizer this nation ever produced, as governor of Utah Territory supported slavery of both blacks and Indians. Flake Green, the driver of Brigham’s carriage when he entered the Salt Lake Valley, was a slave.

1. Andrew Love Neff, *History of Utah, 1847–1869*, edited by Leland H. Creer (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1940), 618.

Glen Wade
Santa Barbara, California

The Lesson of Noah’s Flood

I thought that the article by Clayton White and Mark Thomas, “On Balancing Faith in Mormonism with Traditional Biblical Stories: The Noachian Flood Story,” (40, no. 3 [Fall 2007]

85–110) was thorough and showed very clearly the importance of considering science in helping to shape our religious ideas about the Earth. A more pressing scientific/religious issue than whether a flood occurred thousands of years ago, however, is whether our actions today are threatening not only the lives of untold numbers of other species but also the lives of our children and grandchildren, through countless acts of destruction of our environment and the growing problem of global warming.

I've heard Latter-day Saints who admit that the environment is, in fact, in danger say things like, "Well, it's the last days. The scriptures say things will get bad at the end. It's just a fulfillment of prophecy. There's nothing I can do about it." The scriptures also say there will be lots of sin and wickedness in the last days. Does that mean we should be adding to the sin personally because it's prophesied to be rampant? That we should just give in and contribute wholly to the evil of the last days, because "it's in the scriptures"? If these are indeed the last days, don't we want to be doing the right thing and be prepared when Christ returns?

We are told that it is okay to work on the Sabbath only if we are pulling our ox "out of the mire," but that's assuming we didn't spend the entire previous day pushing the ox into the mire in the first place. In the same way, we can't keep indiscriminately destroying our planet, saying, "Well, God will take care of it all during the Millennium." We are flippantly pushing off our responsibility on God.

People who shrug off serious threats

to the environment repeatedly say it costs too much to make the changes conservation groups want. Are we actually willing to sin, though, as long as we can save money? Isn't that selling our souls in a very real sense? That makes saving the environment quite clearly a religious problem for me.

Too many people see this as a political issue rather than as the moral and pragmatic danger that it really is. Millions and millions of people will be affected by flooding, drought, famine, and disease caused by climate change. To shrug off their misery and suffering is a sin, when we are completely capable of relieving a great deal of it. We need to accept both the overwhelming scientific evidence of global warming and our religious obligation of stewardship of the planet. We need to use these gifts to help us stand up for the environment as devout Latter-day Saints, making this planet a place where all of God's creatures have a right to live.

Johnny Townsend
Seattle, Washington

Reply to Schow's Reply

I must say that I've never read a piece of more convoluted reasoning than H. Wayne Schow's advocacy for homosexual marriage ("The Case for Same-Sex Marriage: Reply to Randolph Muhlestein," 40, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 40–68). Despite his contention that we should not take biblical statements about homosexuality at face value and that our Church leaders must be somehow unenlightened, homosexual *behavior* is a sin. Period.

From the beginning, God has declared that sexual relations of any kind between two men or two women constitute sin, just as adultery is sin. These sorts of commandments do not change just because social or cultural contexts shift over time. But what would be the result if the Church began sanctioning homosexual marriage? The answer is that homosexual behavior, between two married men or women, would no longer be considered a sin. And if homosexual acts within the bonds of such a “marriage” were not sinful, then practicing homosexuals would be eligible to enter the temple, and the Church would have no grounds for refusing to seal them to each other. But who are we to take it upon ourselves to play God, or to change his commandments at our own whim? This is the crux of the homosexual marriage issue, and the consequences are more far-reaching than Schow would have us believe.

The crucial question everybody seems to belabor is whether homosexual orientation is biologically based or strictly cultural. It may surprise most Latter-day Saints, but LDS doctrine insists that homosexuality is, at least in its incipient stage, biological. The scriptures teach that we are “fallen man” (D&C 20:20), that because of the Fall “all mankind” is “carnal, sensual, and devilish” (Mosiah 16:3). Our spirits were not perfect in our first estate, but they came to this earth pure and innocent (D&C 93:38). But our mortal bodies are of this fallen earth, carnal and sensual, until we tame the flesh so that it obeys the spirit.

Many people assume that if something is “natural”—even biological—we

must pursue it and embrace it. But our task in mortality is just the opposite. We are to put off the natural man and become saints through the atonement of Christ (Mosiah 3:19); we are to resist our natural tendencies and proclivities. Dr. M. Scott Peck put it nicely: “Just because a desire or behavior is natural does not mean it is essential or beneficial or unchangeable. . . . It is also natural . . . to never brush our teeth. Yet we teach ourselves to do the unnatural until the unnatural becomes itself second nature. Indeed, all self-discipline might be defined as teaching ourselves to do the unnatural.”¹

Now, I am not homosexual, so I do not completely comprehend the specific trial these individuals endure, but I was born with my own set of natural proclivities, many of which are ungodly and are tremendously difficult to overcome. But I don’t attempt to have these tendencies reclassified so that I can sin with impunity. Just because I might feel an attraction for my neighbor’s wife doesn’t mean I should ask the Church to make adultery an acceptable “alternative” lifestyle. I certainly don’t make the ridiculous claim that the Church is not pursuing the “path of inclusivity in the spirit of Christ’s gospel teaching” (Schow, 62) if it does not welcome adulterers into its ranks. The same argument, of course, could be made for pedophiles, serial rapists, pathological liars, greedy capitalists, drug addicts, or kleptomaniacs. So, why is it that homosexuals want to be special, to be treated differently from those who struggle with other but categorically similar thorns

in the flesh? Why is it that they (and this is one of Schow's primary arguments) believe they are entitled to happiness while living in sin? This, as Alma explained, is contrary to the nature of happiness (Alma 41:10–11).

I have compassion for individuals who struggle with homosexual tendencies. And I know that Schow is distraught over his son's death from AIDS. But his wish that gay marriage had been available in "Mormon country" so that his son wouldn't have gone off to California and contracted his fatal disease is simply wrong-headed. There is no guarantee that the availability of homosexual marriage would have prevented either the promiscuity or the infection. If, on the other hand, his son had recognized his sexual attraction for what it was—a natural inclination that needed to be resisted and perhaps even overcome—he certainly would not have died from AIDS.

What concerns me most is that homosexual tendencies are affected by cultural influences. The biological factor is not the only element in the equation. What this means, ultimately, is that, as homosexuality becomes more accepted and prevalent in society, more children who perhaps have a slight homosexual tendency will feel the cultural tug, will experience a curiosity, will explore these rather benign feelings, and will expand them beyond all reason. For, contrary to the propaganda, homosexuality is not binary, not simply an on or off switch. Rather, it is a spectrum of desire ranging from very intense to rather mild. Consequently, in such a society as we are "tolerating" into existence, individuals who fifty years ago

never would have given a second thought to a stray homosexual urge will now become entrapped by the propaganda and "discover" an identity that is largely a cultural construct. In this context, Elder Neal A. Maxwell was right: "When some things come out of the closet, they bring the darkness with them."²

Contrary to what the homosexual community wants us to believe, it is indeed possible to overcome homosexual tendencies. Most interesting is the conversion of a major activist in the homosexual revolution. Michael Glatze, founding editor of *Young Gay America*, recounts his story in "How a 'Gay Rights' Leader Became Straight." After sixteen years, Glatze began questioning his life and influence. When he turned to God for answers, "It became clear to me, as I . . . really prayed about it—that homosexuality prevents us from finding our true self within. . . . We believe, under the influence of homosexuality, that lust is not just acceptable, but a virtue. But there is no homosexual 'desire' that is apart from lust."³

Unfortunately, the homosexual community and its supporters, like Schow, simply refuse to acknowledge that this perspective has any validity. But Glatze's conclusions are both sobering and persuasive: "I know that homosexuality is lust and pornography wrapped into one. I'll never let anybody try to convince me otherwise, no matter how slick their tongues or how sad their story. I have seen it. I know the truth."

Notes

1. M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled* (New York: Touchstone, 1978), 213–14.

2. Neal A. Maxwell, *Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977), 12.

3. Michael Glatze, “How a ‘Gay Rights’ Leader Became Straight,” *WorldNetDaily*, July 3, 2007, http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=56487 (accessed December 1, 2007).

Roger Terry
Orem, Utah

A Reasoned Discussion

Until this last issue of *Dialogue*, I feel justified in saying that the gay marriage “debate” has not been a debate at all. Those in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage have offered reasoned and impassioned *arguments* in support of same-sex marriage, while opponents of same-sex marriage have offered only the vehemently expressed *assertion* that gay marriage would undermine or even destroy traditional marriage. When pressed on exactly how same-sex marriage would do that, opponents have always simply repeated the assertion—without explaining the mechanics of how same-sex marriage destroys anything, much less the marital relationships of nongays.

When I saw that *Dialogue* was actually planning to publish an article making the case against same-sex marriage, I became hopeful. Knowing *Dialogue*’s reputation, I expected to finally get what I have been longing for all these years: actual reasoned discussion of substantive issues, with the possibility of actually understanding the concerns

of gay marriage opponents. And *Dialogue* delivered. For the first time ever, I read an actual argument against same-sex marriage that explains the assertions in terms that I can understand, even if I do not agree. Thank you!

I am grateful that Randolph G. Muhlestein (“The Case Against Same-Sex Marriage,” 40, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 1–39) was willing to go out on a limb, especially knowing what type of criticism he might open himself up to from those who disagree with his position. Discussions of this emotional topic have often not been civil, so it takes courage to come forward and state the case. He did so both clearly and compassionately. Before reading his essay, I understood the scriptural arguments but could make neither heads nor tails of the social “death-of-marriage” argument. Thanks to his willingness to go out on a limb, I think I understand it much better now, and I thank him for it.

If I understand his core argument it boils down to the notion that legalizing same-sex marriage will cause people to become gay. Muhlestein did not overstate the case. Even while acknowledging that the data are difficult to analyze and that this thesis could be wrong, I read the emotional heart of his argument as caution: Gay marriage might not cause any more damage to the already beleaguered institution of heterosexual marriage, but don’t go tinkering with a system that is already in distress when you don’t know what effect the tinkering will have. To me this position suggests openness on his part to the possibility of same-sex mar-

riage if at some time in the future it can be proven that it causes no demonstrable harm.

If I understood him correctly, he sympathizes with the distress, pain, and social, economic, and legal difficulties faced by gay people in our society, and he would be willing to do anything to alleviate that difficulty as long as it doesn't undermine an institution as important as heterosexual marriage. This is not an unreasonable position.

As a gay man, I feel ethically bound to consider whether something good for me might cause harm to another. I hope my heterosexual brothers and sisters would feel similarly ethically bound to consider the harm that denying certain rights and privileges might have on me, and weigh whether the good served by denying those rights is greater than the harm inflicted on me and others like me.

For my part, I don't find his arguments persuasive, for a number of reasons very eloquently stated by H. Wayne Schow ("A Case for Same Sex Marriage: Reply to Randolph Muhlestein," 40, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 40-67). Schow identifies the central problem that Muhlestein has chosen to ignore or discount—namely, modern scientific data about the biological basis for homosexuality and the witness of gay men and lesbians themselves.

As a published scholar of sexuality studies, I might add that I am familiar with the historical literature Muhlestein cited and feel that his rephrasing of scholarly findings was somewhat distorted. The vast majority of sexuality studies scholars would reject the extreme Foucaultian "social construc-

tionist" position that underpins his entire argument, just as they would reject an extreme "essentialist" position. Sexuality is interpreted and expressed in certain cultural embodiments, but there are certain basic biological givens that are not amenable to cultural manipulation. This is the position of most scholars working in this field.

A more reasonable interpretation of the data, more likely to be accepted by the majority of history of sexuality scholars, would be to point out that the number one cause of the erosion of traditional marriage in modern times is the modern, urban, industrial economy. Prior to roughly 1850, the basic unit of economic production throughout most of the world was the family. Increasingly after circa 1850, the basic unit of economic production became the corporation, which related to individual workers. Large traditional families have become increasingly problematic under the present economic and political regime.

Once you have an economy where family no longer matters—indeed, our economic system prefers singles because they are cheaper and easier to manipulate—individual choice and preference in relation to life mates moves to the fore. All of the "homosexualities" that have existed prior to the modern industrial age have not been *true* homosexualities, because they unfolded in societies and economies where the production of children (for the poor) and heirs (for the rich) were of utmost importance, and the free choice of partners was economically unfeasible.

The two major models of socially sanctioned homosexuality in the pre-industrial world—pederasty and transgenderism—were models that indirectly supported the male/female pairing model by mimicking it without interfering with it. We don't see modern homosexuality in these societies because there were severe sanctions for expressing it. But the historical record does in fact provide glimpses of individuals who exhibited unmistakable signs of homosexual orientation. It's just that there were severe sanctions faced by an ancient Greek man, for instance, who exhibited too much of the wrong kind of affection for his boy lover once the man reached marriageable age.

Only in modern times have social libertarianism and constitutional, individual rights existed with sufficient strength to make it possible for gay people to finally come out. No one, including Muhlestein, wants to go back to the kinds of feudal society where gay people—or anyone not conforming to certain political or social ideals or economic norms—must live in silence or else fear for their lives. Only in modern times has science developed the tools to study complex phenomena like genetics, heritability, brain chemistry, hormones, and fetal development during gestation, thus enabling us to begin to understand the biological foundations of even more complex phenomena like human sexuality.

Modern homosexuality, in other words, was not invented by moderns. Moderns simply created the economic, social, and scientific conditions that have made it possible for us to recognize it, tolerate it, and even begin to un-

derstand it. This is not the only explanation of the sociological and historical data, but it has the advantage of taking account of *all* the data presently available to us, not just half of it. It takes changing social norms into account, as well as modern scientific data and—not least importantly—the testimony of gay men and lesbians themselves.

Parenthetically, it is hard to imagine what it would be like to live under the kind of economic system demanded by gospel principles, but I suspect that, whatever it is, it would enshrine freedom, responsibility, equality, compassion, and nurture of the planet, rather than inequality, poverty, exploitation, or coercion. The glimpses we catch of a gospel-based economy in the New Testament and in the early LDS Church suggest that, whatever it is, it will look very different from modern, family-eroding capitalism as well as ancient, coercive, woman-subjugating, homosexual-persecuting feudalism. Perhaps struggling for such a system is where the energies of those concerned about preserving the family should be focused.

*John Gustav-Wrathall
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

Appreciation for Wayne Booth

I appreciated Neal Kramer's review of Wayne Booth's *My Many Selves: The Quest for a Plausible Harmony*. (*Dialogue*, 40, no. 4 [Winter, 2007]: 137–41). Wayne Booth befriended me during my midlife Ph.D. program at the University of Chicago in the early 1990s. His ethical approach to literary

criticism has been useful in the work I am trying to do with interreligious contestational dialogue. I am writing to share another of Wayne's many selves with your readers.

In the winter of 1992 Wayne and I were at lunch discussing the social-psycho-spiritual dynamics of sincere "testimony contra testimony" dialogue within and between religious communities. Suddenly, he asked me what I believed about Joseph Smith's story. His pragmatic mind and open heart elicited this response: "Wayne, I would not be at all surprised if it turns out that Moroni, as an actual resurrected man, gave real gold plates to Joseph to translate by the power of God." Wayne

smiled thoughtfully, and said, "I like that. I could own that statement." We then talked of how he at times doubted his religious doubts and how he allowed himself to hope that something like Mormon sociality might exist beyond the grave.

Wayne Booth was a beloved teacher who loved Chaucer and William James with similar delight. Since these latter two are already enthroned along with Abraham—I just know this, but dare not reveal my sources), I trust Wayne has already found heaven fulfilling his hopes.

*C. Randall Paul
Highland, Utah*



Gordon B. Hinckley. © Intellectual Reserve. Courtesy Family and Church History Library Archive.

GORDON B. HINCKLEY (1910–2008)

Gordon B. Hinckley remained a vital leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints until the very end of his illustrious and prophetic life. President Hinckley's de facto guidance of the LDS church spanned over twenty-three years. Called to be an apostle forty-six years ago, he moved into the First Presidency as a third counselor during the last days of Spencer W. Kimball. Following that, he served for a decade under Presidents Ezra Taft Benson and Howard W. Hunter, who were in precarious health. In 1995, President Hinckley assumed the mantle of prophet and president.

Consequently, he leaves a legacy that stretches far beyond the past thirteen years. Although much has been said about his decision to take temples to the far corners of the world, that is only a part of his effort to globalize the Church. Other steps included expanding humanitarian aid wherever needed, creating the Perpetual Education Fund to assist members in less affluent areas, and calling European-born Dieter F. Uchtdorf to the Council of the Twelve. He also led an endeavor to revitalize Salt Lake City by building the new 21,000-seat Conference Center and authorizing the renovation of the Church-owned business blocks near Temple Square.

This was accomplished by means of a robust American economy as well as the Church's decision to centralize budgets, operating costs, and missionary expenses. It allowed a quick response to spiritual and physical needs around the world. Gone was the delay of requiring local agencies to raise portions of necessary funding. Gordon B. Hinckley felt a sense of urgency and responded accordingly.

From the perspective of *Dialogue*, the Church under President Hinckley evolved toward a greater appreciation of free expression of ideas, research, and thought. The intellectual tensions of the period immediately preceding his presidency seem muted. Without great fanfare, the Church Archives and leaders became more accessible to scholars and the media. Latter-day Saints everywhere loved President Hinckley for his ready wit and wise discourse upon the principles of the gospel. His presidency was an amazing tenure, and we are all beneficiaries of his positive and revelatory stewardship. We will miss him.



Brian Kershisnik,
Singing Madonna and Child,
oil on panel, 24 x 20 inches, 2007

In Taiwan But Not of Taiwan: Challenges of the LDS Church in the Wake of the Indigenous Movement

Chiung Hwang Chen

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has experienced stable growth in Taiwan since the first four missionaries arrived in 1956. Even in recent years, when the growth of the Church has slowed considerably in many countries including those in East Asia, LDS growth in Taiwan remains robust. Thus, something distinctive characterizes Mormonism in Taiwan compared to Mormonism in neighboring countries. Some scholars have used diminishing growth rates in the past decade or two to argue that Mormonism remains marginal in many countries.¹

I argue, somewhat differently, that despite its stable growth, the LDS experience in Taiwan shows signs of cultural marginalization that are not much different from its marginalization elsewhere. Like Mormonism in many places outside the American continent, Taiwan's Mormons also face a double marginalization, a marginalization manifest both inside the Church and in their own country. Taiwan is at the periphery of internal LDS dialogues. The land and the people there remain unknown to most of the LDS population. Stories about Church development on the island, foreign missionaries' encounters with the local population, members' cultural conflicts and adjustments, and their gospel outlook and identity struggles await a telling. Externally, comprising a small proportion of society in Taiwan, Mormonism continues to be seen as a cult-like religion. Its foreignness, and particularly its Americanness, is positively exotic and

productive of continued growth in the unique context of Taiwan, but this quality simultaneously keeps Mormonism at the margins of society.

Local members celebrated the fifty-year jubilee of Mormonism on the island in the summer of 2006. The jubilee provides a useful lens through which to reflect on the history of the Church in Taiwan and evaluate its current fortunes. This paper examines the position of Mormonism in contemporary Taiwan, where two seemingly contradictory forces—the indigenous movement and the desire for strong engagement with globalization—work together in shaping the culture of Taiwan. Through analyzing both the outsider narrative (discourse constructed by media) and the insider narrative (discourse constructed within the Church in Taiwan), this paper evaluates how the American image of the Church has both benefited and challenged the Church in Taiwan.² The paper first provides a brief history of Taiwan and then outlines the development of Christianity and Mormonism on the island. Next it analyzes the media image of Mormonism and ways in which local members internalize Americanness within the Church. The concluding section discusses the benefits and challenges that accompany perceptions of an American church and reflects on the conceptualization of an American church in a global setting.

The Land and the Past

Taiwan is located ninety miles off the coast of Southeast China. In a literal sense, the island has lived “at the edge” for the past four centuries.³ It has been a backwater frontier for both Eastern and Western empires; and its political ownership has exhibited remarkable discontinuities.⁴ Aborigines—Austronesian-speaking, Malay-Polynesian peoples who have inhabited the island for about eight thousand years—have not fully been agents of their own political and economic fate for the past four centuries.

Western knowledge of Taiwan began in 1544 when a Portuguese ship first passed the island and a Dutch navigator on the ship, Jan Huygen van Linschoten, named it *I'lhha Formosa* (meaning “Beautiful Island”). Taiwan soon became a frontier for Japanese, English, Chinese, Spanish, and Dutch traders for commercial gain. The Dutch eventually controlled the island between 1624 and 1662. This short-lived Western occupation ended when the late Ming general, Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga), retreated to Taiwan after his defeat by Manchu armies in China. The Zheng

family expelled the Dutch, ruled part of the island for about twenty years, and eventually surrendered to the Qing regime in 1683.

Streams of Chinese migration to Taiwan started during the Dutch period when Chinese men (mainly from Fujian Province) crossed the “Big Black Ditch”—the Taiwan Strait—to work for the Dutch East India Company. Large-scale Han migration to the island, however, did not occur until the late Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), when the Qing pressed southward on the mainland. Although Qing authorities imposed migration restrictions to Taiwan, Chinese migration, mostly from Fujian and Guangdong provinces, continued. The Chinese population thus steadily increased during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, soon outnumbered the aboriginal population, and became the majority in Taiwan.

The Qing regime (1644–1911) loosely ruled Taiwan for two centuries until it ceded the island to Japan in 1895 after the first Sino-Japanese War. Fifty years later, Japan “returned” Taiwan to Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist government in 1945, after Japan was defeated at the end of World War II. Chiang then lost China’s civil war to Mao Zedong’s Communists in 1949 and fled with more than one million Chinese to Taiwan. For five decades thereafter, the Nationalists controlled and shaped the island’s politics, culture, and society in significant ways. In recent years, however, the Taiwan-centered (though mostly Han Chinese) indigenous movement fostered the growth of opposition forces and created a situation in which power can and does change hands.⁵

Christianity in Taiwan

Christian missionaries came with Western explorers, traders, and armies in the 1620s. In conjunction with Western armies occupying the land, missionaries converted aboriginal village after village. Historian John E. Wills identifies two factors for early Christian success. First, aboriginal social and cultural organizations were isolated and vulnerable in the confrontation with outside forces. Second, the “red-haired barbarians” (as Han Chinese later called the Dutch) simply owned superior weapons. Many aborigines were forced to convert in the encounter. Christian missionaries set up school systems, expelled female shamans (leading practitioners of aboriginal religious rituals), kept men home from the head-hunting business, and recast the family structure of the aborigines from a matriarchal toward a patriarchal emphasis.⁶ Nevertheless, Zheng’s

Chinese Taiwan, by resisting Manchurian rule as well as maintaining Han cultural traditions, limited the development of Christianity on the island.

A similar sentiment toward Westerners carried through the Qing Dynasty. In this period Christian missionaries gained converts among aboriginal villages but had very little success among Chinese.⁷ During Japanese rule (1895–1945), the colonial government first held a neutral position toward Christianity as it tried to build a positive relationship with the Western world. With the outbreak of World War II, however, the Japanese suspected missionaries of spying for their home countries and strictly limited missionary activity on Taiwan.

Missionaries resumed their work on the island after 1945 as the Nationalist KMT government guaranteed freedom of religion. In fact, the new regime favored Christianity over traditional religions because many political elites, including the “first family,” were Christian. Christianity reached a “golden age” during the 1940s and 1950s. The membership of Catholicism, for example, reached 190,000, an increase of 1,700 percent between 1945 and 1966.⁸ Two factors contributed to this phenomenon. First, as Communists prevailed on mainland China, a large number of missionaries and members flooded Taiwan. Second, Taiwan’s economy collapsed after the war, with inflation and unemployment rates running at all-time highs. American aid provided great relief in that desperate time. Since a great deal of food and social services came through church institutions, people waited in lines in front of churches for flour, soap, eggs, and other daily goods. Christian churches therefore won the nickname of “the flour religion.” These churches also built hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and orphanages, weaving themselves into Taiwan’s social fabric.

Mormon missionaries arrived near the end of the golden age of Christianity, on June 4, 1956. Early missionary efforts focused on American military personnel in Taiwan and educated local elites, who often spoke English as missionaries struggled with the language and had no Chinese LDS scriptures available.⁹ As historian R. Lanier Britsch points out, the Church did not take as strong a hold in Taiwan as in Hong Kong in the first few years, due to the threat of war from China and the distance and lack of communication between the mission president in Hong Kong and missionaries in Taiwan.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Church has grown slowly but steadily during the past five decades. (See Figure 1.) An average of about a thousand people have converted to Mormonism yearly from 1979

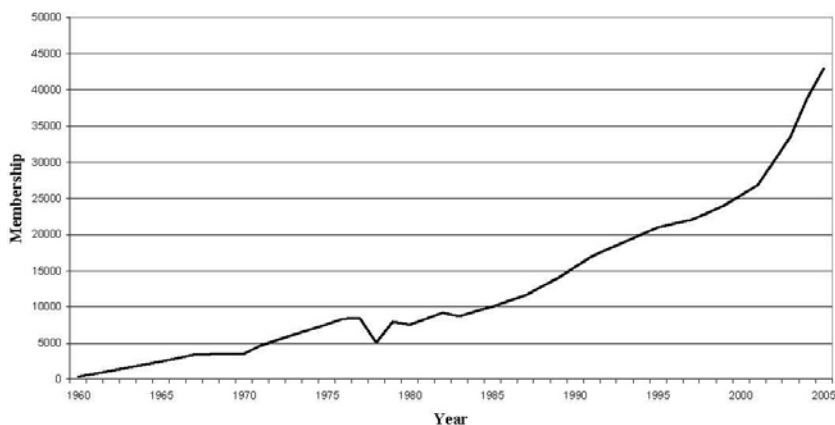


Figure 1. LDS Membership in Taiwan, 1960–2005

onward;¹¹ since the mid-1990s, more than two thousand have joined per year. The Taipei Taiwan Temple was dedicated in November 1984. In 2007 there were three missions and nine stakes. At the end of 2005, LDS membership was 42,881, or about 0.19 percent of Taiwan’s almost 23 million people.¹²

The “Outside” Narrative

The steady growth of Church membership in Taiwan, however, does not indicate a full acceptance of Mormonism. On the contrary, Mormonism is seen, at worst, as a cultish, unknown, polygamous religion or, at best, either as a friendly, polite American guest or as something exotic that accentuates the diversity and the global outlook of a cosmopolitan Taiwan and of Taipei in particular.

This conclusion is based on analysis of popular media in Taiwan. I utilized periodical and newspaper databases from the National Central Library, the most important research library in Taiwan. The periodical database is relatively new, encompassing articles published in Chinese in both popular magazines and academic journals in Taiwan since 1998. A keyword search for “Mormon Church” and the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” yielded only ten articles. This result suggests, unsurprisingly and as in many other countries, that Mormonism is virtually unknown or unimportant on the island. These ten articles are an LDS pub-

lic relations piece on the development of the Church in Taiwan; a jubilee-related article on missionaries and Mormonism; a story on the Mormon connection to multi-level marketing; a review of Jon Krakauer's *Under the Banner of Heaven*; two articles on Church architecture (one featuring the Conference Center in Salt Lake City and the other a new Church office building in Taipei); three pieces on the un-Christian nature of Mormonism published in a university-oriented Christian periodical (one details a Utah-based pastor's mission to save Mormons from false doctrine); and one article comparing Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity. Only the last-mentioned is an academic article, written by a Presbyterian pastor who is also an adjunct religion studies professor at the Catholic Furen University in Taiwan. This article, for the most part, correctly describes the origin and history of the Church. The focus on these three specific religions, however, imputes a cult-like nature to these sects, as indicated in the title: "Pseudo-Christian Religions in Taiwan."¹³ Most of these articles signal Mormon otherness in one way or another.

Using a different database, I located seventy-seven articles about Mormonism in major Taiwanese newspapers between 2000 and 2006. I separated stories on American Mormonism from those on the local LDS Church. Polygamy, not surprisingly, dominated news reports about American Mormonism. Stories about Warren Jeffs, Tom Green, and the kidnapping of Elizabeth Smart comprised twelve of the total twenty-five. Headlines such as "American Top Ten Most Wanted: 80 Wives 250 Children, Polygamous Head Arrested," "Self-Proclaimed President and Prophet, Jeffs Inherits His Father's 65 Wives and Controls His Followers' Marriage Decisions," and "Mormon Headquarters State of Utah Still Has 30,000 people Living in Harem," signify a strong sense of Mormon otherness and peculiarity, if not bizarre deviance. One report, which featured the accusation by Hugh Nibley's daughter that her father had sexually abused her, worsens the image.

These news articles are all translations of articles from U.S. wire services. Until the past decade or two, with the rising of grassroots identity and the revitalization of traditional religions (discussed below), religion was seen as a private activity and, except for scandals, rarely became a topic for public discussion. In journalism practice, as a result, religion is not considered a separate beat, there are no "religion reporters" in Taiwan, and religion studies is not mandated as a part of the journalism (or regular

university) curriculum and training. With limited knowledge about religion, journalists in Taiwan are generally not equipped to report on religion-related events and often arbitrarily add unrelated information and stereotypes.¹⁴ In the case of Mormonism, most reporters/translators do not have enough understanding of Mormonism to differentiate the LDS Church from other groups with Mormon roots. Many of the articles, especially in headlines, use sensationalism to entice readership. Some articles did indicate Jeffs's and Green's "fundamentalist" affiliation. But if this disclaimer does not register with most American readers, there's no reason to expect it will with Taiwanese readers.

Tourism is the second most prominent theme in Taiwanese news articles on Mormons. With rhetorical conventions common to tourism, many of these articles produce Mormon otherness by creating or emphasizing the distance (both real and imagined) between the place they write about and their readers' world. Mormon Utah is portrayed as mysterious and exotic—with mentions of the beauty of the desert and the secrets of this religious Zion—in the far-distant American West. Each article contains stereotypes about Mormons and misinformation about Utah/Mormon history. One article, for example, asserts that Mormon temples are only for high-level elders and for special occasions such as marriages. It describes ordinary Mormons as wearing black dresses and suits in everyday life and claims that Taiwanese tourists joked that, if they want to be saved, they must at least use Mormon restrooms on Temple Square.¹⁵ Brigham Young is arguably the best-known LDS Church president and prophet in Taiwan, in part because of the reputation of Brigham Young University. Without careful research, these travel writers credited every historical event they know of to him. One article, for example, claimed that Young issued the Manifesto in 1898 (instead of Woodruff in 1890).¹⁶ Another article about the Church-run Polynesian Culture Center on Oahu, Hawaii, is even more fantastical, claiming that Brigham Young established the center forty-one years ago; the article was written in 2004.¹⁷ A few tourist-style reports on the 2002 Winter Olympics in Utah mention Mormonism. One specifically focused on alcohol regulation in Utah and made the indirect connection with polygamy by citing a billboard advertisement for beer that "One Is Not Enough."¹⁸ This article is light-hearted; but by recalling polygamy and rigid Mormon prohibitions against drinking, it positioned Mormonism as out of the mainstream.

Stories on the local LDS community presented a very different, al-

though equally exotic, aspect of Mormonism. Among the forty-three articles on the local LDS Church, excluding jubilee-related stories, about half (twenty-one articles) focus on American missionaries.¹⁹ In fact, foreign missionaries are the dominant image or face of the LDS Church in Taiwan. They become news simply because of their foreignness. In most of these stories (always accompanied by sizeable photographs), missionaries are seen as providing community service, such as teaching English, cleaning up streets, and visiting nursing homes or orphanages. But, interestingly, they are not often depicted as missionaries proselytizing—the thing they come to Taiwan for. To be fair, local members' good deeds are occasionally reported as well. However, these reports tend to be small and located on the bottom portion of news pages either with only small photographs or without illustrations.

The Church received a public relations boost during its jubilee celebration, which generated impressive news coverage.²⁰ Three activities particularly attracted the press's attention: the first Mormon missionaries in Taiwan, the island-wide bicycle relays, and the pioneer handcart reenactment during a youth conference. All three strongly reinforced the American image of the Church. Stories about Elder Weldon J. Kitchen and Elder Melvin Fish, two of the four first missionaries to Taiwan in 1956, who returned for the Jubilee were spotlighted. Their experiences during post-World War II Taiwan and their touching reunions with early members typified news reports of the early jubilee celebration. Local members became part of the news stories only in relation to the two American missionaries.

Photographs of the bicycle relays featured members and missionaries, but the dominant image stressed missionaries. All the local members featured in photographs wore white shirts; some even had ties. The pioneer handcart reenactment during the youth conference provided another exotic, and probably the most problematic, spectacle for media coverage. Most newspaper photographs showed Taiwanese youth wearing clothes from the Victorian era, imitating early Mormon pioneers pushing handcarts or crossing small streams. This image (mis)places Taiwanese youth in time and space and in a way that fits nowhere in local LDS history. However, it presumably satisfied the curiosity of journalists as well as the general public toward "the Spirit of the American West" and "American Migration History," as newspaper headlines suggested.

In short, the coverage of Mormonism in the Taiwanese media is am-

biguous, and geography seems to condition such portrayals. The image of Mormonism in the United States is mainly shaped through the reports on polygamy, and the religion is often described as a cult or a religious oddity in a far distant land. This negative image coexists with the positive portrayal of American missionaries and, to a much lesser extent, local members. Either way, however, Mormonism comes across as foreign—as something that does not quite fit in Taiwanese society. This ambiguity might have prompted another subset of newspaper articles giving tips on how to refuse Mormon missionaries in humorous and inoffensive ways.²¹

The “Inside” Narrative

Journalists do not necessarily invent these images; rather, they are often supplied with them. What people see in the local press partly reflects Church public relations strategy, which, in turn, is directly shaped by the public perception of Mormonism in Taiwan. It is a reinforcing cycle: A church with strong American characteristics is seen as American and is expected to be American; the Church in turn meets this expectation with appropriate images, thus reinforcing perceived American characteristics. One local Church leader, “Brother Lin,” with long membership and much administrative experience, noted that local leaders had tried unsuccessfully to break the cycle by promoting local members’ stories. The Taiwanese media, he concluded, simply do not deem stories about local members newsworthy.²² In a separate interview, one Public Affairs missionary said that what Taiwanese media, as well as the government and general public, want from the LDS community is something “spectacular” and “exotic.”²³ He cited an incident with the Taipei City Government, which invited the Church, among other social groups, to celebrate Confucius’s birthday, but instructed the Church to send only foreign/American members (missionaries and the mission president). Organizers wanted to use the Americans to show the globalization of the Taipei metropolis. Although amazed at this request, the Americans dutifully showed up so as not to let slip the public relations opportunity.

Some members say they are sometimes afraid to let others know of their religious affiliation; many Taiwanese think local members are trying to become like Americans by going to an American church.²⁴ This identity is reinforced both inside and outside the Church. These examples, in one way or another, indicate that the Church is in Taiwan but not of Taiwan. Fifty years of Mormonism in Taiwan have changed the size but not

the position of the Church on the island. Missionaries and the Americanness of the Church are merely used to display Taiwan's desire to be seen as cosmopolitan. The Church remains at the margin of Taiwanese society and is perceived by members and nonmembers alike as quintessentially American.

While the embrace of Americanness is doubtless instrumental in some instances in promoting missionary work, it is also my sense that many members internalize the Americanness of the Church and uncritically take it as natural. A survey of jubilee promotional materials shows such an internalization process. Many of the event posters, produced to advertise among members, were strongly American oriented. The island-wide bicycle relay poster was such an example. Two photographs of missionaries were featured—four elders and two sisters—all of them American. Similarly, of the four photographs on a poster promoting a “member-missionary” reunion, none shows a local member. The image on the youth conference poster reflects pop culture in Taiwan, with two Americanized Japanese-type comic-book characters (both are Western-looking; one with blond hair and blue eyes) holding a flag with Chinese characters—“heritage”—on it. Though not unusual in Taiwan (and indeed in East Asia), it is no small irony for Western-looking comic-book characters to represent Taiwanese youth. The word “heritage” is also ambiguous. Does it refer to Chinese/Taiwanese cultural heritage, local Church heritage, or American pioneer heritage? The attendance of former “Especially for Youth” workers from the United States to help direct the conference might also illustrate an unwitting effort to import American/Utah youth culture as a gospel norm.

The use of English in Church-owned workplaces also shows such Americanness. English becomes another, if not *the*, official language in Church buildings. English proficiency is almost a requirement for employment in the Church, since most workers need to either communicate with Church headquarters in Salt Lake City or with American Church leaders in both Taiwan and Hong Kong (e.g., mission presidents, area authorities, temple presidents, senior missionaries, etc.). Most Church employees and local Church leaders adopt English names for convenience; most Americans cannot pronounce their Chinese names. Even many regular members have English names, often given by American missionaries, and use those names in church. One sometimes hears American missionaries, especially senior missionaries, commenting on Taiwanese people's

lack of English skills, particularly with terminology, which, in their view, becomes an obstacle in communication. The demand for and acceptance of English in regular Church functions in Taiwan (and other parts of the non-English-speaking world) reinforce “the hegemony of English,” to borrow BYU Hawaii professor Mark James’s phrase.²⁵ English, he suggests, has been uncritically accepted as the world’s dominant language and, as a result, endangered many native languages. Again, the point here is not to argue that this phenomenon is unique to Taiwan or limited to the local LDS community but simply to point out that this institutional practice reinforces the hegemony of English.

Mormonism in Taiwan’s Cultural Paradox

Arjun Appadurai points out that globalization is not a unitary process but is rather characterized by the coexistence of different cultural flows, each possessing its own logic.²⁶ Contemporary cultural identity in Taiwan is similarly characterized by the confluence of distinctive cultural trends. Two seemingly paradoxical cultural flows have developed on the island since the 1990s: passionate nationalism/local identity and a strong desire for globalization. These two forces often interact with each other without clashing. Mormonism in Taiwan is affected by both flows, which work both for and against the development of the LDS Church. This section of the paper examines contemporary pros and cons of the Church’s Americanness given Taiwan’s various trends relating to cultural identity.

The Positive Side of Americanness

The Americanness of Mormonism has worked in favor of LDS growth. In the late 1950s and the 1960s, missionaries attracted highly educated social elites with English proficiency to the Church. These converts became the backbone of the local church and laid a firm foundation for the Church in Taiwan, including the translation of scriptures and the construction of the Taipei chapel.

Consider two current phenomena: First, since the end of the Christian golden age in the late 1950s, most Christian denominations have suffered either very slow or no increase in membership; some have even experienced diminished membership numbers. Second, since the 1990s Mormonism has faced a similar slowdown in parts of Asia, such as Japan, South Korea, and Hong Kong. But LDS growth in Taiwan has not slowed.²⁷ An examination of Taiwan’s colonial past and its current politi-

cal dilemma provide a helpful perspective in interpreting this difference. As mentioned earlier, Taiwan's past is a history of multi-layered colonialism. Colonial history results in a colonized mentality. Many people in Taiwan tend to have the so-called *Congyang Meiwai* (Western-worshipping, foreign-envy) psyche that leads people to become extra friendly toward Westerners. Many develop a blind belief in Western cultures and technologies. The United States had a strong presence on Taiwan after World War II, providing military and financial aid, technological assistance, cultural imports, etc. Taiwanese people still tend to lionize Americans more than other foreigners. A popular tongue-in-cheek saying—"The American moon is always rounder [than the Taiwanese moon]"—illustrates this colonized mentality.

The LDS Church, to some degree, has benefited from this Western envy and attracted many who would like to be associated with Americans. A long-time local member bluntly states, "In general, people in Taiwan worship Americans. Two-thirds of the people joined the Church because of American missionaries."²⁸ It is no secret that many come to church simply for socialization—to practice English and befriend American missionaries. "Brother Lin" felt a need to suggest that the situation may be changing, claiming that an increasing proportion of more recent converts come to church because they are searching for a religion. Nevertheless, Mormonism's American characteristics continue to attract people to the Church.²⁹ This social-psychological inclination may not be wholly unique to Taiwan, but it is particularly developed in Taiwan and has undergone little alteration in Taiwanese life even in the new millennium due largely to Taiwan's unique political history.

The island's political difficulties have made the role of the United State relevant in ways that surpass the U.S. role in even South Korea and Japan. Unresolved remains "the Taiwan issue"—which refers to the debate over Taiwan's political future. That future is often framed as having only two options: becoming an independent country or uniting with China. Facing constant military threats from China, Taiwan relies on the United States for arms sales and protection, part of its role as a kind of "legal guardian" of Taiwan for the past six decades. Taiwan has always been careful to read the signals from Washington before deciding its political moves. Unlike Japan and South Korea, which have moved toward more independence in foreign policy in the last decade or two, Taiwan has remained dependent. An example is the Anti-Secession Law, which the Chinese government

passed in March 2005, forbidding Taiwan from claiming independence, as Beijing insists that Taiwan is one of its provinces. While encouraging citizens to protest against Beijing's law, Taiwan President Chen Shuiben waited for Washington's reaction before vocally denouncing Beijing's law and formally mobilizing the largest-ever demonstration in Taiwan. In any case, Taiwan cannot afford to offend the United States. Although the U.S. invasion of Iraq has generated anti-American sentiment in many parts of the world, Taiwan's government and media rarely disagree publicly with the Bush administration. Most news reports of the war are filtered through the lens of American foreign policy. As a result, there is no significant anti-American sentiment in Taiwan. This pro-American attitude, I think, protects missionaries from outcries challenging the legitimacy of the war in Iraq and U.S. international relations, allowing American missionaries to stay focused on proselytizing.

Taiwan's international options have been greatly restrained since the United Nations recognized China and expelled Taiwan in 1971, and since the United States and China rebuilt their diplomatic ties after President Richard M. Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972. China has either bullied or enticed nation after nation into cutting ties with Taiwan. Taiwan currently has formal diplomatic ties with only around twenty-five countries, mostly small nations in Africa and the Pacific Islands, to whom Taiwan gives large amounts of financial aid in exchange for recognition. The more energetically Beijing tries to curtail Taiwan's international relations, the more eagerly Taiwan strives for international recognition, and the more obsessed it is with globalization. Acceptance of an American church fits into this psychological and practical geopolitics. Mormonism, as a particularly visible manifestation of Americanness, becomes a welcome guest that helps to showcase Taiwan as a legitimate part of the global community.

Challenges of Americanness

Existing simultaneously but disjunctively with Taiwan's embrace of (especially American) globalization is Taiwan's search for identity. Economic growth and political liberation have generated post-colonial consciousness and strong nationalism in Taiwan. Thus, while Americanness has aided the numerical growth of the LDS Church, Taiwan's indigenous movement has also hindered broad LDS participation in, and influence on, Taiwanese society. There are reasons to believe that Mormonism may be having only a surface-level impact, rather than deeply integrating with

Taiwan's society. The LDS Church faces four particular challenges in Taiwan.

1. New Kid on the Block. In comparison to other Christian denominations, Mormonism is a new kid on the block. Four hundred years of Christian missionary efforts have secured some denominational presence on Taiwan, even if the Christian proportion is relatively small—5% of the total population. Catholicism, for example, became the major religion among the aboriginal population. The Presbyterian Church, with its long-time involvement in the democratization process, also won a place in Taiwan. With its late arrival (thirty-six years after David O. McKay, then an apostle, dedicated China in 1921 and seven years after missionaries went to Hong Kong), Mormonism probably missed a chance at integrating itself into Taiwan society in the early Nationalist KMT era (1940s–1950s).

Japanese colonialism and the political instability that followed World War II might have delayed the Church's decision to send missionaries to Taiwan. The "return" of Taiwan to China after the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45) did not stabilize the political situation on the island. Taiwanese people were again terrorized by the new regime. The civil war between Nationalists and Communists in China was extended to Taiwan after the Nationalists lost China and escaped to the island in 1949. Communist leader Mao Zedong wanted to "wash Taiwan in blood" and therefore bombed the intervening islands controlled by the KMT Nationalists. During the so-called First Taiwan Strait Crisis (1954–55), the Nationalists lost the Yijiangshan Islands and the Tachen Islands and barely maintained control over Jinmen (Quemoy) and Matsu islands. Many countries, including the United States, did not expect Taiwan to survive.

After years of on-and-off offensives, Mao finally decided to make the timeline for Taiwan's "liberation" indefinite. Mormon missionaries came toward the end of this political instability. Unfortunately this time period also marked the end of the golden age for Christianity in Taiwan, as local consciousness started to rise. Consequently, Mormonism's ability to become deeply involved in Taiwan's society has been limited.

2. The Indigenous Movement. The ongoing indigenous movement posits a fundamental challenge for the development of the LDS Church in Taiwan. The lifting of martial law in 1987 dramatically transformed Taiwan-

ese society. Political liberation and economic confidence led to a search for identity. Local consciousness and grassroots culture have become the main ideologies affecting almost every aspect of Taiwanese identity. Consider language. If language is a crucial site for contesting identity, as many theorists argue, the revival of mother tongues has challenged the legitimacy of Mandarin, the official language installed by the Nationalists. Some intellectuals have even gone so far as to label Mandarin the “colonizers’ language.” In the wake of the indigenous movement, the government has instigated a new school curriculum to teach children and youth their native tongues. The media also reflect this new trend and incorporate various dialects into regular programs and news broadcasts.

As Weller observes, religious practices have always been connected closely to changing identity in Taiwan.³⁰ Whether a religion can identify with local culture in post-martial-law Taiwan might determine its acceptance by the Taiwanese people. Catholicism and many Christian denominations were on the frontline of indigenization even before Taiwan’s political reforms. Catholicism identifies itself with aboriginal cultures and uses tribal languages in its worship services and Bible readings. The Presbyterian Church also gradually became a key player in religious indigenization in Taiwan after it came to the island in 1865. It called for a native ministry, established an indigenous clergy, ran an independent Taiwanese church, and invented a Romanization for the Taiwanese (Hoklo) language in order to translate the Bible. Since the 1970s, the Presbyterian Church has been sympathetic toward the Taiwan Independence Movement, allying itself with the Taiwanese and their Hoklo language.³¹ In other words, the Presbyterian Church helped Hoklos “define their sense of cultural/linguistic self-identity.”³² These churches identify themselves as *Taiwanese* Catholicism or *Chinese* Christianity in an attempt to distance themselves from being *huan a gao* (literally meaning, in Hoklo, “barbaric religion,” referring to Western/foreign churches).³³ Some Christian denominations, such as the New Testament Church and the True Jesus Church, are locally grown, with indigenized Pentecostalism in their history, organizational structure, doctrine, and rituals.³⁴

The LDS Church seems to have little desire to adjust to the indigenous movement. Mandarin remains the common language used in formal Church functions in Taiwan. Foreign missionaries sometimes feel frustrated because they are not able to communicate with many of the older generation who use Taiwanese. “Brother Lin” half-jokingly stated that

missionaries might have better success if they could also speak Hoklo, particularly in the southern part of Taiwan where grassroots identity is strong. I taught at a university in Kaohsiung in 2000–2001 in southern Taiwan, and constantly found myself needing to speak Hoklo to connect with students there. But at church, during both my mission and living experiences, Mandarin was the only language spoken. When Hoklo speakers come to church, they need a translator. This awkwardness undoubtedly turns many people away. Britsch asserts that, in the Church's early days in Taiwan, missionaries found more success among those with Christian backgrounds than those without.³⁵ Those Christians he refers to were probably not the aborigines or Presbyterians mentioned above but more likely urban, middle-class, relatively educated, younger, Mandarin-speaking Christians who had come to Taiwan with the Nationalist government. In continuing to give linguistic priority to Mandarin, the Church may have failed to reach a population as wide as it could hope for.

Of course, the Church's prioritization of Mandarin makes some sense. It has been the country's *lingua franca* since the Nationalists arrived. In practical terms, it is still the language that reaches the most people, both in Taiwan now and potentially in China in the future. However, cultural sensitivity in post-martial-law Taiwan is crucial. It doesn't really take much effort to make the cultural connection. In fact, many missionaries learn a few phrases of Hoklo to impress people. But the problem is that they often use those phrases in a somewhat demeaning way, either to make fun of Hoklo speakers or to show that the dialect does not sound as "graceful" or "polished" as Mandarin. There is still little sense that Mormonism is using language to authentically integrate itself within Taiwan's society.

3. *Revitalization of Traditional Religions.* "Secularization theory" expects religion to decline in situations of increased modernization and economic development. However, the orthodoxy of the secularization thesis has been seriously challenged in recent decades. Reviewing sociological research on religion, Rodney Stark and Roger Finke question the correlation between modernization and religiosity and propose a rethinking of the paradigm.³⁶ Taiwan's experience also contradicts secularization theory. Modernization has not pushed Taiwan away from religion; on the contrary, it has pulled Taiwan toward it—especially toward its traditional expressions. The transformation of Taiwan society, in fact, has produced

TABLE 1
STATISTICS ON RELIGIONS IN TAIWAN

Religion	Members	% of Total population	Temples/ Churches	Universities/ Colleges	Hospitals
Buddhism	8,086,000	35.1	4,006	1	3
Daoism	7,600,000	33.0	*18,274	8	3
Yi Guan Dao	810,000	3.5	3,260	—	—
Protestantism	605,000	2.6	3,609	7	14
Catholicism	298,000	1.3	1,151	4	12
Lord of Universe Church	298,000	1.3	50	—	—
Maitreya Great Dao	250,000	1.1	2,200	—	—
Tian De Jiao	200,000	0.9	14	—	—
Li-ism	186,000	0.8	138	—	—
Syuan Yuan Jiao	152,700	0.7	22	—	—
Islam	58,000	0.3	6	—	—
Tenrikyo	35,000	0.2	153	—	—
Universe Maitreya Emperor Jiao	35,000	0.2	12	—	—
Hai Zih Dao	30,000	0.1	55	—	—
Confucianism	26,700	0.1	139	—	—
Church of Scientology	20,000	0.1	7	—	—
Baha'i	16,000	0.1	13	—	—
The Chinese Heritage and Mission Religion	5,000	<0.1	5	—	—
Zhonghua Sheng Jiao	3,200	<0.1	7	—	—
Mahikarikyo	1,000	<0.1	9	—	—
Precosmic Salvationism	1,000	<0.1	6	—	—
Huang Zhong	1,000	<0.1	1	—	—
Da Yi Jiao	1,000	<0.1	1	—	—
Total Religious Population	18,718,600	81.3	33,138	20	32
Total Population	23,036,087	100	—	—	—

Source: *Taiwan Yearbook* 2006.

*Includes 8,753 home shrines.

its own paradigm shift in the island's religious terrain. The "Taiwan Miracle" starting from the 1960s gradually reduced the island's economic reliance on the United States and diminished the social welfare functions of Christian churches in general, contributing, as a result, to a decline of Western religion in Taiwan. The end of the golden age of Christianity coincided with the beginning of the revitalization of traditional religions. In fact, traditional religions benefited from economic growth. Many Bud-

dhist and Daoist organizations emerged during this time and eventually became the backbones of contemporary Taiwanese society.

Four Buddhist forces, in particular, have become symbols of grassroots identity and agents within civil society, in both Taiwan and abroad: *Ciji* (or *Tzu Chi*), *Foguangshan*, *Fagushan*, and *Zhongtaishan*. Each of these organizations has a charismatic leader who attracts millions of followers and generates substantial donations. Each also operates sophisticated media outlets and mobilizes seemingly endless numbers of volunteers. They build schools and hospitals and are involved in other humanitarian relief efforts; they have, in the past two decades, gradually replaced the social functions filled by Christian churches. Their influence is expanding transnationally with strong proselyting efforts and influence among the Taiwanese diaspora.³⁷

According to Taiwanese government records and as partially indicated in Table 1, religious groups currently operate 32 hospitals, 43 clinics, 25 retirement homes, 33 centers for the mentally challenged, 14 institutions for the physically disabled, 3 rehabilitation centers, 12 orphanages, and 39 nurseries. They have also established 352 kindergartens, 12 elementary schools, 41 high schools, 6 colleges, 14 universities, and 107 monasteries and seminaries, and set up 147 libraries and 59 publishing houses, with 774 publications.³⁸ In comparison to traditional religions and established Christian denominations, Mormonism is virtually invisible and has very little impact on Taiwan's society. The LDS Church is not even listed as an independent religion in this government source but rather is included in the Protestant category. In a recent *BYU Studies* article, Richard B. Stamps, former missionary and mission president, argues that Mormon missionaries have contributed to Taiwanese society on an extensive scale both monetarily and culturally.³⁹ I respectfully disagree. Although the Church and missionaries have brought in American dollars, the amount remains insignificant in comparison to the Taiwanese economy as a whole. I find no compelling evidence, either, that Mormonism has had much impact culturally.⁴⁰

Seeing the strong social impact of Buddhist and Daoist organizations, many local members wonder why Church headquarters does not invest more money in Taiwan.⁴¹ However, "Brother Lin" argued in his interview that the Church has actually put more money in Taiwan than its share. He cited the Taipei Temple, new chapels across the island, and the recently completed Church office building as evidence of the Church's in-

vestment on the island.⁴² Nevertheless, he recognized the gap between the LDS community and the general Taiwanese population and acknowledged that the Church is often one or two steps slower than other religions and charity organizations in providing humanitarian relief in Taiwan because of the constraints accompanying central control of the budget and lack of emergency funds available locally. Every request needs to go through bureaucratic procedures back and forth from Taiwan through Hong Kong and then Salt Lake City. In addition, given its small number of members, the Church is in no position to compete with traditional religions or even other Christian churches in numbers of volunteers and frequency of social services. Of course, the leaders at Church headquarters may view its mission differently than that of providing social services; however, such an approach risks failing to fully encounter religion as it is understood in Taiwan.

4. *Universalism versus Localization.* In comparing Christian missionizing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with contemporary mission fields, a renowned German missiologist Walter Freytag commented, "Formerly missions had problems, but now they have become a problem to themselves."⁴³ The post-colonial world has challenged the traditional West-centered focus of Christianity. Thus, Mary Schaller Blaufuss, a theology professor, argues, "The field of missiology suffers from a 'Colonial Captivity,'" which prevents missions from going forward.⁴⁴ Many scholars suspect that effectiveness in spreading the gospel in today's world requires a shift in Christian missiology, in both conceptualization and practice. These reformers acknowledge problems with the traditional model of Western-dominated knowledge and authority and call for a de-centered, contextual approach to Christianity. In other words, they argue for an indigenous Christianity—integrating local culture and tradition into an understanding of Christianity and missionary work.⁴⁵

Mormonism, I suggest, stands at a similar crossroads. Missions and American-centeredness generally are no longer simply a means to expansion, but a cultural issue in their own right. Accompanying the Church's international growth are questions such as whether Mormonism is an American religion with many non-American members or a true world religion, and whether Mormonism can be applied universally or should allow room for local cultural negotiation and adaptation. Such questions have become central for scholars of Mormonism.⁴⁶ They point out that inter-

national success has, in fact, led to tighter central control from Church headquarters. The claim of being a universal church often deemphasizes the need to integrate the Church into local societies. This universalistic view tends to overemphasize the similar, compatible parts of local culture (e.g., family values in Confucianism) but shuns the incompatible parts of local tradition (e.g., ancestor worship, explained below).

As mentioned earlier, missionaries are able to convert more than a thousand souls per year; but the activity rate in Taiwan remains very low, about 25 percent.⁴⁷ Every time I visit my home ward in Taiwan, I notice a core, stable group of members who have been active in the Church for years or even decades, but more recent converts are constantly in flux, seldom present when I visit again. Why is the Church able to convert but unable to retain new members? I assume that the answer differs to some degree from place to place, but I hypothesize that a consistent element regardless of locale is the same core issue: local cultural traditions. At least in the case of Taiwan, I think the gap between Mormonism (or Christianity in general) and traditional culture/belief systems correlates with low retention rate. Britsch correctly identifies some difficulties of Church growth in a Chinese society in his important history of Mormonism in the Far East.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, he rhetorically quickly turns to a preaching tone and dismisses the issue with a faith-promoting quotation. Approaches like Britsch's and Stamp's, while faith-confirming, tend to fall short in providing insights that come from grappling seriously with uncomfortable data.

Epistemologically, Chinese people generally have a very different view about religion and deity from Westerners. The Chinese, in general, see religion as a natural human tendency, not something to force upon someone, or to express with undue insistence. As a result, most are tolerant toward different belief systems. Although there have been historical exceptions, the Chinese do not often fight over religion because of their broadly tolerant attitude toward how religion should be practiced. Religion is seen by many Chinese people as a way of life but often not in the formalized and ritualized way Westerners/Christians are used to. For example, clearly defined religious membership, boundaries, loyalty, and weekly services are not required. In their view, different religions do not necessarily contradict one another. They do not claim the only truth; instead, they believe that truth encompasses everything. It might puzzle a Christian to see a Taiwanese person going to a Buddhist temple right after

visiting a Daoist shrine, but it is a very common religious practice in Taiwan. Many Taiwanese people do not see a need to insist on monotheism, just as most Christians have a hard time understanding/accepting polytheism. It takes time and determination for new converts to make this sea change in worldview.

Another crucial difference between Western ideas and traditional Chinese culture concerns ancestors. Many Chinese/Taiwanese regard becoming a Christian as betraying one's tradition and ancestors. After I joined the Church, my mother often sighed and repeated a local saying: "Christianity: nobody weeps when people die." What she is concerned about is that I will not care for her when she (or anyone in the family) dies. Many Chinese believe in an afterlife in which the dead will live well in the spirit world through regular offerings (of food, incense, religious paper money, etc.) from their family and descendants. Thus, they will not become dislocated, hungry spirits floating aimlessly in the spirit world. My mother also worries that I will not have anyone to provide me with necessities when I leave this earth. The saying thus expresses a common resentment over Christianity's hostility toward ancestor worship.

Through localization, Catholicism generally accepts Chinese ways of paying respects to ancestors and to heaven/gods and adapts its religious rituals accordingly. Protestantism, on the other hand, interprets the first commandment ("thou shalt have no other gods before me") to exclude any traditional practice that recognizes other entities. The LDS Church is able to effectively use genealogy and temple work to connect with the local population on this issue. However, defining one's devotion toward ancestors as idol worship, as is done by most Christian denominations, including Mormonism, creates a fundamental conflict for converts and their families. Male converts face an even more difficult dilemma than their female counterparts. In a patriarchal culture that emphasizes male obligations toward family (and, by extension, ancestors), many male converts feel particular pressure to follow cultural traditions and often feel forced to make tough decisions between their family and the Church.

Like many converts around the globe, members in Taiwan also risk being cut off from their original social networks once they join the Church. Such alienation does not necessarily come from persecution or anti-Mormon sentiment, but as a natural result of a different lifestyle from the rest of the Taiwanese population. With limited membership, the Church has not been able to fully provide a meaningful support system

for local members who face this alienation. In an economy-driven society like Taiwan, materialism defines the standard of living and the quality of life. People constantly overwork themselves in an extremely competitive environment. Missionaries complain that people are not receptive to the gospel because of constraints on their time. Members carry extra burdens because they also assume multiple, heavily tasked Church callings. Some eventually burn out and leave the Church.

Conclusion

The political situation and identity struggles in Taiwan pose an interesting challenge for Mormonism. The Americanness of the Church, in this context, yields both positive and negative results for the development of Mormonism on this island nation. As the Church becomes more globalized, non-American congregations become contested ground for universalistic views of the gospel versus localization/indigenization. Simply asking non-American members to repent and change cultural practices that are seemingly incompatible with American Mormonism might not prove fruitful or even desirable in a post-colonial world where strong nationalism has aroused the desire for local identity and collective consciousness.

The long-term, stable success of a religion in a new environment largely depends on how it can transform itself to fit in the society in which it resides, without necessarily compromising its doctrine. Christianity in the Western world and Buddhism in Eastern Asia are examples. Negotiation between American Mormonism and local cultures is essential for Mormonism to become a world religion. In the case of Taiwan, the success of Catholicism and the Presbyterian Church, or even Buddhism, has much to do with their willingness to connect with and integrate into Taiwanese society.

It is certainly not yet fair to expect Mormonism to look “Taiwanese,” since the Church has only been in Taiwan for half a century. However, viewing the length of time Mormonism has been in other cultures, time might not be the most crucial element. It is more a mind set and how the Church defines Mormonism that will eventually determine the shape it takes. As the Church is working toward global Mormonism, I believe that an approach that takes the local cultural, political, and socio-economical context into account will offer great potential.⁴⁹

Notes

1. Marjorie Newton, “Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia,” *Dia-*

logue: *A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 193–206; Jiro Numano, “Perseverance Amid Paradox: The Struggle of the LDS Church in Japan Today,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 138–55.

2. The primary sources for this paper include information that spans 2002–07 from interviews with Taiwanese members, local Church leaders, and American missionaries; Taiwanese popular periodicals; major newspapers’ coverage of the LDS Church from 2000 to 2006; and Church promotional materials for the jubilee celebration. All interviewees are anonymous or pseudonymous.

3. Robert P. Weller, “Living at the Edge: Religion, Capitalism, and the End of the Nation-State in Taiwan,” in *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism*, edited by Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000), 215.

4. John E. Wills Jr., “The Seventeenth-Century Transformation: Taiwan under the Dutch and the Cheng Regime,” in *Taiwan: A New History*, edited by Murray A. Rubinstein (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 85.

5. In English, the generic term “indigenous movement” usually describes the revitalization of aboriginal culture and political rights in the post-colonial world. Taiwan’s cultural politics, however, presents a difficulty. The Taiwanese term “indigenous movement” is widely used by scholars to describe the late twentieth-century social/political/cultural reexamination of Taiwan’s relationship with China and the world, and the attempt to create a Taiwan-centered identity, most frequently by Taiwanese of Chinese ethnicity. This movement is different from the concurrent “aboriginal movement,” led by Taiwan’s aboriginal peoples to revive cultural identity and political rights. To avoid potential confusion to readers, I thought about instead using terms such as “Taiwanese nationalism,” “localism,” “nativism,” “regional identity,” or “de-Sinification.” While the indigenous movement encompasses elements of these concepts, none of these other terms quite captures the same meaning as “indigenous movement.” Therefore, I use it. Readers should understand that, in the context of Taiwan, “aboriginal” refers to Taiwan’s first peoples, while “indigenous” refers to a Taiwan-focused identity that suggests a decentering of mainland historical experiences and cultural inclinations.

6. Wills, “The Seventeenth-Century Transformation,” 92.

7. *Ibid.*; see also Ke Xinya, “The Development of the Catholic Church in Taiwan” and Yan Jiajun, “The Truth on the Cross: The Development of Christianity on Taiwan” in *An Overview of Taiwan Religions*, edited by Li Shiwei (Taipei: Boyang, 2002), 62–83, 84–105.

8. Ke, "The Development of the Catholic Church in Taiwan," 66.

9. The Chinese Book of Mormon was first published in 1965, the Doctrine and Covenants in 1973, and the Pearl of Great Price in 1976.

10. See R. Lanier Britsch, *From the East: The History of the Latter-day Saints in Asia, 1851–1996* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 254–55.

11. *Ibid.*, 280.

12. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Historical Department, *Deseret News/Deseret Morning News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1960–2007); see also David L. Stewart Jr., "Taiwan," *Cumoram Project International LDS Database*, www.cumoram.com/cgi-bin/db.cgi?view_records=View%2BRecords&Country=Taiwan (accessed April 23, 2007). The anomalies in growth between 1978 and 1983 might be mistakes in the official record. Nevertheless, without other sources for comparison, I followed the official account.

13. Dong Fangyuan, "Pseudo-Christian Religions in Taiwan: Mormon Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, and The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity," *Taiwan Wen Hsien* 53, no. 3 (2000): 237–61.

14. Jiang Caiteng, "The Coverage of Religion in Mass Media in Contemporary Taiwan and Its Possible Social Impacts," *Association of Taiwan Religious Studies* 4 (2000): 115–25.

15. Huang Weiwen, "Visiting Mormon Headquarters," *China Times*, September 11, 2005, E8.

16. Huang Caijuan, "Salt Lake City: Beauty of Desert," *Mingshen Bao*, May 10, 2004, D1.

17. Xu Wenli, "Oahu: Seven-Tribe Cultural Shows," *United Daily*, October 20, 2004, F1.

18. Ruan Ziliang, "Mormon Territory, Olympics Visitors Follow the Rules," *China Times*, January 30, 2002, 31.

19. Most people in Taiwan do not distinguish Americans from other Westerners. Many call all Caucasians "Americans" regardless of their nationalities. Many non-American missionaries complain about this misidentification but cannot do much about it. Such a generalization, in a way, shows the hegemonic influence of the United States on Taiwan. To many Taiwanese, the United States represents all Western countries.

20. I located fourteen news articles related to the jubilee celebration. All major Taiwanese newspapers are islandwide and most have regional/local editions; thus, some local news might not be collected in the database.

21. Fu Tianyu, "Who Is Afraid of Mormon Missionaries?" *United Daily*, October 19, 2002, 39.

22. "Brother Lin" (pseud.), interviewed, December 2006, audiocassette in my possession.

23. Public affairs missionaries, interviewed December 2006, audiocassette in my possession. Public Affairs missionaries are sent to twenty-eight international and thirteen U.S. "key cities." They are under the direct supervision of the Church Public Affairs Department and are not considered part of local mission structure.

24. Local members expressed this sentiment in three group interviews: two conducted in the winter of 2003 in Kaohsiung (seven people) and Taipei (four people), and one in the summer of 2005 in Taipei (five people). Participants in the 2003 groups were active members who held leadership positions in local wards and stakes; three of them had been in the Church for more than a decade, three of them more than twenty years, and one for forty years. The 2005 group consisted of both new members and long-time members, ranging from two months to twenty-four years. Of course, not all members agree with one another. "Brother Wang," who was in a stake presidency at the time of the interview (summer 2005), claimed that he seldom felt Americanness in the functions of the Church.

25. Mark James, "The Hegemony of English: A Way Forward," David O. McKay Lecture, Brigham Young University Hawaii, February 16, 2006 (Laie, Hawaii: Brigham Young University Hawaii, 2006).

26. Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Theory, Culture, & Society* 7, nos. 2–3 (1995): 295–310.

27. Stewart, "Taiwan," Cumorah Project International. Ryan Cragun recently found that LDS Church growth rates correlate significantly (and negatively in the index's upper reaches) with the United Nations' Human Development Index. Ryan Cragun, "The Secularization Transition: Worldwide Growth of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, November 3, 2007, Tampa, Florida. Though Taiwan's Human Development Index is comparable to those of Japan and South Korea (in the range where expected growth is quite low), LDS growth is anomalously high.

28. This individual is a Church Educational System employee, an active member for more than twenty years. Interviewed winter 2003. Audiocassette in my possession.

29. "Brother Wang" and a couple of participants in the summer 2005 group interview echo this view, pointing out that, in the past, missionaries

tended to attract young converts; in recent years, however, new members actually come from a variety of age groups. They see this as an evidence of changing motives among those who join the Church.

30. Robert P. Weller, "Religion and New Taiwanese Identities: Some First Thoughts," *Harvard Studies on Religion: Papers of Taiwan Studies Workshop* 3 (2000): 225–32.

31. Generally speaking, there are four ethnic groups in Taiwan: (1) "Hoklos" are the descendants of Han Chinese from Fujian Province who immigrated to Taiwan during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. They speak Hoklo, or *Minnan hua* (Southern Fujian dialect). As the largest ethnic group (70 percent of Taiwan's population), they identify Hoklo as the Taiwanese language and themselves as Taiwanese; (2) "Hakkas," descendants of a different ethnicity of Chinese immigrants from eastern Guangdong and the mountains of Fujian, who came about the same time as Hoklo immigrants. Hakka speakers make up 15 percent of the population; (3) "Mainlanders" are those who came to Taiwan after 1949 with the Nationalist government and their offspring. This group is extremely diverse, coming from all over China and speaking the various dialects of their hometowns. However, all are lumped together and generally thought of as Mandarin speakers. This group comprises around 13 percent of Taiwan's population; (4) Aborigines are the smallest minority, consisting of only 2 percent of Taiwan's population. There are various tribes speaking different Austronesian languages. John Cooper, *Taiwan: Nation State or Province?* 4th ed. (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 2003). A long history of intermarriage, however, makes these categories more a form of political classification than ethnic reality.

Identity politics is a hot debate in Taiwan, mainly over the issue of who is Taiwanese. The hegemonic Hoklo claim has been seriously challenged. "Taiwanese" now more broadly refers to whoever identifies himself or herself with Taiwan's culture and political fate, which allows even some first-generation Mainlanders to regard themselves as Taiwanese. The term "New Taiwanese" is particularly popular among Mainlander politicians in order to position themselves in Taiwan's society and to appeal to non-Mainlander voters.

32. Murray A. Rubinstein, "Mission of Faith, Burden of Witness: The Presbyterian Church in the Evolution of Modern Taiwan, 1865–1989," *American Asian Review* 9, no. 2 (1991): 71.

33. Ke, "The Development of the Catholic Church in Taiwan," 81; Yan, "The Truth on the Cross," 101. Chinese, especially Han Chinese, are as ethnocentric as other civilizations. They often objectify non-Han people as the Other and assign them low status, calling all non-Han people barbarians.

34. Murray A. Rubinstein, "The New Testament Church and the Protestant Community," in *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the Present*, edited by Murray A. Rubinstein (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 445–73.

35. Britsch, *From the East*, 278.

36. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

37. Jiang Caiteng, *Contemporary Taiwan Buddhism* (Taipei: Nantian Press, 1997); see also Andre Laliberté, *The Politics of Buddhist Organizations in Taiwan: 1989–2003* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).

38. "Religion," *Taiwan Yearbook 2006*, <http://www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website/5-gp/yearbook/22Religion.htm> (accessed November 5, 2007). The Catholic Church runs 186 schools while Protestant churches operate 158 schools ranging from kindergartens to colleges. See Paul R. Katz, "Religion and the State in Post-War Taiwan," *China Quarterly* 174 (2003): 395–412.

39. Richard B. Stamps, "The Cultural Impact of Mormon Missionaries on Taiwan," *BYU Studies* 41, no. 4 (2002): 103–14.

40. Stamps also asserts that missionaries are "making a sacrifice to serve the people of Taiwan" and "reinforc[e] Chinese values" "through their teaching and activities" at the time when "traditional Chinese social values . . . are increasingly under pressure in fast-paced Taiwan." *Ibid.*, 107, 110. While I acknowledge missionaries' good work in Taiwan, his comments can also be interpreted as posing an anthropologist's gaze on Taiwanese people with his strong missionary mentality by assuming superiority over people he was serving and writing about. Traditional Chinese values, he assumes, need to be maintained and retaught to Chinese by American missionaries. The inclusion of a photograph in his article of an American missionary pointing to local food displayed by a street peddler reinforces a sense of American superiority. To native eyes, this photograph comes across as a typical example of cultural ethnocentrism, with an American missionary making fun of local food (in this case, chicken feet and organs) as unclean and repulsive. This photograph partakes of a version of Orientalism: the West (American missionary) as progressive, modern, and civilized; the East (Taiwanese cuisine/peddler) as regressive, backward, and barbaric.

41. Group interview in Taipei, summer 2005.

42. He hinted, however, at the sentiment shared among many local members that the Church's investment in Taiwan seems to aim toward the Church's preparation for China. Over the years, members in Taiwan have been constantly reminded about the possibility of opening China's door for the Church, and they have been encouraged to prepare themselves for this

mission. The question of whether Taiwan should unite with China or become an independent state has painfully divided the Taiwanese population. Interestingly enough, members in Taiwan, regardless of their individual political inclination, seem not to talk much about their stances on Taiwan's political future, at least in public. The Church's noninvolvement in politics and concerns about unity among members may discourage conversation on the topic.

43. Quoted in Lalsangkima Pachuau, "Missiology in a Pluralistic World: The Place of Mission Study in Theological Education," http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1177#_edn13 (accessed November 5, 2007). For a slightly different version of the quotation, see Mary Schaller Blaufuss, "De-centered and De-centering Missiology: A Search for New Relationships and New Terminology," *Asia Journal of Theology* 16, no. 2 (2002): 435.

44. Blaufuss, "De-centered and De-centering Missiology," 428.

45. Ibid. 428; Kirsteen Kim, "Missiology as Global Conversation of (Contextual) Theologies," *Mission Studies* 21, no. 1 (2004): 39–53; Herb Swanson, "Said's Orientalism and the Study of Christian Missions," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 3 (2004): 107–12; Notto R. Thelle, "Changed by the East: Notes on Missionary Communication and Transformation," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 30, no. 3 (2006): 115–21; Yeow Choo Lak and Megumi Yoshida, "Doing Theology in Asia: The Narrative Way," *Asia Journal of Theology* 16, no. 2 (2002): 449–66.

46. See, for example, Walter E. A. van Beek, "Mormon Europeans or European Mormons? An 'Afro-European' View on Religious Colonization," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 3–36; Marjorie Newton, "'Almost Like Us': The American Socialization of Australia Converts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 9–20; Jennifer Huss Basquiat, "Embodied Mormonism: Performance, Vodou and the LDS Faith in Haiti," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 1–34; J. Douglas Davies, "World Religion: Dynamics and Constraints"; Gerald R. McDermott, "Testing Stark's Thesis: Is Mormonism the First New World Religion Since Islam?"; Jan Shipp, "Joseph Smith and the Making of Global Religion"; and Roger R. Keller, "Authority and Worldwide Growth," in *The Worlds of Joseph Smith*, edited by John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies Press, 2006), 251–316.

47. Stewart, "Taiwan," Cumorah Project International LDS Database.

48. Britsch, *From the East*, 284–88; see also Janice Clark, "Taiwan: Steep Peaks and Towering Faith," *Ensign*, August 1975, 55; Christopher K. Bigelow,

"Taiwan: Four Decades of Faith," *Ensign*, September 1998, 39; Raye Kao, "A Higher Calling," *Taipei Review*, October 2001, 14–21.

49. Blaufuss, "De-centered and De-centering Missiology," 429–30.

The Scholarly Study of Mormonism in Finland: An Overview of Literature, Research Ideas, and Sources

Kim B. Östman

The study of churches and religious movements is especially prone to the issues of bias and selective presentation due to researcher position and organizational politics. Like many other religions, Mormonism as an object of study has not escaped this problem.¹

With time, though, there has been a notable change and maturing in the study of Mormonism. Increasing numbers of researchers are now looking for analytical syntheses that are both detached from religious truth claims and based on a wide range of reliable sources and methods, studying Mormonism simply as one religious tradition among others. “Mormon studies” has lately emerged as a nascent academic subdiscipline with a growing body of literature and with institutional developments taking place at various universities.² That said, however, fundamental considerations related to the academically problematic intersection between faith and scholarship still remain to be satisfactorily solved before the field can develop more fully.³

With respect to geographical concentration and cultural views, it is evident that much of what presently constitutes Mormon studies has so far been conducted from a comparatively narrow North American perspective. Research on Mormonism’s history, for instance, has been filtered mostly through a narrative centered on the United States. Mormonism in the rest of the world is, in this discourse, often simply placed under the label “the international church”—as if the United States itself were not

part of the international as opposed to the domestic in the eyes of an Asian scholar, for example. Social science research on the Church overwhelmingly focuses on the Latter-day Saints in the United States—a one-sided view when considering the rather unique nature of the American religious landscape compared with the rest of the world.

The emphasis on the North American perspective is understandable for many reasons. Mormon headquarters are located in the United States and the movement's foundational events took place there. One must also consider possible language barriers for U.S.-based scholars desiring to study the Mormon experience in other nations. Furthermore, the United States is one of the few countries where Mormonism actually has any meaningful presence on the religious scene, thus justifying larger research efforts.

It could be argued, however, that the U.S.-centric discourse has led Mormon studies into a state of myopia. While much is said among scholars concerning Mormonism as a global religion, or perhaps even as a burgeoning world religion, very little effort is expended on actually studying and analyzing the widely varying and often highly challenging Mormon experience outside the United States. When it is done, the story of Mormonism in non-U.S. nations tends to be studied through the frameworks and activities of American leaders or “gospel heroes.”⁴ The grass-roots experience of non-U.S. Mormons is not usually elevated to a level where it could give input to the broader study of religious experience, and the complexities and implications of a non-U.S. host culture's interaction with Mormonism are seldom analyzed to any greater or meaningful extent. Mormon studies thus, probably unintentionally, tends to follow the model of colonization used by the Mormon Church itself—that is, silencing the colonized in favor of the colonizer.⁵

The real depths of the worldwide LDS experience will begin to be plumbed and Mormon studies will blossom more fully only when fundamental problems and limitations such as these are widely recognized and overcome. Such a paradigm shift will also enable Mormon studies to broaden its views from details of interest primarily to other Mormons and to bring it into constant dialogue with the various broader scientific disciplines to which it belongs.

With this brief contextualization in place, the rest of my article will seek to answer the call to further transnationalize Mormon studies. My immediate purpose is to map the landscape of scholarly research on Mor-

monism in the northern European country of Finland. Independent since 1917 and a member of the European Union since 1995, Finland is a country with approximately 5.2 million inhabitants and, despite a very high level of secularization, a culturally strong Evangelical Lutheran national church. A plethora of smaller religious movements operates in the country, although they are often viewed with suspicion by the mainstream population, especially if they are of foreign origin. The Mormon Church is viewed as among these movements.

I will begin my literature review by surveying the peer-reviewed scientific research done so far. I also mention some devotionally colored sources that are important in view of future research. My purpose is not to evaluate the correctness of the research, and I recognize that my overview is not deep enough for a scholar who desires to actually engage and utilize some of the prior research specifically. My purpose, rather, is to point interested researchers in the direction of existing sources by giving a general picture of prior topics, questions, and research results. In light of these data, I then propose some questions that future research could fruitfully explore. Finally, I give a brief overview of the archival and primary sources that are available for studying the Mormon experience in Finland. This present study can also, I hope, serve as a preliminary model for similar overviews concerning the study of Mormonism in other countries.

Research Literature

Probably the largest gap in the Finnish literature is the lack of a broad scholarly introduction to Mormonism. Some brief general overviews do exist; however, due to their abbreviated nature, the interested researcher must turn to the English-language literature to get a basic sense of the LDS movement and contemporary research paradigms.

One of the earliest of these Finnish overviews describes LDS Church history, basic doctrines, and the Finnish manifestation of the Church. Authored by Alarik Corander, it is based on a paper given at a 1979 seminar on current religious movements.⁶ The more recent general overviews to be mentioned here are included in books that chart the Finnish religious landscape. These newer texts focus mostly on the Mormon Church's formative history, its doctrines and organization, and discussions of Mormon thinking concerning society and other churches. They were authored by Harri Heino, late director of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland's Church Research Institute.⁷

Despite the paucity of general introductions, more specific research on aspects of Mormonism has been done either in Finland or dealing with Finland. I will survey this research literature in the following sections. The literature consists of scientific articles and university theses and other university-level studies, on various levels. The theses can be divided into two major groups: those that deal with Mormonism in Finland and those that deal with Mormonism in general—for example, general Mormon theology or some other aspect of Mormonism. With respect to theses, my overview is limited to describing the contents of those on the master's level and mentioning some of those on the bachelor's level. (No doctoral dissertations have been written on the topic.) My overview should not be regarded as fully comprehensive, as I may have missed some items during my search for literature.⁸

Theology

Research on Mormonism in Finland has partly focused on Mormon theology on both a theoretical and a practical level. Studies that give a general picture deal with the main points of Mormon theology, including views on the meaning of life, salvation, and the after-life.⁹ The master's thesis of Niina Uljas, for example, brings to the forefront the LDS view of the “plan of salvation” or the grand panorama of human existence—what happened before mortality, why human beings are in this world, how one should act during this life, and where an individual goes after death.

Latter-day Saints believe that God reveals His will to the Church's president, the prophet, just as He did to Old Testament prophets. This belief in “continuous revelation” is the explanation for some innovative doctrines that separate the Mormons from the rest of Christianity. Kirsi Lamminpää's master's thesis discusses, on the one hand, the reformatory revelations related to the cessation of polygamy and to ordaining worthy black men to the Mormon priesthood, and, on the other, the official declaration related to family values.¹⁰ The author has used interviews to chart what Mormons in the southern-Finland city of Turku think about these revelations and their meaning. According to Lamminpää, continuous revelation serves as a strategy through which the Mormon Church can change and accommodate itself to new social conditions, without losing the integrity of its flexible theological structure.

One clear example of the Mormon belief in continuous revelation

is the revision of the Bible that was done by the Church's first prophet-president, Joseph Smith, who felt inspired to make changes in the biblical text, resulting in what Latter-day Saints call the Joseph Smith Translation or Inspired Version. Some research has been done in Finland on Joseph Smith's relationship to the Bible by Heikki Räisänen, now professor emeritus of New Testament exegesis. He concludes that some of Smith's revisions are naive while others provide interesting solutions to traditional theological problems in Christianity. Räisänen also suggests that theologians may benefit in their own studies from examining Smith's solutions and the underlying questions.¹¹

Another feature of Mormon doctrine that has its origins in modern revelation is the Word of Wisdom, a kind of health code that at the same time functions as a boundary maintenance device. Finnish research has, to some extent, charted Mormon thought on health and habits of living. An article co-authored by medical doctors Pekka Roto, Terho Lehtimäki, and Sari Suurinkeroinen includes, among other things, a review of previous studies related to the health effects of observing the Word of Wisdom. The studies involve mainly American Mormons, although some of them also deal with other localities.¹²

The final theological characteristic of Mormonism to be mentioned here is the doctrine of temples. The first LDS temple in Finland was completed in the fall of 2006 in the southern city of Espoo. I wrote an article giving a general overview of the Mormon temple tradition, describing the meaning of temples in Mormonism, the theology and practical arrangements surrounding the temple and its religious ceremonies, and giving some idea of the importance temples hold for Finnish Mormons.¹³ The study of Mormon temples from the Finnish perspective could be continued further by examining Finnish members' earlier temple visits in foreign nations (mostly Switzerland and Sweden) as a type of pilgrimage to sacred sites; indeed, the same perspective could be used for Mormons of many other nationalities.

In addition to these topics, theology studies on the bachelor's level have dealt with interpretations of the Book of Mormon and the use of scriptural books in a Finnish Mormon congregation.¹⁴

Sociology

Sociological studies in Finland have dealt with the Latter-day Saints and their Church on both the organizational and the individual level.

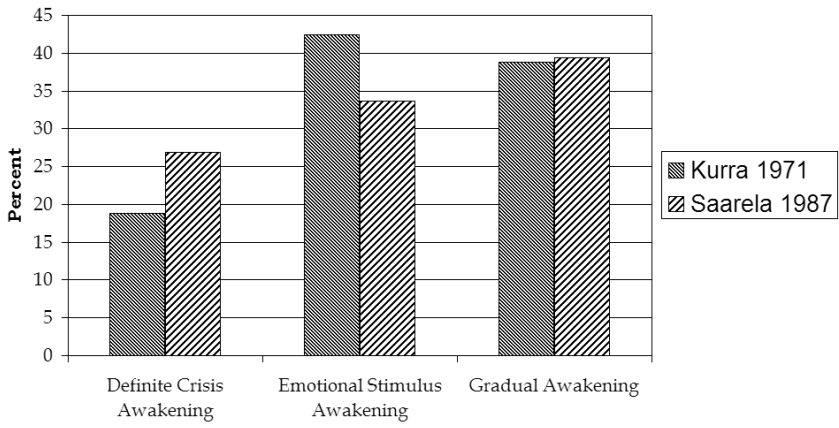
Ann-Catrin Kaski's master's thesis is an example of the first kind, describing the Church's structure and its individual and financial resources. The study is partly anchored to the Church in Finland.¹⁵ A work smaller in scope by Hellä Kylmä has pondered the status of the Mormon Church from the perspective of typologizing religious organizations.¹⁶

The master's thesis of Risto Kurra deals partly with Mormonism's public image, using Finnish newspaper clippings on the Mormons between 1946 and 1968 as source material. According to Kurra, the political left and the papers of other religious organizations were the most negative about Mormons during that time, while large daily newspapers were the most matter-of-fact in their reporting. The main focus of the thesis is on the individual level, however. Kurra deals mostly with conversion and the orthodoxy of Mormon Finns based on a survey of 209 Mormons throughout Finland.¹⁷

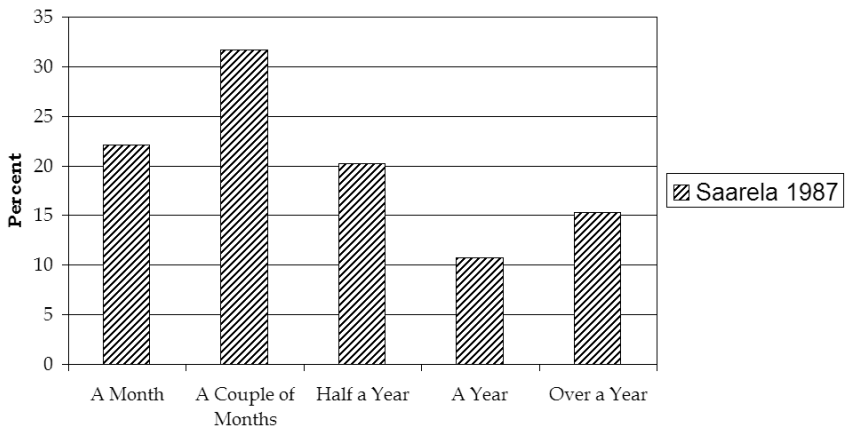
Based on Elmer T. Clark's conversion typology,¹⁸ 19 percent of the members were of the "definite crisis awakening" type, meaning that conversion entailed a serious emotional crisis and included, for example, the change from a deep feeling of sinfulness to a state of peace. About two fifths or 42 percent were of the "emotional stimulus awakening" type, denoting a less clear emotional experience but involving a nevertheless clear point of decision. Finally, 39 percent were of the "gradual awakening type," meaning that they had thought about the matter for a long time and it had "grown on them."

These results can be compared with material gathered from 267 members about fifteen years later in the Tampere Finland Stake, where the corresponding rates were 27 percent, 34 percent, and 39 percent.¹⁹ This later study by Sinikka Saarela also analyzes the length of the investigation period among converts. More than half of all converts had been learning about Mormonism for no more than one or two months when they accepted baptism, she found. Part of Kurra's and Saarela's research results have been compiled as Figure 1.

Research has also been done on the Mormon Church's socialization processes—the processes through which an individual internalizes Church procedures and expectations about how members should behave. The study was conducted as a project in the anthropology of religion, but I include it here with sociological studies, due to clear points of connection. Eija Taskinen describes socialization processes according to both the individual's sex and age when he or she joined the Church. According to



Panel A. Conversion Type



Panel B. Time

Figure 1. (a) Conversion type and (b) Length of investigation period for Finnish converts to Mormonism.

Taskinen, the lay nature of the Church results in the individual functioning in these processes both as a socializer and as the person being socialized. The study also uses a system-theoretical framework to depict the official and unofficial phases and the possible outcomes of the socialization processes.²⁰

In addition to conversion and socialization, one master's thesis has paid attention to Mormon deconversion, although not by using Finnish source material. Instead, Vesa-Petri Lehto used eighty-four deconversion narratives housed at www.exmormon.org, an international website operated by former Mormons. Most of these narratives are written by North Americans, with at least one in Lehto's sample being written by a Finn. Lehto uses Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh's theory of role exit as his main framework for studying these narratives.²¹ According to the results, some people take public positions in opposition to Mormonism, while others "leave" only on the level of thought, perhaps because of social reasons. As another example, some consider themselves to be Mormons and live a Mormon lifestyle even after they have become formally disaffiliated.²² Although the thesis does not address the situation in Finland, it is conceivable that the reasons and the dynamics of disaffiliation may be largely similar. In any event, the matter merits further study.

As I mentioned earlier, the Mormon Church is one of several religious minorities that maintain an active presence in Finland. While the LDS membership consists mostly of native Finns, the Church, like many other religious minorities, is often viewed as "the other." This phenomenon became visible when the Latter-day Saints in Finland received wide attention related to the temple open house and dedication in the fall of 2006. Using this publicity as source material, I analyzed some otherness-promoting and otherness-diminishing discourses that were present. Depending on the actor and venue, the Finnish media discussed topics such as Americanisms, the temple's esoteric nature, and the relative normalcy of Finnish Latter-day Saints.²³

I have also done research on the topic of LDS boundary maintenance, identity construction, and ambivalence toward mainstream Christianity in the late 1800s, using as source material public speeches of Mormon leaders in Utah. I used three different perspectives to analyze how these leaders thought about Christianness. The Latter-day Saints defined themselves as Christian in one sense of the mainstream Christian tradition but distanced themselves from it in another sense—in effect redefin-

ing the term “Christian.” Traditional Christians were also not seen as being Christians in the deepest sense, although their actions and attitudes were sometimes laudatory.²⁴

The Study of Mormon Literature

Mormonism has given rise to an extensive literature, including the Church’s canonized texts and religious writings by its members. Pertti Felin’s master’s thesis deals with the English-language text and style of the Book of Mormon, one of the Church’s books of scripture. His analysis includes the claims of the book’s divine origin, concluding that the text contains traits from cultures that used the Arabic, Egyptian, and Hebrew languages. Felin also found strong influence from the Bible. He concluded that the Book of Mormon in some respects ranks on a high level as literature, while in other respects it leaves much to be desired.²⁵

In addition to religious literature, much fictional writing with a basis in Mormonism has appeared. Mormon author Orson Scott Card, for example, has received acclaim based on his works of science fiction and fantasy that implicitly contain elements related to Mormonism. Eva-Jo Jylhä wrote her master’s thesis on two of Card’s books, noting that Card does not make explicit connections with Mormonism and therefore achieved success outside the Mormon community as well.²⁶ Jylhä identifies several points of connection between the books and Mormon philosophy. She sees the books as evidence that Card used his religion to explore the potential future scenarios Mormonism makes possible and to present matters that he feels most strongly about, both on a conscious and on a subconscious level.

History

Mormon studies throughout the world have traditionally taken a historical orientation. This approach is partly because the theology of Mormonism is strongly tied to its foundational events, even to the extent that the Church’s history could in a way be said to *be* its theology.²⁷ In Finland, Mormon studies have not been so clearly oriented to the history of Mormonism. Nonetheless, historical studies of Mormonism also play a significant part on the Finnish scene.

Part of the historical research has focused on Mormonism’s peculiar situation in Utah during the last half of the nineteenth century. The master’s thesis of Heikki Hannikainen charts the relationship between

the United States and the Mormon Church during that period. The relationship became more complex because of, among other things, the Mormon practice of polygamy, although the real battle under the surface was the struggle for power between Church and state. Hannikainen summarizes the historical and legislative phases that eventually led to the cessation of polygamy in mainstream Mormonism.²⁸

Another historical study conducted in Finland surveys the micro-filming of Finnish parish records funded by the Church immediately after World War II as part of the Mormon Church's genealogical program and to support the proxy ordinance work performed in behalf of the deceased in the Church's temples. Maria Ollila, the author of the thesis, used archival and newspaper material to describe, among other things, the phases of the filming project and the Lutheran Church's attitude toward the project.²⁹

I have surveyed attitudes on the political left toward Mormons at the end of the Cold War in the 1980s. Some on the political left voiced suspicions that Mormons were spying on Finnish citizens and saw Mormon connections to the U.S. power structure.³⁰ I have also sought to chart the societal opposition that Mormonism has experienced in Finland since the mid-1800s. The opposition has mainly come from other religious actors in Finnish society and has partly had its source in specific individuals.³¹

Zachary R. Jones's master's thesis deals with Mormonism's nineteenth-century history in Russian-ruled Finland. This period has received comparatively little attention, and thus the understanding of early Mormon history in Finland has remained sketchy. Jones focuses on Mormon proselytizing efforts and on the relationship between Russian religious legislation and Mormonism in Finland at the time.³² I have charted the emigration activities of the early Finnish Mormons, finding that, unlike other Nordic nations, emigration was a minor part of the Mormon experience in Finland.³³ This charting is part of my doctoral dissertation project, where I build on Jones's work to analyze the introduction of Mormonism to nineteenth-century Finnish society.

Another history, privately published, was written from a devotional perspective by Anna-Liisa Rinne. This work deals with Mormon history in Finland from 1856 to the beginning of the 1980s. In addition to a general overview, the book contains short histories of various Finnish Mormon

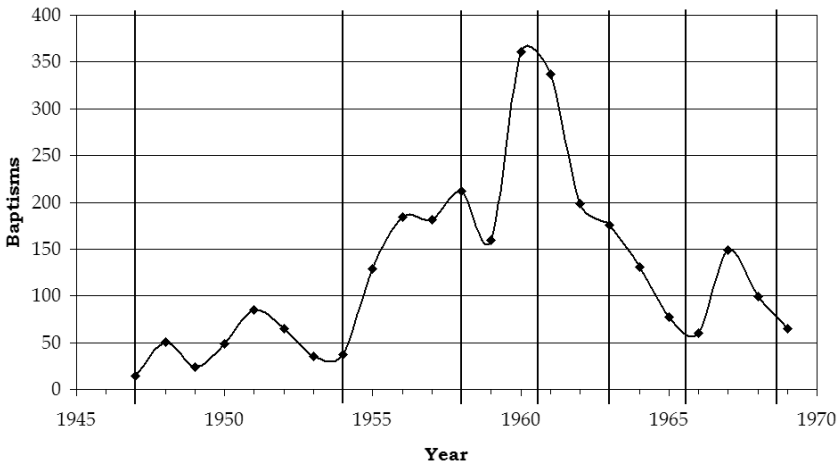


Figure 2. Mormon baptisms in Finland, 1947–69.

congregations.³⁴ It functions as an important general starting point for the interested researcher.

Proselytizing

Latter-day Saints are usually recognized in Finland through their mostly American missionaries. Mormon missionary work in the country has been discussed from a number of perspectives. Jessica Björkman's master's thesis deals with missionaries working in Finland at the time of her inquiry in early 2000. She administered a survey to seventy missionaries and interviewed two of them. Among other topics, Björkman discusses their motivation for becoming missionaries, their impressions of Finns' attitudes toward them, and their impressions of how much the Finns know of Mormonism. According to Björkman, young Latter-day Saints become missionaries as a result of religious socialization and personal conviction. They feel that they are faced with much ignorance and prejudice in Finland.³⁵

Another thesis submitted at Utah State University deals with LDS missionary work in Finland between 1947 and 1969. Among other topics, Kaija H. Penley sheds light on strategies of choice for American mission presidents in directing missionary activities in Finland. She used as her

sources the Finnish Mission's chronological history, statistics, and interviews with former missionaries. Figure 2 shows the number of converts for the period covered by the thesis.³⁶ The vertical lines which I have placed in the figure indicate changes of mission presidents, thus often implying when a change of approach in doing missionary work occurred.

Such line placement is, at best, approximate. How should one decide when the influence of the newly arrived mission president began to dominate over the former way of doing things? Other things can also affect the success of proselytizing. But in any case, some trends in baptismal numbers are apparent. According to Penley, different mission presidents emphasized different approaches at different times. Some presidents emphasized numerical growth, while others concentrated on the spiritual growth of the existing Finnish membership, with resultant dips in the number of new baptisms. It would be important to update this study and to bring it closer to modern days. A comparison with the techniques and success of other religious movements that proselytize in Finland would also shed interesting additional light.

Timo Kouki compares Mormon missionary work to general marketing strategies in his master's thesis. His work also has a sociological component, as it analyzes the conversion process and the leaving behind of the convert's previous faith tradition (if any). The thesis is based on surveys, interviews, and participant observation, and concludes that the LDS strategy of missionary work is largely equivalent to general business marketing methods. Most of the sampled converts came from families where they had been brought up with a positive attitude toward religion.³⁷

In addition to these studies, another valuable source for the student of Mormon proselytizing in Finland is a 1997 privately printed devotional book that views missionary work mostly from the perspective of former mission presidents. The bilingual (Finnish and English) commemorative book includes, in addition to the memoirs of mission presidents, chronological historical information, and a fairly comprehensive listing of Mormon missionaries that have worked in Finland between 1946 and 1997.³⁸

Gender Studies

Men have a prominent role in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because priestly leadership and activity are so fully in their hands. Mormon views on priesthood are discussed in Alarik Corander's master's thesis, based on Church literature and participant observation.

Strictly speaking, the thesis does not discuss gender roles; but since only men can be ordained to priesthood office in the Mormon Church, the thesis can be said to also represent a study of the male gender role. According to the author, LDS men are in a special position both in this life and in the hereafter, and priesthood holders form a kind of core group in the Church.³⁹ Further Finnish research on the male experience of Mormonism is currently in progress through a thesis that deals with masculinity and male body representations in LDS teaching literature.⁴⁰

The role of women in the Mormon Church has been discussed to some extent in Finnish research. For example, Anne Marie Talvio's master's thesis analyzes the purpose of a woman's existence and her duties from the Mormon perspective. Talvio uses Church literature, her own observations, and interviews as her source material. Despite the Church's strongly patriarchal nature, Talvio concludes that it also achieves equality between the sexes by, for example, placing men and women in a soteriological dependence relationship; according to the Latter-day Saints, neither man nor woman can separately fulfill the criteria for the highest exaltation.⁴¹ In a bachelor's level work, Piia Metsä-Tokila has specifically examined Brigham Young's views on woman's position in family and society.⁴²

Other Topics

In addition to the topics discussed above, research in Finland has been conducted on the internalization of religion among Mormons, for example. The joint master's thesis of Arja Kuuva and Susanna Lindahl-Kaipia analyzes the effect of religion on the personality of individuals and the internalization of the distinguishing principles of their particular religion into their thought and experience. Sources for this study were Latter-day Saints in Turku, and the methods include a word association test and interviews.

According to the study, Mormons had not internalized their religion to the same extent as the comparison group, Jehovah's Witnesses, although they had done so more strongly than the control group representing the population at large. Latter-day Saints also reported somewhat more religious experiences than the Jehovah's Witnesses who were studied. The authors added that the Mormons' strong commitment to their religion and congregation and the resultant potential weakening of out-

side social ties may be partly responsible for negative attitudes from the rest of society.⁴³

Research has also been conducted among Finnish Mormon youth, focusing on the construction and development of a religious worldview and commitment. Timo Metsä-Tokila and Jukka Lehtimäki found that youth actively involved with the Mormon Church most often question the values learned through religious socialization at about the age of seventeen, with some continuing their activity and others dropping out. In any case, the Church is seen as having a significant effect on the life of young Latter-day Saints, especially by providing a reference group that consists of other Mormon youth.⁴⁴

One master's thesis currently in preparation deals with the Church Educational System (CES) of the Mormon Church. The thesis compares pedagogical methods suggested by the Church with teaching methods generally accepted in the field of pedagogy. The thesis also seeks to chart how the lay CES teachers in Finnish LDS congregations succeed in following the Church's suggested methods as they teach Latter-day Saint youth. Works of smaller scope have discussed Mormon Scouting activities in the Helsinki region and the future development of the Mormon Church in Finland.⁴⁵

Suggestions for Further Research

Since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Finland has not been studied much, comparatively speaking, it is fairly easy to suggest topics that would provide an improved and more nuanced understanding. Like other religious traditions, Mormonism can be used either as an independent topic or as a case study; both approaches have their value. The following research suggestions include examples of both.

First, it would be very beneficial to establish a profile of contemporary Finnish Latter-day Saints. It would be important to update previous studies that give some general understanding of membership composition. Some necessary questions to be answered include: What is the general education level of Finnish Mormons? What are their professions or trades? What are their religious backgrounds and those of their families of origin? Are these variables distributed along the lines of other actively religious people in Finland, or do they show distinctive trends? How orthodox and committed are Finnish Latter-day Saints in their religious practice and beliefs? Are Finnish Latter-day Saints' beliefs conservative or lib-

TABLE 1
Mormon Church Membership Figures and Percentage of Growth in
Finland, Sweden, and Worldwide, 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000	Growth 1980-2000
Finland	3,849	4,250	4,455	16%
Sweden	6,552	7,850	8,595	31%
Worldwide	4,639,822	7,761,000	11,069,000	139%

*Information for 1990 is missing from the *Deseret News Almanac*, and I have therefore used the average of the membership figures for 1989 and 1991 for Finland and Sweden.

eral within the spectrum of Mormon thought, and why? Why do Finnish Mormons disaffiliate from the Church?

A positive aspect to such investigations would be that data for some topics exist in some of the previously described studies. In addition, similar data exist for other countries and religions, and comparative investigations can prove to be illuminating.⁴⁶ Such a profile could also serve as a springboard for further Finland-specific studies related to topics such as Mormon families, bringing up Mormon children, drug abuse among Mormon youth, mental health, the impact of the missionary experience on Finnish Mormons, and the position of LDS women at home and in the Church.

A matter that has occupied some researchers is the growth of the Mormon Church and the reasons for it. Although official membership numbers do not address the complicated question of real growth and are, by themselves, even misleading,⁴⁷ some have held Mormonism up as an example of a religion that is growing strongly despite general secularization.⁴⁸ The worldwide growth of the Latter-day Saints has been numerically impressive, although growth in Finland has been virtually nonexistent for a long time. Some membership statistics for the Church in Finland, neighboring Sweden, and the world as a whole are provided in Table 1.⁴⁹

The differences are conspicuous, and Finland as a country has its own reasons for slow growth.⁵⁰ In any case, it would be enlightening to study more deeply the reasons for the difference in growth between Finland and Sweden, since they are quite similar in many ways. It would per-

haps be even more fruitful to compare the Mormon growth figures for the two countries with the corresponding figures of other churches, both in terms of recruitment and in terms of children born to Mormon families.

Another broad topic is Mormonism's public image in Finland. It would be especially enlightening to study the Mormon interface with the surrounding society and with the media, and to compare the results with prior insights on the issue of new religious movements and minority religions.⁵¹ What factors have contributed to the public image of the Mormons in Finland? What has the Mormon Church done or not done to affect its image, and how has the Finnish media treated the Latter-day Saints as one of the religious minorities active in the country?

It would similarly be interesting to study the categorization problem from the Finnish perspective. What arguments have been used in Finnish discourse to classify the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as Christian, Christian-based, non-Christian, or as a new religious movement, and why? Depending on emphasis and point of view, Mormonism as an institution and as a religious philosophy can plausibly be said to include elements having "family resemblances" with each of these categories. Although this categorization is not in itself important from an analytical point of view, it has an effect on the way Finnish people think of the Mormons and thus has an effect on the Church's situation in Finland. It also opens interesting windows into the self-understanding of Finnish Latter-day Saints and into their understanding of other Finnish churches.

The final research ideas suggested here concern the concept of Mormonism among sectarian and secular anti-cult movements. The high-profile deconversion of two Latter-day Saints at the end of the 1970s, for example, has strongly influenced Finnish anti-cult activities. Accordingly, the Latter-day Saints have, sporadically, been dealt with negatively in public settings. For example, anti-cult presentations in schools and public gatherings and articles in newspapers and magazines have likely had an effect on the image of Mormonism. However, the issue has not been studied in sufficient depth.

Mormonism is, of course, not the only target of anti-cult criticism; many other churches and movements have received their share of negative publicity. It would be instructive to study the differences in anti-cult rhetoric when it is focused on Mormonism on the one hand, or on, for example, the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Church of Scientology on the other.

Primary Sources Related to Finnish Mormonism

Researchers have at their disposal a fairly large number of sources in which to search for answers to questions such as those presented above. A large collection of sources related to Finnish Mormonism is found outside Finland, at the Church Historical Library and Archives of the Church's Family and Church History Department in Salt Lake City. The library and archive are the main repository of archival material on Mormonism from all over the world. They contain regional and congregational histories, published books and pamphlets, and original handwritten documents from the early days of Mormonism. There has been and still is some controversy over the archive's openness policies; but except for some limited categories of materials (i.e., financial records, minutes of meetings of the leading quorums and auxiliaries, etc.), an extremely large amount of valuable material is freely accessible to researchers.

The library and the archive also contain the most comprehensive collection of material on Finnish Mormonism. A chronological history, for example, includes entries dating from 1860 onward. The archive also contains numerous interviews of Finnish Mormons and missionaries who served in Finland. In addition, there are mission reports, correspondence, official ecclesiastical records, books, pamphlets, etc. Some of the material on Finland is not directly available to researchers due to reasons of confidentiality. Requests for the use of these materials are handled on a case-by-case basis.

In addition to this material abroad, Finnish researchers have two geographically more easily accessible repositories of primary source material. They have scarcely been used at all for scholarly studies and are thus important new resources. One very valuable archive is located in the basement of the Hämeenlinna LDS meetinghouse. It was founded in 1999, when LDS congregations and individuals around Finland were asked to begin sending in historical material that they had accumulated over the years. Among other items, the archive contains hundreds of newspaper clippings related to Mormonism from 1946 to the present, correspondence, congregational records, ecclesiastical reports, oral history interviews, and formerly used lesson manuals. The collection of the Finnish Church magazines *Valkeus* (1949–98) and *Liahona* (1999–) is also an important source for the researcher. Additionally, a process is under way to make some of the Finland-related materials of the Salt Lake City archives available in Hämeenlinna.⁵²

Another important archival source is at the LDS mission office in Helsinki. Perhaps the most valuable resource housed there is a detailed multi-volume and multi-binder history of events in the Finnish Mormon mission since the 1940s. This history contains information about how Mormon missionary work has been directed in Finland, some congregational histories, and information on what has happened in different cities where the Mormons have proselytized. In addition, the office archive also contains conversion stories, early newspaper clippings, and missionary rosters.

The downside to these two Finnish archives is that their holdings have not been fully organized and catalogued. This often means that the interested researcher must engage in some digging to find the needed source. In any case, it is highly important to note that these archives exist and that they contain a great deal of next to untouched material for a scholar who wants to study the Mormon experience in Finland.

One should also not forget local Mormon congregations that have, at least according to the studies surveyed in this article, been generally receptive to students engaging in participant observation, conducting interviews, and administering questionnaires.

At least one more Finnish resource is likewise relevant. The University of Helsinki is currently creating a "Historical Newspaper Library," which means that it is digitizing all Finnish newspapers from 1771 to 1890.⁵³ Scheduled to be finished in 2008, the database of the newspapers processed has been searchable on the internet by keyword for some time. One can, for example, type in "Mormon," and the system will search for newspapers and articles containing that word. Preliminary searches have turned up a very large number of articles in the Finnish and Swedish languages. A couple of examples of early newspaper mentions of Mormonism are given below in Figure 3, dealing with the activities of two early Mormon missionaries to Finland, the Swedes Alexander S. Hedberg and Leonard D. Nyberg.

The newspapers contain many different types of information related to Mormons: missionary activities in Finland, Mormon activities in Scandinavia or elsewhere in the world, general descriptions of the Mormon religion, etc. These newspapers are a highly valuable source from the point of view of the Finnish study of religion. Allusions to the Latter-day Saints in Finnish nineteenth-century sources have been available in the past on an extremely limited basis; but these sources, now easily available,

— **Gräs mormonilaisuuden saarnaaja Hedberg on kutsu Folkiv. tietää, saapunut Helsinkiin Kihotista ja myyhlentelee pitkälirjoja, jotka sijättävät mormonein opinkappaleet ja joisia muun muosta puolustetaan myöskin monissa lehdissä.** Hänen sanotaan Turussa ja Siiposissa saaneen uusia sielunsa werkoja.

Meidän tietäjäksemme on moinen uskonkääntäjän toimi Suomessa tietty.

— **Diverse inhemska notiser. Mormoner i Helsingfors.** Sedan någon tid skall enligt Finl. en i H:fors boende svensk tryckeriarbetare vid namn Nyberg arbeta för spridande af mormonism, dess värre icke utan framgång.

I förgår afreste nämligen derifrån med ångaren Finland till Stockholm en timmerman Winqvist jemte två qvinnor, en sömmerska från denna stad och en väfverska från Borgå trakten, för att vidare fortsätta resan till det förlovade landet i fjerran vestern, Utah, och der eiter mormonsk sed sammanvigas med sina båda reskamrater. Mannen

Figure 3. Newspaper notices about Mormonism from *Hämäläinen*, November 5, 1884 (left, in Finnish) and *Östra Finland*, September 21, 1888 (right, in Swedish). Source: Historical Newspaper Library, Helsinki University Library.

open up a completely new window on Finnish reactions to Mormonism during its early years in that country. What makes the matter even more interesting is that Finland did not assure freedom of religion during this period. Thus, the early reactions to the Mormons can sometimes seem rather curious to the modern reader.

Conclusion

Like many other religions, Mormonism in Finland is an interesting research topic. First, although some studies on the Mormons exist, the research field is largely uncharted. Disparate studies of Finnish Mormonism provide only limited peeks into a large room through multiple keyholes. Much work remains to assess the place of Mormonism among Finnish religious and cultural influences and to more fully understand the internal dynamics operating within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Finland.

Second, religion in Finland is very different from religion in the United States, the homeland of Mormonism and the strongest cultural influence on the Church's operating procedures. Whereas the United States is strongly pluralistic, Finland is dominated by the culturally, albeit not religiously, strong Evangelical Lutheran national church. This condition clearly affects how smaller religious movements like Mormonism are viewed. In this respect, studies of Mormonism in Finland can be fruitfully

compared with similar studies from other nations. They will provide an interesting window into cultural successes or tensions affecting the Mormon Church from both the inside and the outside.

Finally, one of the most promising aspects of future research is an abundance of material related to Finland. Due to a religious mandate, the Latter-day Saints have a penchant for meticulous record-keeping. The researcher of Mormonism will therefore not easily exhaust available sources. In addition, those sources are largely untouched and unused, thus providing an interesting and fruitful field of discovery for scholars. To borrow from Mormon parlance, it could well be said that “the field is white already to harvest” (D&C 4:4).

Notes

1. Throughout this paper I use “Mormonism,” “Mormon,” “LDS,” and “Latter-day Saint(s)” interchangeably to refer to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members. More broadly and accurately, the term “Mormonism” of course refers to all faith traditions descended from Joseph Smith’s “Church of Christ,” as his movement was originally called.

2. For a review of some of the most recent literature, see Irén Annus, “Review Essay: New Studies in Mormonism,” *Nova Religio* 9, no. 4 (May 2006): 98–111.

3. For the views on some of these issues by a non-Mormon doctoral student writing his dissertation on Mormonism, see Seth Perry, “An Outsider Looks In at Mormonism,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 52, no. 22 (February 3, 2006): B9–B11.

4. The matter is discussed, for example, in David M. Morris’s introductory comments, “The History of British Latter-day Saints from 1837” at <http://www.mormonhistory.org> (accessed January 5, 2008).

5. On the idea of colonization applied to Mormonism, see for example Walter E. A. van Beek, “Mormon Europeans or European Mormons? An ‘Afro-American’ View of Religious Colonization,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 3–36.

6. Alarik Corander, “Myöhempien Aikojen Pyhien Jeesuksen Kristuksen Kirkko,” in *Aktuella religiösa rörelser i Finland*, edited by Nils G. Holm et al. (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1981), 311–21.

7. Harri Heino, “Myöhempien Aikojen Pyhien Jeesuksen Kristuksen Kirkko,” in Heino, *Mihin Suomi uskaa* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1984), 148–54; and Heino, “Myöhempien Aikojen Pyhien Jeesuksen Kristuksen Kirkko,” in Heino, *Mihin Suomi tänään uskaa* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1997), 181–88.

8. I thank those individuals who have brought some of the literature to my attention.

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10. Kirsi Lamminpää, "Jatkuvan ilmoituksen periaate Myöhempien Aikojen Pyhien Jeesuksen Kristuksen Kirkossa" (Turku: University of Turku, 2002).

11. Heikki Räisänen, "Joseph Smith und die Bibel: Die Leistung des mormonischen Propheten in neuer Beleuchtung," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 109, no. 2 (1984): 81–92; Räisänen, "Joseph Smith ja Raamattu," *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* 89, no. 4 (1984): 287–94; and Räisänen, "A Bible-Believer Improves the Bible: Joseph Smith's Contribution to Exegesis," in Räisänen, *Marcion, Muhammad and the Mahatma: Exegetical Perspectives on the Encounter of Cultures and Faiths* (London: SCM Press, 1997), 153–69, 273–77.

12. Pekka Roto, Terho Lehtimäki, and Sari Suurinkeroinen, "Mormonien käsitykset elämäntavoista ja terveydestä," *Suomen Lääkärilehti* 55, no. 19 (2000): 2125–28.

13. Kim Östman, "Nykyajan kristillistä esoteriaa: Katsaus mormonismiin temppelitradiitioon," *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* 111, no. 5 (2006): 430–40.

14. Elisa Mikkola, "Mormonin kirja—tulkinnan ongelmia" (Turku: University of Turku, 1998), and Leila Kvist, "MAP-kirkon pyhät lähteet ja niiden käyttö Turun seurakunnan sakramenttikokouksissa" (Turku: University of Turku, 1974).

15. Ann-Catrin Kaski, "Jesu Kristi Kyrka av Sista Dagars Heliga: En religionssociologisk studie av mormonkyrkan med särskild hänsyn till förhållandena i Finland" (Turku: Åbo Akademi University, 1984).

16. Hellä Kylmälä, "Myöhempien Aikojen Pyhien Jeesuksen Kristuksen Kirkko Suomessa ja sen asema suomalaisten lahkojen typologiassa" (Turku: University of Turku, 1970).

17. Risto Kurra, "Mormonikäännyminen ja mormonismien kuva Suomessa" (Tampere: University of Tampere, 1971).

18. Elmer T. Clark, *The Psychology of Religious Awakening* (New York: Macmillan, 1929).

19. Sinikka Saarela, "Mormonikäätymys Suomessa" (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 1987).

20. Eija Taskinen, "Oulun pyhät: Oulun Myöhempien Aikojen Pyhien Jeesuksen Kristuksen Kirkon piirissä tapahtuvan sosialisatioprosessin tarkastelua" (Oulu: University of Oulu, 1994).

21. See Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh, *Becoming an Ex: The Process of Role Exit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

22. Vesa-Petri Lehto, "Uskonnollisesta yhteisöstä eroaminen uskonto-tieteellisenä ongelmana: Tutkimus ex-mormonien eroamiskertomuksista" (Turku: University of Turku, 2000).

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24. Kim Östman, "Kristillisen identiteetin ongelma varhaisen mormonismien aatemaailmassa," *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* 112, no. 2 (2007): 123–34. The article will appear in English as "The Problem of Christian Identity in Late Nineteenth-Century Mormon Thought," in an anthology of Joseph Smith Summer Seminar papers, edited by Richard Lyman Bushman (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, forthcoming).

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28. Heikki Hannikainen, "Moniavioisuus Utahin historiassa" (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 1991).

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48. See, for example, Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Mormonism*, edited by Reid L. Neilson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

49. I have gathered membership numbers for Finland and Sweden from the 1982, 1991–92, 1993–94, and 2003 editions of the *Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News), and worldwide membership numbers from Stark, *The Rise of Mormonism*, 144–45.

50. See Kääriäinen, Niemelä, and Ketola, *Religion in Finland*, for a discussion of these reasons.

51. See Jeffrey Kaplan, ed., *Beyond the Mainstream: The Emergence of Religious Pluralism in Finland, Estonia, and Russia* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature So-

ciety, 2000), 125–330 for scattered insights about this matter from the Finnish perspective. The general sociological literature about new religious movements, and their interface with society is extensive.

52. Address queries about the archive to Pirkko Lahti {pirkko.lahti@luukku.com}, the LDS Church's historian in Finland.

53. *The Finnish Historical Newspaper Library 1771–1890*, Digital Collections, Helsinki University Library, <http://digi.lib.helsinki.fi> (accessed January 5, 2008).

My Madness

Steven L. Peck

On all sides, madness fascinates man. The fantastic images it generates are not fleeting appearances that quickly disappear from the surface of things. By a strange paradox, what is born from the strangest delirium was already hidden, like a secret, like an inaccessible truth, in the bowels of the earth.

—Michel Foucault

I sat in the bed facing the two smiling demons—leaders of the great Satan/Wal-Mart Organization that ran the hospital. They were trying to convince me that I should let them adopt a clone of my five-year-old daughter Emily. She had been created by new genetic techniques developed by their powerful company and they insisted, “Her place will be great in the new world order.” Over the last few days, however, they had lied to me so often I knew it was a sham. Despair seemed to overwhelm me at the thought of the strange global changes that had recently taken place under this evil organization’s machinations. But I was resolute. I would never let them have the copy of my daughter.

* * *

For a week, I went crazy—completely and utterly insane. I still wrestle with which word to use to describe my condition: Crazy? Insane? Mad? They all seem too general and indistinct. However, schizophrenia, dementia, and psychotic disorder, while more specific, all seem too clinical and lack existential force. Because I hope to give you the view from inside my mind, I have decided to go with the first group. They describe better what I felt happened. I went crazy. I was insane. Madness.

A few minutes ago, I was looking at MRI brain scans taken during

my illness. As I scrolled rapidly through thin sections of my brain, a shiver ran down my spine as I realized I was looking at the small organ that in some ways defined who I was. Everything that I think of as defining “me”—my memories, what I’ve learned, my personality—is sequestered in the physical brain captured in these images. Somewhere in that fleshy blob was a memory of walking under the stars with my father along orchard canals when I was twelve years old; over there might be my goal to run a marathon; to the left might be my knowledge of functional analysis from a graduate math class; the processes that defined my love for my wife and children were written somewhere within the mass represented on the screen. Even though we believe in a spirit, its dependence on our brain for making our way in this physical reality, is absolute. Just think of the destruction of identity that comes with Alzheimer’s.

Prior to my experience, I imagined that going insane merely involved seeing and hearing things that were not there, so I was surprised to find that not only my sensual experience had been rearranged and recreated, but also that my entire belief structure about the world was rewritten. In addition to seeing people who were not really there, they were also placed in a coherent system of thought and belief that, while similar to my normal tool kit for dealing with the world, was decidedly different. Not only did I see and hear things that did not jibe with the rest of the world I had known, but the way the world worked changed. I was handed a completely new calculus for looking at the world that rejustified, reinterpreted, and made new sense of the things my mind presented to me. I became paranoid. I believed in magic. I embraced a new set of natural laws for the universe. And most strangely, God disappeared. These laws and rules were strikingly different from the usual text with which I had previously structured the world, but to me they were just as coherent as the laws of physics with which I am normally so comfortable.

Colin McGinn in *Mindscales* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004) points out that this is the kind of rewriting of our belief systems that occurs when we are dreaming. In a dream, we don’t question our ability to fly; we just do it (albeit perhaps with a bit of surprise). However, unlike when I am in a dream state, in this madness I did not believe everything presented to my mind completely uncritically. Moreover, some things occurred that required complex thought, analysis, interpretation, decisions, contemplation—aspects of rational thought that are very unlike our consciousness in dreams. My madness seemed a weird mixture of hal-

lucination and interacting with the real world. But it was a consistent world that seemed oddly coherent from the first-person perspective. At those times when something occurred that did not conform to my understanding of the way the world worked, my mind created explanations to cover the anomalies. Unlike a dream, in which the laws of the universe, our relation to past beliefs, desires, and our understanding of the world can simply be set aside, my mind was constantly providing explanations and reinterpretations of my experience to ensure that it coherently fit together in some way. Because of the strange sensual inputs, there were bizarre twists of logic and interpretation; but unlike in dreaming, my brain was trying to put things back together in a sensible fashion. A consistent reality seemed an important value to my brain.

While interpreting the experience has been a challenge, the cause of my insanity was not in question. It was caused by *Burkholderia pseudomallei*, a malicious bacterial species that causes melioidosis, usually a respiratory disease not uncommon in Southeast Asia. During a recent visit to Vietnam, I picked up the infection. The physicians in Utah, largely unfamiliar with melioidosis in general, were especially unprepared to deal with the rarer form of the disease manifesting as a brain infection.

It started with headaches so severe I thought my skull must be ripping apart. Doctors diagnosed it as viral meningitis, started me on antivirals, and sent me home with instructions to take ibuprofen for the pain. Nevertheless, the pain went on and on, with the doctors, over repeated visits, insisting that viral meningitis takes time and I needed to be patient. The pain was unbearable, and despite priesthood blessings, prayer, and the constant care of my wife, Lori, nothing seemed to relieve it.

On April 7, 2002, almost a month after my first diagnosis, something strange started happening. In addition to the pain, I began to have strange visual perceptions. Any time I closed my eyes or was in the dark, I would see rolling waves of vivid colors, swirling surfaces of reds and greens, weaving spectral nets waving like a flag in the wind, which suddenly became a slow tornado of multicolored patterns flowing wildly through my visual field.

That night, as I lay down to sleep, my headache seemed better than it had been for a long time. Rather than intense pain, things had mellowed to a dull background ache. I noticed that the bed was covered with a beautiful pattern of soft light green that glowed brightly through the dark room.

Unexpectedly, people began to arrive. Strangers. I did not know who they were or why they were there. Several young women and an older man walked around my bedroom, browsing through our odds and ends as they would at a small shop. Although they did not appear dangerous, I was slightly afraid of them and wondered what they were doing in our home. My reaction seems odd. Normally, I would have actively tried to confront intruders, but now I just watched them from my bed, timid and afraid. They looked real—not in the least dream-like. Moreover, although solid, they had the ability to pass through things like outlandish ghosts. They did not appear to be interested in me, however, and seemed to wander aimlessly, chatting casually with each other. Occasionally, through a subtle motion of a hand or head, the wanderers caused a star-burst of white dust to rain down upon me and cover the already glowing bedspread. I could not understand how they did any of this, but it was unsettling.

When the visitors got to the far end of the room, I jumped up and turned on the bedroom light. The people scattered. They did not simply disappear like the dark shadows created by ordinary objects, but I could see them physically flee as they zoomed away like roaches scampering to hide from the sudden light. Lori told me to turn off the lights. She was exhausted from caring for me and just wanted to get some sleep. I tried to explain but she said I was dreaming and to come back to bed.

I turned out the lights; but in only a few minutes, the people returned. They again seemed to wander about the room like nonchalant tourists in a museum. Sometimes, one would look at me and the others would warn him or her not to do that, as if it were a breach of etiquette. It never occurred to me that they were not physically there or not real. My natural skepticism had been suspended. I accepted all this activity as patently real.

The people vanished for a moment so I jumped out of bed to gaze out of our second-story bedroom window into our backyard below, trying to get some sense of what was going on. My grassy backyard had been plowed, leaving a system of crooked brown furrows where my lawn had once stood. Through my yard, people were migrating; I could see small groups of people marching slowly in the same direction as if gathering for a special event. A few seemed to be wearing military uniforms and might have been driving the people somewhere. I was not sure, but it scared me.

The visitors came back so this time I tried talking to them, asking them to please leave my family and me alone. That changed everything.

Rather than being casually strolling sightseers, unconcerned with my presence, they immediately focused their attention on me. *Please go. I just want to get some sleep*, I explained. A few left, but a group of about five girls told me they would go only if they could touch my genitals. I said no. They became insistent and started reaching for me. They angrily accused me of breaking a promise I had implicitly made or somehow otherwise implied by my acknowledging their presence. I had broken some code of acceptable behavior. By talking to them, I was now bound in a contract that allowed them to touch me in any way they wanted. All five of them started trying to reach for me from different angles.

I reached out to block one of the girls and pushed her back. She instantly withered up and died. The other girls looked on in shock. "You killed her!" one said. They backed away angrily. "I didn't mean to!" I said, trying to explain. "I just meant to push her away." They seemed annoyed, rather than being horrified as normal people would react at seeing a murder. Death, I inferred, was a common theme in the lives of these visitors. They backed up and left, but I felt they were not far away, watching me. I felt guilty. I did not mean to kill the girl. Was I guilty of murder?

Stealthily, one of the girls shot through the mattress, through me, and delightedly told all those around I had screwed her. I was horrified. She woke up my wife and told her we had "made it" together. I tried to restrain the girl, but she got away.

It turns out I was actually choking Lori. She was now scared and begged me to go to sleep. I had been out of bed several times during the night, and she had walked me back to bed, becoming increasingly frightened. I was clearly delusional, but now I was becoming dangerous.

I will not try to describe the full events of that first night of madness; the horror, the despair, and the frustration were real and unrelenting. These events were interspersed with a number of weird interactions with the people of that world. As dawn began to break, a person informed me that I had joined their cause and I was now part of a powerful Satan and Wal-Mart conglomerate, the SWO. Somehow, I had automatically joined when the girl performed the bizarre sexual act of flying through me. The person told me that great benefits were mine but that I was bound for life. My wife had even joined a mutilation fad and had cut her eyeball in half horizontally. She was placidly spinning the lower half.

Seeing I was clearly out of my mind, Lori put on an old movie and I settled into watching it while she tried to contact our doctors. The people

still wandering around now took the form of workers provided by SWO to take care of domestic needs. One of them came and sat next to me to watch the movie. I was a little annoyed because he was supposed to be working and he was just sitting there watching TV. He wore a kind of chief's outfit that included buttons and a cap, and had mannerisms, including things like yawns or occasionally readjusting the blanket in which he had wrapped himself. He would occasionally even direct a smile my way. I had to tell my mother to be careful because she almost sat on him.

In addition to appearing real, these apparitions were amazingly consistent. If I went into the kitchen to get a drink, the people on the couch were still there when I got back. When I looked out into my backyard, the ground was plowed and the fences that ringed our suburban backyard were all down as I had seen from the window last night.

My wife realized that I was in deep trouble so she drove me to the hospital. I was in a state of amazement: The hospital was brimming with large, colorful insects! I am a biologist and this did not cause me the fear I suppose most people would feel. Mostly I was delighted! I thought the idea of filling the hospital with insects was an inspired approach to cleanliness because they could eat harmful bacteria. I also thought the insects might be used to help keep up a healthy pool of bacteria that were susceptible to antibiotics and keeping down the level of antibiotic resistance in the hospital. I also surmised that the insects had been genetically engineered by the SWO for this purpose.

Finally, an intern decided I was quite in need of admittance, noting in my record: "At the time of admission, the patient was oriented to person and to place only. Furthermore, the Patient was having vivid hallucinations at the time of admission."

After a long wait, they finally wheeled me into my room. I was so tired. My head was again aching in debilitating pain, and I had not slept in forty-eight hours. Last night's adventures were still fresh in my mind when I retired to my bed. I felt safe in the hospital. Oddly, though, I discovered that, not only was my room full of insects and other various creatures, but my bed was, too. I had my first sense of consternation. Filling the room with insects was one thing, but my bed, too? That was going a little too far. I told one of the nurses that I appreciated what they were trying to do with the insects but that having them in my bed was going too far. She told me that if I turned on the light they would go away. I tried that and it appeared to work, so I got back into bed.



The evil leaders of the Satan/Wal-Mart Organization.

Like the previous night at home, my first night in the hospital was terrible. People were walking in and out of my room, some reminding me I had murdered that girl at home. At one point during the night, the room began to fill with water; at another time, monkeys invaded the room begging for asylum from the SWO. It was another long, busy night with little sleep and grossly disturbing dreams when I did sleep. Despite my wild hallucinations, I could still distinguish between sleep dreaming and my waking states.

The next day, my wife brought me two hand-drawn pictures my five-year old daughter Emily had made to cheer me up. She hung the pictures on a bulletin board facing my bed. In the middle of the night, it slowly began to dawn on me that the two beings depicted by my daughter were the heads of the SWO, not drawings of the leaders of the SWO, mind you, but the actual rulers of the SWO themselves. I started talking to them and they answered back. In so doing, I began a conversation with my daughter's drawings that was to last the rest of the week.

As dawn broke on the second day, I imagined I saw my wife approaching through a window that lined a hallway, but I knew that this approaching woman was not really Lori. I rushed out to the nurse's station and told her to call my wife because a copy of my wife was coming and it was not really her. "Please get on the phone and talk to her so that when this imposter arrives you will believe me." The copy of my wife arrived and

I pretended to play along; but thinking better of it, I told her that I knew she was a copy. (I could tell Lori from this fake because the copy of my wife used the F-word repeatedly, something Lori, a good LDS woman, would never do.) My imposter wife seemed very angry and gave me an evil look, mixed with hurt. It occurred to me that this copy of my wife actually loved me; she could not help her evil nature; it was just part of her cloning. Just then, Lori came around the corner. The imposter ran away; I could see her scampering all the way down the hall.

Lori had come to be with me for an MRI. Throughout the hospital were groups of people scampering in and out of hiding. I saw a couple of my children among them and noticed with surprise that they were all in army fatigues. When I asked my wife what our kids were doing here, she insisted they were still at home. I then realized that copies had been made of all my children. Evil copies. Just like the copy of my wife I had just met, these copies had all the memories and feelings of my kids at home but had somehow been made evil. Sadly, they did not even know they were copies. They thought they were my real kids. The crimes of the SWO began to grow and grow. When would this end? Who could control an organization that could wield such powers over life and death? I despaired.

I was loaded into the MRI machine and told to “hang on for the ride” by the technician—and what a ride it was! I thought the large machine was bolted to the floor, but when I climbed inside, much to my delight, I found it was mounted on a set of wheels. We started bouncing down a dirt road in the MRI toward the nearby Provo River, which flowed about a mile from the hospital. We rolled along at a good clip, and through a small periscope that allowed me to peer outside, I could see a whole wagon train of MRI machines. Suddenly, again to my amazement, we started flying. We flew upstream to where the Provo River rushes from the outlet of Deer Creek Reservoir Dam; then, entering the river, we floated down the river in peace and delight. I could see other MRI machines bouncing along with us as we rode the rapids or smoothly bobbed along in the calm places. It really was a great ride. What a hospital!

All these adventures were intermixed with conversations with doctors, my wife, friends, nurses, and others. I remember their presence and interaction with my world. My conversations from their perspective were bizarre at best. For example, at another point I was brought in for an additional MRI. About midway through, they let me out for a short break before they put me in for the second half of the procedure. The technician

was explaining the second part of the procedure and suddenly said, "You deserve to die for killing that girl. I am going to make sure it happens. Get back in the machine." I was frozen in fear. His conversation alternated between a mundane explanation about why we needed to complete the second half of the MRI and swearing at me, telling me that he was going to kill me. The vehemence of his denouncements of my crimes was startling. He told me he would personally make sure I did not come out of the machine alive. Naturally, I refused to get back in the machine. While he was talking to some others about my refusal, I bolted back to my room. I knew they would be looking for me, so I returned very cautiously, peeking around corners, hiding whenever a crowd approached me.

I have snatches of memory about many strange sights and events, but these were not just perceptual hallucinations. In my madness, I not only saw and heard things arising only from my imaginative facilities, but I *believed* things about the world that were informed by cognitive delusions. I believed that the hospital was run by the SWO and that my children had all been copied in a strange new kind of cloning. These were not just new images but new cognitive beliefs about the world.

It was these beliefs that made the experience of my madness so hellish. I agonized over the question about what I was to do with the evil version of my kids. Was I still responsible for them? Was I their father? What was the ethical thing to do? I often ran into my kids in the hospital. They were always dressed in fatigues, always engaged in some sort of military training exercise. Once I saw them in the courtyard of the hospital practicing kung-fu moves that included fantastic leaps off buildings and gargantuan jumps onto the roof of the hospital.

Later that night—several hours after this experience with my soaring children—I watched the evening news with my wife. My mind conjured a news story (with both audio and visual hallucinations) on the new military training at the hospital that showed the same things that I had seen in the courtyard earlier. Most surprising is that the file footage shown on TV was filmed from the perspective of the ground rather than from the seventh floor where I had watched it originally, showing the news footage from a different angle than I had seen it earlier that day.

This is something that continues to amaze me about this experience: the consistency of the world in which I lived. Things that happened, no matter how strange or bizarre, continued to be a part of the reality and were often referred to later, like the girl I "killed" in my bed at home. The

narrative in which I found myself was internally consistent and self-referential, interacting smoothly with the reality I was handed (albeit a distorted one). Moreover, there was a narrative structure to my madness. There seemed to be a plotline exerting itself as I interacted with the people and demons of my imagination.

My five-year-old Emily was perhaps my greatest worry. I saw her often around the hospital. She was never involved in the war games my older children were engaged in whenever I saw them around the hospital. On one occasion, I saw Emily with one of the evil leaders. I thought they were going to try to keep her because I was not caring for her. What could I do? My wife did not believe she even existed. I was so sick I was incapacitated most of the time, and these horrible creatures were taking away my daughter—or at least a copy of her. She was so young and innocent that I did not believe she had been corrupted like the older children. I could not let her go with these powerful and evil entities.

I tried praying while I was in this state, and I don't really know how to put it except that God was gone for me. I wanted to pray, but there was a hopelessness about it that seemed very real and impenetrable. Satan/Wal-Mart ruled here completely. This was especially strange because prayer has always been a part of my life. How could that be taken away? In contrast, as these events unfolded, Lori had distinct impressions of help from beyond the veil and felt the direct influence of many people praying for me. To me, however, this aspect of my life vanished.

After I spent about five days in the hospital, a new doctor finally joined us. He believed that my illness had a bacterial origin and began IV antibiotics targeting this bacteria rather than the former diagnosis of viral meningitis, which had been based on the lack of bacterial activity in my spinal fluid.

My delusions and continued wrestling with this demonic world continued for two days after I started antibiotic treatments. On the morning of the third day, every time I ran into one of my alternate children, I asked them to meet me at 8:00 that night. I told Lori that I had set up the meeting and that our cloned children would come to the hospital room at 8:00 that night. She insisted that the kids were home; but I knew that, even though my copied children had been made evil, they still loved us and would be there at my request. My wife bet me that the children would not show up at 8:00. I was sure they would. It occurred to me that, if they did not come, then Lori might be right and these children were not real. I

believe that this possibility was the first intimation that I was returning to reality.

At 8:00, I fully expected my kids to knock on the door. In fact, I was sure I heard them talking outside the door a couple of times. However, they did not come. At 8:15, I was a little concerned. At 8:30, I still thought, "They might just be held up," but a new hope was bubbling up. What if Lori is right? Maybe I did not have to worry about my evil kids bunking with my real kids and trying to raise them all together. Maybe there were not two Emilys, and I did not have to give one up! Maybe I had not killed someone! At 8:45, I felt happier than I had in days—like a dream in which you lose all that is most precious to you, but you awake and find it all restored. I remember looking at the clock and thinking over and over, *Lori is right! Lori is right! There are not two sets of kids.* All the ethical problems that surrounded me were gone. I felt like rejoicing.

From that time on, I no longer saw strange people, doors, animals, insects, landscapes, malevolent copies of all those I loved, or events that no one else could see. Even so, I am struck by the memory of how real they were. The memories laid down from this time do not seem like the memories of a dream. They are as real and as vivid as any memory I have. I can recognize them only by the incongruity with the rest of reality, as I know it. Their richness of color and detail are as clear as those of any other memory I have.

I have been asked how my madness compares with dreaming. There were several similarities. Like a dream, there seemed to be a narrative structure to my madness. There was an ongoing story that I seemed to be imbedded in: I had killed a girl, obligating me to membership in the SWO; my family had been cloned and were being trained by this organization for their diabolical purposes and had been purposely made evil; the leaders of the SWO wanted to adopt the clone of my little girl and were constantly pestering me to allow them to have her; and everywhere I went, people in the hospital were playing a game with complex rules that I could not understand. The narrative structure seems to have informed everything I thought and did at this time and provided a matrix for the images with which I was confronted. Like a dream, I would also suddenly "know" very complex things without the imposition of intervening facts and information.

However, in some respects, the madness was decidedly not dreamlike. There seemed to be more details in my visual hallucinations than in

dream images. The memories of my interactions seem more real than memories of dreams and are imbedded in a perceptual context that was conditioned on real perceptions. For example, I can remember my colleagues visiting me with my cloned son standing next to them crying. In my memory, there is no difference between the qualitative aspects of my son's presence and those of my colleagues'. Both seemed as real as any percept I would see when my brain is behaving normally.

My madness seemed also more consistent than dreams. For example, I had the hallucination of my cloned children practicing kung-fu moves seven stories below me, and then six hours later watching file footage on TV of their practice seen from the ground.

During this time of madness, I also reasoned much more deeply than I normally do in dreams. My obsession with the ethical dilemma of whether I had a responsibility to raise the cloned children because they believed they were my real children weighed heavily upon me. I deliberated, argued, and reasoned about this question in ways that I never do in dreams.

Unlike in dreams, I also tried to explain why certain features of the world were the way they were. Why was I the only one that could see certain things? Why could my wife not see our cloned children? The "answer" was that I had a genetic defect that allowed me to see what others could not. (I also reasoned that the SWO had glasses that would allow others to see these invisible people, but the SWO passed them out only to their confederates.) Why was the hospital filled with insects? To control bacterial infections. These explanations seemed to make consistent things that otherwise would not fit neatly together.

It fascinates me to consider those things that remained of my normal consciousness during the illness and those things that were lost. I retained a sense of ethics, love, emotional attachments, my scientific understanding of genetics, antibiotic resistance, and other scientific facts. Some of the powers of reason remained. But I was paranoid; I assigned causes to things that did not exist; I believed that conditions held that did not, which I appeared to pull from thin air, like the existence of the SWO.

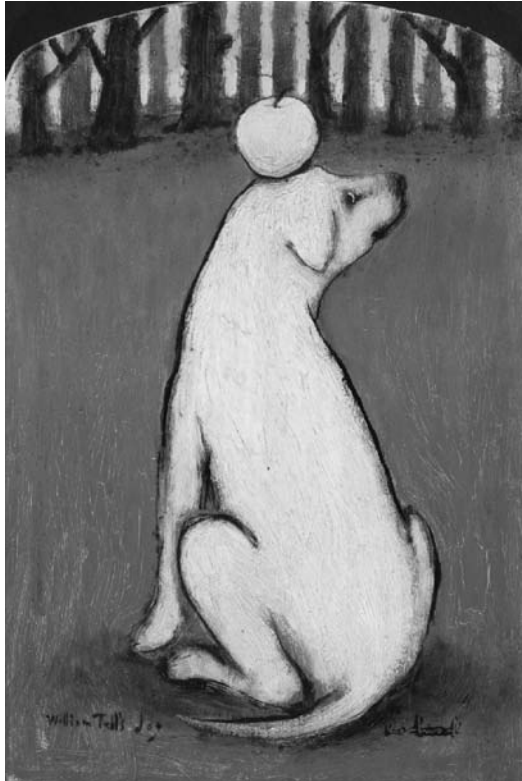
However, one thing that amazes me more than anything else is how powerfully the brain was able to construct a consistent world—a world filled with images, people, and beliefs that had no bearing on reality. It was able to integrate this constructed world with elements of the real world and produce a coherent presentation to the conscious self. Having

seen the creative elements of the brain display such an impressive array of abilities, I cannot help wondering how much of our current reality is likewise a construct. How pliable are our minds? These nagging questions have taken away a bit of security about why I believe the things I do. If not only the percepts presented to my mind can be manufactured by the imaginative faculties of the brain but also my beliefs and desires can be rewritten, how can I ever be sure that what I believe about the world reflects an objective reality? That is an old, and almost hackneyed question, but one that takes on new meaning now that I have seen the brain in action at its creative best.

I have avoided some questions and even now find difficulty in writing them—mostly, because I have not come to any answers that satisfy me. How did I find myself in a place without God? What does this experience imply about the connection between the spirit and the body? How could the very things I believed be changed? I don't know what to say. I was teaching a priesthood class a few weeks ago, and one of the brothers commented that God never abandons us. I could not let it pass because I *had* been abandoned. So completely, so utterly, that looking back no other words fit. There were no footprints in the sand. I was not being carried. God disappeared for me and only demons remained. This has left me shaken because, as the questioner in my quorum meeting suggested, this was not supposed to be an experience I *could* have. I still do not know how to fit it in.

A few days after I came back from my madness, I ordained my son a priest. Standing there in my hospital robe, supported by my good bishop, brothers, and friends, I felt that same spiritual connection I have always known. I felt the presence of God and the flow of the priesthood. But seeing how completely, how frighteningly, my brain can construct and deconstruct realities, there are questions that I still don't know what to do with.

Epilogue: Ironically, I had formed an interest in consciousness philosophy about a year before the events discussed in this paper happened. Among my published articles on this topic is “The Current Philosophy of Consciousness Landscape: Where Does LDS Thought Fit?” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 36–64. This article was already written in rough when this happened. However, I think I learned more by going mad than I ever did reading the literature on consciousness!



Brian Kershisnik,
William Tell's Dog,
oil on panel,
9 x 6 inches, 2007

“A New Future Requires a New Past”

Ken Driggs

I had never heard of fundamentalist Mormons until seeing a *60 Minutes* segment about them in the late 1980s. During a western vacation, I visited Colorado City, Arizona, on January 2, 1988, and talked my way into some friendships which continue to this day. FLDS Prophet Warren Jeffs, his father Rulon Jeffs, former Colorado City mayor Dan Barlow, the late Owen Allred, and his successor LeMoine Jenson of the Apostolic United Brethren (AUB) were among my acquaintances. I later earned a graduate degree in legal history, and my thesis concerned an important event in their experience.¹ I have continued to study, visit, and write about the fundamentalist Mormon universe since then.²

Almost from my first discovery of fundamentalist Mormons I found myself comparing their version of LDS history and the doctrines entwined in our history, with that offered by the big church to which I belong. As I did my own reading of our history, I found neither had it right. In fact, there are multiple narratives, all with both truth and distortion in them.

I now conclude there is no one historical truth. “*The Truth*” all depends on the needs of the teller, most especially institutional tellers. Things get left out, motivations get altered, people disappear or get enlarged. This is where “faith-promoting history” comes from. Generally, institutional history is part truth and part myth.³

In a 2007 Mormon History Association session on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, Gene Sessions, a professor of history at Weber State University, commented: “What happened in the past means nothing. What people *think* happened in the past means everything.”⁴ One recent historian has observed, “A new future requires a new past.”⁵ Beginning in

1890 and lasting for a generation or two, both the LDS leadership and the majority of the membership yearned for a new future. At that point in time, the LDS Church had been the object of what one non-Mormon historian called “one of the most sweeping episodes of religious persecution in American History,”⁶ made possible by a series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions which, depending on your point of view, either emasculated the free exercise clause of the First Amendment or saved the nation from religious anarchy.⁷

This new future required making peace with the larger American society. Long-held practices and beliefs were put away, defenses were lowered, some people were allowed to pass into obscurity, unique beliefs were modified, some episodes were denied, rituals were changed, and assimilation with limits not yet defined became the goal. It was a bumpy transition; but once it began, there never was much doubt that the Church was moving away from its isolated nineteenth-century identity.

But toward what?

Mormon teachings and practices that were modified during this process included:

- Polygamy and the definition of celestial marriage⁸
- Temple rituals and garments⁹
- Adam-God teachings¹⁰
- Economic cooperation or United Order living¹¹
- Millennial thinking and the kingdom of God¹²
- The temporal gathering¹³
- Adoption of the King James version of the Bible¹⁴

LDS sociologist Armand L. Mauss wrote of this peacemaking process: “Mormons were required to give up polygamy, theocracy, collective economic experiments, and any other flagrantly un-American institutions, and thus to abandon the path of charismatic peculiarity, except at the relatively abstract level of theology.”¹⁵ Our whole relationship with the “Gentile” world was reworked. Religious communities draw a circle in the sand around themselves, establishing requirements for those who stand inside the circle with membership in the group, and those who stand outside the circle without membership. In short, what it meant to be Mormon inside the circle was redefined.

While not the exclusive crafter of this change, Heber J. Grant came

to be its most visible embodiment. He went from being a post-Manifesto polygamist as an apostle¹⁶ to being a Church president committed to monogamy and assimilation. In 1918 Grant succeeded Joseph F. Smith and presided for twenty-seven years until his death at age eighty-eight in 1945, longer than any other Church president. During Grant's administration, the Church moved from toleration of polygamy hold-outs to actively driving them out of the circle.¹⁷

One University of Utah graduate student in 1963 described Mormon fundamentalism as a "protest to adaptation."¹⁸ While certainly a majority of Mormons had grown weary of the conflicts with the larger society, some dissenters sought to preserve the old ways, and some were in positions of religious authority.¹⁹ They grumbled and fought change from within until they died or were driven out by the striving for a new future that Grant represented. In a way, the Church insured that these fundamentalists would metastasize. By the 1930s they emerged as an annoying voice in opposition, challenging the big church's version of whether, how, and why this change came about.

One of the things I stumbled across in studying this subject was that in 1930 the LDS Church published *Latter-Day Revelations: Selections from the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. As its title states, it was an abridged version of the Doctrine and Covenants, one of the four Mormon canonized texts. It contained forty-one sections, some of them abridged, and did not include Section 132 on celestial marriage. Prepared by James E. Talmage, an educator, scientist, and apostle, the book was published in English, Spanish, and Norwegian. Fundamentalist Mormons leaped on the book as an example of the Church's continuing efforts to jettison unique Mormon doctrines. The Church quickly retreated, withdrawing the book from sale.²⁰

In 1941 an essay in the fundamentalist Mormon monthly magazine *TRUTH* pointed out that, in addition to omitting Section 132, Section 85, which predicted a time when one "mighty and strong" would have to set the Church "in order," had also been omitted. "These two revelations apparently constituted a thorn in the side of the leaders of the Church who had repudiated and surrendered the principles involved." *TRUTH* then noted sarcastically that omitted revelations "were considered obsolete and of no 'enduring value', and hence were omitted from Dr. Talmage's book."²¹

To some extent, change in the LDS Church was possible because it

came through the Prophet, often given emphasis by “Thus saith the Lord.” That kind of institutional authority makes it easier to effect change, although LDS Church presidents have never had the power to act without seeking consensus. And the pronouncements of past prophets are often brought out by dissenters to challenge those of modern prophets.

In George Orwell’s futuristic novel *1984*, one of Big Brother’s aphorisms is: “Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.”²² The Prophet controls the past for the great majority of believing Mormons, not by destroying or altering historical records, but by articulating an institutional past that most casual listeners are prepared to believe. “Plural marriage ended in 1890” is an obvious example.

LDS sociologist Armand Mauss has described the Mormon experience as alternating periods of “assimilation” and “retrenchment.” He suggests that the Church was anxious to emerge from cultural “disrepute” and emphasized assimilation until the 1960s when the pendulum began to swing back. “Faced with assimilation, Mormons have felt the need since the sixties to reach ever more deeply into their bag of cultural peculiarities to find either symbolic or actual traits that will help them mark their subcultural boundaries and thus their very identity as a special people.” He calls this a “predicament of respectability.”²³

Writing in 1994, Mauss examined how the mindset of Church leaders influences Mormon doctrine and culture, but he did not consider the dilution effects of a flood of converts on the LDS community, even while noting: “New converts between 1986 and 1990 accounted for more than three-fourths of all baptisms.”²⁴

When I was born in 1948 there were just over a million Mormons on the whole planet.²⁵ They were overwhelmingly a Rocky Mountain West community. That changed in my lifetime, ignited by David O. McKay,²⁶ driven harder by Spencer W. Kimball, and greatly accelerated by Gordon B. Hinkley. Hundreds of thousands became millions.²⁷ The LDS Church recently sent out the one-millionth missionary and claimed a membership of thirteen million.²⁸ We changed from a denomination where the great majority of members were born, raised, and indoctrinated in the Church to a world where they are just a fraction. The great majority of members I encounter today are relatively recent Baptists, Presbyterians, Church of Christ, and Catholics. They bring their past religious experi-

ence and beliefs into the Church and do not have a lifetime of Mormon religious education.

I was born in North Carolina and have lived most of my life in the Deep South. When I was a boy and young man, the people in my branches and missions were, like my father,²⁹ largely part of the post World War II Mormon diaspora, raised and instructed in the Church. What I heard at church seemed to reflect that religious indoctrination.

Now in mid-life, I attend growing wards and stakes in the Deep South. The members are largely former Baptists. Fewer than half the adults sitting around me grew up in the Church. What I am taught in sacrament meeting and Sunday School now is very different from what I heard as a boy and a teenager. It is more protestant and less “Mormon” than what I knew growing up.³⁰

For a long time, I taught the Gospel Principles class in my ward. One Sunday we sang a hymn in sacrament meeting that referred to our Mother in Heaven, Eliza R. Snow’s *O My Father*. “In heav’n are parents single? / No, the thought makes reason stare! / Truth is reason; truth eternal / tells me I’ve a mother there.”³¹ The manual touched on family that Sunday, and I mentioned the Heavenly Mother in my lesson. I did not see that belief as heretical. Rather, it was something I had been taught all my life.³² After class a furious missionary scolded me for bringing this up, for “not teaching from the manual.” Apparently an investigator had been in class and freaked out at the reference. I was annoyed at the time but let it pass. Now, I wonder if I am a product of an older brand of Mormonism while the young missionary—and probably the great majority of the missionaries—are the product of the new, more protestant Mormonism.

Then I was jolted to see a married Jesus thrown overboard with a press release in May 2006. The Church apparently succumbed to the hysteria in conservative Christianity over the popularity of *The Da Vinci Code*. As the Tom Hanks movie was about to be released, Church Public Communications issued a press release, resulting in the following news item:

LDS doctrine does not endorse claims made in a popular book and movie that Jesus Christ was married.

“The Da Vinci Code,” which opens today at the Cannes Film Festival in France, has evoked a lot of discussion from critics and Christians everywhere. The fictional story by author Dan Brown focuses on the premise that Jesus Christ was married to Mary Magdalene and fathered a child. Dale Bills, a spokesman for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said in a statement released Tuesday: “The belief that Christ was

married has never been official church doctrine. It is neither sanctioned nor taught by the church. While it is true that a few church leaders in the mid-1800s expressed their opinions on the matter, it was not then, and is not now, church doctrine.”

Professors of religion from around the state met earlier this week to discuss the story line, finding very little evidence within the Bible to support the book’s storyline.³³

My fundamentalist Mormon friends, who emailed me the news item, were no doubt struck by the fact that plural marriage was also first cast overboard in a press release.

Where and how was I taught that God and Jesus were married and that I had a Mother in Heaven? I rack my brain trying to identify just where I got this. Were the branch presidents, Sunday School teachers, seminary teachers, and home teachers who taught me that wrong? I was also taught that God and Jesus had plural wives. I was taught that a bit more on the sly; I could see this was not for public consumption so we didn’t talk about it too loudly. It seemed to fall under the heading of “the Mysteries” which we were discouraged from speculating on.

I recognize I am not consistent in all this. I always believed the Church’s pre-1978 teachings on race were wrong and inconsistent with the gospel as I understood it. I just could not accept the old Mormonism on that point and welcomed President Kimball’s revelation allowing worthy black men to be ordained to the priesthood. The newer, more protestant Mormonism is one more to my liking on that issue.³⁴

I recognize that much of what was presented to me as belief and doctrine in the first half of my life has today been separated out as culture, folk belief, or the mere speculation of now-dead LDS leaders. I grew up being counseled that living prophets always trumped dead prophets, a teaching that left me somewhat uncomfortable as undermining consistency and stability. I also recognize that we cannot just pick and chose our dogma off a religious à la carte menu.

I think this subject is made more difficult by the fact that the institutional Church presents the prophet as perfect, as without error. Follow the prophet, do not question the prophet, when the prophet speaks, the discussion is over. That deference is extended to all General Authorities and trickles down to your stake president and bishop. Obedience. Absolute obedience, which is justified by the promise that they will not lead us astray. And that same halo of deference gets enlarged to encompass just about anything they might have said in a past Church calling.

I always saw this situation as a formula for a crisis of testimony. Prophets are mortal men; they are not divine beings; of course, they make mistakes. They are well intentioned and do the best they can, but they are not perfect.

When the faithful are finally confronted with error, with the bad decision, the secret sin or dark corner that every human being has, the flash of anger, the error of judgment, or just the difference of opinion, it presents them with problems. Furthermore, social norms change over time, and consensus in a group—the “group think”—will be different over the decades. Much of what came out of Ezra Taft Benson’s mouth on race and civil rights now sounds just looney where it once was consistent with at least some corners of his time.³⁵ Some of what was once said to justify the former prohibition against ordaining black men to the priesthood was a part of its time where now it stinks of racism. Those who find and quote the old stuff today sometimes get flogged for speaking nothing but the truth.

I believe that there is an obvious spiritual answer for this dilemma, but institutional forces find this answer a threatening one. Testimony is personal. Faith is individual. We each must develop our own compass. We must believe because we believe, not because we are directed to believe without questions by rigid ecclesiastical superiors. We can come to that belief only by wrestling with the questions ourselves, not by being afraid of the questions. We must have confidence in our own testimonies; we cannot delegate our testimony to some Church leader. We must answer for the content of our lives. “But he told me to believe that way; he said I would be safe if I just believed that way” is not an eternal answer.

There is a symbiotic relationship between the Church and its fundamentalist fringe. The more the Church succeeds and grows, the stronger the fundamentalists become. As the Church strives to be more convert friendly, to require less of a leap for new converts to embrace, the more discomfort will be felt by more traditional Mormons, some of whom will leave. As the converts come in the front door, some of the traditionalists exit through the back door. For a minority of those who leave, Mormon fundamentalism represents a place to go. This does not mean they will become polygamous or join a United Order community, but they will hear beliefs with which they are familiar and which they were taught in their youth.³⁶

In September 2006 I attended the John Whitmer Historical Associ-

ation meeting in Independence, Missouri. That is the historical society of what was once the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ). Many Latter-day Saints are also members of JWHA. The theme of the conference was the various religious communities who traced their roots to Joseph Smith Jr. Anne Wilde and I conducted a session on fundamentalist Mormons.³⁷ I learned how the RLDS world had undergone serious realignment as the result of doctrinal changes, dumping what many of its religious conservatives regarded as core values. The result has been the emergence of the now thoroughly protestant Community of Christ, the dissenting and more traditional Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and a number of independent congregations that refuse to declare themselves. The RLDS Church is no more. I was immediately struck by the parallels with the LDS experience.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is one of the few religious communities which has progressed from one-time marginal cult status to a robust and thriving religious community. Philip Jenkins, a historian of contemporary religious movements, has observed:

The religious margin is the seedbed of new churches and mainstream organizations. Though the great majority of new religious groups do not succeed in growing to become major denominations, at least some do make the transition. Ultimately, all existing Protestant denominations began as new, radical sects, with the exception of a few groups like Episcopalians and Lutherans, who from their earliest days were accorded the status of an established church by a particular nation-state. Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, and Pentecostals all began their respective histories as suspicious and unpopular, yet each over time made the transition to respectability.

He added: "The growth of the Latter-day Saints is very striking; the Mormon rate of growth in its first century-and-a-half has exceeded that of early Christianity itself."³⁸

The LDS Church is still going through the natural evolutionary course from what others see as a cult to a church. Jenkins has some helpful definitions:

Churches are . . . defined as "religious bodies in a relatively low state of tension with their environment," sects are in a high state of tension, but remain within the conventional religious traditions of a society; cults, likewise, exist in a state of tension, but they "represent faiths that are new and unconventional in a society" or have no prior ties to any established body in the wider society. Cults "do not evolve or break away from other re-

ligions as do religious sects, but rather offer something new and different."³⁹

There will be change. Nothing is fixed. But LDS institutions will likely try to paper over those changes. As Armand Mauss has commented: "One sometimes hears in Mormon sermons or lessons the reassuring testimony that the church has 'always been the same' since it was founded by Christ through the Prophet Joseph Smith (and even then, of course, it was presented to the world as a faithful replication of the primitive Christian church). Such a proposition is credible . . . only among those lacking institutional memory (as all Mormon converts do by definition) or among those untutored in any but mythological Mormon history (as are nearly all Mormons at the grass roots)."⁴⁰

Our individual comfort or discomfort with these changes probably has to do with when we were born and indoctrinated during this period of evolution. A generation from now, the changes that make me so uncomfortable will be nonissues for the vast majority of active members, just as plural marriage and United Order living are not issues for Mormons today. They will have vanished from the official discourse, but likely will be preserved in some form among fundamentalist Mormons. Some of those who are made uncomfortable by these changes will find sanctuary in Mormon fundamentalism.

My bottom line is my firm belief that my testimony and belief are personal convictions that I must arrive at for myself. The religious part of my life is not an empty glass into which my LDS superiors pour convictions. I must be persuaded myself. I also firmly believe that every prophet was a man, a good and benevolent man with the very best of intentions, but still a mortal who may make mistakes.

And don't try to tell me the Church is never changing.

Notes

1. A portion of my Master of Laws (LL.M.) thesis, University of Wisconsin Law School, was published as "Who Shall Raise the Children? Vera Black and the Rights of Polygamous Utah Parents," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 60 (Winter 1992): 27-46.

2. See "After the Manifesto: Modern Polygamy and Fundamentalist Mormons," *Journal of Church and State*, 23 (Summer 1990): 38-60; "Fundamentalist Attitudes Toward the Church As Reflected in the Sermons of the Late Leroy S. Johnson," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23, no. 2 (Sum-

mer 1990): 38–60; “Utah Supreme Court Decides Polygamist Adoption Case,” *Sunstone* 15 (September 1991): 33–40; “‘This Will Someday Be the Head and Not the Tail of the Church’: A History of the Mormon Fundamentalists at Short Creek,” *Journal of Church and State* 43 (Winter 2001): 49–80; “Imprisonment, Defiance, and Division: A History of Mormon Fundamentalism in the 1940s and 1950s,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 65–95.

3. Rebecca Olpin, an employee in the LDS Church Historian’s office, reported a survey in which “active Latter-day Saints want their church to provide a ‘frank and honest’ presentation of church history, unvarnished by attempts to sugarcoat the past in order to make it more palatable.” Quoted in Carrie A. Moore, “LDS in Survey Call for Unvarnished History,” *Deseret Morning News*, May 27, 2007, B2.

4. My notes, Gene Sessions, Session 4D: “Depictions of the Utah War,” Mormon History Association annual conference, Salt Lake City, May 26, 2007. I’m reasonably sure Sessions was paraphrasing some other historical luminary, but I made note only of the quotation.

5. Eric Froner, *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 77. Froner was writing about changes in history textbooks as the old USSR morphed into what we now know as Russia.

6. Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 36.

7. Edwin Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Ken Driggs, “The Mormon Church-State Confrontation in Nineteenth Century America,” *Journal of Church and State* 30 (Spring 1988): 273–89; Orma Linford, “The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases, Part I,” *Utah Law Review* 9, no. 2 (Winter 1964): 308–70 and “The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases, Part II,” *ibid.*, 9, no. 3 (Summer 1965): 543–91; Penelope W. Saltzman, “Potter v. Murray City: Another Interpretation of Polygamy and the First Amendment,” *Utah Law Review* (1986): 345–71.

8. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 60–73; B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); and D. Michael Quinn, “LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 9–105.

9. See generally David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994); and David John Buerger, "The Development of the Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 33–76.

10. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 18–19; for a Fundamentalist Mormon perspective see Joseph Musser, *Michael Our Father and Our God* (1937; rpt., Salt Lake City: Truth Publishing Co., 1963).

11. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 180–211; Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958); Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976).

12. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 74–92.

13. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 305–7.

14. Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

15. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 22.

16. Grant pled guilty to a charge of unlawful cohabitation with his plural wives in 1899. "Heber J. Grant Appears in Court," *Deseret News*, September 8, 1899, 2; and "Confession by Grant," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 9, 1899, 4.

17. Grant issued a series of "Manifestos" denouncing polygamy holdouts and their sympathizers, including what has come to be known as the "Final Manifesto" on June 17, 1933. James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833–1964*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 5:315–30. In the 1940s, the Church undertook its own spying operation on fundamentalist Mormons, then turned its results over to federal and state prosecutors to use in the 1944 raid and prosecutions. D. Michael Quinn, *Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 241–54.

18. John Marshall Day, "A Study of Protest to Adaptation" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1963).

19. Victor W. Jorgensen and B. Carmon Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair and the Watershed of Mormon History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 48 (Winter 1980): 4–36; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904."

20. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith: A Series of Lectures on the Principal Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Latter-day Revelation: Selections from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants Containing Revelations Given through Joseph Smith the Prophet* (1890; rpt., Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2003). See the foreword by James P. Harris, xxviii-xxxv. I have two copies of *Latter-day Revelations* in my collection of Mormon historical materials.

21. "EVIDENCES AND RECONCILIATIONS," *TRUTH*, August 1941, 60.

22. George Orwell, 1984 (New York: Signet Classic, 1977), 35.

23. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 77, 79.

24. *Ibid.*, 92.

25. 2007 *Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: *Deseret Morning News*, 2007), 636.

26. Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005).

27. Official LDS Church membership was claimed as just short of 13 million worldwide in 2006. More skeptical researchers estimate active membership at about 4 million. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "LDS Church's Worldwide Growth Slows Down," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 26, 2005, A1.

28. Tad Walch, "1 Million Missionaries for LDS Church—So Far," *Deseret Morning News*, June 26, 2007, A1; Peggy Fletcher Stack, "An LDS Missionary Is One in a Million," *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 26, 2007, A1.

29. My father, Don Ferring Driggs, was a fifth-generation Mormon, the grandchild of Apollos Griffin Driggs, a polygamous bishop of Sugar House Ward in Salt Lake City, and the only child of Earl Alston Driggs and Ida Ferring Driggs. He served a mission in Germany in 1934–37. He then served in the Army Air Corps in North Africa during World War II, sustained serious injuries in a bomber crash, and finished his war service as a translator during interrogations of German POWs. After peace he attended graduate school at Temple University in Philadelphia and at the University of North Carolina. He never returned to Utah to live and is today retired from the psychology faculty of Florida State University and living in Pennsylvania with his wife Dorothea. I was born in Durham, North Carolina, and grew up in Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida. I did not attend a ward or live in a stake until I enrolled at the University of Florida in 1966.

30. I presently attend the Atlanta Ward in the Atlanta Georgia Stake, a decidedly mixed-race and multicultural LDS community where I would guess well more than half the members are converts, many of them immigrants from outside the United States.

31. *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), 292–93.

32. On our Mother in Heaven, see McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 516–17.

33. “LDS Do Not Endorse Claims in ‘Da Vinci,’” *Deseret Morning News*, May 17, 2006, B2.

34. See my chapter, in *Black and Mormon: Constructions of Race in an American Church*, edited by Newell G. Bringhurst and Darron T. Smith (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 132–47.

35. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay*, 64, 70, 72, 92–93.

36. While I do not have numbers to offer, it has been my observation that the majority of fundamentalist Mormons are not part of polygamous families and do not live in some sort of communal arrangements.

37. See Mary Batchelor, Marianne Watson, and Anne Wilde, *Voices in Harmony: Contemporary Women Celebrate Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Principle Voices, 2000). Wilde is a widow of independent Fundamentalist Mormon writer Ogden Kraut. See Peggy Fletcher Stack, “Polygamist Patriarch Ogden Kraut Dies,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 19, 2002, D2.

38. Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs*, 228.

39. *Ibid.*, 16.

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



Brian Kershisnik,
Jumping Over Two Snakes,
oil on panel, 24 x 30 inches, 2007

Polygamy, Mormonism, and Me

B. Carmon Hardy

Note: This article is part of a series, Avenues to Faith, guest-edited by Todd Compton. The series looks at how historians, creative writers, administrators, educators, and scriptural scholars have dealt with some of the classic problems in Mormon history. The series assumes that a careful examination of these issues is necessary to develop a holistic, inclusive faith.

When I was a young Latter-day Saint, polygamy entered my consciousness about the time I became a teenager. References to it were not uncommon by family members and in Sunday School classes. It seems to me there was less sensitivity surrounding discussion of polygamy in church meetings then than now. Men reflected on the practice, often humorously. Women, nettled by such remarks, often expressed displeasure with the prospect of plurality under any circumstance. The comment most often heard was that, though once permitted, Mormon polygamy had been discontinued by the Church's president. Guided by inspiration, he had directed that such marriages no longer be performed. It was also occasionally said that the reason for its discontinuance was that too many had fallen short of living the principle in righteousness. Plural marriage in this life was thus brought to an end by the Manifesto of 1890. It may recommence in the millennium, we were told, but there, as in heaven where it is sure to be the domestic order of the gods, our minds will be so enlightened that all misgivings, and especially female discomfort with the arrangement, will fade away. This was the general course that I and others followed in discussions on the subject, both in church and, after I married, at home with Kamillia.

A more extensive encounter with the topic occurred in the process of preparing my doctoral dissertation on the Mormon colonies in Mexico. Examination of materials relating to the relocation of large numbers of Mormons south of the border beginning in the mid-1880s revealed that, rather than a search for new lands—the reason publicly given for the migration—it was escape from prosecution for unlawful cohabitation that actually prompted most to go there. I became aware that the thousands of Latter-day Saints living in northern Mexico constituted the greatest concentration of pluralists anywhere in Mormon society at the time. More than this, it became obvious from my research that plural marriages continued to be performed in Mexico after the Manifesto of 1890. Records left by Anthony W. Ivins, stake president in the colonies and later an apostle and member of the First Presidency, showed that he performed many of these post-Manifesto marriages with the quiet approval of and instructions from high Church leaders in Salt Lake City.

This discovery did not, at the time, startle my conscience or threaten my religious convictions. For reasons I cannot fully explain, I ignored the dissonance brought by contradictions between what was publicly stated and what secretly took place. I accepted statements by Mormon authorities that plural marriages after the Manifesto had not been approved and were the work of rebels out of harmony with Church leaders. Consequently, Church-approved post-Manifesto polygamy received virtually no attention in my finished dissertation. The contradiction lingered, however, and would later be joined to other questions concerning the reliability of Mormonism's official historical claims.

After receiving an appointment to teach the history and philosophy of education at Brigham Young University, I completed the dissertation and devoted myself to responsibilities associated with work and raising a young family. Kamillia and I had always been conservative in our views, both of us were active in the Church, and we both wanted to acquire a deeper confirmation of Mormonism's divinity. I imagine the questions we addressed in our private conversations were much the same as those raised by other thoughtful Latter-day Saint couples when discussing religion. Our searching was accompanied by prayer, fasting, scripture reading, and full activity in the Church—all that was prescribed as the pathway to a "testimony." As time passed, however, and when nothing of a convincing nature occurred to allay our doubts, confidence that Mormonism offered us a sure road to either heaven or absolute truth wavered.

During these same years, as commonly happens with scholars after completing their doctoral programs, I continued my research on the colonies in Mexico with a view to eventually publishing my findings. This research involved regular visits to the Church Archives in Salt Lake City, where I learned, first, that there were numerous documents I could not see and second, that whatever notes I took on documents I *was* permitted to view must be examined by A. William Lund, then assistant Church historian. It was always a harrowing half hour or so at the end of each research day when Lund read the 3x5 cards on which I wrote my notes—especially when, finding some of which he disapproved, he would crumple them and throw them into the waste can in his office.

Another occurrence of the early 1960s involved making the acquaintance of Nelle Spilsbury Hatch. She was a prominent resident in the colonies, had written a history of Colonia Juarez, and was visiting a relative in Provo, Utah, when we were introduced. She kindly consented to answer questions about the colonies, permitting Kamillia and me to spend an afternoon with her during which we discussed everything from polygamy to economics in Mormon-Mexican colonial life. I particularly remember the sense of abandonment that she said the colonists felt when President Wilford Woodruff issued his 1890 Manifesto. Our discussion was pleasant and led to a collaborative project some years later. Near the same time, Kamillia and I also interviewed Heber Farr, an older Provo resident who, having married a plural spouse in 1904, was at the time, perhaps, the only polygamist yet living in the United States whose post-Manifesto marriage had been approved by Church authorities. The memories and comments of these two individuals gave human faces to numbers of people whose names I knew only from diaries and other documents.

Another approach I undertook to my subject was to send questionnaires to Mormons living in the colonies. Some residing there had survived the exodus imposed on them by the Mexican Revolution, had returned to Mexico and, I hoped, could tell me things that would otherwise die with them. Some of the questions I asked related to polygamous practices before the exodus but were respectfully phrased and constituted only a portion of the information I sought. It was with surprise that I was one day summoned to a meeting with one of the university's administrative officers, Anthony Bentley. Born in the colonies but living in Provo, Utah, he had somehow learned of my questionnaires and insisted that I explain the reason for them.

Angrily, he interrogated me both about my purpose in sending such inquiries and my intentions regarding the use of any information obtained from them. With a raised voice, he repeatedly demanded to know where I would publish my findings. Taken aback by his hostile manner, I could only say what was true: that questionnaires were commonly employed by scholars in many fields; that my intent was an innocent search for historical information; and that, while I did not yet know where I would publish any writing I might do on the subject, I had assumed that I would eventually submit it to some historical journal. Bentley was especially provoked because I could not be specific about where the information I sought would appear in print. He seemed suspicious of my intentions generally and found none of my answers satisfactory. He told me that, before resuming work on the colonies I should clear future research with him.

About the same time, Antone K. Romney, dean of the College of Education, also asked me to explain what my research was about. This was a more amicable experience than the interview with Bentley. The dean displayed greater understanding about how research is conducted and published, seemed sympathetic with what I was trying to do, and said he would discuss my work and need for more historical information with his brother, Marion G. Romney, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. Their family also had roots in the Mexican colonies, both Antone and Marion having been born in Colonia Juarez.

It was perhaps three months or so before a response came. Again Dean Romney invited me to his office and read to me a memorandum sent to him not from his brother but from Hugh B. Brown, a member of the First Presidency. It indicated that I should not pursue my research, at least so far as it involved Mormon polygamy. When I asked Dean Romney for a copy of the memo, he said he could not give me one. I vividly remember some of the language, however. There was no rancor in it, but it instructed Romney to tell me that it was best not to examine subjects that had brought "trouble" to the Church in its past. I was disturbed by the message, not only because of the curb it placed on my work but by the view that things possibly embarrassing to the Church were not appropriate for scholarly investigation. It seemed entirely at odds with what I thought a university should be about. I was also affected by the fact that it came from one in the First Presidency whom I and many others believed possessed a broad and intellectually friendly outlook.

These events occurred at the same time Kamillia and I were privately equivocating over the truth claims of Mormonism. It is important that I acknowledge Kamillia's interested participation in all that occupied me in those years. While discussions on the subject occurred nearly daily, we shared our inner turmoil with no one, not even our children. I was fortunate to have a companion whose misgivings were identical to my own and who confronted the implications of our questions so bravely and honestly. I must also add that our decision to leave Brigham Young University—and subsequently the Church itself—did not hinge singly on issues associated with my research. These were but part of a complex of considerations that brought us to that momentous life step.

While there were several ingredients in the decision, the primary concern remained a want of spiritual certainty that the Church was true, an increasing awareness of instances where the historical record contradicted what we had been taught, and a growing realization that the world was filled with admirable, heroic people entirely outside the Mormon frame. Discouragement with the university's approach to scholarship, particularly as it related to my own work, was but one of several matters qualifying my religious faith. Taken altogether, it seemed dishonest on my part, as I told the president of the university when explaining my resignation in the spring of 1966, to continue as an employee paid from the tithing receipts of believing members.

Something more needs to be said regarding my break with Mormonism. After formally submitting my resignation from BYU, owing probably to brief discussions with colleagues and administrators about my reasons in the matter, several faculty and friends paid visits, hoping to dissuade me. I particularly remember Hugh Nibley, a former teacher from whom I had taken many courses, and one whom I had long held in high regard. He did not "bear his testimony" or engage me on philosophical or historical grounds. His chief plea was simply that I should not be "inveigled by the ways of the world." What affected me most was his interest and concern. I was even more touched when Dean Romney asked whether Kamillia and I would visit with one of the General Authorities concerning our doubts if he could arrange it. Of course, we consented.

An appointment was made for us to meet with Apostle Howard W. Hunter in the Church Administration Building in Salt Lake City. After we were ushered in by a secretary, Apostle Hunter graciously greeted us. The first few minutes were confused because, for some reason, he as-

sumed we were grieving for a dead child and seeking spiritual solace for the loss. After explaining the correct reasons for our presence, our growing doubts and misgivings regarding the Church, he expressed understanding and responded with kindness. He remarked on the many advantages offered by the Church, especially for those with families. He told us that he could not imagine how life would be for him without “the gospel.” When I asked if he had direct, personal confirmation that the Church was true, such as a communication from heaven, he said, “No.” But, he went on, he knew others who told him they had had such a witness, and he relied on their claims, believing that they would not deceive him. While Kamillia and I left the interview no more convinced than before, we have always remembered the thoughtful manner and compassion the apostle displayed toward us.

I should also add that Kamillia and I, neither at that time nor since, harbored any bitterness toward Mormonism. It was responsible for much that we considered best in our lives. We yet have enormous regard for the toil, sacrifice, and achievements of our pioneer ancestors. Even after becoming nonmembers, we stood by our children when all chose to be baptized in the Church. And we were happy to support our son when he was called to fill a mission abroad. We occasionally attended church, especially when our children were participating in some way. It was only that we could not *personally* subscribe to contentions that Mormonism alone possesses all religious truth, that its theology is divinely dictated from heaven, and that, if there is a life beyond the grave, as between individuals of equal ethical merit, those who are Mormon will be given a greater reward than those who are not. In the years following my resignation from Brigham Young University and our decision formally to leave the Church, we have consistently sought to respect the religious choices made by our children. And in none of my historical writing about the Church have I ever intended to criticize or embarrass it.

After accepting an appointment at California State University, Fullerton, I sought for a time to redirect my research into areas apart from Mormon history, fields in which I had studied and that had long held interest for me. While this resulted in publications on non-Mormon topics, I found I could not entirely abandon historical interest in my Latter-day Saint ancestors. Moreover, with the appointment of Leonard Arrington as Church historian a spirit of openness and honesty regarding investigation of the Mormon past largely replaced the paranoia I encountered in the

1960s. I was given a grant to work at the Church's Historical Department Archives for several weeks in the mid-1970s. Access to materials I had never seen before was permitted, and I was able to add considerable information to what I already possessed on the polygamous, Mormon colonies in Mexico. Near this same time, I met and became acquainted with Victor W. Jorgensen, an engineer from Utah, who was intensely interested in post-Manifesto polygamy. He had already gathered data on the post-Manifesto marriages of certain Mormon apostles. It would be unfair of me not to acknowledge the large contribution he subsequently made to publications resulting from our work together.

Another important event occurred when, in the early 1970s, I and my colleague, Professor Gary Shumway, along with a few students spent several days in the Mexican colonies. Gary gathered numerous interviews on tape, all of which are a part of the impressive collection he developed as founder and director of the California State University Center for Oral and Public History. These and other records gathered by Gary have proven of great assistance to me over the years. During our visit to the colonies, I renewed my acquaintance with Nelle Hatch. Though aged and severely impaired in both sight and hearing, she remained mentally alert and implored me to bring to completion a project she had long ago commenced and since passed on to another Mormon colonist from Mexico, Hal Bentley, then employed at the University of Utah. The project involved writing biographical sketches of important personalities dating from the founding years of the colonies' history. She had gathered several notebooks of memoirs, letters, and other materials to be used in the volume. Bentley, struggling with an illness, was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task and was unable to do anything with it.

Fearing that her long-envisioned tribute to old friends, the pioneer founders of the Mexican settlements, would be forgotten, Nelle pleaded that I do what I could to obtain the materials and finish the volume by 1985, the centennial date for the founding of the colonies. I promised her I would do so. I succeeded in acquiring possession of all Nelle's materials bearing on the project, incorporated findings of my own, and with the assistance of Gary Shumway and Nelle's daughters—Ernestine Hatch and Madelyn Hatch Knudsen, the book was privately published by Gary Shumway and made available for sale during the centennial celebration of the colonies in 1985. Titled *Stalwarts South of the Border*, it is a rich compilation of biographical and autobiographical reminiscences relating to the

Mormon pioneers of Mexico, many of whom were polygamous.¹ Nelle Hatch remains for me an especially dear personality, forever connected in my mind with those sturdy figures who, with so little, built a thriving Mormon commonwealth in the deserts of northern Mexico.

It was also during the early 1980s that I met Guy C. Wilson Jr., the son of polygamous parentage in the Mexican colonies who was then living in Pasadena, California. After reading an article of mine, Guy contacted me, wishing to share some of his memories. I soon realized that, though in his eighties, he had unusually strong powers of recollection. I arranged to interview him, making tape-recordings of his reminiscences. Goodly portions of his youth were spent both in the colonies and in Utah. His father, Guy Carlton Wilson Sr., was a prominent citizen in the colonies and presided over the Juarez Stake Academy, one of the premier elementary and secondary schools in all northern Mexico. He was also a polygamist. In addition to Melissa Stevens, a plural wife and Guy Jr.'s mother, Guy Sr. married Anna Lowrie Ivins, a daughter of Anthony W. Ivins, president of Juarez Stake. Young Guy thus grew up within the colonies' most elite circle and was extensively acquainted with polygamy as it was practiced and approved by Mormons in the early twentieth century.

Guy was primarily interested in memorializing his father. But in the process of telling about him, Guy brought other individuals and events into his narrative. He remembered the names of many who took plural wives after the Manifesto, some in Mexico and others in the United States. So many women who married in polygamy after 1890 were sent to Mexico to bear their children and thereby be less conspicuous north of the border, he said, that Mexican colonists referred to their settlements as "lambing grounds." He told how George Q. Cannon, counselor in the First Presidency, strongly urged entry into "the Principle" and helped implement its continuation. He related touching accounts of the hardships imposed on families who, relocating to the United States after the Mexican Revolution, were asked to geographically disperse their plural families so as to spare Mormonism (by then officially monogamous) any embarrassment owing to its former attachment to the Principle. These and many other memories were published by the California State University Oral History Program in 1988 as, *Memories of a Venerable Father and Other Reminiscences*.

Guy took great pride in his Mormon heritage but was relaxed in his personal attitudes toward Latter-day Saint teachings. Following our re-

ording sessions in the mornings, he generally took me to the Valley Hunt Club in Pasadena for lunch. After ordering cocktails, Guy always raised his glass and said: "Come Carmon, let's drink to the Church!" Then followed two hours of further recollections, some adding to stories recorded in the morning, others new, but most told in language so salty that he wanted it confined to our luncheon table.

I should now return to the work that Victor W. Jorgensen and I first undertook in the late 1970s and early '80s. The first printed investigation into approved, late plural marriages on which we collaborated was an article in an issue of the *Utah Historical Quarterly* for 1980 dealing with the cases of Apostles Matthias F. Cowley and John W. Taylor.² That article not only showed the extent to which these two authorities engaged in plurality after 1890 but, more importantly, demonstrated that their expulsion from the Quorum of Twelve in 1905 was an event orchestrated for the purpose of appeasing national criticism of the Church. We explained how the two agreed to resign owing to pressures brought by Senator-Apostle Reed Smoot whose seat in the United States Senate was challenged on the grounds that the Church still engaged in new plural marriages. The article also revealed that there were other apostles, apart from Cowley and Taylor, who entered plural marriages after 1890. The publication was well received and was awarded the Dale Morgan Prize as the best article to appear in the *Quarterly* that year.

The success of this project encouraged us to commence work on a book-length treatment of the matter. Then Michael Quinn, who had an interest in the same subject, published a long article on it in *Dialogue* in 1985.³ His findings reinforced ours and provided additions to our growing list of post-1890 plural unions. His account also contained helpful insights into how such marriages were approved. Pressing ahead with our work, Vic, who lived in Utah, regularly sent me extensive transcripts identifying and discussing approved plural marriages after the Manifesto. I then added my own findings and other observations, slowly working all into a book-length manuscript. The result was *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage*, published by the University of Illinois Press in 1992, more than a decade after our first foray into the topic in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. Despite his extensive work in searching out those who married after the Manifesto, for personal reasons Vic decided that he did not wish to be formally identified with the book. Thus, the volume bears my name alone. Like our article, this work received overwhelmingly favor-

able reviews and was given the best book award for that year by the Mormon Historical Association.

It is always interesting how one's views change as work in a subject area progresses. At the outset, the extensive number of new, Church-approved, post-Manifesto plural marriages was what most surprised me. And it is still astonishing to realize that, between 1890 and 1910, at least two hundred and perhaps as many as three hundred such marriages took place. Church statements, when rumor and question arose, that such marriages were few, that Church authorities did not approve them, and that those that did occur were the "sporadic" work of "mavericks," fell hollow before the sheer quantity of plural unions that research now shows were approved and contracted. But gradually, something else emerged, something more significant even than the magnitude of their numbers. This was the identity of many of those who undertook such marriages. The majority were individuals who could be counted among the most faithful of Church members: former missionaries, bishops, members of bishoprics, stake presidents, members of stake presidencies, and other individuals similarly distinguished and favored in the Mormon community. At least seven apostles took plural wives after the Manifesto.⁴

Again, it was not just that numerous apostles entered the Principle after 1890, but that members of the First Presidency approved and assisted them in such unions as well. George Q. Cannon in the mid-1880s was remembered to declare that his attachment to the revelation on plurality was so strong that he felt "like taking every son of mine & placing his hand on my thigh causing him to swear he will obey it."⁵ After the Manifesto, Cannon remained more active perhaps than anyone else in assisting with its continuance. He not only encouraged individuals, including members of his own family, to take plural wives but sent recommends to Anthony W. Ivins in Mexico indicating that the bearers of such messages were approved and that Ivins might proceed to solemnize their plural unions.⁶ President Joseph F. Smith was also a strong believer in polygamy and gave permission to numerous individuals after the Manifesto to enter the practice—both in and outside of the United States.⁷ While documentation for such marriages is in most instances compelling, it is less so for President Wilford Woodruff, who issued the Manifesto. While I am persuaded that Woodruff entered a marital arrangement of some kind on his own with Madame Lydia Mountford in 1897, the available evidence for

this is inferential only.⁸ And other capable historians have disagreed with me.⁹

This realization, that it was the Church's elite who were mostly involved in post-Manifesto polygamy, highlighted another issue, one that nagged the investigation from its beginning. This was the problem of the Church's use of mistruth when publicly discussing polygamy, both early and late. Even a superficial examination of Mormon plurality, from the period of its practice in the 1840s to the throes of its cessation in the first two decades of the twentieth century, confronts one with numerous instances of false denial by Church leaders. This led to my writing a rather lengthy essay, titled "Lying for the Lord," that was added as an appendix to *Solemn Covenant*. Since the publication of the book, that phrase has sometimes been repeated as a criticism of the Church for instances of dissembling on a variety of questions. My intent in that essay was not, however, to indict the Church in any general way but simply to explore its use of prevarication when attempting to keep the approved practice of polygamy secret.

While it is true that Church leaders used purposeful falsehood to cloak Mormon polygamous practice at almost every stage of its history, my essay on the subject argued that we must be careful with our conclusions concerning it. Honesty and dishonesty are not easily reduced to the binary, ethical judgments we commonly make. Most importantly—and what I fear is too often missed despite my repeated attention to the issue in the book—is that plural marriage was so important as a tenet that resorts such as lying, though regretted, were thought necessary as a way to preserve it. In all of life, and with all people, lesser truths must sometimes yield to more important ones. While policies of deceit seldom escape detection and, once indulged, are susceptible to being employed elsewhere, their use here speaks most emphatically to the high regard in which plural marriage was held during those years.

And this, the crucial significance given the practice by the nineteenth-century Church, was justified by other contentions, some of which have been quite forgotten. One of these was the support polygamy gave to patriarchal government in the home. The importance of patriarchal authority, and its linkage with plural marriage, was affirmed in the first public defense of the practice printed on Joseph Smith's press in Nauvoo, Illinois: Udney Hay Jacob's *The Peace Maker* (1842). During the decades of its approval, plurality was often referred to as "patriarchal marriage." The sig-

nificance of restoring the polygamous, Abrahamic household, with a strong male figure at its center, was repeatedly emphasized in nineteenth-century Mormon sermons and writings. Attention to patriarchal government in the home was so pervasive that I sometimes wondered if polygamy was but an auxiliary device, a brace recruited to assure the more important function of male rule. This thinking led to my article on the subject in the *Journal of Mormon History*.¹⁰ Unfortunately, when printed, the typesetting program ran footnotes into the text, making it difficult for readers to follow the development of the article's themes. I was not given an opportunity to correct mistakes made by the printer before it appeared in the completed issue of the journal. Because the patriarchal-polygamous alliance was so important in nineteenth-century Mormon thinking about home life, I have sometimes thought I should revise the article, add further reflections, and publish it again.

Biological advantages were also said to follow plurality when practiced as taught by Mormon leaders. If sexual relations were employed only for reproductive purposes, men and women were told they would enjoy greater health, greater strength, and greater longevity, goals that were allegedly more easily accomplished in polygamy than in monogamy. Some saw the practice as a way by which the longevity of the ancients would be restored. As I combed through Mormon diaries, sermons, and public prints during the years of my research, I encountered this argument so frequently that I wondered why it had not received greater mention by historians. Dan Erickson, a friend and graduate student, joined me in summarizing these arguments in an article in the *Journal of the History of Sexuality* in 2001.¹¹ Along with its eugenic promises, superior social gifts were ascribed to polygamy, along with the claim of providing greater happiness than could be found in the monogamous home. Another assertion was that women might escape the curse of Eve by submitting to the requirements of plural family life. Such contentions make it easier to understand why the Saints went to such lengths, including the use of mistruth, to keep the Principle alive after the Manifesto.

All these aspects of plural marriage, and more, were brought together in *Doing the Works of Abraham: Mormon Polygamy, Its Origin, Practice, and Demise* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2007). I had always been interested in writing a book that would be published by the Arthur H. Clark Company. When I was a graduate student at Brigham Young University in the late 1950s, Dr. LeRoy Hafen, one of my profes-

sors and a much-published authority, praised the Clark Company for the quality of materials used in its books and the historical service provided through its splendid volumes on western Americana. The Arthur H. Clark Company, as every historian of the American West knows, continues to enjoy a reputation as one of the premier publishing houses in the field. When I learned that Clark was planning a new series, *KINGDOM IN THE WEST: THE MORMONS AND THE AMERICAN FRONTIER*, I contacted Robert A. Clark and expressed interest in doing a book for him on Mormon polygamy. Bob put me in touch with Will Bagley, the series general editor. After I sent him a prospectus, Will invited me to be a contributor to the *KINGDOM IN THE WEST* project. Over the lengthy period of time necessary to complete the book, I suspect Will often wondered whether he had erred in that decision. Not only were ten years required to finish the volume, but my early drafts, submitted to reassure Will and Bob that progress *was* occurring, were so filled with footnotes and documents that they must have despaired at the behemoth in preparation.

Books in the series, as Will envisioned them, were to consist primarily of original sources illustrating development of Mormonism's nineteenth-century "Kingdom in the West." Inasmuch as I had been collecting notes and documents on Mormon polygamy for more than thirty years, I first needed to organize the book into conceptual categories, that is chapters and subchapters. This was followed by much sifting and winnowing, then grafting the selected materials into their appropriate sections. Because polygamy is so rich a subject, with so many interconnecting implications, I considered it necessary to use several early writings to illustrate each theme. When my own commentaries on these documents were added, along with lengthy footnotes, the book ballooned beyond what either Will or Bob found acceptable. Then followed a series of drafts, each thriftier than its predecessor. As part of the slenderizing process, including many excellent recommendations by Will and Bob, the work greatly benefited from the helpful critiques of Ben Bennion, Todd Compton, and Michael Homer. In addition to stylistic and factual corrections, all identified places where surgery on the volume could be done.

The book was finally published in the spring of 2007. It contains most of what I have found and thought concerning polygamy in the course of several decades of research: original inspirations for the practice; arguments for plurality presented both to Church members and to the world at large; commentary by those living "the Principle" on their experi-

ence with it; the long, cruel, anti-polygamy crusade by the federal government; Mormonism's final surrender of the practice; and its return to monogamy as the preferred form of domestic life. Looking back now that I have completed the volume, perhaps the most significant feature to emerge in my mind is the enormous importance given the doctrine by nineteenth-century Mormon advocates. But equally dramatic, after equivocating for twenty or so years following the Manifesto, is the emphatic manner displayed by the Church in moving away from the Principle. All who acquaint themselves with sermons and writings of nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints repeatedly encounter the centrality given plural marriage as an ideal both for this life and the one hereafter. And no less conspicuous is the subsequent abandonment, made obvious by a glaring absence in official histories and sermons, of the Church's attention to it today.

But Mormon polygamy, I now realize, has implications beyond a narrow concern with nineteenth-century Mormon domestic life. Anthropologists indicate that the marriage of one man to several women yet remains the most *preferred* (if not actually entered into) form of marriage in world societies—a claim made by nineteenth-century Mormons when justifying the practice. This is why, in *Doing the Works of Abraham*, I made occasional comparisons between the Latter-day Saint practice of plurality and that of others such as Muslims and certain African societies. Mormonism's own involvement with polygamy may have been one of the larger, if not the largest, formal departure from traditional monogamous marriage in Euro-American family structure in centuries.

Latter-day Saint efforts to secure the legality of their plural marriage system also led to many encounters with the government in court. The most famous of these, *Reynolds v. U.S.* (1879), laid down principles of American constitutional law yet followed and cited in cases involving the First Amendment's freedom of religion clause. To examine such contests, one in which the advocates of polygamy almost always lost, necessarily leads to a consideration of legal and constitutional issues, an area no historian of Mormon polygamous experience can ignore. Apart from legal defenses, I am also struck with the sheer quantity of formal apologetics produced in behalf of the Principle. Mormon writings and sermons defending plurality are encountered at every turn during the years when the Church approved the practice. While I have done no counting nor made a serious survey, I suspect formal Mormon justifications supporting plu-

rality may constitute one of the larger bodies of such argument in world literature.¹² These are but a few of the ancillary lines of inquiry that flow from the study of Mormon plural marriage.

In concluding, it is important to repeat that my work on polygamy should not be seen as connected in any large way with my decision to leave Mormonism. Except that I was frustrated by university policies regarding my early research, it was not the major reason leading Kamillia and me to ask that our names be removed from the Church's membership rolls. Moreover, it needs to be said that those administering the Church's historical archives in recent years have been most generous in making their collections available to me. Neither have I as a historian ever condemned Mormonism or judged it negatively because of plurality. Rather, exposure to Mormon polygamy, with all that it demanded from practitioners, has only deepened my respect for the men and women who lived it. They were, as Nelle Hatch put it to me decades ago, "big people."

I have often thought about the fact that there are many historians, numbers of whom are better scholars than am I, who yet believe in the divinity of the Church. Though looking at the same historical phenomena, they seem simply to appropriate them differently than do I. I have wondered at times if it comes down to personality or psychological proclivity on the part of the observer. I can only say in all honesty that there is nothing in the evidence with which I am acquainted that grants Mormonism, either in the past or at present, a greater radiance than one finds in many institutions and individuals. It is always painful when, as occasionally occurs, someone accuses me of writing "against the Church" or, as when a caller from Utah told how his stake president warned him to trust nothing Carmon Hardy writes inasmuch as he is "an apostate." Such comments have been few, however, and almost without exception I am treated kindly by Mormon historians and Latter-day Saints—especially those who actually read what I write.¹³ In every instance, when treating Mormon subjects, I do my best to describe them as accurately and fairly as possible, placing all under the same lamp I would if recounting a military exploit of the American Civil War or the policies of a medieval Catholic pope.

This said, it is also true that my interest in the study of Mormon polygamy is partly owing to the fact that it is my heritage—what Eugene Campbell, a former chair of BYU's History Department, in a conversation with me about the difficulties of religious belief, called "the folkway of our fathers." Not only was I raised in the Church, a descendant of

George A. Smith and his polygamous wife Hannah Maria Libby, but I am proud that my Mormon forebears walked across the continent, broke their plows subduing the salt-crusted plain, fought the crickets, and raised up cities in the dry valleys of the Rocky Mountains. If I now disagree with some of their precepts, I yet hope to emulate their courage in setting a different course, in honoring my own deepest convictions.

More than anything, however, as one infatuated with the limitless range of our species' possibilities, I see Mormonism as constituting an extraordinarily brave and rich religious instance. If, for me, it remains a mortal invention, it still partakes of the evanescence I find to surround the human adventure generally. Though no longer a formal Latter-day Saint, I expect the drama and allurements of its historical journey, including its complicated dance with polygamy, to long bind my fascination.

Notes

1. Nelle Spilsbury Hatch and B. Carmon Hardy, comps. and eds., *Stalwarts South of the Border* (Anaheim, Calif.: privately printed, 1985).

2. Victor Jorgensen and B. Carmon Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair and the Watershed of Mormon History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (Winter 1980): 4–36.

3. D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 9–105.

4. All of Chapter 6 in *Solemn Covenant* is devoted to providing evidence for and identifying plural marriages by Mormon apostles in those years. The ratio of distinguished Latter-day Saints to those less prominent who took plural wives after the Manifesto is given at the end of Appendix 2 in *Solemn Covenant*.

5. Thomas Memmott, Quotation Book, 101–3; Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

6. Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 171.

7. *Ibid.*, 310–35.

8. *Ibid.*, 227–32.

9. See, for example, Thomas G. Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, a Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 326–29.

10. B. Carmon Hardy, "Lords of Creation: Polygamy, the Abrahamic

Household, and Mormon Patriarchy," *Journal of Mormon History* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 119–52.

11. B. Carmon Hardy and Dan Erickson, "'Regeneration—Now and Evermore!': Mormon Polygamy and the Physical Rehabilitation of Humankind," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 10, no 1 (January 2001): 40–61.

12. I am, of course, not talking about memoirs or reminiscences, imagined and factual, that describe men and women's experiences in plural, sexual relationships. Rather I refer to purposeful defenses of formal, religiously approved polygamous marriage, adducing its advantages and urging its adoption.

13. And, I must add, though my dominant historical interest remains with those many-wived, patriarchal stalwarts of the old Church, I have found today's polygamist dissenters not only welcoming but as gentle and sincere a people on the whole as their nineteenth-century predecessors.



Brian Kershisnik,
Gardening in the Rain,
oil on canvas,
84 x 40 inches, 2007

The Newlyweds

Joshua Foster

After our two-day honeymoon in West Yellowstone, we move into this one-bedroom place above the Modern Plumbing & Heating building in Rigby. There's a door right on Main Street that opens up to a barn-red flight of stairs. Only two places up there—ours is on the right, 1A. The windows are tiny, shiny squares that glare across the street to Dolly's Ragtime Bar and the parking lot of Ben Franklin's Crafts. Other than that, there's not much else to look at.

The hallway's narrow, so it's tricky moving stuff upstairs. Luckily, my grandma gave us this table with foldable legs. I sat at it every Thanksgiving growing up—the kiddie table—and since I was the last grandkid to get married she said I could have it. One of the legs is bent due to a post-turkey scuffle with an older cousin. He won, but I got the table, right? Kendra fixed it by stuffing a folded-up paper plate underneath. It still wobbles if you nudge it the right way.

My dad got me hired as an apprentice plumber at Modern. He said Randy owed him. Kendra got a part-time job at Triple J's Foodtown a few blocks away. She bags groceries and answers phones three nights a week.

So, everything is going okay, I guess, other than we've been watching for our neighbor. We keep getting her mail. Jenn Bliss, Apartment 1B. No one answers when we knock. The old door is warped, and there's no room to slide it underneath. But we know someone lives there because sometimes we hear people laughing and moving up and down the stairs late at night.

We don't see her until Saturday. When we walk in from Main with our groceries, she's locking her door. She starts down the stairs. We walk up.

“Hi there,” Kendra says, stopping to talk.

Jenn pushes right between us. “Sorry, hons. Late for work. Come by

tomorrow. We'll chat." She leaves without saying more, heels clacking the whole way down.

When we get inside, Kendra says, "What was that?"

I pile the plastic bags on the table, which wobbles. "Jenn, I guess. She looked nice."

"What kind of nice?" she says.

"Good nice." I open the fridge, put away the eggs.

"How old do you think she is?"

"Maybe thirty."

Kendra puts things away under the sink and then goes to the living room, which is actually the same room as the kitchen, just where the linoleum stops and the carpet begins. "What do you think she does?" she asks.

"Who knows?" I follow her. "What do you think?"

Kendra sits down at the table and picks up three letters marked as Jenn's. She puts her feet up on one of the folding chairs and taps the mail on the table. "She looks kind of sleazy."

I take the letters and shuffle through them. Mountain Power. A card from the dentist. Cable bill.

"Maybe she's a dancer," she says and looks up, grinning.

"Maybe she's a dancer," I repeat, and sigh. Sometimes Kendra is so immature.

On Sunday afternoon—when we're supposed to be in church, Kendra's mother, Tammy, insists—we make a plate of cookies for Jenn. Really, we just take them out of the wrapping and arrange them on an old St. Paddy's Day plate. A shirtless, hairy man answers when we knock. The door stays open a crack when he goes to get her. Faint giggling floats out of the apartment. Jenn comes to the door, no makeup, hair in a ponytail, a pink tank top.

"Hey, you two," she says, in this nasally, fake whine. It looks like she's wearing a piece of bailing twine for a necklace.

"Hey," we say at the same time. Then there's that new-neighbor awkwardness we've never felt before.

Kendra says, "Just wanted to introduce ourselves. I'm Kendra Smithfield. This is my husband, Chad."

I nod. Jenn looks at me and we lock eyes—hers are greener than garden peas.

"You two are married?" she says. "You're just kids! How old are you?" She's obnoxiously chewing gum.

“Eighteen,” I say.

“Seventeen,” Kendra says.

She opens the door a little farther and glances back at the man. He watches television and doesn’t respond, his stomach rolls lapping toward the elastic band of his navy blue sweatpants.

“So, did you have to?” Jenn says in a low voice. She smirks, pumps her eyebrows.

“Have to what?” I blurt.

“Get married,” Jenn says. “You know, the doc tell ya you’re in love . . .”

“Well,” I start.

Kendra shoots me this look, butts in. “No. We were high school sweethearts.” She says it like it’s some trophy to line the walls of Rigby High.

Jeez, I think, staring at Jenn. Kendra’s eyes are this sidewalk gray, not green one fleck. And that stray piece of twine, floating down and toward the creamy crease climbing out of her shirt . . .

“How long?” Jenn asks.

“A week and a half,” Kendra answers shortly. She caught me looking, I know it. I glance upward to the wall jambs and count the flakes of peeling ceiling plaster.

Jenn swears in this long, drawn-out way. “Gawd.” Sounds from the TV waft to us. “Ya’ll lived in Idaho forever?” she asks.

“Yeah—Roberts, Hamer,” I say putting all my weight on one foot, then the other, making the wooden floor creak.

“We made these for you,” Kendra says. She holds out the cookies and nudges me.

I offer the letters. “We keep getting your mail. Sorry.”

Jenn takes the plate and letters. She smiles. “Ain’t you two sweet.” She holds up the mail and kind of waves it back and forth in the air.

“Let us know if we can do anything,” I say, feeling my cheeks rush and redden.

“Actually, I’m leaving town for a week. Pick up my mail?” she says.

“Sure,” Kendra and I say at the same time.

“You might just get it anyway,” Jenn says.

Kendra chuckles politely.

When we’re back inside number 1A, Kendra says, “Weird.”

“Yeah, she was,” I say.

“No, weird because you checked her out.”

I try to counter but can't. Instead, I turn on the TV and search for a baseball game. Big fan—I used to play, before getting hitched. Kendra purposefully avoids me and spends the afternoon on a Tammy call. When she's done, she comes out for a glass of water. Her eyes are puffy and red. I ask her what's wrong and tell her to come and talk, patting the seat cushion beside me, but she opts to drink alone in the bedroom. I'm frustrated—how long can a man live like this?

On Tuesday, while Kendra works late shift, I get the mail. There's another letter for Jenn. I set it in the stack. For dinner I eat a can of chili and a soda, both cold. Cheetos for desert.

There's nothing on, so I sit down and thumb through the mail, putting it in two piles. One for Jenn, one for us. Ours has a flyer for the canned food sale at Triple J's and a handwritten note from the postman to fix the mail slot. Jenn's has another cable bill, an envelope with no return address, and a postcard featuring a dancing bear. The printed caption on it reads “Circus Capital of America, Peru, Indiana.”

I organize the piles, then reorganize them. Biggest pieces on the bottom, then longest, then fattest. Gotta make sure all face the same way—Kendra says I'm a bit over the top, a bit eccentric. When I pick them up and tap them on the table to even the edges, Jenn's postcard slips out and falls like a pinwheel onto the beige carpet. It lands picture-side down. Handwriting stares up at me.

I don't read it, though. I snatch it from the floor and put it back on top. Then I go straight to the bedroom, flop down on the bed, and watch the ceiling fan. Almost two full minutes go by before I return and read the postcard. It says:

Jenn,
Thanks for the weekend. Don't be a stranger.
Paul

The writing is heavy. The top of the “T” shoots at a high angle across the card, and “Paul” is underlined three times. I put the postcard at the bottom of the pile, cover it with the other letters, and walk downstairs to fix the mail slot.

The flap isn't broken, just stuck, so I go back upstairs for a screwdriver. My eyes are drawn to the mail again. I take the postcard and spin it

by its corners, hypnotizing me into circus daydreams. The weight of the screwdriver in my back pocket reminds me of the task at hand. I head for the door.

When I open it, Kendra's there. It startles me—I didn't hear her come up.

"What are you smiling about?" she teases. She seems happier today.

"Me?" I say.

"No, Harry," she says. That's what we nicknamed Jenn's friend. What an ape.

"Just thinking about something."

In the hallway, with the door open, I grab her tightly around the waist. She squeaks. Her eyes look like river rock.

"What are you doing?" she says, pulling away a little.

"I don't know," I say. "Just playing." I let her go.

"Where are you going?"

"The mailbox." I flash the screwdriver, return it to my pocket.

"Where's the mail?" She says this more seductively, almost meowing.

I point to it on the table and back out the door. As Kendra shuts it, I say, "Don't be a stranger."

"Huh?" The door freezes.

"Nothing," I say. "Forget it." I take the stairs two at a time, palms barely grazing the handrails.

I sleep restlessly and lie awake from five on. When Kendra finally wakes up, I coax her into a quick session. At first she's a little hesitant. We're on a schedule. We've done it nights for the past year, mostly in clammy backseats and dimmed basements. It got best—I say best, it always was a little guilt-filled—right before the drugstore stick turned purple. It got worse when she lost it in Yellowstone.

I mention that the neighbors can't hear. Then she's all right and relaxes.

I'm late for work. Randy reams me. When I lie and say I slept late, he calls me on it. The ceiling is paper thin, he says and doesn't crack a smile.

Thursday, I have Kendra call in sick for me. She's cool with it but tries to get me to go out to Hamer. When she asks, I cough violently and pull the covers up to my chin, lying still until she leaves.

I murder the morning around the apartment. *Baseball Today*, the

slop operas—nothing does it for me. All I can think about are dancing bears, acrobats, sharing Cracker Jacks with Jenn. Except, in my mind, everything is bathed in a brilliant sheen of green, the same shade as birthday balloons, avocado skins, kiwi fruit. It's a circus, all right, but the big top looks like a turtle shell, the clowns have pale, grassy faces and cucumbers for noses. The color attaches to everything. I thumb through the mail and reread the postcard. "Paul," I say out loud, in the empty apartment. "Paul."

Kendra told me that the mail comes around two. I check it at 1:50. Then at 2:10. When it finally comes at 2:31, I'm sitting at the top of the stairs, fists propped under my chin, pigeon-toed, impatient.

After I'm sure the mailman's long gone, I gather up the correspondence and fly upstairs. I sort. More bills, more letters. No postcards. Nothing comes for us. Jenn's pile doubles.

I notice the cable bill's flap has worked slightly open, exposing a corner of the bill. Suddenly, I crave macaroni.

As the water boils, I whistle and glance across the living room toward the apartment door. I would hear Kendra coming, for sure. Plenty of time. Just in case, I open up and look down the flight of stairs.

The steam burns my hand until I put on a tattered oven mitt. The letter pops completely open after a few seconds in the steam. When the bill slides out, I sit back down at the table and read through its contents. My palms sweat from the steam, or something else, I don't know. I'm not hungry any more. I mean, it's just the cable bill, but it's something more. When I'm done, I examine the other letters for loose flaps and hidden openings.

I have it back in the envelope and glued shut when Kendra gets home. Before she can ask if I'm feeling better, I'm at her, pushing into the back of her hair, panting.

"Did we get anything in the mail?" she asks, pulling away from me. I let her go after guiding her past the table and to the fridge. While she eats, we make small talk.

"Today go okay?" she asks. She seems distant again.

"I missed you. Other than that, fine."

"What's gotten into you?" she says flatly and spoons through her stew.

"Nothing," I say.

"You're just so, I don't know . . . giddy."

“Really?”

“Yeah, usually you’re just kind of quiet.”

Her eyes look like pencil lead, bike tire rubber.

“You need to tell me something?” she says. “How come the change?”

“What change?” I say.

“You tell me,” she says, and waits until I look at her.

I can’t answer for a while. Finally, I say, “Randy says I might get a raise soon. He came up and told me.”

“Really?”

“Yeah,” I say.

She’s pretty happy about that and comes around to sit on my lap. We kiss for a while before we go into the bedroom. For the first time in a while, it’s easy.

Friday. Restless. At work I check my watch every ten minutes. Once it passes two, I’m even more antsy. Time grinds by slower than Christmas Eve.

But there’s nothing inside the door when I get home. I trudge up the stairs and take my clay-covered boots off in the hallway. Before knocking, I slide over to Jenn’s apartment and quietly try the knob. It’s locked. Our place is locked too, and Kendra doesn’t answer. It takes a minute to dig my keys out from the bottom of my lunch pail.

Kendra is sitting at the table, the two piles of mail in front of her. Two angry pig-tails jut out near her neck, she’s not wearing makeup, and her jaw is squarely set. I tell her thanks for opening the door, that that was really nice. She doesn’t say anything back. It gets worse.

When I come out from the kitchen, she holds up Jenn’s cable bill. The flap is open—my glue job didn’t hold. She shakes the envelope and the papers fall out.

“What’s this?” she says.

“Looks like Jenn’s mail.”

“Why is it open?”

I shrug, crack a soda.

She repeats her question, and then zeroes in with a drawn-out, “Chad.”

“I’m not sure. Did you open it?” I head for the TV.

She starts yelling at me. That lasts for a while. She cries some too, sniffing about privacy.

It takes a while, but I bust. “Fine!” I say. “I did it. Happy?”

“Are you?” she asks.

“I’m fine with it.”

“Oh really?” she says. She throws it down on the table. “You’re happy, opening up someone else’s business. What if everyone knew about us? How would that feel?”

“Why would I care?” I shout without thinking.

Kendra crosses her arms and sticks out her bottom lip.

“You started it,” I say, “Asking about her, wondering what she did. It wasn’t my fault the envelope ripped.”

She doesn’t really answer, just grinds her heel into the carpet.

“Yeah, it was open. The papers fell out on the stairs.”

She walks around the living room, gathers up the two piles of mail and goes to the bathroom. The door slams hard, and she locks herself inside. I stand there for a while, go over and try the knob, but she yells for me to leave her alone. I pound one sharp, staccato burst on the door with my fist, but leave it after that. It’s the second time I’ve stared blankly at a locked bathroom door during our marriage. Our bed, a hand-me-down from my aunt’s basement, doesn’t give when I lie down. It makes for another restless night.

I’ve made her fume before. There was this girl no one at school knew about, some quiet blonde in government. Turns out she lived across from me through the neighbor’s hay field, and we started meeting up by the headgates. When Kendra found out, she got drunk for the first time and made out with Jarrett Buckett dirty style. It took us a while to work things out after that.

So I know it’s best to leave her alone. I don’t see her again until I start frying eggs and bacon for breakfast. She pulls on the back of my T-shirt and wraps her arms around my waist.

“Hey, you,” she says. She’s wearing her navy blue robe. It’s covered with white outlines of teddy bears. Her eyes rove around but never meet mine.

“Hey.” The grease pops. “You better stand back. It’ll burn.”

“I’m okay,” she says. She squeezes me tighter. It’s always this way, even after Yellowstone. Just give her a minute, let her breathe. She’s a real trooper.

While we’re eating, I say, “Look. About last night . . .”

“It’s okay,” she says. “I got a little mad, that’s all.”

“No big deal, right?” I say.

She smiles and shakes her head no. “Don’t be mad,” she says. We eat quickly and make love on the couch. She seems A-OK.

After, I go to the bathroom. Surprise—I’m blown away. The letters are scattered everywhere: along the sink’s edge, the back of the toilet, in the bottom of the dry tub. I stand in the doorway, confused. Kendra wraps me from behind again.

“Who do you think Paul is?” she says. I’m stunned.

“You know, Paul from the postcard. You don’t have to hide it.” She walks in and fishes it out of a pile, points to a cheesy thumbprint covering one corner.

I shrug.

“Maybe he’s her manager,” she says, and starts to tickle me.

I realize something big, and grab the letter with the blocky handwriting, the one with no return address. Side by side, they match nicely.

“What did you think about the cable bill?” I say. It’s out of the envelope, under a hairbrush.

“Naughty, naughty,” she says.

I hold up the letter and the postcard. “Do you think?”

I see her make the connection. “Maybe.” She starts to gather up the mail.

In the living room, I clean the dishes off the table and backhand the crumbs onto the floor. “When’s she coming back?” I ask.

“Tomorrow sometime,” she says, carrying all the mail in the crook of her arms, like she would a baby. She spreads it out across the table.

I find my stainless steel trout knife under the bed. Without its sheath, the blade gleams clean, well-honed.

Kendra is organizing the mail on the table, sorting bills from letters, letters from cards. She sees the knife and scoots two chairs side by side. We cross our legs underneath us and lean over the table.

“Softly,” she says. “Carefully.”

I bite the tip of my tongue. She grits her teeth.

I slide the blade under one of the letter’s flaps, sawing slowly through the glue. We open three letters and read their contents out loud. Halfway through the fourth, the downstairs door slams shut. Light, noisy footsteps ascend the stairwell.

I stare at Kendra. Her eyes get bigger than I’ve ever seen them—big gray orbs of panic. My knife stabs clear through the envelope, skewering it.

“It’s Saturday, right?” I whisper.

The clacking stops at the top. Kendra can’t answer. We slump down in the chairs and hold our breath. Jenn knocks on our door. “Hello?” she says. “Hons?” She pounds a little harder.

I set the knife and letter on the table. Both of us sit still as china dolls. Kendra takes my hand and we bow our heads, like children, praying for the knocking to stop.

The knocking reminds me of the steady *thump thump thump* of my mother’s borrowed Buick Regal as we pulled onto the shoulder on our way to Yellowstone two weeks before. There, Kendra’s contractions set in. The pee test proved what we knew deep down, so we went to the courthouse and sealed the deal, but kept living with our parents for a while. Finally, though, we decided to tell them, and we let the cat out of the sack separately, but on the same day. They interrogated us about something in the oven, but we denied it, argued that we were “just in love.” No big deal. “I mean, you guys got married right out of high school,” I remember pointing out to my folks. “What’s a year early, anyway?”

So the Smithfields called the Bisbees and pooled some money for a honeymoon shack in West Yellowstone. “What’s a wedding without a honeymoon?” my dad had said after I told him. He said it with a grimace. I could tell he was heartbroken.

We left, and then Kendra started cramping. She told me to keep driving, so I slammed the Buick up to eighty and made it to Yellowstone in under an hour. As soon as we got to the room, she stripped and showered. I’m not sure what happened. She locked the door. She sobbed and sobbed. Then I took her to this little hippie hospital, and they made sure it was all cleaned out. The rest of the weekend we stayed inside watching fuzzy television, wrapped around each other, and swearing that no one ever needed to know.

Kendra says I’ve lied enough, so I have to take the mail to Jenn. I say I wouldn’t have even cared if she hadn’t brought up the dancing stuff. She says she’s sick of me causing problems. I say she doesn’t know what she’s talking about.

We glue the flaps back down and lie low in the apartment for a day. Sometimes we hear Jenn leave. Sometimes we don’t.

The skewered letter can’t be glued, so I cover it as good as I can with transparent tape, hoping it looks like the post office’s mistake. On Sunday night, I walk it over to apartment 1B, knock, and hand Jenn the pile of

mail without a word. She asks some questions while sifting through the bills. In that brief moment that her mouth moves, nothing registers for me. I notice her dingy tan teeth; her pale, thin lips; the wrinkles forming around her bare shoulders. When she stops and looks up, expecting an answer, I'm long gone.

The next day, Tammy shows up with her bishop. They sit us both down at the table. Tammy starts in with this stern lecture about growing up. Bishop Clark follows up with the sanctity of marriage. Tammy butts back in about the loss of a loved one. When I look at Kendra, realizing she's told, she starts crying. Her eyes are duller than ever.

I don't know where Kendra's mom gets off, bringing in the cavalry, ordering me around. When someone starts knocking, I'm anxious to answer, and shoot out of my chair to get it.

I recognize the face—Harry. He's wearing a blue mechanic's jacket with PAUL stenciled above the right pocket. His mouth is one little line, puckered a bit, and before I can say anything he pops me hard with a stiff straight right. From the floor, before my eye swells shut, I see the damaged mail clutched in his left hand. He towers over me and grunts about invasion of privacy. My head aches with a resonant fire alarm echo.

The bishop lumbers over and shoos him into the hallway, shutting the door. Kendra scoots my head onto her lap and runs her cool fingers over and over through my hair. She coos and calls me sweet names. Cold sweat forms all across my forehead.

From the kitchen, Tammy brings a bag of frozen broccoli wrapped in a paper towel and plants it on my brow. The two women are speaking in low tones when I black out.

Randy fires me for lying, and we get booted from Apartment 1A. He never did like me. It's okay because we get our deposit back and use the money for a down payment on a 1988 Chevy Corsica that belonged to Kendra's older sister. Kendra gets me a job stocking at Triple J's. We carpool three times a week from my parents' place, where we stay. The kiddie table is stashed in the Bully Barn out back.

The swelling and discoloration around my eye are gone in a few weeks. Sometimes, though, when I'm in the canned vegetables aisle making sure the Garden Peas aren't wall-faced, I think about Jenn and my vision of that strange circus, and this flush of curiosity surges through me. It burns around my eye. The bishop tells me that all of us face temptation, but it's really a matter of action. He says we have to choose. So, sometimes

I stay away from aisle 9—but sometimes I can't help but request it and spend all night there.

I climb the ranks faster than usual—the up-and-ups like my organizational skills—and earn a spot as receiving manager within a few months. It's graveyard shift, not bad. Jenn pops in and out of my memory the entire time. I can't wait to see Paul again; I can swing like a champ. I practice with the broom handle in the break room.

Late one night, an eighteen-wheeler brings in a massive shipment. The grizzled old trucker nods and jaws about fuel prices, then mumbles about sleeping in the cab. He leaves after opening the trailer. Before Jessie or any of the other stockers come out, I truck down a crate, open it, and extract a can. In the reddish glare of the taillights, even in the haze, I know it's the label for Western Family Emerald Peas. Aisle 9, on the right. I toss it up in the air a few times, judging its weight, and try to picture a perfectly green version of Kendra.

It doesn't click. I don't know if it's the dark asphalt blanketed by the night, or the cave-like appearance of the closed loading dock door that sets me off, but all I can imagine are Kendra's shadowy, tear-glistening eyes when she opened the bathroom door in Yellowstone. I cock my arm way back and chuck the can into the desolate parking lot. It soars lopsided, whooshing end over end until it lands with a hollow *thunk*. Under an empty, starless sky, I listen to the can roll off the curb and disappear. The halogen floodlights flip on; I'm bathed in synthetic yellow light. The others come out with dollies and begin unloading.

I leave before the sun rises, park the Corsica in the barrow pit, and let myself in the back door. In my old bedroom, curled in my old bed, Kendra is asleep. The sounds of her breathing fill the room. It's timid and soft, comforting beyond belief. I don't undress, just climb in with her, and run my fingers through her long hair until she finally blinks awake.

Domlik

Samuel Brown

Winter was Domlik's best season. The New Year rains were the earth's sweat; and when the soil perspired, the dirt softened into mud so thick it postponed all organized demining activity. Even the bravest deminer—by all rights the title belonged to Domlik—was dispatched to his home village. Domlik's annual return to Busalam meant that his skills could be invested in cajoling moody Athir into extending his tab at Busalam's only bar, a thin-walled green house with an oval sign declaring SALON CROOKED DOG in filigreed purple letters.

By necessity each morning began at home, and this day was not unlike others in the wet season, when the mud and rain troubled Domlik's breathing and sapped his strength. His wife had risen first and now stood impatiently at the foot of his sleeping mat.

"Domlik, the day is filled with work."

He frowned at her. "Dear wife, I am a deminer. In the rainy season, my Ebinger 420 SI finds as much metal as an Englishman's beagle with two legs and no nose."

She snorted back, "We see you excuse and excuse, but never do we see you work. I wish that you would remove that weapon from us. Your metal stick is danger to your family. Your daughter Sunal pretends she is cooking stew by stirring a branch in the mud. She believes she is her father with her own weapon."

Domlik knew his wife did not want to understand and rolled to his knees, then pushed himself to his feet. "Where is my Ebinger?" he asked as he did every day, staring past her solid form.

"You know that I do not touch it, Domlik. I shall never touch it."

He wandered from the room where the three of them slept together and stepped into the back room where he kept his gear in a turquoise GI footlocker for which he had bartered a carton of Marlboros. Its damaged lock wore the scuffmark of a combat boot. Domlik had always trusted this

broken lock to secure the trunk. But now the lid was open like the mouth of a yawning cow, and the Ebinger was gone.

He rushed back to the main room, where his wife was sweeping dirt from his sleeping space, his mat rolled into the shape of a tree trunk. He blurted, "Where has our daughter gone?"

"She is visiting the Lamriks." Her even tone defied his urgency.

He hated the way that family of farmers watched him with envy and regretted that his daughter had made friends there, but they were close neighbors and there was nothing to be done. He sprinted down the rough pathway to their land. His daughter Sunal was bent over in the grassy field adjacent to the Lamriks' hut, her arms holding an instrument like a hoe.

He could not call her name, could only yell, "Stop." She straightened and looked toward him. As he drew closer he realized that she was wearing her brother's tunic. Seeing Malki's clothes on his daughter was like watching a ghost fill out a shroud, and though he knew she was beautiful, he could not bear the image of his son. Malki's death was too near, and he yanked the tunic over her head as he confiscated the metal detector. The handle was warm and wet where she had held it, making the Ebinger slippery and difficult to grasp. She was scared: her lips unsteady, her cheeks flushed, her eyes focused on her father's feet.

"You must never open the trunk. You must never use the Ebinger. You must stay away from all minefields, Daughter. Allah has not chosen that path for you, and he will destroy you if you do not obey him."

His stern tone tapered off as her sobs rose to his ears. He did not like tears, particularly from children, and he quickened his pace. His daughter walked behind; he could not bring himself to hold her hand.

His wife was waiting, meaty fists denting the soft flesh of her hips. He handed the tunic to her, hefting the Ebinger with both hands. She turned the cloth over her arm and inspected it. "Sunal, you must never touch Malki's things. You do not honor the dead." Defeated, the girl slumped her back against the walls in the corner of the sleeping room.

Domlik replaced the Ebinger in the trunk, removing the face shield and lead-lined tunic, his abbreviated uniform for the rainy season. He pushed the lid tightly against the base, watching his thumbnail whiten in a crescent against the damaged latch, and wished for the first time that the lock worked.

The angry mood in the house made it easier to head to the Crooked Dog, though Athir was unlikely to have opened so early in the morning.

Domlik knew he was Athir's best customer, though he suspected the bartender tried to forget this. Not only did he pay for many of his own drinks, Domlik also attracted others who came to hear his stories over mugs of *perak*, the bracing slurry of fermented grains that he himself had brewed until Fortune smiled on his family and blessed them with the deminer's stipend.

Even now he could see Fortune's smile in the shadow over his door jamb, supple and smooth, but with a menacing twitch at the corner, the curse lurking within each act of Allah. With one exception, his career as a deminer had been a blessing, and he praised Allah for the chance to serve his people.

Domlik walked slowly along the street to the Dog. On the final block, he passed almost an hour inspecting second-story windows, half of which were covered in fabric instead of glass. In the beginning of his demining career, when the original Ebinger had been his magic staff, the world—particularly the houses closest to the Dog—became an untamed wilderness of treasures: keys buried in planter boxes, television sets covering beneath window sills, and the rare blush of white cloth hanging from an inside wall.

The white cloth had been the most intriguing of his early Ebinger discoveries, and Domlik had spotted several of them before realizing with ocher embarrassment that they were ladies' *brassieres*. He still laughed when he heard the word—*brassiere*—a sound only a foreigner would attach to such a garment. He had extracted only a single specimen, just enough to discover that the metal distracting his Ebinger was the wire rim of the fabric bowls that cupped women's breasts. Without the metal support, the cloth had wilted, and Domlik had thrown both fabric and wire into the sliver of old air between the Crooked Dog and Athir's adjacent apartment.

He had stopped exploring after Malki died. The activity no longer intrigued him, even if he had a daughter to replace his lost son.

Since his promotion in the regional humanitarian demining program, Domlik had occupied the seat to the right side of the *shriba* at town meetings. Though it was unprecedented for a man from Busalam to take the honored guest's seat, Domlik had never doubted his place. If he had any reservations, it was whether the inbred *shriba* was worthier to govern than an artisan of peace who daily risked his life removing *ukso*, the mines and unexploded ordnance thus labeled by Domlik's foreign teachers. His

chest and chin rose slightly higher than the *shriba*'s if he straightened the curve in his spine, his habitual reflex when he ascended the makeshift dais in the town hall.

Waiting for the Dog to open, he revisited the spectacle of the last meeting. Of all the important men, only the traveling surgeon, Ramik, made Domlik feel uncomfortable, not by anything he said or did, but by the confident set of his muscled shoulders. Domlik had smiled at the doctor, showing all his teeth as if to say, "A surgeon only sews piece to piece, while a deminer saves village upon village."

He'd worn his blast-proof lead smock to the meeting, knowing that any potential critics would have to still their complaining voices in the face of objective evidence of his service. He worked and risked more than anyone in the town, and the jealous slanders of the *shriba*'s younger brother were blasphemous and ungrateful.

Domlik had been surprised that his comments weren't solicited at the meeting, but he knew that in his honored position even silence expressed power. In any case, he preferred stories to speeches, and he was glad to save his voice for the Dog. Domlik had as little tolerance for hearing speeches as for reciting them, and only the brush of the *shriba*'s hand on the shoulder of his work shirt had made him realize that they were discussing the Rikoni field.

The now wild copses of bamboo on the eastern edge of Busalam had been mined so long and so extensively that only the men with the most wrinkles in their leather faces could remember when a direct road had connected village to city through the Rikoni field. There was talk that the latest victim still rotted in the center of the bamboo, too successful to be close enough for the village to extract him, not successful enough to have escaped to the other side. Domlik knew the talk was true the way he knew Allah rules the skies, so he accepted the circuitous route of the new road. At the right moment in late afternoon, he could see sunlight reflecting off human skulls, like pale fragments of the moon half-buried in the ground. Since his first vision of the bones, Domlik had been careful to visit only in the morning. The field both attracted and repulsed him, and he reached an equilibrium by staring from its edge with wary eyes. The stout arms of bamboo seemed to suck fear from the clouds like rain.

But the *shriba* had made up his mind this time: his voice was the grinding of a tree branch against a motorcycle sidecar. "You will need to clear Rikoni, or we do not know what we will do." In the *shriba*'s public ex-

asperation, Domlik could see the pallid face of the younger brother, whose jealousy of a deminer's glory would eagerly lead the village through Domlik's dishonor and into the mine field.

Domlik was glad when Athir's face appeared in the waxy half-window of the Crooked Dog's door, as his arrival freed Domlik from the memory of the thin scowl of the *shriba*'s brother. The bartender's expression was not as welcoming as usual, but through the mud-spattered tip of Domlik's face shield, the difference was subtle at best.

Inside the bar grew an abundance of stories to be plucked from the Tree of Life and shared, and Domlik slouched into the buckled Formica in preparation for his first drink. He had often wondered where the woody presence in *perak* came from when there wasn't even a splinter in the stills he had used and seen. Staring at Athir's dimpled chin, Domlik wondered whether he washed the bar with *perak* and then served the soiled liquor to his customers. The burning sensation that chased a gulp made the bark flavor on his lips a question for quieter moments, and his throat, after a wet cough, was lubricated for a day of anecdotes.

His first listener was also the oldest. Surtav had served as Busalam's cobbler until his eyesight dimmed so completely that he stitched his thumb to the sole of a work boot. Though he managed to cut himself free, he had been unable to wash the blood out of the leather and was shamed into retirement. When Domlik paid his own tab, he as often as not covered several drinks for the old man. As a result, each time he entered the bar they exchanged the uncomfortable smiles of client and patron.

Domlik never wondered how Surtav recognized him despite his failed eyesight, augmented by a durian branch he'd put into service as a walking stick. The old man held the branch mid-shaft at a tawny section where his hand oils had dissolved the grayish brown bark. To Domlik the stick seemed barely more substantial than Surtav's scarred thumb.

Rather than disrupt Surtav's quiet tapping of his walking stick, Domlik decided to wait for a quorum to assemble, though doing so left him with nothing to say to the old man, who mumbled gratefully to the counter between his elbows. Domlik withdrew a Marlboro from the packet he'd stolen from an American volunteer and savored the dry texture of the filterless butt on his lips. He allowed himself one of these cigarettes a week to make his small supply last the winter, the rest of the time making do with local counterfeits, which spelled the brand name with an "n" or an extra "l."

He rolled the cigarette in his mouth, unlit, and thought about his children. In a year, his daughter and son had become indistinct from each other. Their names had quietly merged until the name Sumalki usually caught on his lips when he saw his daughter instead of her original Sunal. He had tried to change her name with the *shriba* when he returned for the winter, but his wife had bellowed that it wasn't right to taunt the dead. Then and since, he had regretted marrying such an irrational woman. His children's beauty made him wonder at times whether his wife was truly their mother. The *shriba* had refused to accept the name change. Underterred, Domlik had fixed the name in his will, pencil-etched on the inside of a carton of Marlboros: "To my daughter Sumalki I bestow my gear and the locker."

As the day's accumulated dust eroded the sun's rays, patrons slowly filled the bar, where they were intimate by the limits of space rather than choice. The GI card tables furnishing the room clustered as close as stones in a fence. There was no room for the stools that stubbornly encircled the tables, though each night the same miracle occurred, and every patron found and occupied his seat. Domlik let his listeners situate themselves behind their drinks before beginning his story.

He had made preparations for the evening earlier in the day while he waited for the Dog to open. Alone on the street he had finalized his resolve to disclose a new *ukso* from the glossy newsletter the Dutch group sent him each season to keep his skills sharp. His eye had settled on the KRG-219, a smooth-sided Russian sundisk that he had yet to encounter in practice. He recognized that his neighbors were as obsessed as he was with the pageantry of mines and their extraction: the PMN-2 green canteen with a black turtle holding tight on its entire voyage from the Soviet Union; the R2M2 explosive meat tin containing not strips of fish flesh, but the compressed death of cyclonite wax; the P-40 Apple, a metal cone filled with Composition B. He knew the *ukso* like butterflies in a display case, how to categorize them by triggers, lines, fuses, strikers, firing pins, casings, sensitivities, tripwires, boosting detonators. He knew their textures and their heft, their dirty stench. His favorites, though they frightened him by dealing death from a distance, were the bounding fragmentation mines. The letter codes for the many versions of Bouncing Betty represented the deliberate imprecision of war and its hatred of strangers.

Four of his audience lacked limbs—three legs and an arm among them—while Zitra boasted a J-shaped scar like a fishhook with its tip in his

cratered eye socket. They were as obsessed with the *ukso* as Domlik, and together they radiated an energy that compelled him to speak.

If Allah had not chosen him as a deminer, Domlik would have become an army sapper. He had never in his life wished for another person's death, but there was implacable logic in the technological variations of mines, the simple sophistication of form and function that separated them from their business of haphazard death. Until, and then again after, Malki's death, he could not connect his legless neighbors with the explosive pellets he harvested from the soil. He was glad to be on the side of the bearded white men in sandals and T-shirts instead of muddy fatigues; but if he had to choose, he would rather plant mines for the army than live life without them.

In his storytelling, Domlik was careful to blur crucial details regarding each *ukso*. His training had been arduous and cost him an entire summer of *perak* in seminars with fat bureaucrats who wore ties even when rivers of sweat flowed down their chests like chicken grease after a drunken meal. The misinformation was Domlik's way of keeping the system in balance. The rites of demining mirrored the perfect knowledge of the Quran's poetry that only the imam could fully possess. Considerable work had been required to reach Domlik's level of expertise; he had made mistakes early in his career, omissions that could, in inexperienced hands, lead to accidents. On the one hand, his listeners had to know that he possessed the secrets of *ukso*, while on the other hand, they had to fear it enough to avoid disaster. And they needed to remember who among them was the professional deminer.

In addition, Domlik coupled each *ukso* revelation with a reminder of their dark power beyond nature, a danger that Allah would not control because it was too malevolent. Domlik stretched his face into the most frightening grimace he could imagine when he intoned the exact name of a mine. "*Ukso* is the burning hand of the Adversary that fills your throat with your legs." At times he would bend deeply and grab his own face, his elbow at a sharp angle below the knee, fingers pulling down the shelves of his eye sockets. The one day, a year prior, when he had smeared red clay on his hands to make the flames more convincing, the men had stared at him until his cheeks filled with blood that required harder drinks than *perak* to hide.

He had regained his legitimacy after the red clay mishap within a week and renewed his campaign of fear, closing each story with the same

phrase, impressed on him as true by the Quranic melody of the words. "Only the anointed shall survive the black fire," always punctuated by a thump of his right palm against the side of his face shield.

The Dog slowly filled. Amar with his whitish eyebrows locked permanently in a fan of surprise. A scar at the left edge of his mouth appeared to be a tattoo distorting his cheek into an unrelenting grin. Simar's eyes dancing with a limitless energy that unsettled Domlik. His peers' attention bound them to him, and he prepared to say the name KRG-219 to seal their communion. He had paused and was ready to whisper the mine's name through his customary grimace, when he felt an insistent tug on the side strap of his tunic. The pressure of the shielding apron against his skin made him realize that he had been sweating.

The voice, though quiet, pierced his armor and burrowed into his wet hide. "Sunal is in Rikoni."

The smile collapsed from his face as his mouth jerked shut. Ramik's aloof eyes stared at Domlik. He knew the surgeon was lying because Sumalki was too wise to be in Rikoni. She knew better. She would not follow in her brother's footsteps.

Ramik was more formal than usual, visibly nervous, which frightened Domlik. "I am speaking truly, Domlik Ramawljan. Your daughter is in the Rikoni field. She took your detector and is gone. Sumnak saw her near the football pitch, and he called, but she would not mind."

Domlik's chin withdrew beneath the scalloped shadow of his face shield as he lumbered through the door, hunched shoulders sealing the words in his mouth. The air on the street was as thick as inside the Dog, and his ribs burned with the same intensity as his throat, the pain storming through his body. He forced his feet to stumble along a path so familiar his eyes were not necessary.

At home his wife was cleaning the floor in the hunched position of a cat, her legs moving freely beneath the loose dress of a married woman. She was oblivious to his fear. He marched silently into the back room to his footlocker. The lid was still closed tight. He examined the latch as he flipped the trunk open, and it showed no sign of trespass.

Inside the musty locker lay the secateurs, grappling hook, trowel, trip-wire feeler, his boundary markers and locator sticks. He reached for his forehead and found the face shield in its accustomed place. His chest was protected by the reinforced tunic that smeared his cotton Earth Day T-shirt over the sweat-pickled skin of his chest. His leggings lay at the bot-

tom of the locker. He jerked them into the air with a tinny clattering of metal that the locker gulped into silence. Domlik bit his lip until his teeth almost touched through the red lumps of skin, and a tear blurred his eye, but the pain could not rouse him from his waking nightmare. The Ebinger detector was not in the trunk. Its absence invaded his mind beyond the reach of words, echoing the sound of Malki's death. He ran from his house in a panicked stagger, unable to breathe at all.

His brain could spare no attention for the squealing of his lungs, and he sprinted on, his leg muscles twitching and kicking beyond his conscious control. He knew the path to Rikoni by heart, the craggy roots of a durian tree whose trunk was branded with a diamond-shaped cluster of bullet holes, the impromptu football pitch in tangled bluethorn that hovered near Rikoni's edge. Some days he had stayed within the safe borders of the football pitch while others he had gone beyond, right up to the edge of the bamboo. This was the first time he would come to Rikoni without full gear. Though he was not encumbered by leggings and Ebinger, the lead tunic slipped across his wet chest, disrupting his stride.

The minefield rose from a gentle upslope just visible from the football pitch. As he climbed, he could see Sunal's fiercely dark hair like a mushroom among the bamboo's jointed pillars of green and brown. He could not see whether she was moving, though the commotion of her form in his running eyes made him fear that she was. He paused at the first row of bamboo, hands pressed tight against his kneecaps, and yelled as loudly as his breath would allow, "Sumalki, be still. I am coming for you."

He examined the uneven line of cracked markers that he himself had staked three years ago, his first summer as a deminer. He wanted to push Dr. Adams—the retired American engineer with too little hair but too much belly—past the markers to his death. He could still see Adams's jowls jiggle as he briefed Domlik's class on demining safety protocols. The smooth pink skin on the American's cheeks glowed in front of Domlik, obscuring his view of his daughter.

The tunic squeezed a froth of sweat against his skin, which was already painfully chafed. His knowledge of the safety protocols sapped his strength, and all that remained within him was dread. Each moment Domlik stared toward his daughter from the safe side of the perimeter, she swayed closer to an early heaven, which could be no heaven at all. He turned toward the Holy City and begged Allah for fleet and sure feet. He

knew that the Prophet loved his own daughters, and he wished to make Allah spare Sumalki with honeyed lips of protection.

Domlik lunged into Rikoni, propelled by an unbalanced mixture of fear, hunger, and pious hope. His feet moved in a dance of their own devising. His eyes jumped from Sumalki's barely discernible face to the ground before his feet, to the stocky reeds of bamboo, to the dirt beside him in bursts that made his head ache. The bamboo seemed to him bayonets of an enemy infantry that he could not evade for long, and he struck a trunk with his shoulder, almost causing himself to fall. He righted himself and ran faster, his legs occasionally flipping sideways, as if Allah were guiding his steps away from *ukso*.

Halfway to Sumalki, he was overtaken by the giddy doubt that the field was even mined, that there had ever been danger in Rikoni, an instant's peace that dissipated when he glimpsed a tripwire sagging between bamboo stalks and the slovenly bulge of dirt that covered a Bouncing Betty.

He jumped over the string, his nylon jogging pants slick against his wet skin. The more he ran, the less he breathed, and he coughed a squeaking noise from his Adam's apple. Suddenly he was standing over Sumalki's teary face, a small window of dirt and flesh atop her ten-year-old frame. Her muddy shirt trembled as she shivered beneath it, her elbows unhinging clumsily to extend her hands toward her father. He leaned over her, and as her frightened breath touched his neck, he choked, spilling tears onto her mud-dappled black hair.

Her fear nauseated him, and he froze, needing to find a strategy beyond chanting his daughter's name. He placed his feet under her bottom, then shuffled until he was straddling her from behind. He stooped and lifted her onto his shoulders to avoid unsettling the ground beyond the spot she had accidentally cleared. As she held onto his hair, legs wrapped around his neck, he folded his own legs, then dropped into the indentation she had left in the mud as precisely as he could. She was heavier than he remembered, and he resolved to carry her more when they were safe and could eat porridge together each morning. He glared at the 420-SI and wanted to shatter its mud-blurred eye against the palisades of bamboo.

He dropped her into the space between his legs where she burrowed into his tense abdominal muscles, which were knotted into an endless cramp. Her scent in his mouth forced images of Malki into his mind. His

children were the same size now, their slender arms the same shape, their tapered noses identical. He wept again as her warmth merged into the smoky charcoal of Malki's funeral, shreds of skin hanging from muscle, his body the consistency of rain-soaked pork fat.

Sumalki's flesh was white, and the sweat on her arms made the skin glisten with tiny jewels. Her bony frame in his lap felt like a wild animal caught after a long struggle, too exhausted to resist captivity. His daughter's warmth against his belly caused hunger to displace fear. He promised himself an entire jug of *perak* with a lamb's leg if they survived. He would share all of it with his daughter, whose heaving shoulders he squeezed between his own. Her bony spine in his sternum tightened his lungs within his chest, and he had to lift his chin to exhale. Her breathing was disorderly, as if she were sobbing; and he prayed Allah that she be spared the visions of her brother that were falling from the ashen sky.

He heard a murmur like distant crickets and could see his neighbors at Rikoni's edge. They were shouting indistinguishable words and waving their arms. He could not find his voice to answer them, but he arose with Sumalki in his hands, holding her over his head for the sliver of strength that remained in his body. The two of them fell back to the ground, Domlik's tailbone splashing in the mud. Even sitting, he felt his back muscles weaken and his head fall toward an unseen *ukso* that would steal the heads off their bodies. There was languid comfort in the minute portion of a second between resigning himself to death and Sumalki's arresting his slump by jerking forward in his lap. Sitting bolt upright, he heard her whimper, "I'm sorry, Daddy. I was helping you."

He focused his attention to comfort her, but his voice was the tinkle of a wind chime. "Do not worry, Sumalki. Daddy is come."

She responded with an endearment he had long forgotten, humming it like a prayer. "Daddy's daughter, Daddy's daughter."

Night smothered dusk, and the heads of their neighbors were replaced by holes of light in the sky over the bamboo. Domlik wanted to pray *Magrib* toward the Holy City, but he could not face west for fear of detonating an *ukso*. He knew that Allah would be patient because he had given Domlik the gift of his daughter alive. If they had to starve together in Rikoni, they would. But he would not be separated from Sumalki.

Her breathing eventually slowed into a steady rhythm, and he knew that Allah had blessed her with sleep. He prayed that the same sleep would pass him by, lest he slump onto an *ukso* hidden in the darkness. He

folded his hands across Sumalki's lap, enclosing her wordlessly against the deep night. The sky's blackness was not diminished by the growing moon, which cast a weak shadow over Rikoni. The dim, stippled ground beyond his daughter's feet made Domlik's vision uncertain. The shifting shadows conjured memories of Malki's funeral.

His wife had at first wrapped the remains of their son in a linen shroud, but the purplish scars had been sticky, embedding the fabric in blackened flesh. The appearance of the charred specter of Malki had been neither unexpected nor endurable, and Domlik made his wife cover the fabric in garbage bags, though even they showed smooth spots where the linen held to Malki's body most tightly. One black bag for the top, one for the bottom, secured with a sash in the middle, the entire package in turn covered with a final blue-and-white shroud. The colored stripes on Malki's wrapped corpse melted into the shadows of bamboo, and Domlik stroked Sumalki's hair gently, so that she would not awaken. He needed to feel her skin, to know that in her Malki had never left, had never exploded an *ukso*. His fingers on her skin, he lost his thick mind in the night's blackness, and he could not pray *Isha*. He buried his nose in her hair and inhaled. The hairs tickled his nostrils but her smell was strong and familiar. Her fresh life crowded out the funeral images, and for a moment he felt whole and safe.

Allah sent an early dawn. The pale moon was burned from the sky by its angry older brother so quickly that Domlik did not think to pray *Fajr*. As the sunlight penetrating the bamboo brightened further, Domlik heard nervous laughter and the whinny of metal slapping against the ground. Sumalki wiped a green pebble from her eyes, while Domlik squeezed her shoulders between the palms of his hands. He felt her upper arm click as it moved inside the joint.

The *shriba*'s green jeep shimmered through the bamboo. The retired military vehicle was covered with a gleaming mountain of uncoiled, corrugated tin. Domlik recognized the large metal fragments as pieces scavenged from culverts in the streambeds Allah had redirected after the army engineers abandoned Busalam.

The jeep stopped, and the men unloaded the tin onto the ground. Two small men pushed a slice of metal upward, like a swelling storm, until it collapsed forward with a muffled twang, then carried the next section across the path cleared by the first piece. At regular slow intervals the men disrupted the muggy air with another thudding tin culvert aimed toward

Domlik and Sumalki. The metal slabs were continuously recycled in a transient road that cleared a hollow corridor from the perimeter.

Occasionally the sheets of metal caught in the bamboo and bowed upward until several men clambered aboard, snapping the trunks near the base. When the caravan was ten meters away, a culvert section detonated a mine as it landed, a nauseating thump of anger that formed a boil in the tin. Domlik could not remember seeing an *ukso* there the night before.

Domlik trembled, and Sumalki threw her arms over her head, wrapping them roughly behind his neck. His tears joined hers as they tracked through the mud on her cheeks. The wind expelled from beneath the final section of tin made their tears cold, then the splattered mud made them warm again. The *shriba*'s brother approached them on the metal carpet, wearing a meticulously polished welder's hood. With a rapid bow, he grasped the Ebinger and pulled, but Sumalki would not release the instrument. The veins on the back of the man's unmuscled hands swelled with exertion, and he let go. After a second tug and a scowl, he relented, leaving the ringed scepter in its position on Sumalki's lap.

Domlik's limbs had frozen in place, and he needed assistance to rise, though he would not release his daughter, even as the others pulled on his left arm. As he rose he saw greed under the welder's helmet in the muddy white tooth pinching the man's lip. With his left hand, he pushed his deminer's face shield into the *shriba*'s brother's eager chest. Leaving the welder's shield on the ground, the man returned, arrogant and unprotected, along the path of crushed bamboo. Domlik, unable to make his buzzing, wobbly legs advance, waited for the slow reversal of the tin road, one culvert fragment after the other flopping onto the ground. He was aware only of his daughter's warmth against his chest and the pressure on the balls of his feet as he negotiated the metallic surface, shuffling from ridge to ridge. Despite his clumsiness he refused to set Sumalki down, and she squeezed his arm with one hand, bearing the Ebinger in the other.

The men and the wives who waited behind the field markers bore expressions of gratitude and embarrassment, caught between wanting to stare at the rescued pair and needing to look away. Domlik's wife made eye contact first, her earthy hands clenched into fists. Her lips stretched forward as if she would spit, but instead she demanded, "Give me Sunal."

Domlik stared at the spot where his daughter's hands melted into the base of the metal detector. "Sumalki is Daddy's daughter."

His wife snorted. "She is Sunal. She might have paid with her life

for your bad habits. Allah has made you taste your bitter fruits. You have brought dishonor to your family.”

“By Allah, Sumalki has honored me.” He could no longer feel the arm on which his daughter rested, but he pushed forward in a focused stagger, forcing his wife to step back. She followed for a time, yelling more with each stride. She did not try to remove Sumalki from her father’s arms, and the diffused quiet of a spent storm slowly overtook her, until she retreated from the two of them. Domlik could not attend to her departure, instead continuing on toward his goal.

When they reached the Crooked Dog, the sun shone directly into Domlik’s eyes. Sumalki hid her face from the hot rays by curling across his chest, transferring her staff into his cramped arm. Her warm sweat coated the handle. Domlik swatted at the doorknob with the 420-SI until the detector ring broke and fell to the ground, then kicked with his boot until the doorjamb splintered. He relished a feeling of power as the door swung open.

He carried his daughter into the stifling darkness of the bar. The room’s emptiness was so heavy he had to set her on the floor. She watched him cross back to the shelves where he appropriated two jugs of *perak*. They clanged as he carried them with a single finger looped through their handles, then dropped them on the floor. He crawled against the wall where they had fallen, and Sumalki snuggled next to him, her head under his armpit.

He tipped a jug into his mouth then into hers, and the day became warmer with each shared swallow. She rested her head on his arm, and the mild discomfort of her shoulder pushing into his ribs was a satisfying reminder of their survival. Their feet faced the holy city as they drifted into sleep.

POETRY

Grace

Annette Weed

I'm wedged between two lifetimes,
this one and that.
Like cement walls on either side,
they press close.

"What is okay for you is not for me,"
she taunts me, this daughter of mine,
letting me know she will not settle
for what I have settled for.
She will choose something all her own,
playing neither my father's game nor mine.
I'm glad.

I will need to work on these walls myself,
without her help, without her lovely presence,
a kind of lace on concrete.

And so I do, mastering
new arts which give
the power to walk through walls,
to skip through time, to spin—
only with Christ's help—
hate into gold,
strands of sparkling filigree
so bright, so true, they are
the only things I can recognize
can grasp, more real than iron,
to transcend the walls. Praise God.

Necktie

Anita Tanner

Again he stands
at the mirror
and wants to jump
into the waterfall
that hangs from his neck,
widens as it falls,
cascades over
the sternum of his chest.
He wants the invigoration
of that leap—
the exotic darkness
against the ever predictability
of white.

Fidelity to Objects

Anita Tanner

“Love calls us to the things of this world.”—Augustine

The ponderous round oak table
calls our family of ten
to their places,
the crowns of our heads
like small planets
stilled in orbit,
mealtime settings like jewels
in an expansive medallion.

More than five feet in diameter
the table is our desk,
hosting homework at all hours,
filling most of the room
while pieces of coal
seethe in the hearth
making clinkers we will haul out
and dump sizzling in snow.

Mother reads to us
around this table
with a book propped
on what looks like
an ancient dolman.
Blankets tossed over the wood
double as a pirates' cove.
Our hands like lotus blossoms
splay across the surface,
reaching for game pieces strewn there
on this everlasting round,
our bagpipe hearts circumluculent
like suns.
Beneath on the four-legged
heavy pedestal
our twenty feet rest and crisscross.

Round and around
this wheel of life
in the diurnal course of sun,
morning and night we offer
our circle of prayers,
this ecliptic stump
centering us,
its diameter and circumference
forever drawing us in.

Epithalamium

For Lauren

Krista H. Richardson

Good advice was of no use in the garden,
reason only rudimentary in her
who slouched toward the tree and took unflinching
what was needed.

She was naive, knowing nothing of hard labor,
the end of indolent, do-nothing days, or even dumb fear
that could have stopped her. Not yet imagining a storm
nor watching shadows gather over God's brow, she rebelled

perhaps painfully, but more likely drawn to that taste
by a distant song in her sensitive hands, divine tuning of her untried body.
Eve was no wilting daisy, resisting even God to obey
the compass buried in her heart.

It was always a trick question.

World-young she sensed that to enter everything
one must leave everything, so that marriage makes us break
excellent rules, tear down walls to find the world that is our soul.

Stumbling, we do not learn our way toward love
but, as Eve to Adam, come together like flung planets,
with no option to avoid collision. We choose by not choosing
and without searching, are found.

Caught Up

Mark Bennion

John the Beloved considers the Rapture

Word buckler, chary tribe,
inured lamb,

stumped in your cinderblock den, you attempt
to draw up my life—the puns latent

in your knuckles, your shoulders bowed
in perpetual commencement,

though we have never met
at the crossroad of years, you will not

dispense with wondering about the unknown
mountains. Since your teenage grief,

you've heard anecdotes dismounting
the disappearances from cars and vans,

the story twisters passed from cousin
to mother-in-law and back through the lattice

of a friend of a friend of a friend
whose name has been forgotten.

You'd ask, "What are they doing now?"
yet querying through to the speculative,

for you, is another name for foolish.
You want to know and don't want to know,

you are repelled and attracted
by the old natter, the unhatched myth. Yet

I want you to recognize me
even in the surgical winter, a prison

newly rent, this pit recast into a bare-boned
sanctuary. Yes, I've shadowed by

you and your kind, worn something akin
to your collars, a meandering trail

of nighttime water, another fleeing
forebear charged with new blood,

now firm with the yearly weather
of disguising and allaying,

confirming and bearing out
in due course the unadorned into the cloud

and downpour of unspeakable things.
Will you meet us there, too?

Beholding the basins and farms,
ridgetop of the vineyard's last stand,

waiting for rending and uplift,
the gusts of ocean, breath and fire.

REVIEWS

Good Stories Told Well

A Survey of Mainstream Children's Books by LDS Authors.

Reviewed by Stacy Whitman, an editor at Mirrorstone, which publishes fantasy for children and young adults. She holds a master's degree in children's literature from Simmons College. A slightly modified version of this review was posted on By Common Consent, December 20, 2007 {<http://www.bycommonconsent.com>}.

If you're at all familiar with literary talk these days, you might be aware of the chatter about children's and young adult literature¹ being the hot new thing. Everyone's wondering what will be the "next Harry Potter." What was once a ghettoized field of study—because children are a self-perpetuating lower class, and literature for children must therefore serve a purpose (teach a lesson or make kids get good grades)—is now legitimate at many institutes of higher learning. Adults are getting reading recommendations from children and teens, and vice versa. Despite frenzied reports to the contrary, reading is not dead among the younger set.

When people ask what I do for a living, invariably the reaction to my answer—that I'm a children's book editor—is "how exciting!"—especially when I say that I edit children's and young adult fantasy novels. It is exciting. We're living in a golden age of children's and young adult literature, full of breathtaking storytelling and artistry. And some of the leading names in this golden age are authors who happen to be Mormons.

When I read submissions at work, any variation on "the moral of this story is . . ." makes me want to stop reading. If a writer tells a good story, the message will take care of itself. Katherine Paterson, the author of beloved children's and YA books including *Jacob Have I Loved* and *Bridge to Terabithia*, explained the religious content of her books thus: "What you are will shape your book whether you want it to or not. I am Christian, so that conviction will pervade the book even when I make no conscious effort to teach or preach. Grace and hope will inform everything I write."²

A lot of times I hear, "I liked that book because it was a clean read," implying no sex, minimal violence, and no swearing. While I applaud

those who are looking for stories that don't offend their sensibilities, for me as an editor the question isn't what *isn't* there. Rather, my foremost question is, "Is it a good story, told well?" What do I look for? A story that draws me into a world that I don't want to leave. Characters I empathize with, adventures that I want to go on, and twisty plots that spin my head. All done with beautiful writing.

To paraphrase Shakespeare, "The [story's] the thing." A bad story told well will get more kids excited about reading (and yes, even teach them a thing or two) than a good story told poorly—and all the better if it's a good story told well! That's my agenda as an editor, to find books that fit in the latter category. The story is what matters, making the moral message secondary—a given, if you will (though perhaps depicting evil in the process).³ Moralizing and excessive preachiness get in the way of the story. A great example of that is a final touch to C. S. Lewis's *Narnia Chronicles*. In an otherwise excellent story, the mentions of Susan's lipstick keeping her from heaven were a bit heavy-handed⁴—and if I were his editor, I would have tried to convince him to strike those comments. The message was already obvious; no need to bash the reader over the head with it.

This then brings up the question: Am I saying that it's okay to have a "bad" message in a book if the story is well told? As is often the case, it depends. The idea of the power of books is ingrained in Mormon culture. After all, if we believe the Book of Mormon to be the most correct book on the earth, we definitely believe in the power of the word (not to mention the Word) to transform a reader.

But do we believe it to be so powerful that it will take away agency? Unlikely. Interpretation of the message of a book, if one must have a message, is at least in part up to the reader to decide to agree with or not—and the message itself might be up for debate.

Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* is a timely, though controversial, example of a story that some would say is a well-written but bad story. Currently, the debate over this trilogy resurfaced and gained attention with a wider audience because of the movie release based on *The Golden Compass*, the first book of the trilogy. The argument against the books—even to the point of calls for banning—crop up because of their message alone: the "Authority," a character set up as a despotic God, must be overthrown for the world to be set to rights. But the message of the *His Dark Materials* story could be reinterpreted as a tale of unrighteous dominion, or perhaps a retelling of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in which Lucifer has

won the War in Heaven and must be defeated, a morality tale that many would agree with. As one reader of my blog put it, “If [my children] think that the God Pullman describes is the God they learn about at church, then I need to do a much better job at teaching them who God is.”⁵ Either way you interpret it, books like *His Dark Materials* can open up conversations, if we allow them to.

Because a “bad” message can be interpreted with such wide variation, it’s hard for me to call *His Dark Materials* “bad” for its message. I would instead say that sometimes the preachiness of that message, however you might interpret it, overshadows an otherwise romping good tale.

And I don’t just look for romping good tales in my slush pile. I look for them in my personal reading, as well. Which is why I’m excited to share with you a brief sampling of the excellent books out now in the mainstream children’s and young adult market by LDS authors. Some names you might recognize. Shannon Hale received a Newbery Honor for her middle-grade⁶ novel *Princess Academy*. Stephenie Meyer’s YA novel *Twilight* and its sequels have topped bestseller lists. Several other authors may not be as widely known, but each fits my criteria of a good story told well. These writers are tackling the age-old questions of good and evil in a way that resonates beyond their LDS culture into a world welcoming stories about that deep struggle.

The Goose Girl by Shannon Hale (Bloomsbury, 2003) is a young adult novel. Shannon and I were once on a convention panel together, and someone asked her why she wrote this retelling of the Grimm’s fairytale by the same name. She said something to the effect that the tales are intriguing because they leave so much out. It’s just so fun to flesh out a story, to give motivations to inexplicable actions and figure out how the magic in that story would actually *work*, she said. *Goose Girl* is an excellent representative of this genre, the story of Princess Anidori Isilee and her conniving handmaid who forces Anidori to switch places with her while journeying to the home of Anidori’s betrothed prince. Finding employment as a goose tender in the new city, Anidori begins to better understand her ability to talk with the wind, and makes friends with her fellow animal workers. These relationships and her newfound power make all the difference in Anidori’s eventual triumph. Other great Hale titles are *Enna Burning*, *River Secrets*, *Princess Academy*, and *Book of a Thousand Days*.

Twilight by Stephenie Meyer (Little, Brown, 2005) is also a young adult novel. Edward is a brooding vampire whose love interest is in danger

just from being near him. But Bella Swan is a little too curious and a little too fascinated with Edward for her own good. This book gets rave reviews—and not always from the people I expect them from. It's well written and there's plenty of romance, but I wasn't convinced by Bella's attraction to Edward simply based on Edward's utter beauty. Hey, he's a *vampire*. He wants to *eat you!* But Meyer's Edward is much more nuanced than many vampires in popular culture; Edward chooses to abstain from his monstrous side, and that sets up an intriguing situation of denial and passion. This book might be the best example of how a well-written story done well will attract the right reader—and a lot of them. Just because I don't necessarily love vampire stories doesn't mean that it isn't a well-drawn story that appeals to its target audience. Other great Meyer titles: *New Moon* and *Eclipse*.

The Princess and the Hound by Mette Ivie Harrison (Eos, 2007) is also young adult. Prince George has a secret: He can perform forbidden magic. When he becomes betrothed to a princess from a neighboring country whom he's never met, he figures it's best to never fall in love. George, who lost his mother early in life, doesn't want his life complicated by a second loss. But Princess Beatrice has her own secret; and as George and Beatrice near their wedding date, the expectations a reader might have of this original fairy tale that feels like a retelling are all turned on their head. Other great Harrison titles: *Mira*, *Mirror* and *The Monster in Me*.

Alcatraz vs. the Evil Librarians by Brandon Sanderson (Scholastic, 2007) is a middle-grade novel. A prolific author of fantasy for adult readers, Sanderson made his first foray into children's literature with this title. If you like whimsical humor coupled with original adventures, this is a book for you. The protagonist Alcatraz Smedry has been raised in foster homes most of his life, shuffled from home to home due to his exceptional ability to destroy everything around him. On his thirteenth birthday, everything changes—opening a door to an unseen world of evil librarians trying to dominate the world's flow of information. All that stands between them are one boy who breaks things, his perpetually late grandfather, and a bag of sand.

Red Dragon Codex by R. D. Henham (Mirrorstone, 2008), middle grade, is a book I edited but which I couldn't resist including on the list. Rebecca Shelley is the author behind the pen name of this adventure. A boy named Mudd sets off on his own to seek a silver dragon who can help him rescue his friend Shemnara from an evil red dragon. Mudd must nav-

igate all sorts of dangers, not the least of which is the decision to team up with his little sister, Hiera. I chose to work on this book precisely because Shelley's writing fits my criteria of a good book. This is a tale of high fantasy adventure peopled by characters that a reader can't help but root for even while you're laughing at them.

Fablehaven by Brandon Mull (Shadow Mountain, 2006) is another middle-grade novel. When Kendra and Seth go to visit their grandparents for a two-week vacation, little do they know that they're visiting a forest reserve for magical creatures. Their secretive grandfather insists that they stay in the yard and never go into the woods; but Seth, inquisitive and adventurous, ventures out anyway and meets an old woman in the woods who proves to be both friend and foe. Meanwhile, Kendra tries to find the locks that three mysterious keys open. What she finds unlocks Fablehaven's secrets to the siblings—leading to danger and intrigue.

Shadow Mountain, the publisher of *Fablehaven*, is an imprint of Deseret Book that publishes books by Mormon authors for a mainstream audience. This book skirts the edge of the line between telling a good story well and allowing the message to overshadow the story, but the slightly preachy parts serve the adventurous story; after all, the folklore of the fairy world depends on agreements, negotiations, and abiding by complicated rules. So this one remains on my "recommended" list. A good Mull sequel is *Fablehaven: Rise of the Evening Star*.

You might notice that every single one of these recommendations is a fantasy book. Space limits me in my ability to recommend all the many books I'd like to; and because of my line of work, I'm partial to the genre. There's a lot of really great fantasy out there, written by Mormons and those of other faiths. Several LDS authors write realistic mainstream YA and children's literature—Ann Dee Ellis, Louise Plummer, and Kristin Randle are three examples—and several other authors write crossover titles, published for adults but accessible to younger readers—such as Orson Scott Card and Tracy Hickman. Other excellent LDS authors writing mainstream children's fantasy not covered here include Dave Wolverton (sometimes writing as David Farland), Dan Willis, James Dashner, and Jessica Day George.

Every single author I mention writes good books well—adventure, fantastic creatures, absorbing characters, and engaging plots. Anything less would be to underestimate the intended readers of these excellent stories: children of all ages. Including me.

Notes

1. “Children’s literature” includes picture books for very young children all the way up through novels for older readers—and technically includes the subgenre of young adult literature, meaning novels and other forms of literature for readers twelve and up. However, generally the designation “children’s literature” means literature for children under twelve, while “young adult” means the twelve-and-over set. Both are very broad categories that take in wide developmental ranges.

2. Katherine Paterson, Official Website, Questions (2007), <http://www.terabithia.com/questions.html> (accessed November 29, 2007).

3. Orson Scott Card wrote an excellent essay on what I’m referring to here, addressing how *depicting* evil and *advocating* evil are two very different things, a nuance lost on some audiences. See his “The Problem of Evil in Fiction,” available in the collection *A Storyteller in Zion: Essays and Speeches* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993), 69–98.

4. C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle* (1956; rpt. New York: HarperCollins, 1984), 154–55.

5. Scott M. Roberts, comment, *Stacy Whitmore’s Grimoire* [blogspot], November 21, 2007, <http://slwhitman.livejournal.com/78603.html#cutid1> (accessed November 29, 2007).

6. Middle grade is a subclassification of children’s literature, novels for independent readers of about ages eight to twelve.

Innocent Hooligan

Douglas Thayer. *Hooligan: A Mormon Boyhood*. Provo, Utah: Zarahemla Books, 2007. 186 pp., paper, \$14.95

Reviewed by Edward A. Geary, professor emeritus of English, Brigham Young University

A staple of Douglas Thayer’s fiction is the sensitive, adolescent or young adult Mormon male struggling to come to terms with the burdens of mortality, a sense of sin, or the pressures of exemplary living. Now, in a memoir, Thayer deals more directly with his own experiences of growing up in the old Provo Sixth Ward during the 1930s and ’40s. Curiously, the authorial voice in the memoir is almost entirely devoid of the complicated inner life of Thayer’s fictional protagonists. He maintains a cool, rather

detached, faintly ironic narrative tone throughout, with only oblique hints at something more deeply involved.

Thayer gives us a detailed inventory of the Depression- and World War II-era milieu through which he and his friends moved. The organization is topical, one topic following close upon another and often mingling the experiences of adolescence with those of early childhood.

Hooligan is a book of lists—not a bad thing in a social document: “Although healthy and active for the most part, we boys sometimes found ourselves diseased or wounded, or both. Measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, whooping cough, rheumatic fever, polio, flu, sore throats, tonsillitis, infected ears, appendicitis, broken arms and legs, sprains, cuts, blood poisoning, and lockjaw. . .” (52). A fairly comprehensive catalogue of the ills to which flesh is susceptible. Even the chapter titles are random lists—“tomato soup, brutality, dancing, nosebleeds, fire escape”; or less random lists—“work, laziness, rotten laziness, damned rotten laziness.”

The overriding impression I gained from the happy abundance of remembered experiences is of the immense freedom enjoyed by small-town boys of an earlier generation. Thayer and his friends had no organized sports, no after-school programs, no lessons, no adults whose job it was to keep them safe or entertained. They attended school, had daily chores around the house, and were expected to get part-time jobs when they were old enough. But this left great stretches of free time for prowling the streets, looking into shops and pool halls, hunting, fishing, swimming naked at the Provo River swimming hole called the Crusher, building cardboard cities or fighting rubber-gun wars in vacant lots and abandoned sheds, and taking in the Saturday matinee double features at the Uinta Theater.

The author writes that he and his friends enjoyed thinking of themselves as “hooligans,” largely because “it had a nice sound” (38), but the level of hooliganism presented in the memoir is pretty mild, limited to such activities as smoking cedar bark, stealing the occasional egg from a neighbor’s chicken coop, or tossing rocks through the windows of derelict buildings. The boys cheerfully slaughtered as many fish, birds, and small mammals as came within reach of their hooks or firearms, and aspired, especially during the war, to larger and more destructive weaponry, but through it all there is an overriding sense of innocence. One charming moment occurs when the author, encountering for the first time a girl wearing a backless gown at a high school dance, discreetly covers his hand with his clean handkerchief to avoid the contact of flesh on flesh.

Hooligan is an enjoyable read, but I found myself wishing that Thayer had not so firmly avoided drawing upon the techniques of fiction in his autobiographical account. The long lists give a solidity of specification to the represented world; but in some instances, this effect could have been more effectively achieved by one or two selected, evocative details that could create a mood or set a scene. We learn a great deal about the author's activities as a child but gain only a superficial insight into his thoughts and emotions. The word "sin" appears many times, but there is almost no sense of sinfulness or of struggling against personal imperfection. Nor, on the other hand, do we get much feeling for the spiritual or emotional content of the Church activities described. The others in the author's remembered world—his parents, brothers and sisters, adult leaders, friends—are sketchy figures, without much human substance. It would be interesting to have more fully developed portraits of the author's parents: the aged, one-eyed father, who lives in a furnished room in back of a pool hall and who had offered to give the author a prized fishing rod if he would stay with him when the family broke up; even more, the crippled, tireless, no-nonsense mother who supports her family through the Depression by working as a cleaning woman in the homes of more prosperous Provo residents, maintaining her dignity through such small rituals as insisting that her employers provide a cup of tea in the afternoon. The memoir Thayer has given us is well worth the reading, but it makes us wish for the autobiographical novel he has chosen not to provide.

The Kind of Woman Future Historians Will Study

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. *Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History*. New York City: Knopf, 2007. 320 pp., cloth, \$24.00.

Reviewed by Jana Bouck Remy, book review editor for Dialogue and a Ph.D. candidate in American history at University of California, Irvine. Her writings appear bimonthly on Exponent II {<http://www.exponentblog.blogspot.com>} and SunstoneBlog {<http://www.sunstoneblog.com>}.

What happens when a quotation becomes a pop culture slogan—appearing on bumper stickers and coffee mugs and even thong panties? "Well-behaved women seldom make history," wrote Laurel Thatcher Ulrich in a 1976 academic essay about pious women in colonial America. So how did

her simple phrase evolve into a trendy T-shirt logo? And what does this Mormon housewife turned Pulitzer-prize-winning historian think about it?

Ulrich answers these and related questions in her latest book—aptly titled with her now-famous phrase—in which she discusses “how and under what circumstances women have made history” (xxxiii). Moving across time and space, Ulrich explores how women create history through writing the stories of their lives. She also shows how women’s histories are appropriated in varied ways to buttress the worldviews of later generations. Free of scholarly jargon and all formalities, this book will appeal both to the lay reader and those with an academic bent.

A departure from her previous research on colonial America, *Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History* reads like a primer of women’s world history. With an emphasis on storytelling rather than on continuity, Ulrich moves from point to point with transitions so seamless that the reader nearly loses herself in the flow of the narrative. As an example, she recalls tales of mythical Amazon warriors, then recounts a modern-day battle between an independent feminist bookshop of the same name with the gigantic internet-based bookseller Amazon.com.

Though her forays into history leads her to engage with a wide variety of sources, she focuses on the writings of three famous women: Christine de Pizan (author of *Book of the City of Ladies*), Elizabeth Cady Stanton (the American champion of female equality), and Virginia Woolf. She chooses these feminist authors because “they are important to my generation of scholars” and all three “turned to history as a way of making sense of their own lives” (xxxiv).

Following the lead of Virginia Woolf’s well-known musings about the dismal fate of Shakespeare’s sister, Ulrich describes Elizabethan England and some women who were the playwright’s contemporaries. She finds that there were successful female artists in this era such as Aemilia Lanyer, Elizabeth Cary, and Artemisia Gentileschi—their works rediscovered in the past three decades. Like Woolf’s imaginings about Judith Shakespeare’s fate, these women experienced the vulnerabilities of female oppression. Ulrich shows that the details of their often-scandalous lives can be reconstructed through their art and through such written sources as court documents. At the same time, she laments that we know so little about most of the women of this era, such as Shakespeare’s wife or daughters, because they were among the well-behaved women who “did not

make history” (104). Speaking of such women, she writes, “If history is to enlarge our understanding of human experience, it must include stories that dismay as well as inspire. It must also include the lives of those whose presumed good behavior prevents us from taking them seriously. If well-behaved women seldom make history, it is not only because gender norms have constrained the range of female activity but because history hasn’t been very good at capturing the lives of those whose contributions have been local and domestic” (227).

Ulrich’s chapter, “Slaves in the Attic,” traces the stories of four women with the same first name: Harriet Powell, Harriet Jacobs, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Harriet Tubman, and offers a well-wrought analysis of feminism and abolitionism in nineteenth century America. Though a story that is familiar to many American readers already, the compelling and humorous anecdotes offered through this section make it a must-read. Again, Ulrich shows herself a masterful historian and storyteller as she forges connections between people and events in a manner that will certainly be duplicated by other scholars.

Many LDS readers of Ulrich’s book will find themselves wondering where she places the Church in her schematic of women’s history and whether she discuss her own prominent role in Mormon feminism. Such readers will already know that Ulrich was a member of the Boston circle that authored *Mormon Sisters* and founded the *Exponent II* magazine. She discusses these efforts in the context of second-wave feminism, where “the past became a guide to the future,” though Ulrich does not delve into the then-radical nature of her cohort and their hopes of changing the Church (218). Rather, she transitions to discussing the failures of an activism “that didn’t provide answers” even as she addresses a younger generation of women that are not appreciative of the freedoms bought by feminist foremothers. Yet Ulrich’s own foray into being an “outrageous,” even “naughty,” feminist is passed over lightly as she explains her choice to study colonial women to distance herself from her “own [Mormon] life and culture” (xxix-xxx).

Throughout the text, Ulrich muses about how women’s history is remembered: “As we have seen over and over again in this book, historical icons can be appropriated for contradictory causes. . . . Confronting these shifting meanings, some people wonder whether history has any value at all. At any given moment it is hard to know whom to believe or what to trust. That’s why details matter. . . . Details keep us from falling into the

twin snares of 'victim history' and 'hero history.' Details let us out of boxes created by slogans" (226).

To close her book, Ulrich explains that women who make history matter only "when later generations care" (229). Certainly today's women do care, as evidenced by the popularity of the merchandise bearing Ulrich's quotation. For each time a girl writes in her diary that has "Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History" embossed on the cover, she is telling her own stories of being outstanding, exemplary, and even a wee bit misbehaved. In doing so, she'll be the kind of woman that future generations of historians will come to study.



Brian Kershisnik,
Dancing on a Very Small Island,
oil on canvas, 66 x 78 inches, 2007

Love Your Elders

Melissa McQuarrie

Nothing thrilled me more as a little girl than hearing my parents' courtship story: my mother, diminutive and dimpled, was eighteen, Australian, and a recent convert to the Church, living with her parents and six sisters in Warimoo, a little town in the Blue Mountains. My father, tall and baby-faced, was twenty-two, an American missionary from Farmington, New Mexico, serving his last three months in my mother's branch. She thought he was handsome in his navy suit; he admired her short dark curls and green eyes. They exchanged shy glances during sacrament meeting and spoke in the halls after Sunday School. My mother's parents had the elders over for dinner once a week, and sometimes my father's hand brushed my mother's as she passed him sausage rolls and steak-and-kidney pie. Once, at a branch picnic, my father tried to jump over a fence while my mother watched, but he caught his pants on the top of the fence and split open the crotch. Blushes and giggles ensued.

The branch president's wife, Sister Davison, noticed my parents' growing attraction and decided to help things along—after all, my mother wasn't the first girl in the branch to capture an elder's heart. A few weeks before my father's release, the branch members and missionaries spent a Saturday tearing down a house in preparation for building a chapel, gathering afterward at the Davisons' house for dinner. While her guests ate and visited, Sister Davison took my mother aside, told her she needed to speak to her in private, and asked her to wait in the master bedroom. My mother obeyed. Then Sister Davison found my father, told him she needed his help and asked him to follow her. Trusting Sister Davison—and perhaps forgetting mission rules—my father followed Sister Davison down the hall to the master bedroom. Imagine his surprise when he entered the bedroom and found my unsuspecting mother waiting there. But before he could back out of the room, Sister Davison locked the door from the outside.

“Now, you two aren’t coming out until you’ve settled things,” she said through the keyhole.

After an awkward silence, my father collected himself and began to speak—and what could he do but declare his love? Though they’d hardly exchanged more than a couple of sentences, my parents became engaged within minutes, even sealing the proposal with a brief kiss (definitely forgetting mission rules). Sister Davison, who had been listening through the keyhole, unlocked the door and gave them both a hug, then, beaming, led them outside and announced their betrothal to the rest of the branch. Congratulations ensued. Wedding plans were hurriedly made. My mother would join my father in the States after his mission release. But at the time the United States issued visas only to spouses—not fiancées—of U.S. citizens. So three weeks later, with the mission president’s permission, my parents were married at the Sydney courthouse before my father boarded a plane for the States. Six weeks later, after my mother received her visa, she joined my father in California, where they were sealed in the Los Angeles Temple and then went on their honeymoon—and on their first real date.

Fast forward to 1975, my sixteenth year. After spending their first seven years in the States, where I and two younger siblings were born, my parents had moved back to Australia and had had two more daughters. We’d been living in Australia for eight years and now lived in Emu Plains, a town nestled between the Nepean River and the Blue Mountains, where my father was the bishop of the Emu Plains Ward—the same branch in which he’d met my mother. I’d had several crushes on Australian boys: I’d written love notes to Paul Stapleton in the fifth grade, then cried when he jilted me for Gina Norris; I’d played spin the bottle in sixth grade and kissed half of the boys in my class. Recently I had liked both of the LDS boys in our ward: I’d held hands with Simon Kerr while playing hide and seek during Mutual, and Garry Rogers had kissed me on my bunk bed when his family came over for dinner before taking the final missionary discussion. But now, at fifteen, I was reading Barbara Cartland romances and *The Fascinating Girl*. I was ready for real love.

That’s when I discovered missionaries.

I knew missionaries were off-limits and on the Lord’s errand and all that, but given my parents’ history, aspiring to my own missionary romance didn’t seem that improper. And since my parents’ courtship sixteen years earlier, member/missionary romances had continued to flourish in Australia. In fact, Nora Dainey had just flown to Seattle to marry El-

der White, who had served in our ward and courted her afterward through letters, and several older girls in our ward were writing to American missionaries with hopes of an engagement. Given the scarcity of eligible LDS men in Australia, missionaries continued to be prime romantic targets—and I eagerly engaged in the hunt.

Tall, short, dark-haired, or blonde—I found all missionaries appealing. For one thing, they were American. Though I spoke like an Aussie, I considered myself American and loved everything American—as did most Australian Mormons because America was the “Promised Land.” Missionaries were also just the right age—nineteen and twenty—suitably older and mature to a fifteen-year-old girl. Wasn’t my own father four years older than my mother? And there was something about those suits—even the plainest boy looked handsome and authoritative in his crisp white shirt and tie. Since missionaries were taboo, the appeal of the forbidden fruit made them all the more desirable. Yet being off-limits also made missionaries safe: I could fantasize about them and practice my newly acquired feminine skills on them without worrying about being rejected and not being asked out (although I hoped one of them would fall in love with me and we’d marry when I was respectably older—say, eighteen). Best of all, there was a steady supply of them—when one left, another took his place, each with his own charms.

I had plenty of opportunities to pursue my crushes. Not only did we see the elders several times a week at church and seminary and Mutual and firesides; but fortunately for me, our home was one of their favorite hangouts. Since my father was American and the bishop, and since we’d fellowshipped and helped baptize several of our neighbors, the missionaries were always dropping by for dinner or to teach a discussion to one of our neighbors, or to just hang out and listen to Neil Diamond and John Denver records and talk about the States with my dad. One summer night they brought us a bottle of Hires extract and helped us make root beer chilled with dry ice in a clean garbage pail. I liked the root beer’s strange, medicinal taste. We drank it all evening, with the windows open in the heat and the cicadas chirping in the darkness, while the elders talked about high school football and trick-or-treating and McDonalds.

I began cataloguing my crushes in my diary, starting with Elder Hansen. He was brown-haired and brown-eyed, with a slight Idaho drawl. “I’m really flipped over Elder Hansen,” I wrote. “He makes my head spin.” His companion, Elder Hall, was short and chubby, but he enter-

tained me with stories about American high school and loved to bounce my baby sister, Charlotte, on his knee. Elder Hawke was only five foot three, shorter than I was, so I secretly nicknamed him “Tom Thumb”; but he told me funny jokes in the hall after Sunday School, and I wrote in my diary that I thought he was “cute.” Elder Gardner had blonde hair and a “darling” nose, and I noted that our eyes kept meeting during sacrament meeting. Elder Blum was from Canada, had curly hair and acne, and entertained us with expressions like, “You bet your sweaty socks, mama cakes!” and “Hold the pan, man.” He could also stagger about the room while dragging his knuckles on the ground and laughing like a monkey, which made my five-year-old sister, Shannon, giggle.

Then there was Elder Wilde. He was six foot three, dark-haired and serious—“my idea of a dream man,” I wrote. He had a fiancée back home in Utah, but that didn’t stop me from staring into his chocolate eyes while he taught our Sunday School class and imagining kissing his perfect mouth. Then tragedy struck. A month before Elder Wilde’s release, his fiancée froze to death in her stranded car during a blizzard, and poor Elder Wilde roamed the halls at church, hollow-eyed, a Heathcliff mourning the loss of his Catherine. While the other ward members patted his arm and whispered condolences, I kept a sad and respectful distance, pitying him and loving him all the more.

Elder Wilde stayed an extra month. When he finally left, still sad-eyed, Elder Teriyan took his place. And that’s when I realized all of my previous crushes were merely puppy love. *This* was the real romance I’d been waiting for. Elder Teriyan was five foot eleven, with wavy light-brown hair and hazel eyes, and a brilliant white smile. “He looks just like Merrill Osmond!” I gushed in my diary. I went to work with my *Fascinating Girl* skills, laughing coquettishly when we spoke in the halls, gazing at him during sacrament meeting, and then looking away when I caught his eye. “Elder Teriyan and I seem to be more and more attracted to one another, I’m afraid,” I wrote in my diary. “I blush like a silly thing whenever our eyes meet.” I looked forward to Sundays, and took extra time getting ready for church. I wore my white crepe dress covered with tiny rosebuds, or the mint green dress with the puffed sleeves and sweetheart neckline, and I brushed my hair into soft curls and carefully applied green eyeshadow under my newly plucked brows.

About this time the missionaries got permission from our high school headmaster to teach the LDS kids during the weekly scripture

study class on Thursdays. Usually we went to the library during the scripture study hour while the Baptists and Methodists and Church of England members studied the Bible with their pastors. But now there were six of us Mormons, so we got to have our very own class. For me, it meant one more opportunity to see Elder Teriyan. Normally I wore no makeup to school; it was prohibited and girls caught wearing so much as nail polish risked being suspended. Usually I pulled my hair up into a ponytail; but now on Thursdays I woke up early, washed and curled my hair, ironed my school uniform, and then applied a little mascara. It was worth risking suspension to look attractive for Elder Teriyan. Luckily, I was never caught.

I loved scripture study. I'd sit in the front row while the elders taught us lessons from the Book of Mormon, eagerly raising my hand to answer every question. When Elder Teriyan taught, I'd gaze up at him, chin in hand, and flutter my eyelashes and smile. When I read the assigned scriptures out loud, I'd try to sound more American by making my "r's" hard instead of soft, which the elders must have found amusing. But if they did, they didn't let on. Narelle Jarman nudged me, though, and asked, "Why are you trying to talk like a Yank?"

I ignored her.

The weeks passed. The elders dropped by our house several times a week, usually on week nights. During their visits we talked about school and friends and Elder Teriyan described Las Vegas, his home town, while I listened to every word. He called me "Curly," which made my heart dance, and once he tweaked my hair before leaving. That's when I knew the attraction was mutual.

One Sunday night after a fireside, Elder Teriyan and I chatted afterward; and I wrote in my diary that, when it was time to go, he shook my hand and said, "Goodnight, madam." "We laughed," I wrote, "but then as we gazed into each other's eyes we weren't laughing anymore. Then he finally let go of my hand. I love the way he makes me feel. He treats me like a woman and I treat him like a man."

One Saturday afternoon about a month before Elder Teriyan was transferred, I sat in the shade of our backyard gum tree, reading the latest Barbara Cartland romance and listening to the ski boats drone on the river and the lyre birds whistling in the bush. I was wearing my ratty jeans, a faded green shirt, and no makeup. My hair was in sponge rollers. Suddenly my sister Shellie bolted out of the back door.

"The missionaries are here!"

Normally this announcement made my heart skip with delight, but that afternoon it filled me with horror. I thought about stealing away to the gully behind our house and hiding until the missionaries left. But then I had another idea. I told Shellie to go back inside and sneak downstairs to the basement, where my bedroom was, and open my bedroom window at the front of the house. Meanwhile, I edged around the side of the house and climbed through my window, changed into a sundress, quickly did my hair, and put on some lipstick and blush. Then I sauntered upstairs, feigning surprise when I saw the missionaries sitting in the living room talking to my mother and sipping ginger ale.

We chatted for awhile; and when they were leaving, Elder Teriyan said, “You look very nice today.”

Later I gave Shellie two fifty-cent pieces.

A month later, the moment I’d been dreading arrived. Elder Teriyan was transferred. He came to us one night, said his goodbyes, and tweaked my hair and shook my hand one last time. I wrote in my diary that he held my hand for a “long time” and looked at me until my eyes met his. Then he let go of my hand, and he and Elder Johnson walked to their car as I watched through the window. For days I drifted about the house and hardly spoke during dinner. I went to sacrament meeting, seminary, and scripture study but didn’t listen to the lessons. Elder Green, the elder who took Elder Teriyan’s place, was nothing in comparison. I stopped wearing mascara on Thursdays. I checked the mailbox every day. Finally, several weeks after Elder Teriyan’s transfer, we received a letter. There was his beautiful handwriting on the envelope. I tore it open and read the letter eagerly. He described his new area, his companion, and the people they were teaching—it was nothing but missionary talk. My heart sank. But at the end of the letter he wrote, “I just want you to know that I love all of you. I mean it. I really do love *all* of you.” I smiled: By underlining the second “all” he was obviously trying to tell me that he loved me.

Of course, now, years later, I laugh at my girlish fancies. No doubt most of what I wrote in my diary sprouted from reading a few too many romance novels. But I wonder if Elder Teriyan returned a little of my crush. I suspect that, while most of the elders ignored me or indulged me good-humoredly, some of them may have encouraged me. Missionaries like Elder Hawke, who was only five three, or Elder Blum, who had severe acne, probably didn’t get noticed much by girls at home, so having a fifteen-year-old Australian girl fawning over them would have been flatter-

ing, even welcome. They may have considered my crushes a harmless, pleasant diversion from the work.

As I re-read my diary now, I see evidences of flirting. Elder Blum once asked me how I managed to shape my eyebrows in such perfect arches and told me I'd make a good model. Once, after an area conference, I overheard Elder Gardner ask another missionary, "Melissa's pretty, isn't she?" which made me flush with pleasure. As for Elder Teriyan, even though he didn't really "treat me like a woman,"—whatever that means—he did call me "Curly" and tweak my hair, and he seemed to enjoy shaking my hand and talking to me after firesides and scripture study. The underlined "all" in "I really do love *all* of you" may have been a coded message of affection for me, after all.

My correspondence with Elder Teriyan seems to have fizzled shortly after we received his letter, however, because I don't mention him much in my diary after that. In the meantime, I moved on to a new and more exciting stage. Several months after Elder Teriyan's transfer, my parents sold our home and we moved back to the States, just as I turned sixteen. I could now date pre-mission American boys. What were missionaries in comparison with dark and handsome Brian Thomas, who drove his own Camero and gave feather-light kisses? And so, my fascination with missionaries ended—until two years later, when I sent my boyfriend, Ralph, on a mission and waited for him.

But though I waited for a missionary and, when that romance ended after Ralph got home, ended up serving my own mission (this time finding most of the elders annoying and immature), a missionary romance culminating in marriage wasn't to be my fate. My own eventual courtship came three years after my mission, beginning with an ordinary blind date while working on my master's degree at BYU. Though my husband was a returned missionary, we didn't meet in the mission field; we didn't exchange heart-racing handshakes or furtive glances during sacrament meeting; we didn't court through letters. We dated, got engaged, got married, and the last of my old notions about mission romances slipped away. Still, sometimes I remember the fluttery-heart excitement of meeting a new, fresh-faced boy in a suit—and the world of romantic possibilities that lay in a handshake, a compliment, a look, a wink.

Driving to Heaven

Tara Washburn Christensen

Cory and I more or less live in the cab of a long-haul semi. We have a house in Indiana, but we don't make it home very often. It's not unusual for two months to pass between visits home. There are a lot of problems connected with living most of your life in an 8'6"x13' box. When we first started driving, I was shocked to learn how quickly our tempers flared, and how often the thought of divorce came to mind. After two months, I was ready to never see him again; but we fought it all through. Another problem was that, after we had been driving for a couple of years, Cory developed diabetes and, under regulations governing long-distance hauling, could no longer drive. For many months, I drove alone. Now Cory rides with me, so at least we are together.

Another problem has been keeping active in the Church. I believe in strict obedience to the principles of the gospel. Obviously, trucking has meant no home or visiting teaching, no callings of any sort, no sacrament meetings, no closeness with ward members. Cory and I have been compelled not only to work on Sunday, but to buy food and fuel. It has been impossible to keep our job while still being strictly obedient. For a while, I feared my lack of meeting attendance would lead me to true inactivity—that is, I feared I might get where I didn't care about missing church. As for Cory, he had joined the Church at seventeen and still found some ways of his old life appealing—occasionally desiring to return, but fighting that desire.

This essay is partly about how I came to be the kind of person I am. But mostly it about how I feel about God and my religion and about how Cory and I have worked out a way to worship and serve the Lord while driving truck seven days a week. We feel we are staying close to the Lord and following His ways and doing His will.

* * *

I grew up in Snowflake, a small Mormon town in northeastern Arizona. My family was a big one. I had ten brothers and sisters. I came along in the next-to-last position—a place where it seemed pretty easy to get lost and go unnoticed. Surrounded by people, I seemed to exist in a black hole of loneliness through much of my childhood. I was depressed most of the time.

I felt that I wasn't supposed to be lonely and depressed, and I went out of my way to conceal my feelings. I knew that I was supposed to have a testimony; and I thought that, if you had a testimony, you wouldn't feel the way I did. The gospel was the central focus of our home while we were growing up. My mother was always the one to engage us in gospel discussions. I, being more like my taciturn father, preferred to keep my deepest thoughts and feelings to myself. It was hard for me to find words for them, and I was simply afraid of or didn't understand some of them.

I felt like a hypocrite, having the appearance, rather than the actuality, of a direct relationship with the Lord—a relationship I truly desired but didn't know where to begin to find. It seems to me there was a kind of desperation in my pretense to a testimony. No persona, no dissembled personality, seemed too extreme for me to adopt if circumstances required it. It seemed to me that failing to dissemble, failing to appear confident of having a testimony, would confirm a terrible fear. What if the great black vastness was proof that there was no God and I had no "spirit" inside of me?

This was in stark contrast to everything around me at church, among my friends, and particularly at home. For example, my mother's favorite scripture, 2 Nephi 25:26, was plastered on the bathroom wall and her bedroom door, and occasionally it found its way to other walls in the house. "And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins." I truly desired to know to what source I could look for the remission of my sins. As I said, I wanted a direct relationship with the Lord—I just didn't know where to begin to find it. More on that later.

* * *

People ask me how I can stand driving a long-haul semi seven days a week. That's a good question. One of the reasons I can stand it is that I can think and feel while I drive. I think about my friends and my loved

ones and about my childhood. I think particularly about my religion. And I experience deep feelings about all of them.

When I was young, my family would take road-trips on a regular basis: It was always to see other family members. My mother had a restless spirit and needed to travel somewhere every couple of months. We would go for long trips to northern California, Washington, Ohio, and Louisiana in the summer. During the school year, we took short trips to Mesa or Page in Arizona or to places in Utah. I remember lying on my back between the driver's and passenger's seats in our van while my mother was quoting "The Highwayman" to us. She had an arsenal of close to thirty poems she had memorized for when singing together wouldn't keep us from fighting. To this day I have never looked at a printed word of "The Highwayman" or "The Children's Hour," but I can quote both of them almost in their entirety with very few errors.

The drive was always the boring part of the journey to me when I was very young. But as I got older and the car got smaller and less crowded, I began to change my attitude toward these trips. As a teenager I went on a lot of bus trips with my high school classes, especially in the spring time. There were volleyball games, choir trips, jazz band trips, and orchestra trips. My classmates were my own age, yet not my own age. I could never get into talking about boys, hair, make-up, dances, etc. I liked boys, I enjoyed dances, and I detested make-up. That was about as much as I had to say on the subject. What I loved to do during those many hours in bus and van was to watch in pensive silence as the countryside rolled past my window in ever-changing colors and shapes. The beauty of nature pulled me out of myself and filled me with tranquil feelings. In nature I had a heart. Otherwise, as I say above, I was just an empty shell, feeling alone even among people.

When I was seventeen, I went to girls' camp for the last time. I remember sitting out in the woods with my journal in the middle of the afternoon. There was peace, not only surrounding me, but within me. I began to wonder why nature calmed my severe moods. I wrote: "Nature is so sublime. Always it can soothe my fears and heal my loneliness. Why is this so? Why, when His disciples were afraid for their lives, did the Savior calm the sea—yet He leaves the storm raging in my heart? I see, as I sit on this log, a world of order, yet of chaos. The chaos brings balance to the order, but there is no order inside to bring balance to the chaos within me. Nature is *strictly* obedient, if the Lord wishes a storm to cease, it does so in-

stantly. If He wishes a tree to wither and die because it bears no fruit, it happens before the words can sink into the understanding of those hearing. Obedience without question.” And with that insight, strict obedience became my religion—the letter of the law to the last dot. Yet the emptiness remained, and my obedience turned out to be a part-time affair.

After my first year of college I moved to Mesa for the summer. I was nineteen and yearned to receive my endowments. I discussed the possibility with my bishop, telling him that I not only wanted to go to the temple but that I wanted to do it the following week. For some reason, this detour of protocol did not bother him, and he agreed to give me a recommend. Three days later my stake president said, “I would like to see you take the temple preparation class first, but I will leave it up to you.” I decided to stick with my plan.

The next day was Monday. I was just sitting down to dinner with my grandmother, older brother, and his wife, when the phone rang. It was very bad news. My mother had cancer. It was colon cancer, and according to the prognosis she wouldn’t last long.

Tuesday morning my mother and father and a handful of my siblings and their spouses sat with me in the Mesa Temple. I was worried a little about the ceremony after all the comments of “Don’t worry, it’s weird at first, but you’ll get used to it.” Surprisingly, I found myself in a mood of serenity that I had previously experienced only in nature. The same quieting peace that I felt in the woods permeated the walls of the temple, and I felt I was home. There was no black hole in my heart, no need to stretch the truth to get a desired response. It was a healing experience. For the first time in my life, the Lord was there and He was enough.

However, only two weeks and four days after that healing experience, my mother died. It was a Saturday. I sat on the ground outside our house in Snowflake in the middle of the night and looked into the sky, searching for peace. I admit that my mother’s death rocked my faith. It didn’t make sense for this to happen. I *had* felt the presence of God in the temple, and it had filled my heart. But a new ache, deeper and more terrifying than anything I had experienced before, had replaced it. The young seedling of faith in me began to feel like a barren, shriveled twig. It was as if I assumed that a testimony made a person immune to the shocks and deprivations of mortality.

This time, though, I knew I shared my grief and loneliness with others. I took a semester off from school and stayed home to help my father

and younger brother. Solace came for both Dad and me in the temple. At least once a week we got up early, made breakfast, and left for Mesa after making sure my brother was up and getting ready for school. Neither Dad nor I said much while we drove. Again the familiar miles would pass, and I would find myself as lost in my thoughts as he was in his. But I think our weekly trips to Mesa kept us both on this side of a complete emotional breakdown. The Lord was still there for me.

* * *

I met Cory while doing a session in the Mesa Temple. We were married in the Salt Lake Temple because of our great respect for it. Then we settled down to married life, confronting the necessity that both of us had to hold jobs to survive.

We got into truck driving because, after two years of marriage and no children, we were still working overlapping opposite shifts and literally saw each other only on Sundays. One day, while on my lunch break, I noticed an ad for truck drivers. The more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea. It made good money, and I could see my husband every day.

So off we went to driving school in Denver. The first day there, I was shocked at the vulgar and lewd comments made by others in our class. I sat there till I could no longer stand it, then I politely asked the man doing most of the talking to stop. His reply was, "If what I'm saying bothers you, you're in the wrong business. You better either get used to it or get another job." I believe I still have a bruise on my chin—seven years later—from my jaw hitting the floor.

We had already invested \$12,000 to get our licenses, and we couldn't just turn away and forget that much money. So we forged on, each day trying to ignore the barrage of obscenities and rudeness. After three very long months of training, we were finally in a truck and on the road. As I said earlier, the confined space of a truck cab tested our marriage, but eventually we made up our minds to make it succeed.

We now found ourselves in a career that demanded weeks at a time without seeing home—and without participating in Church meetings or callings. It was a time of spiritual and emotional upheaval, and our physical needs were changing dramatically. Before the first year was over, we had both put on considerable weight. Two years of driving left us more or less physically broken down. We decided to go home and do something else. Less than six months after going home, we were back in the truck,

but this time we were a little wiser. We decided there were a lot of things we could do to control our environment.

My husband received permission to bless the sacrament when we were unable to attend meetings somewhere. We get the sacrament talk topics and prepare talks for each Sunday. We study the priesthood/Relief Society manual for our class time and the designated scriptures for Sunday School. We take our lesson for Monday home evening either from the current month's *Ensign* or from a portion of *Preach My Gospel*. During the week we listen to conference addresses on CD and to the scriptures. I have my study time each day—time to write in my journal and review in more detail scriptures that may have stood out to me while we listened to them. I have discovered that my environment is what I make it. My life, it seems, has reversed itself. I am not as physically fit now as I wish I were, but I feel so deeply—more than I ever have—a true relationship with God.

After my husband was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, we adapted. I drive, and he rides along with me most of the time. It's definitely not traditional, but it works for us. He helps me where he can, and we have time that we never had before when we were running "team." As a team, with both of us driving, the truck stopped for only two hours or less every day. The rest of the time we were driving from coast to coast as quickly as we could. It was not uncommon for us to drive 6,500 miles per week. In such a life it was very hard to have any time that was relaxing or enjoyable, let alone time to exercise and do the things we needed to. Now, as a solo driver, I am required to take a ten-hour break after driving no more than eleven hours in a fourteen-hour period. It makes life very nice. We have time for exercise every day and for personal and couple study. I have time to research and write. We almost always end up in New Mexico or Arizona on the Sabbath, our favorite stopping point being a rest area just west of Flagstaff where we can find a secluded spot in the pines.

While driving our truck, I am surrounded by the grandeur of God's creations. I have experienced an earthquake in California, tornadoes in Tennessee and Indiana, and a freezing rain in Texas that left two inches of ice on our truck. I have driven toward the East Coast while watching the sun rise over the trees in Georgia; and I have been awed by the magnificence of desert vistas as the sun sets below them, leaving the sky awash in brilliant colors. I've watched terrific storms with thunder, lightning, and driving rain (the noise being drowned out by blaring tornado sirens) push across the sky as though someone were scraping off a canvas with a

straight-edged ruler. Behind the line of black billowing clouds is a clear expanse with an unfathomable, impressive display of brilliant stars. The immediacy of the sky's swing from the dark and oppressive to the clear and inspiring leaves me hardly knowing how to react to its magnificence.

Once the storm or scene displayed before me has taken my breath away, it passes. As it does, I realize again how beautiful, yet frightening, are all of God's acts. In that same instant, I am filled with wonder for the majestic power by which nature's fury is controlled. My own pitiful insignificance is made just as clear—my utter helplessness when faced by the same storms that, with one word, the Savior can turn away.

Although I am much less than any of the glorious displays of nature I have seen, the God of the universe takes the time to show me He is mindful of me and knows who I am. I have seen his power move my truck out of harm's way on many occasions. Following are only two of them.

One wintry day in Minnesota we had to delay unexpectedly when our truck overheated for no good reason—on a flat stretch of road in the middle of the winter. Three hours later, driving across a bridge on the loop around St. Paul and Minneapolis during a light dusting of snow, our truck jackknifed, forcing me to spin around and drive in the wrong direction to keep my trailer from going over the bridge. If we hadn't been delayed by the inexplicable overheating of our truck, our mishap would have occurred in heavy traffic leaving a football game, sweeping a lot of cars with us. As it was, the bridge was empty. I attribute that to the Lord.

Once on Highway 2 in Nebraska, I was enjoying the rarity of a windless drive. It seems there is nearly always wind in Nebraska and Wyoming, which might have posed a problem on this particular drive because we had a very light load, about 11,000 pounds compared to a regular load of about 45,000. When it is windy, a lightly loaded trailer is much more dangerous. I have seen more than a few trucks blown over on the side of the road because of wind gusts. Also, on this rare windless day, traffic was light because it was fairly early on a Sunday morning. Accordingly, I was more relaxed and off my guard than usual.

When I started to climb a hill, I suddenly felt a sideways motion, as if someone had just picked up my truck and set it about three more feet to the right, across the stripe and onto the shoulder. As I looked around to see what had happened, I saw a little car trying to pass me. I slowed down and let it around me quickly. It pulled off and I noticed that it had a flat tire. I pulled over to help because I saw that the driver was a woman of at

least sixty. While I helped her change her tire, she commented on my having moved over for her. Puzzled because I hadn't steered the truck from its lane, I asked her what she meant, and she said, "Well, you moved over on the side of the road just before my tire popped and my car went right into where your trailer had been not a moment before. How did you know to move over?" I have only one explanation. The Lord moved my truck three feet to the side so that woman's car would not dodge under my trailer when her tire blew.

I am grateful that the Lord takes notice of me. Driving truck, I have truly come to know Him and to feel close to Him. I am learning what it feels like to have my heart and not just my mind centered on the gospel. Outwardly I may appear inactive, but inwardly I am more active than I have ever been in my life. I can worship the Lord anywhere, even from a stop among the pines in Arizona.

Before my experience as a truck driver, I would never have thought that such a career was what I needed to heal me and open me to the Lord. It would have seemed a sure way to distance myself from him and end up on a path I didn't want to follow. I have found that peace I was searching for, the peace I felt in nature and the temple. I have found a true relationship with the Lord. Now the tranquility is always there, for it comes from within, and I don't have to look outside of myself for peace. It is there, and that tells me He is there, too.

Here I sit behind the steering wheel of an eighteen-wheeler, firmer in my convictions, more certain of the reality of God, and filled by feelings for the gospel. And I think I'll just keep on driving to heaven.

The Goodness of the Church

Robert A. Rees

We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men. . . . If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things. —Joseph Smith, Thirteenth Article of Faith

The roots of all goodness lie in the . . . appreciation for goodness. —Dalai Lama

Attending sessions of April general conference with my wife in 2007, I was reminded in many ways of the goodness of the Church. Joining fellow Saints flowing into the Conference Center on a bright Sunday morning, I was aware that I was part of a body of believers whose collective faith and devotion constitute a vital force in the world. I was reminded of this goodness while watching the October 2007 general conference on television. The music for the Saturday afternoon session was performed by a chorus of young women in their midteens, all wearing a garden of blouses in solid colors. As the camera swept over that array of bright, beautiful faces, I was impressed by what they represented of the three great human quests—Truth, Beauty, and Goodness—whose fusion and harmony, as Wayne Booth argues, constitute God.¹ Their faces, the words spoken during the conference sessions, the music, and the feelings—all of these things engendered in my heart a remembrance of the ways the goodness of the Church has blessed my life over the years.

That goodness is not always apparent, and it has to be seen in the broader context of what is, in reality, a much more complex and complicated picture of the Church. As someone who has experienced that goodness but who has also spent his mature life challenging those things about the Church that are less than good, I don't want to give the impression that I think all is well in Zion. What I propose is to focus on what I con-

sider the real benefits and blessings of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I do this because I feel that such positive attributes are often overlooked or diminished by those who criticize the Church. This essay therefore is an attempt to balance what is often an unbalanced view of the Church by its detractors and critics.

I want to make clear that my observations in this essay are not intended in any way to diminish in importance the legitimate issues that some may have with the Church or to gloss over the limitations, shortcomings, or failures of the Church as an institution. I find myself somewhere in the middle between the apologists and the critics. Both groups tend to be highly selective in what they count as the truth about the Church and both tend to filter out those aspects of the Church that don't conform to their particular view. I don't believe it serves the Church well to pretend that all is well in Zion when it isn't. Conversely, I don't believe it serves anyone well to deny the goodness of the Church or to devalue or diminish its considerable strengths and accomplishments. In reality, we should distrust those who present an image of the Church as a perfect, seamless embodiment of the kingdom of God, just as we should distrust those who see it merely as one more flawed human-inspired institution.

Complaints about institutional limitations and failings are common to all faiths. In the interfaith work in which I have been engaged over the years, I have found that most churches experience the same kind of discontent among a portion of their constituencies that the Mormon Church does. Perhaps another way to put this is that it is the nature of all institutions, including those whose business is God's work, to fall short of their own ideals and thus to disappoint some of their members.

One of the reasons some find fault with the Church is that it claims to be the kingdom of God on earth or, as Mormons testify, "the only true church." As such, many assume that there is little margin for mistakes or imperfections. Like children who idealize their parents, we often expect, perhaps even demand, of the Church what it, by its very nature, cannot be. In other words, there is an inevitable difference between the Church as it is and the Church as it should be. The one exists as a divine or platonic ideal; the other is the one in which we live and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. It is impossible for the latter to conform perfectly to the former. For example, in an ideal church, all leaders and members would be constantly worthy of the Holy Ghost and therefore all decisions would be in accord with the will of heaven. In the real world, in the

Church as it is, decisions are made by inspiration part of the time, which means that some decisions are not inspired. In an ideal Church, we would all respond with perfect generosity, even before needs arose, and give all that we have to sustain the poor and to build up the kingdom of God. In the Church as it is, it is necessary for us to pay tithes and offerings so that the work of the Church can go forward and the needs of the poor can be met. In the real Church, the vast majority of Church leaders are conservative Republicans. In an ideal Church, they would all be liberal Democrats like me.

I make this last statement humorously because it illustrates the impossibility of the Church being able to completely reflect what each of us expects it to be. That is, we all want the Church to be in our image, to reflect our values, to respond to our issues, to fight our battles. During the 1960s, I knew people who left the Church because of our practice of denying priesthood ordination to blacks. In an ideal Church, I believe that such a practice would never have become part of the fabric of our ecclesiastical life. But for a set of complex reasons, it did. A number of us felt that this practice was not inspired and that, in spite of official justifications and rationalizations, it should never have been instituted. We didn't leave the Church over this issue because we knew that the Church as an institution doesn't always perfectly reflect the teachings of the gospel and because we felt the immense good that the Church did was not negated because it failed in this particular instance.

The fact is, those of us who are members have been called to be a part of the Church during what some consider the most wicked time in history. It is a Church that doesn't have the luxury to withdraw from the world into some desert commune. It is a Church that has been asked to play an essential role in the great winding-up of things, to be in the world but not of the world. And we all know how difficult that is! I am intrigued by the Lord's description of the Church as not only true, but also as *living* (D&C 1:30). If it is living, it is also evolving, just as we are.

I often ponder where *I* would be were it not for the Church. It is by no means a stretch of the imagination to think I might be in prison. Much in my early life pointed in that direction. I don't wish to be overly dramatic, but a cousin and a sister did go to prison. One nephew has been in prison for thirty years. Collectively, members of my extended family have committed every major crime, broken all of the Ten Commandments,

and been guilty of all of the cardinal sins. Everyone in my immediate family was or is an alcoholic.

I escaped essentially because of the Church. When I was seven, my father joined the Navy and went to fight the war in the South Pacific. Before he did so, he sent my brother and me to Durango, Colorado, to live with my mother, my sister by a previous marriage, and my stepfather. While my father was in the service, my mother abandoned my brother, my sister, and me. When the war was over, my father, who had been converted by a miraculous priesthood blessing, taught me the gospel and took me to church—a little branch that met in the basement of the high school in Wickenburg, Arizona. Although I was only ten, I somehow felt at home. I felt safe in the Church and loved by the people there. When I was fifteen, my father was again divorced. He and my brother were inactive in the Church, but every Sunday I got up and rode the bus to church by myself—this time to the Long Beach First Ward. There, too, like the wards and branches I have attended in various parts of the world, I found love. Much of what I am I owe to the Church. It has provided me with innumerable opportunities to grow—to evolve from that broken and disadvantaged early environment to a place where I hope I am able to manifest a mature discipleship.

Consider what we as members of the Church enjoy, not just through the gospel, but through one of the earthly institutions Christ has chosen in which his gospel is to be lived.

Because we are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a clear understanding of our true identity—not as drops of water in a great ocean of spirit; not as automatons controlled by forces outside ourselves or as animals driven inexorably by instinct or desire; not as sinners in the hands of an angry God (as the eighteenth-century cleric Jonathan Edwards would have called us); not as lonely creatures in a barren landscape waiting for a God or Godot who will never appear; not as existential beings trapped in Sartre's room with no exit—but rather as literal sons and daughters of loving heavenly parents, the most precious things in all their creation. In the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins, we are Christ's "choice and worthy the winning."²

We have an understanding of the true nature of God—not, as one of Emily Dickinson's poems calls him, "a distant, stately lover"³; not as *deus absconditus*, a God who wound up the clock of the world and then went off to more important things; not as a draconian judge who is as pinched and

narrow as one of Molière's or Dickens's divines; not as a Jaubert or government official who pursues us through the dark and into our dreams—but as a tender, loving parent, one who heals broken hearts and wipes tears from all faces, who has designed all creation so that we may find our way back to His presence, and who has given His Only Begotten Son that we might find eternal joy.

This God is the one seen in the vision of Dame Julian of Norwich: “There is no creature that can know how much and how sweetly and how tenderly our maker loves us. And therefore we can with his grace and his help continue in spiritual beholding, with everlasting wonder at this high, overpassing, unmeasurable love that our lord has for us in his goodness.”⁴

Because we are members of this Church, our true understanding of divinity includes the knowledge that we have a Mother as well as a Father in heaven. While the Church has yet to fully understand, appreciate, or celebrate this glorious doctrine, we have the privilege of calling her into our spiritual imagination. As I once expressed it, “If everything here is, as the scriptures say, a type of what exists in the eternal worlds, then God the Mother's brightness, inventiveness, and creativity, to say nothing of her love and compassion, must equal in magnitude those of the Father.”⁵ How wonderful to know that she was part of our beginning, that she will be there to greet us in her royal courts on high, and that she will be part of our eternal continuing.

Because we are members of this Church, we have an understanding of what it means to be exalted—to become holy, glorified beings like God—that is, to become gods ourselves. This doctrine, which other believers find blasphemous, is in fact the most glorious of all the doctrines of God, for in it we are promised *everything*. Nothing of knowledge, of beauty, of power, of intelligence, of creation, of glory will be withheld from us—but will, in fact, flow unto us “without compulsory means . . . forever” (D&C 121:26). As the oath and covenant of the priesthood states: “And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him” (D&C 84:38). There is no way to exaggerate this profound and astonishing teaching or to discount the Church's role in helping to bring it to pass.

Because we are members of this Church, we have a true understanding of the eternal nature of marital love as promised in the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. Among all the believers in the world, we are unique in having a specific doctrine promising that these most intimate of

bonds are not ephemeral but eternal. Is it possible to fully appreciate the realization that those we embrace here with physical and spiritual intimacy we will so embrace in the resurrection?

Which leads to another blessed understanding—that the love which continues beyond the grave is not only platonic, fraternal, and charitable, but romantic and erotic as well. Again, such a teaching is scandalous to other believers, but to Latter-day Saints it is part of the promise that all good things in mortality can be eternal in nature if we live worthy of them.

Because we are members of this Church, we have a true understanding of the atonement of Jesus Christ and of its saving and sanctifying power to all who have ever lived, who now live, or who ever shall live. Among Christian believers, we alone fully understand the connection between Gethsemane and Calvary.

We have access to hundreds of additional words spoken by Jesus. A number of years ago, radio commentator Lowell Thomas was asked what would be the most significant discovery that humankind could make. He responded, “Finding additional words spoken by Jesus of Nazareth.” In the Book of Mormon we have such words—powerful and touching teachings of the Lord, including his blessing of the children in the New World.

We also have the witness and teachings of additional prophets. Think of how much richer and deeper our understanding of the gospel is because we have Lehi’s dream, King Benjamin’s address, Alma’s great discourse on faith, the missionary experiences of Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah, and Moroni’s last, great testimony of Christ.

Because we belong to this Church, we have a greater chance that we will live healthier and longer lives; that our marriages will not end in divorce, especially if they have been solemnized in the temple;⁶ that we and our children will not be subject to the devastating effects of drugs and alcohol; that we will be well educated; and that we will be happy. Nephi says of his people, “We lived after the manner of happiness” (2 Ne. 5:27), a condition that still characterizes the essential mode of living among Latter-day Saints.

What is right with the Church? Not everything, certainly, but a great deal.

What is right with the Church is its stability in a world of moral relativity and rapidly changing values. For example, the Church takes a strong and certain stand against pornography at a time when this evil invades almost every corner of our society, when millions of people are ad-

dicted to pornography on the internet, when pornography robs many adults of the opportunity for true intimacy and increasing numbers of children of their innocence.

What is right with the Church is that it requires of us a number of small sacrifices that have the power to sanctify our souls. Latter-day Saints who live the law of the fast, who pay their tithes and offerings, who give of their time and energy in Church service, who do missionary work, and who do proxy ordinances for the dead are constantly blessed with opportunities to go outside themselves and thus to grow spiritually.

What is right with the Church is its missionary program. I don't believe there is any way to truly calculate the great blessings and benefits that accrue to individuals, to families, to the Church, and to society from those who serve full-time missions. One of the unique characteristics of the Church is its bold program of sending tens of thousands of young people in their late teens and early twenties throughout the world as emissaries of the gospel. Many go to another country, learn a foreign language, sometimes suffer persecution, take leadership positions, and give dedicated humanitarian service. Also unique is the Church's program for senior missionaries. Young missionaries return better prepared to serve in the Church and to continue with their personal and professional lives. A life of dedicated service in the Church gives seniors an opportunity to bless others with their mature faith and experience in such a sustained way.

What is right with the Church is that it uses its institutional power to bless those in need. As an institution, the Church is able to accomplish our collective will in a way that otherwise would not be possible. Many of us, for example, might wish for opportunities to help the people ravaged by hurricanes in Guatemala and Honduras, to help the refugees in Darfur, to assist AIDS orphans in Africa, or to support the education of poor Saints in the developing world. The Church, acting on our behalf, sent hundreds of millions of dollars worth of aid to relieve the suffering of such peoples. As the director of the Church's humanitarian services for the Baltic States Mission, I was able to see first-hand many instances in which the generosity of the Saints, channeled through Deseret Charities, blessed orphans, the disabled, the sick, and the needy in Eastern Europe. I can still see the look of delight on the face of a severely disabled child who was able to walk better because of a pair of crutches donated by someone in the Church.

What is right with the Church is that it is one of the institutions

that upholds standards of decency, modesty, and morality, taking a strong and certain stand against sexual immorality and violence. In a world of decaying moral standards, increasing crudeness and indecency, and wanton sexual permissiveness, the Church calls its members to live lives of holiness, to “come out from the wicked . . . and touch not their unclean things” (Alma 5:57). The Church’s emphasis on purity of thought and action, on premarital chastity and marital fidelity, is a blessing to those who honor it and to society in general.

What is right with the Church is that it has an optimistic, coherent, thoughtful, and soul-satisfying religious philosophy. Such concepts as moral agency, eternal intelligences, humans being the literal offspring of Deity, exaltation, salvation for the dead, the continuation of family relationships in eternity, and the degrees of glory constitute one of the most enlightened views of humans and gods in the history of humankind. As Joseph Smith remarked in his King Follett Discourse, such doctrines “taste good.”⁷

Latter-day Saints believe in a God earnestly engaged in history, one who is concerned about our temporal as well as our spiritual welfare, one who regards us as a loving parent regards His children. As in the Old and New Testaments, in the first years of the Restoration one finds God pleading with the Saints to catch the vision of what the Church could be; God chastising Church leaders who at times seemed more interested in their own welfare than that of the Church; God waiting through the fits and starts, the wrong turns, the bungled decisions, the stumbling through the lower law, until the foundation of the Restoration was complete.

In the contemporary Church, we see the same process at work. At times those who are called to act for God make mistakes. I certainly made my share as a bishop and as a counselor in a fulltime mission presidency. At times, decisions made in the name of the Church reflect the limitations and even the prejudices of those who make them. Anyone who has lived very long knows that, on the local as well as on the general level, certain decisions are made that later are reversed or changed. We all know of instances in which the Church as an institution has made decisions that are unfair or unjust to certain members. And anyone who reads Mormon history knows that there have at times been strong disagreements among the leading brethren about doctrine, policy, and practice. And yet, in spite of these limitations, the Lord continues to sustain those whom he has called to lead the Church and, I believe, expects us to sustain them as well.

Because of the Church, I have learned how to be a better human being—a more loving husband, a more nurturing father and grandfather, a more faithful friend, and, hopefully, a more dedicated disciple of Jesus Christ. As I partake of the sacrament each week, I am challenged to repent of my sins, to be less selfish, to give more of my goods to the poor and needy, to give more of my time to build Christ’s kingdom. The possibilities for my personal spiritual evolution are magnified because of the discipline the gospel imposes and the opportunities the Church offers.

And so I say to myself, “If God can live with the imperfections of his Church, can’t I?” And, more to the point, “If God can live with *my* imperfections, can’t I live with the Church’s?” To put it another way, the Church is one of the landscapes in which we are called to follow Christ. My friend Barry Lopez writes of an experience he had on the barren tundra of northern Alaska. As he walked that stark landscape, he was struck by “the contemplation of human messes, the sentimental pessimism about human failure the Germans call *weltschmerz*.” He writes, “As I pursued a looping hike that day across the shallow ridge-and-swale of damp tundra, a phrase hung before me: *peccata mundi*, the sins of the world.” Thinking of the difficulty of forgiving the gross sins and injustices of our time, he concludes that somehow he must forgive:

To condemn what individual human beings perpetrate but to forgive humanity, to manage this paradox, is to take on adult life. Staring down *peccata mundi* that day on the tundra, my image of God was this effort to love in spite of everything that contradicts that impulse. When I think of the phrase “the love of God,” I think of this great and beautiful complexity we hold within us, this pattern of light and emotion we call God, and that the rare, pure ferocity of our love sent anywhere in that direction is worth all the mistakes we endure to practice it.⁸

I contend that one of the directions in which we are called to send the “pure ferocity of our love” is the Church itself. We shouldn’t feel that we need to choose between the Church as it is and the Church as it should be. In reality, it is important that we live in both worlds—that we accept the Church as it is with love and forgiveness but that, at the same time, we work to make the Church more what it should be. We can do this with grace and generous charity as we remember that this is exactly what the Lord does with us.

In her beautifully honest and touching book, *Traveling Mercies*, Anne Lamott tells of finding her way to God out of an atheistic upbringing.

ing and a godless world of drug and alcohol abuse by hearing singing from a black church, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, as she stood across the street in a flea market in Marin City, California. This happened at a point in her life when she felt herself “crossing over to the dark side.” For a number of Sundays she simply stood in the doorway and listened to the singing of this small black congregation. Slowly she inched her way into the church. She writes, “Eventually, a few months after I started coming, I took a seat in one of the folding chairs, off by myself. Then the singing enveloped me. It was furry and resonant, coming from everyone’s very heart.”⁹

The effect of her walking into that church was to give her a light out of the darkness: “Something inside me that was stiff and rotting would feel soft and tender. Somehow the singing wore down all the boundaries and distinctions that kept me so isolated.” But, as she had done previously, on this particular Sunday, she rushed out of the church before the sermon. A week later, she stayed for the entire service, and says, “[One of the songs was] so deep and raw and pure that I could not escape. It was as if the people were singing in between the notes, weeping and joyful at the same time, and I felt like their voices or *something* was rocking me in its bosom, holding me like a scared kid, and I opened up to that feeling—and it washed over me.” In reflecting on this experience later, she writes, “When I was at the end of my rope, the people at St. Andrew tied a knot in it for me and helped me hold on. The church became my home in the old meaning of *home*—which it’s where, when you show up, they have to let you in. They let me in.”¹⁰

That, among other things, is what churches are for—to create a home for us, to let us in. When they fail to let all of us in (including the homely, the heretics, and the homosexuals), they fail in their fundamental purpose, which is to make it possible for us to experience the love of God and the love of others in deep, intimate ways and therefore to feel enough love for ourselves that we can allow the grace of God to work its miracle in our lives.

The Church is the joint stewardship of all its members. In a conversation I had with Karl Keller a number of years ago, I said, “The Church is like *us*: sometimes the Gospel works through us and sometimes it doesn’t. I’ll go one step further: the Church *is* us; it is no better or no worse than we are (and that includes *you* and me), for the Church is what we make it.”¹¹

As I said at the outset, my observations are not meant in any way to ignore or gloss over what is wrong with the Church. Like any institution managed by humans, the Mormon Church is less than perfect both in its teachings and its practice. The extent to which the Church reflects values and perpetuates policies and practices that are too hierarchical, patriarchal, sexist, anti-intellectual, racist, homophobic, and protective of its own image, it diminishes its power to be a force for goodness. Nevertheless, as it is a “living” and therefore potentially evolving institution, we can hope that its evolution is progressive rather than regressive. It is the stewardship of all the leaders and the members to ensure that it is, and this means facing honestly those things about the Church that are not reflective of the gospel of Christ as well as acknowledging and affirming those that are.

So, while there are things that are wrong with the Church, there is much that is right with it. Finally, what is right with it is that it is one of the few places where we can find holiness, where we can find manifestations of God’s abundant love and his amazing grace. Not always, but often. And in an increasingly unholy world, this is no small thing. It is, I believe, for the possibility of finding such holiness that the Lord created His church, that He commands us to be engaged in its mission, and that He invites us to partake of its blessings. It is partly out of hope that I will find such holiness and perhaps in my small way make holiness happen for myself and others that I continue to go to church. And, in spite of occasional disagreements with practice or policy, in spite of occasional frustration and hurt, and in spite of the weekly challenges of being a liberal, intellectual Latter-day Saint in a conservative, often anti-intellectual church community, because of my wish for the Church as it is to be more like the Church as it should be and because of a lifelong experience of finding love and goodness there, I give the Church my allegiance and devotion, not mindlessly but mindfully, and with full heart and voice.

Notes

1. Wayne C. Booth, *My Many Selves: The Quest for a Plausible Harmony* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2007), 303.
2. Gerard Manley Hopkins, “As Kingfishers Catch Fire,” www.bartleby.com/122/34.html (accessed October 6, 2007).
3. Emily Dickinson, *Final Harvest: Emily Dickinson’s Poems* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1961), 78.

4. Julian of Norwich, *The Enlightened Mind: An Anthology of Sacred Prose*, edited by Stephen Mitchell (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 125.

5. Robert A. Rees, "Our Mother in Heaven," *Sunstone*, 15, no. 1 (April 1991): 49.

6. According to a recent newspaper article, "Mormons are least likely of all Americans to get divorced." Bob Mims, "Mormons: High Conservatism, Low Divorce, Big Growth," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 6, 1999, <http://archives.his.com/smartmarriages/> (accessed January 8, 2008).

7. Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev. (6 vols., 1902–12, Vol. 7, 1932; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980 printing), 6:312.

8. Barry Lopez, "Ferocious Love," *Portland: The University of Portland Magazine*, Winter 1997, 26–27.

9. Anne Lamott, *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith* (New York: Pantheon, 1999), 48.

10. *Ibid.*, 100.

11. Robert A. Rees, "Letters of Belief," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1974): 13.

CONTRIBUTORS

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SAMUEL BROWN is an academic critical care physician interested in religious and cultural history, particularly as it relates to life, death, and the body. His first encounter with true terror came as he cradled his infant daughter and realized how perfectly fragile she was. The image of a parent's heart breaking captured for him the wrenching paradox of Christ's atonement and the mortal phase of the plan of salvation. Conversations with a humanitarian demining expert, coupled with Samuel's own work on health reform in the Caucasus and Central Asia, provided the stage for "Domlik," his gospel story about fathers and daughters.

CHIUNG HWANG CHEN is a native of Taiwan. She received a Ph.D. in mass communication from the University of Iowa in 2000 and is currently an associate professor of communication and international cultural studies at Brigham Young University Hawaii. Her research areas include journalistic narrative, media and religion in Taiwan, Mormonism and media, and media/cultural studies in the Chinese nations and the Pacific regions. She and her husband, Ethan Yorgason, and their two daughters, live in Laie, Hawaii.

TARA WASHBURN CHRISTENSEN and her husband, Cory, do not plan to drive long-haul trucks forever. Eventually, they would both like to return to college and earn four-year degrees. Sooner or later, they plan to spend time in Italy, where Tara hopes to enter a music conservatory to train her voice. In the meantime, she sometimes sings opera while driving their eighteen-wheeler.

KEN DRIGGS is a career criminal defense lawyer living in Atlanta, Georgia. He has published numerous articles on the legal aspects of Mormon history, on fundamentalist Mormons, and about criminal defense work. He is also the author of *Evil Among Us: The Texas Mormon Missionary Murders* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000).

JOSHUA FOSTER, an Idaho native, currently attends the University of Arizona's creative writing program. His work has recently appeared in *Idaho Magazine*, *Black Rock & Sage*, and *Word Riot*, among others. He is a 2006 graduate of BYU-Idaho. "The Newlyweds" was first published on *Dialogue Paperless* as E-Paper #5, April 14, 2007 (<http://www.dialoguejournal.com/content>).

B. CARMON HARDY, after more than four decades of teaching American constitutional and intellectual history, is now professor emeritus at California State University, Fullerton. His wife is Kamillia M. Hardy. They have five children,

seven grandchildren, and a compounding flock of great-grandchildren. Carmon and Kamillia reside in Orange, California.

MELISSA MCQUARRIE has a master's degree in English from Brigham Young University (1989) and is a writer living in Provo with her husband and four children. She recently visited Australia after a thirty-year absence and was happy to discover that Australia is still just as beautiful as she remembered.

KIM B. ÖSTMAN is a doctoral student of comparative religion at Åbo Akademi University, Finland, focusing on the relationship between Mormonism and Finnish society. He is a doctoral student in the field of radio-frequency microelectronics, works as a researcher at Tampere University of Technology, Finland, and is one of the founders of the European Mormon Studies Association (EMSA). He presented the original version of this paper at the Joseph Smith and Mormonism Symposium, University of Turku, Finland, February 2, 2006. An expanded version was published as "Mormonismmin tutkimus Suomessa: Kirjallisuutta, tutkimusideoita ja lähteitä" in the online Finnish comparative religion journal *Uskonnontutkija* [Researcher of Religion] 1, no. 2 (2006), <http://www.uskonnontutkija.fi>. The present article is a further updated version.

STEVEN L. PECK is an evolutionary ecologist and associate professor in the Department of Biology at Brigham Young University. He received his Ph.D. in biomathematics from North Carolina State University and his M.S. in environmental biostatistics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He and his wife, Lori, have five children and live in Pleasant Grove, Utah.

ROBERT A. REES is a former editor of *Dialogue*. A specialist in American literature, he has taught at various universities and published scholarly works on American literature and on the Mormon experience. He is the editor of *Proving Contraries: A Collection of Writings in Honor of Eugene England* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005) and, with Eugene England, *The Reader's Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008).

KRISTA H. RICHARDSON is a freelance writer with degrees from Brigham Young University (B.A.) and University of Washington (MFA). Her poems have appeared in *Poetry Northwest* and the *Seattle Review*. She currently lives in Los Angeles with her husband, Bim, and daughter Allyn.

ANITA TANNER was raised on a Wyoming dairy farm, attended Brigham Young University, raised six children in Utah and Colorado, and lost her husband to cancer. She now lives in Boise, Idaho, where she serves as ward Relief Society president, reads and writes, meditates with her Buddhist friend, and still seeks for the meaning of it all.

ANNETTE WEED is a writer and mother living in Holladay, Utah. Her work has also appeared in *Sunstone*.

Meeting Awards for 2007

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Cetti Cherniak, "The Theology of Desire, Parts I and II"
Spring and Summer issues, \$300 award

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Winter issue, \$100 award

REVIEW

R. John Williams, “Remembering Gene and His Generation, a review of *Proving Contraries: A Collection of Writings in Honor of Eugene England*”

Spring issue, \$100 award

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Brian Kershisnik

Brian Kershisnik lives with his wife, Suzanne, and three children in Kanosh, Utah. The son of a petroleum geologist, he grew up in Angola, Thailand, Texas, and Pakistan. After serving a mission in Denmark, he took a bachelor's degree in painting at BYU and a graduate degree in printmaking at the University of Texas in Austin. His paintings have been featured at numerous solo and group exhibitions, and images of them have been reproduced in numerous books and catalogs. Kershisnik has himself created a notable anthology of his own paintings, *Painting from Life*, published in 2002 by Guild Publishing of Madison, Wisconsin.

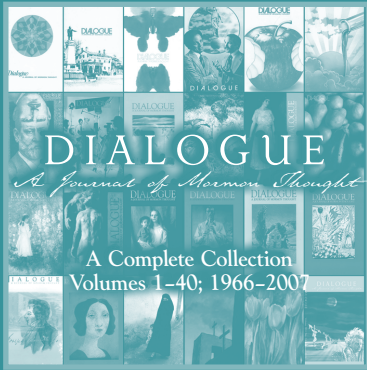
Kershisnik's paintings seem simple and whimsical—a few subjects in unadorned settings, sometimes caught in puzzling attitudes of dance or incongruous gesture. Their simplicity is deceiving. Their simple figures and sparse settings evoke a sense of the surreal and of wakeful dreams. They are replete with indeterminate suggestion, stirring deep emotion and taking on a mysterious and subliminal symbolism.

Many of Kershisnik's paintings address themselves to no particular culture or country. Yet Latter-day Saints often find a reflection of their faith in them. Of particular note is *Nativity*, a very large painting composed of life-size figures, which renders the birth of Christ in a pure LDS idiom. In it, an exhausted Mary holds the just-born Jesus to a breast. Two midwives kneel beside her, their hands still bloody from assisting at the birth. Behind Mary kneels a half-despairing Joseph, drained of energy by the cosmic responsibility suddenly thrust upon his shoulders. Crowding eagerly around is a multitude of supernatural persons clothed in radiant white—angelic, preexistent spirits of the sort in which Mormons believe. Kershisnik understands his faith and knows how to make it visible. To learn more about him and his remarkable art, visit his website at <http://www.kershisnik.com>.

Front cover: *Woman with Infant Flying*, oil on canvas, 138 x 108 inches, 2007.

Back cover: *Fall Coming like Three Sisters*, oil on canvas, 76 x 48 inches, 2006. Courtesy Val and Alice Hemming.

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