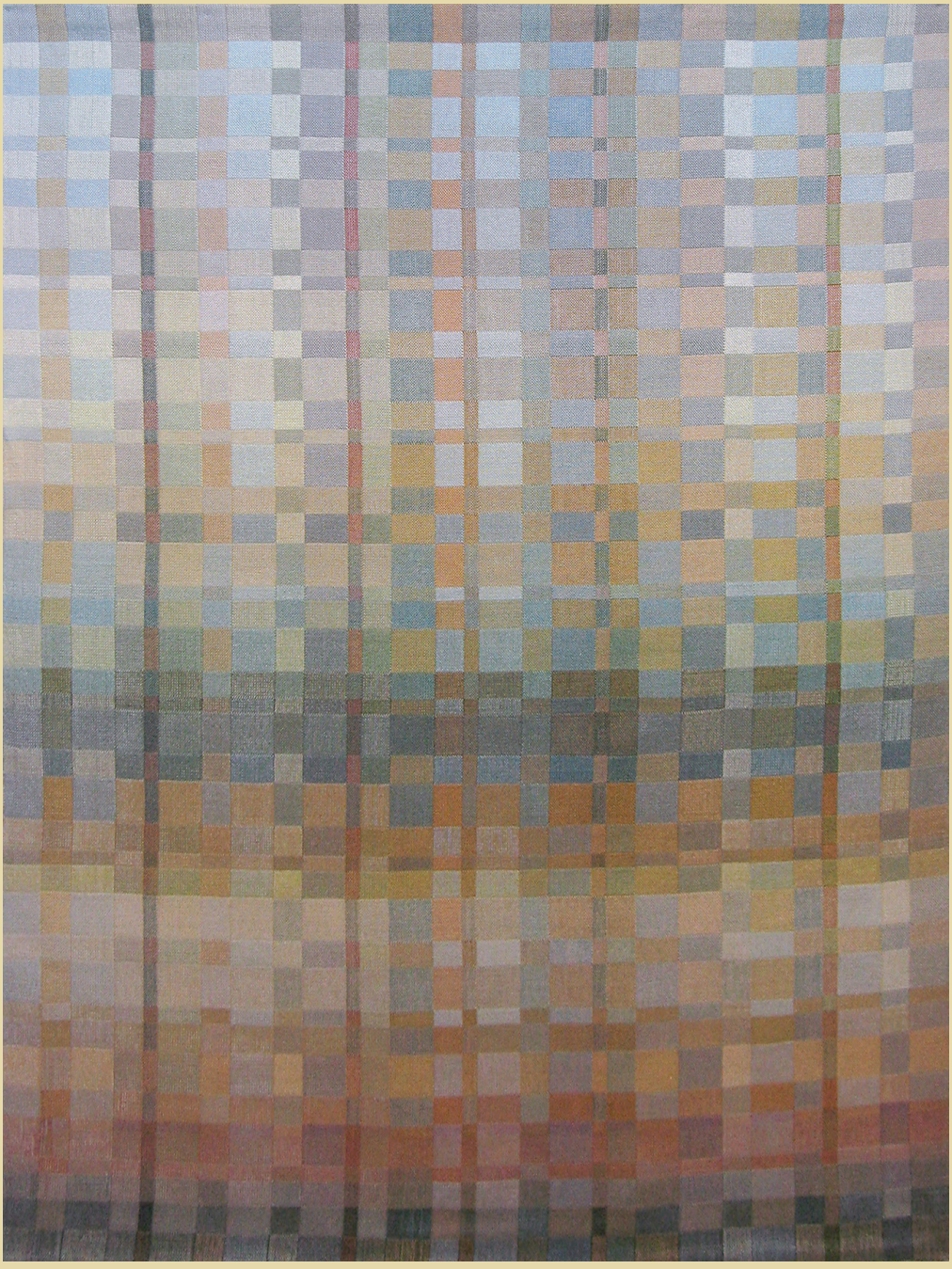
DIALOGUE

A Journal of Mormon Thought



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A Journal of Mormon Thought

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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post-Manifesto Marriages

In *Dialogue's* "Letters to the Editor" (40, no. 4 [Winter 2007]: v), David Timmins is the most recent example of authors and reviewers who misrepresent what they claim to have found or not found in one of my publications. Timmins writes: "Neither [Frank J.] Cannon nor his book *Under the Prophet in Utah* (1909; rpt. Boston: C. M. Clark Co., 1911), are cited in either Quinn's or Savages's articles."

The article in question is my "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904," (*Dialogue,* 18, no. 1 [Spring 1985]: 9–105), which Timmins cites as the first sentence of his letter. The text of my article, page 40, referred to "George Q. Cannon, [and] his son Frank . . . " Associated with that reference was footnote 136, page 40, whose fourth line began: "Frank J. Cannon wrote . . ." (citing Cannon's book and its co-author Harvey J. O'Higgins). This footnote 136 then devoted fifteen lines to discussing what Cannon said and his accuracy.

I don't know whether Timmins is an example of reading only part of my publication he criticizes, or of carelessly skimming every page of it, or of willfully making misstatements, but the result is the same: a distortion of my published text.

Timmins claims: "Frank J. Cannon . . . wrote all anyone ever needed to know about the Church's continued practice of plural marriage, not only in Canada and Mexico, but here in the United States" (v). His letter also accepts Frank J. "Cannon's assertion that it was Joseph F. Smith and his Smith kin who insisted on reinterpreting the Woodruff Manifesto as not affecting continued, underground plural marriages" (vi).

If Timmins *actually reads* my full article, especially its discussion of George Q. Cannon on pages 75–82, he will find the documentation for my statements: "From 1892 until President Snow stopped sending U.S. residents to Mexico for polygamous ceremonies in 1898, George Q. Cannon signed most of these letters" of authorization (76); that Counselor Cannon signed a recommend for a plural marriage to be performed in the Logan Temple in 1894 (77); that Frank J. Cannon himself unsuccessfully asked his father for permission to marry polygamously in 1894, which his mother Sarah Jenne opposed, asking instead that Abraham H. Cannon marry the new wife, the fiancée of Abraham's deceased brother (77–78); that in 1898 Counselor Cannon "commissioned Apostle Matthias F. Cowley to perform plural marriages in the United States for upper echelons of Church leadership without special recommends" (80); that, "until his death, Cannon continued sending prominent Church leaders to Cowley for polygamous marriages" (81)—which included two of his sons and two of his nephews (Angus J., Hugh J., George M. and Lewis M. Cannon—all married to post-Manifesto plural wives by Cowley). Moreover, to President Lorenzo Snow and the apostles in the Salt Lake Temple in 1900, Counselor Cannon expressed his intention of marrying a new polygamous wife so that he could

father a child by her (82). *None* of these facts were provided by Frank J. Cannon, who was shielding his father, mother, brothers, and cousins from the complicity he instead dumped solely on "Joseph F. Smith and his Smith kin." Despite all evidence to the contrary, Timmins prefers to recommend Frank J.'s dishonest "history" of post-Manifesto plural marriage to readers in 2007!

I've often thought of writing an essay with a title like "Why I Don't Recognize My Publications As Described by Their Critics." If I ever write such an article, the above example of David Timmins will be in it.

D. Michael Quinn
Rancho Cucamonga, California

Scriptural Rebuttal to Muhlestein

I would like to make several comments regarding a small segment of Randolph G. Muhlestein's erudite and well-researched article ("The Case against Same Sex Marriage," 40, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 1–39), followed by some personal observations. Many aspects of his studies, theories, reports, and "arguments" (constitutional, scriptural, and sociological) could be discussed, but at this time I would like to focus on his premise (or scriptural argument) of God's loathing (one of the dictionary definitions of "abomination") of homosexuality. Muhlestein states in the third part of his argument that "for Christians who interpret the Bible literally" (5) God has declared it to be an "abomination" (6). He then goes on to quote various scriptures to support this determinant factor. Among these are Leviticus 18:22: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination": Leviticus 20:13: "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them"; and Galatians 6:7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked" (referring to sins of the flesh). These scriptures are used by many LDS people to disparage and judge our homosexual brothers and sisters.

I would like to move forward to the Book of Mormon where God also chastised the Nephites severely for their "crimes" (Jac. 2:9); "many hearts died pierced with deep wounds" (Jac. 2:35); "filthy before God" (Jac. 3:3); "fornication and lasciviousness" (Jac. 3:12); and "breaking the tender hearts of their wives" (Jac. 2:35). To Him this behavior was an "abomination." In fact, that very word is used three times in Jacob 2 and 3. Webster's definition of "abomination" is: "disgust; loathing." These strong admonitions were given to the Nephites in regard to their adultery and polygamy: "they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none, and there should not be whoredoms committed among them" (Jac. 3:5); "Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which was abominable [disgusting and loathsome] before me, saith the Lord" (Jac. 2:24).

The transitional phrase is the following: "For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; *otherwise* they shall hearken unto these things" (Jac. 2:30; emphasis mine).

Jumping from there to Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants, we

learn this former "abomination" is no longer disgusting and loathsome but a commandment! Polygamy is no longer sinful, but a prerequisite of eternal life: "For behold I reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant; and if ye abide *not* that covenant then ye are *damned*" (D&C 132:4; emphasis mine). In Doctrine and Covenants 132:8, God also states: "David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants from the beginning of creation until this time, and *in nothing did they sin* save in those things which they received not of me" (emphasis mine).

We see from the above that the Lord can and does change His mind (if He needs seed raised unto Him) on what is abominable and what isn't, thus overriding scriptural prohibitions with new revelation. As an aside, it's interesting to note that many wives living in polygamy did not bear children. Therefore to "prove" that homosexuality is a "sin" based on scriptures is controversial at best when we consider the history of polygamy.

We can discuss the various theories, studies, etc., of why a male or female is homosexual at length; but until we ourselves experience the agony, terror, shame, and humiliation of a loved one who is living in denial, detachment, self-delusion, and repression, we can never truly *know* the darkness of his or her despair. There are *no* words discovered or spoken that can describe these feelings, for they are deep within the cellular make-up of the body and cannot readily be retrieved and brought into the open so they can be weighed, judged, and analyzed in a religious or scientific forum. These choice, intuitive, loving, and empathic people are so tender that they often cannot withstand the inner turmoil and daily battles. They often develop various addictions (to numb their feelings) and can even become so desperate that they take their own lives.

Many of them cannot accept or own their homosexuality, so they continue to dissociate from that part and live in denial—a life of facade, inauthenticity, and self-blame. How can their supposedly flawed, disregarded, and disgusting selves ever be integrated into one incredible whole human being? This can only occur through unconditional love, acceptance, and Christ-centered compassion. And, no, they did not choose this! Why would one deliberately put such an albatross around one's neck? Are they paranoid enough that they enjoy the taunts, the name-calling, the physical, psychological, and spiritual abuse? Why would they "split" from these parts, if they were so pleasurable?

It is time *now* (if not now, when?), that we as parents, grandparents, siblings, and friends stand up for the "tender mercies" of our Savior when he said: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:1–2). 2 Nephi 26:33 states: "He inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of this goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and gentile."

Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of

When Bad Things Happen to Good People, has written an endorsement statement that appears on the cover of Carol Lynn Pearson's new book of homosexual case studies, *No More Goodbyes* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Pivot Point Books, 2007): "Thank you, Carol Lynn Pearson, for reminding us that the task of any religion is to teach us whom we're required to love, not whom we're entitled to hate."

Christine Burton
Holladay, Utah

The Only Reason to Marry?

In the discussion about same-sex marriage in the Fall 2007 issue of *Dialogue* (Randolph Muhlestein, "The Case against Same-Sex Marriage," 40, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 1–39), I felt that one really obvious argument was lacking. Muhlestein begins his case by quoting the First Presidency position against same-sex marriage and their insistence that it is acceptable for a gay person to experience "great loneliness" and remain isolated and celibate his whole life because the alternative of same-sex marriage would preclude heterosexual marriage and the procreation of children. The abundantly clear point to be made is that celibacy also precludes heterosexual marriage and the procreation of children, so how is it any more "essential to the Creator's plan"? Obviously, someone who is celibate is not pursuing a heterosexual marriage and is certainly not procreating.

The supposed lack of procreation seems like a red herring in any case. Wouldn't adoption be as viable an option for same-sex couples as it is currently for infertile couples? Don't we believe that sealing in the temple makes these children as legitimately ours as if we had borne them personally? It seems to me that the entire argument against same-sex marriage is based on a priori assumptions and double standards. Those involved in honest discussions of the subject need to be bigger than that.

Johnny Townsend
Seattle, Washington

Left Me Baffled

The logic used by Randolph Muhlestein in his article, "The Case against Same-Sex Marriage" (40, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 1–39), left me baffled. Heterosexuals, based on his statistics, avoid marriage at an alarming rate, opting for the single life that society offers homosexuals. And homosexuals, he points out, are reaching for the married life reserved for heterosexuals. Then Muhlestein insisted that untold thousands of heterosexuals would become homosexuals if society mistakenly allowed homosexuals the opportunity to marry. But Muhlestein convinced me through all those studies and statistics that it's *heterosexuals* who clearly want less and less to do with marriage. So why would they go to the trouble of becoming homosexuals to get what they don't want?

The only explanation is that men want less and less to be married because their only option for partners is females. And why do women avoid marriage? Well, again, it's because they have such a narrow option for a partner. It must be a guy. Based on that logic, we can reach Muhlestein's goal of increasing interest in marriage by let-

ting men marry men and women marry women. Or did I miss something?

One other unrelated point: Muhlestein divided children into legitimate and illegitimate varieties. All children are legitimate. Last Sunday I held a baby on my lap whose parents were not married. And a grandmother bottle-fed another baby whose parents were unwed. Both of those children seemed as truly legitimate as the other children in church. We should avoid labeling any child, especially when that label refers to parental activity and/or is derogatory.

Gary Rummler
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

What Is Dialogue*'s Mission?*

I appreciated reading Richard Ward's "*Dialogue* Reconsidered" letter (*Dialogue* 40, No. 3 [Fall 2007]: v–vi). My guess is that the sentiments Ward expresses are shared by a number of former *Dialogue* readers. Certainly, they are similar to those expressed to me when I was *Dialogue*'s editor and in subsequent years as I have had occasion to talk to former subscribers.

What has surprised me with the majority of such expressions is that they seem not to understand the mission of *Dialogue* even though it has been stated clearly in every issue since the second number of volume 1 (Summer 1966): "Dialogue is an independent quarterly established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with the larger stream of world religious thought and with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage." Honestly and openly fulfilling this mission invariably means publishing articles and essays (as well as fiction and poetry) that at times are controversial and even potentially disturbing to some readers, not because an editor deliberately chooses this outcome but because he or she cannot avoid it.

Ward makes a distinction between those articles that are acceptable and those that are not by whether they are "friendly" (a term he borrows from the Redd-Peterson solicitation letter). He uses this word five times in his short letter. By "friendly" I assume Ward means affirming, reinforcing, validating, or, as he puts it, "uplifting and supportive of the cornerstones of my faith," which he then goes on to identify as the foundational principles of the Restored Church. The problem that I faced as editor of *Dialogue*, and which I assume has faced all previous and subsequent editors, is that what one person finds "friendly" may in fact be perceived as "unfriendly" by others.

Undoubtedly, some readers of the special issue on blacks and the priesthood (*Dialogue* 8, no. 1) found Lester Bush's profoundly important article "unfriendly" because it challenged long and deeply held beliefs about the inferiority of blacks and about the worthiness of black men to hold the priesthood. Others, who had experienced deep anguish in attempting to reconcile the Church's teaching with what they understood of the teachings of Jesus, may have experienced the article as the first "friendly" article they had read on the subject. Choosing an example

closer to the present, the fall 2007 issue had articles on same-sex marriage with diametrically opposing points of view. Undoubtedly, some readers who found Randolph G. Muhlestein's article on this subject convincing found Wayne Schow's "unfriendly" or even disturbing, and vice versa. Any article may, in fact, be a Rorschach test of each reader's faith and reason.

Reviewing forty years of *Dialogue*, I find it hard to see how the journal (or any scholarly journal for that matter) could make editorial decisions based on the principle of friendliness, knowing that many of the issues facing any religious community are complex, ambiguous, and even divisive. That is why *dialogue* itself is so essential. It is in the give and take, the sifting and winnowing, the speaking and listening, the pondering and praying that we both seek and, hopefully, find the truth, even if our finding is at times temporary and tenuous.

Ward wants articles that are "enlightening," but it is the very process, even more than the end product, that some find most enlightening. It is what, I believe, God intends when he invites us, "Come, let us reason together." I have found some of the articles that I disagreed with to be among the most enlightening and some of those that challenged my faith to be among the ones that most strengthened my faith—not because I accepted their arguments but precisely because they caused me to be more introspective and more thoughtful about my own beliefs. As C. S. Lewis states, "If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end; if you look for comfort, you will get neither comfort nor truth."

I appreciate the open, honest, and thoughtful spirit of Ward's letter and welcome him back into the fold. I hope he, as well as other previously disaffected readers, keep an open mind and heart about *Dialogue* and support the vital role it is playing in our religion and culture.

Robert A. Rees
Brookdale, California

Patrick Mason Regretfully Resigns

Editor's note: This former board member has stated the purposes of Dialogue *so eloquently in his letter of resignation that we have asked his permission to publish it.*

With great regret I am announcing my resignation from the board of directors of Dialogue Foundation. When I accepted my current job at the American University in Cairo, I knew that my travel back to the United States would be limited, which would thus hamper my ability to attend most *Dialogue* board meetings. I was hoping that I could continue to function in my position, but it has become increasingly apparent to me that some things are very difficult to do transcontinentally, despite the wonders of modern technology. Being an active member on a working board for an organization that deserves genuine commitment is one of them. It is precisely because I value *Dialogue* and the work of the board so much that I feel I should pass the torch to someone who can be more active in the role.

I was honored to be asked to serve on the board and very much enjoyed the collegiality of our correspondence and gatherings. I often left our board

meetings inspired, sometimes by the substance of our discussions but always by the quality of the people around the table. I also have come to appreciate in a fuller way the historical significance and continuing importance that *Dialogue* plays for Mormon studies and for many thousands of people trying to live lives of thoughtful faith in the modern world. In an era in which religion is oftentimes either pilloried by the skeptical or manipulated by the overzealous, it is essential to have people, institutions, and forums in which religion can be critically examined but also treated with respectful and faithful understanding.

In my mind, *Dialogue* plays just such a role, and it has been my privilege to be formally associated with it these past couple of years. I will continue to support the journal and the foundation in whatever way I can.

Patrick Q. Mason
Cairo, Egypt

Dialogue *in Milan*

I am writing from Milan, Italy, where I have lived all my life. I appreciate *Dialogue* very much indeed. I am forty-four years old and have been a member of the LDS Church since 1995. I am a university graduate with two emphases, modern literature and philosophy. I like to read a lot on all topics but especially on sociology, anthropology, theology, and comparative religion.

What I like about your journal is its modern style of discussion and the issues that you confront in it. Here in Italy, according to my long experience and observation, Mormonism is still very traditional and conservative. For lack of anything better, we are forced to read and study the same old books published many years ago. I am not referring, of course, to our holy scriptures; they are in the canon and we find pleasure in reading, praying, studying, and thinking about them because they are the principles and words of our Heavenly Father, Jesus, and the prophets. But for other kinds of reading about our faith, we are disenfranchised from participating in the stimulating debates you have in the United States, as I have discovered in *Dialogue*. This is a contradiction, because the peculiarity of our religion is its belief in ongoing revelation. But here in Italy, it seems to have stopped many years ago. It is as if we are considered like little children still in school.

In Italy we do not have any Mormon journals or magazines except *The Liahona*. That's why I read *Dialogue* with so much pleasure. Please accept my thanks for your great work and your wonderful journal, which I sometimes share with my brothers and sisters during family home evening or during the Sunday lessons.

Thank you very much again and a long life to *Dialogue*!

Paolo Farina
Milan, Italy

Praise

The spring issue (*Dialogue*, 41, no. 1 [Spring 2008]) is a keeper—from the astonishing art to the provocative poetry and satisfying fiction to the challenging academic explorations to my favorites—Todd Compton's interview with one of my most admired friends, dramatist

Tom Rogers, and the wonderful personal voices—all of them inspiring and uplifting as well as mentally involving. These could have appeared in the women's issue as a reminder of the things that matter most—and call to action.

Even the letters are gems.

I hope all our readers will devour and digest all of it.

Mary L. Bradford
Leesburg, Virginia

Notice: Due to press deadlines, we did not have complete caption information for the fine oil portrait of President Hinckley that accompanied the tribute in the summer issue (frontispiece and p. 1). That information is: William Ferrin Whitaker Jr., *Gordon B. Hinckley,* 1995, 40" x 32," oil on canvas. Copyright Intellectual Reserve.

Erratum: The name of Anthony Bentley erroneously appears in an essay by B. Carmon Hardy in the summer 2008 issue. The correct name is Joseph T. Bentley. ("Polygamy, Mormonism, and Me," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 41, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 87.)

A History of *Dialogue*, Part 4: A Tale in Two Cities, 1987–92

Devery S. Anderson

The late 1980s seemed like an ideal time to edit an independent Mormon periodical like *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. Linda and Jack Newell of Salt Lake City were about to finish their five-year tenure as editors, and anyone taking over the job could foresee an efficient and successful operation ahead by just continuing what their predecessors had established. Crucial to that success was maintaining the tradition followed from the beginning that *Dialogue* change hands every five or six years, allowing new blood to provide fresh perspectives and ideas to what was, in actuality, a labor of love. When the Newells stepped down in 1987, they, like their predecessors, looked forward to enjoying the intellectual insights in the journal from a standpoint other than that of sheer exhaustion.

Two teams would continue to manage *Dialogue* in Utah during the decade that followed the Newell editorship. During that time, it seemed that many of the struggles of those early years were truly in the past as subscribers now took it for granted that each issue would appear on schedule. That efficiency may have conveyed the impression that all was well in the Mormon intellectual community, and in many ways it was.

However, it did not take long to discover that intellectuals providing alternate voices remained suspect in the eyes of the Mormon hierarchy, no matter how responsible those voices tried to be. *Dialogue* editors were not seeking Church approval. Yet they were keenly aware that Mormons, who listen to their leaders, often take words of warning well beyond their original intent in ways that could negatively impact the journal. In an organization the size of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, undoubtedly there are many who would appreciate *Dialogue*-type scholarship if they knew where to find it.

Beginning in 1972, with the call of scholar Leonard J. Arrington as official Church historian, LDS leaders began to sanction a more open, academic approach to the writing of its history. The work of Arrington and his team of professionals ushered in an era that came to be dubbed "Camelot," but it wasn't long before some in the Mormon hierarchy became critical of the Arrington team, despite the continued support of Church president Spencer W. Kimball. By 1982, Arrington's team had been transferred to BYU, away from Church archives, and Camelot was over.[1] In 1985, historical documents dealer Mark Hofmann killed two Mormons with homemade bombs in an attempt to conceal the fact that the documents he had peddled to Church leaders and others were nothing but skilled forgeries.[2] For Mormons already sensitive about their Church's past and how to tell that story, this crime and the resulting fallout only made things worse.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, perhaps Church leaders were still feeling the sting of the Hofmann scandal, or maybe it was simply the results of decades of tension between them and independent-minded scholars that finally came to a head. Whatever it was, the LDS Church began to take action—and did it publicly: first in word, during the editorship of the Newells' successors, and later, in deed. For those at *Dialogue* in the five years from 1987 to 1992, remaining independent, dignified, and responsible during a time of official criticism was not easy. To their credit, however, this editorial team managed to do just that.

VI. Transitions, 1987–89

> *I believe that the next editors of* Dialogue *must have a strong sense of responsibility to the institution the journal has become and the community it has helped create. They should be as courageous and independent as past editors but perhaps even more evidently perceived as devoted members of the larger LDS community.* —Eugene England to the *Dialogue* Search Committee, March 19, 1987

> *Taking the church as it is today, could any* Dialogue *editor who possesses intellectual courage and independence be seen by the brethren as wholly committed? I think you and I both know the answer is no, by definition, as far as many members and church leaders are concerned. How many years did they keep you out of BYU?* —L. Jackson Newell to Eugene England, March 21, 1987

When Jack and Linda Newell accepted the editorship of *Dialogue* in 1982, they understood that their tenure would last for about five years; and in late 1986, they began the process by which their successor—or successors—would be chosen. In December they announced to readers that a

Ross and Kay Peterson, 2001. Courtesy of the Petersons.

search committee had been formed, co-chaired by Richard J. Cummings and Randall A. Mackey. Several respected *Dialogue* supporters were recruited as part of the committee, and it set a deadline of February 15, 1987, for submitting nominations and applications.[3] It was a process much like the one that had selected the Newells five years earlier and seemed like the most effective way to choose a qualified replacement this time around.

The search committee, although it had to extend the original deadline, met at the Utah State Historical Society on January 23, February 8, March 5, and March 20, 1987. On February 18, Cummings and Mackey mailed letters to several nominated individuals and asked those interested to formally apply for the position.[4] As a result, what began as a brainstormed list of forty-one potential candidates dwindled to a handful of serious possibilities by the fourth meeting. Those who responded to the invitation and applied were Martha Sonntag Bradley, Carlisle Hunsaker, the husband-wife team of Richard and Peggy Sherlock, and Linda Sillitoe. A few others followed after the March 20, meeting: Marvin Hill, Philip Barlow, and F. Ross and Mary Kay Peterson, also husband and wife.[5]

Ross Peterson, a history professor at Utah State University, and director of the Mountain West Center for Regional Studies there, decided to apply at the urging of Levi S. Peterson (no relation), a member of the search committee. Levi was a Weber State University professor then working two days a week at the Utah State University campus, where he served as acting editor of the journal, *Western American Literature*. He came to know Ross, whose office in the History Department was near his. "I was impressed not only by Ross's affability but also by his level-headed quality of intelligence," Levi recalls. As Levi became acquainted with Kay Peterson, he "was similarly impressed by her good nature and acuity of mind."[6] Kay had graduated in American studies at Utah State University four years earlier and concentrated her research in folklore while also doing contract editing. Recognizing in both of them the skills needed to manage *Dialogue*, Levi asked the Petersons to apply for the editorship; and according to Ross, Levi was persistent. "He kept asking and asking."[7]

Ross and Kay discussed the idea at length. "[Kay] was originally reluctant because she had not worked for awhile and had not been active in official organizations," recalls Ross. "I really wasn't that much either, but we felt good about it."[8] The more they discussed it, the more the enthusiasm grew. "After thoughtful and careful consideration, we have decided to apply for the editorship of *Dialogue*," they wrote to the search committee on March 23, 1987. "We have analyzed the journal and know of its great intellectual and personal service. Dedicated to the continuation of its intent, we feel that we could provide quality leadership for the next few years." In fact, they had already received the assurance of free office space at Utah State University should the committee select them and approve the move seventy-five miles north of Salt Lake City.[9]

Just where to house the journal was a major concern for some of the committee members, however. "It was noted that the current office setting [in Salt Lake City] is available at no cost, that the staff is loyal and efficient, and that a number of staff members would like to continue," noted the minutes of the second meeting of the search committee.[10] Considering the successful operation that the Newell team had established there, it seemed almost a given that the committee would do anything to duplicate it to create a relatively easy transition. On the other hand, some believed strongly that moving *Dialogue* from Salt Lake City, or even from the state of Utah, where it would be less visible to leaders at Church headquarters, was a necessity for preservation. "I think that *Dialogue* needs to leave

Utah, but I am hard put to come up with a viable place for it to go," wrote one supporter. "Provo might very well mean death for *Dialogue* in short order."[11] One important voice was especially concerned. "*Dialogue* has become an institution, one that has great force in people's lives and which now has, therefore, responsibilities we callow young editors did not imagine," wrote Eugene England, one of *Dialogue*'s founders, to the search committee.

> Yet we were also reminded by our reflections that *Dialogue* still faces misunderstanding and opposition, some if it in forms that have become even more intense in recent years. And that is why the choice you make at this time is particularly important. . . . If at all possible, they [the new editors] should be detached from recent controversy and misunderstanding around historical questions and from the fish-bowl exposure and paranoia characteristic of recent relationships between Church authorities and the Utah-based Mormon scholars and journals.[12]

The controversy England alluded to concerned the Mark Hofmann forgeries, which had embarrassed the LDS Church and Mormon historians and made both sides sensitive and defensive about writing Church history. More particularly, concerning *Dialogue*, was the 1985 controversy over the award-winning biography *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* co-authored by Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery. Despite its recognition as the definitive work on the wife of Mormonism's founder, the authors were banned from speaking about Mormon history in official LDS meetings soon after the book was released. Although the ban was lifted after ten months, the episode had been reported in the national media and highlighted tensions between Church leaders and scholars.[13]

England attended the fourth meeting of the committee to establish support for his views and counseled that *Dialogue* adopt "a more balanced editorial approach which would include as many conservative as liberal pieces." Among other suggestions was recruiting renowned historians Richard and Claudia Bushman as the new editors and moving the journal to the East where they lived and taught.[14] After England's presentation, Linda Newell argued that moving the journal from its present location would be a mistake, as the office space was donated and office manager Dan Maryon would be difficult to replace. In response to England's concern over the "fish-bowl" effect, Linda Newell found a change of location unlikely to deflect it. "The moment one assumes the editorship of *Dia-*

logue, one becomes 'suspect,' whether in Salt Lake City or elsewhere, and will inevitably undergo close scrutiny."[15]

With all of these considerations, the committee interviewed a majority of the finalists on March 30 and April 3, 1987: Bradley, the Sherlocks, Hunsaker, Sillitoe, Hill, and Barlow. Because Ross Peterson was traveling at that time, ten members of the committee later gathered on April 13 to meet with him alone (Kay Peterson was in California). During the fifty-minute interview, Ross impressed the committee with his philosophical commitment to *Dialogue*, his experience at fund-raising for the Western Center for Regional Studies, and his willingness to keep the journal in Salt Lake City if that proved to be the best location. "As co-editors, Ross and his wife would not necessarily move the *Dialogue* operations to Logan," noted the summary of that interview. "He is committed to maintaining the *Dialogue* office at its present location in Salt Lake City for at least one year, then to reviewing the situation after that period of time. The operations would not be moved to Logan unless there was good reason for doing so." During the hour-long deliberation, many committee members voiced a preference for the Petersons over the other candidates but those present decided to wait until after they could interview Kay before reaching a final decision.[16]

Committee co-chair Richard Cummings remembers the selection process as "demanding and thorough" and that lengthy discussions about all of the candidates preceded the final report, which was submitted to the *Dialogue* executive committee on April 21, 1987. The report recommended five finalists: Bradley, Sillitoe, Hill, and Ross and Mary Kay Peterson.[17] The executive committee, which made the final decision, considered all candidates and recommendations and finally chose the Petersons as the new co-editors of *Dialogue*. This was not an easy choice among so many able candidates. However, Levi Peterson, who had urged Ross and Kay to apply in the beginning, speculated simply that the executive committee was "impressed by the qualities that had impressed me."[18]

With their selection, the Petersons began preparations to begin their duties as editors on September 1, 1987. For the second time in *Dialogue*'s history, a husband-wife team would manage the journal. If the feelings of outgoing associate editor Lavina Fielding Anderson were correct, *Dialogue*'s future would be just fine: "I have *every* confidence in the new team," she assured a correspondent. "In fact, I hope I'll feel as terrific

about my son's choice of a bride when he decides to get married, as I do about the choice of Ross and Kay for the new editors."[19]

Many of the Petersons' friends, it turned out, failed to share Anderson's enthusiasm—but mainly due to misunderstanding. People in the LDS ward in Logan where Ross and Kay resided and where Ross had once served as a bishop were especially concerned. Some assumed that *Dialogue* was an anti-Mormon publication. "I had people come to me and ask me, 'Is it true that you've left the Church?'" recalled Ross in 1994. "I'd tell them no, of course. I knew it was a source of local rumor." To stop the rumors, the Petersons wrote a letter of explanation regarding *Dialogue* and their new duties with the journal, and sent it to nearly three hundred families. "[Logan] is a smaller town," said Ross, "and everybody knows everybody."[20]

New Faces, Old Office

One task eliminated during the transition was moving the office. Because the Petersons agreed to continue the business end in Salt Lake City for the time being, they made arrangements to continue to share the Cooper-Roberts Architects building, where the Newells had maintained the *Dialogue* office during most of their tenure. As before, rent would be free in exchange for *Dialogue* staff answering phones for the architects. Allen Roberts had originally proposed the arrangements to Cooper, and Cooper was willing to support it.[21] The new team remained grateful as well. "In behalf of *Dialogue* we want to formally thank you for allowing us to share the architects' office," wrote the Petersons to Cooper. "Although we are fairly new to the *Dialogue* staff, it has meant a lot to us to have physical stability during this transition period. It has certainly helped both our operating costs and our visual image. We hope that our presence and help with the phones remains satisfactory. We are literally at your command and are open to any suggestions or recommendations."[22]

Ross and Kay, living in Logan, came to Salt Lake City and worked in the *Dialogue* office roughly twice a week for the first nine months of their editorship. Beginning in the summer of 1988, however, Ross began a one-year sabbatical from Utah State. He and Kay moved to Salt Lake City and into the home of friends who were away serving an LDS mission. Ross taught at the University of Utah for the 1988–89 school year and raised money to match a National Endowment for the Humanities grant

for the Mountain West Center. Of course, a major advantage was that they could now devote more time in the *Dialogue* business office.[23]

Because they maintained operations in Salt Lake City, the Petersons retained members of the Newells' staff who wanted to stay on. Dan Maryon, who had served as managing editor during the last two years of the Newell editorship, continued in that role within the new team. He now had additional duties in helping with editorial decisions and was the staff member in charge of the office most of the time until the Petersons moved to Salt Lake City. This was a challenge for Maryon, who was forced to become more savvy on the phone when there was no editor present to take difficult calls. Sometimes that was upsetting to callers who wanted someone "important." Having a small but growing family, Maryon later accepted a higher paying job at WordPerfect in Provo and stayed on in his paid role at *Dialogue* only until December 1988. After that, he served the journal as an editorial assistant until mid-1989.[24]

G. Kevin Jones, an attorney in Salt Lake City, had worked with the Newells as an editorial assistant and continued on with the Petersons as well, now as an editorial associate. In his new role, he helped with membership drives and represented the journal at various conferences where *Dialogue* had set up a table.[25] Two others, new to the team as editorial associates when the Petersons took over, were Helen Cannon, who taught English at Utah State, and Ray Minkler, also of Logan; both were friends of the Petersons. Cannon's husband, Lawrence (Larry), became part of the staff early in the Peterson term and in 1989 also became an editorial associate. Their jobs included reading submissions and attending editorial staff meetings.[26]

Lavina Fielding Anderson, who had served as associate editor under the Newells, decided to step down at the end of their tenure, and the Petersons asked Susette Fletcher Green to take her place. Green had been assistant associate editor, and later co-associate editor with Anderson during much of the Newell editorship, and learned all aspects of the job from Anderson. She explains: "I had never done editing, but I loved to write, and the work was a good match for me. Lavina sent back loving comments and encouragement with each manuscript, as well as answers to my questions. She taught me everything she knew and took me under her wing." Green was more than happy to accept her new position, and developed an excellent working relationship with the Petersons. "I also responded positively to Ross and Kay's warmth and interest in me and my family. I

trusted the judgment of the search committee and looked forward to five years of working with them."[27] Ross, in summing up Green's performance, later said she was "magnificent" and credits her with keeping the publication on schedule throughout their editorship. "She was almost a slave to deadlines. She had almost zero flexibility, and we had to work around that."[28] New to the business side of the enterprise was Brad Oldroyd, who, through his Pinnacle Management company, arranged for *Dialogue*'s paid staff members who needed medical benefits to join his group health insurance plan—the first time anything like this was offered at *Dialogue*. "That was a helpful benefit since was I out of school and working full-time for *Dialogue*," remembers Maryon. "Dorothy and I had our first child with our second on the way."[29]

Rebecca England, daughter of *Dialogue* co-founder Eugene England, also came on board, first as an editorial assistant working full-time in the office. Her background meant she was very familiar with the journal and felt passionate about it. "My husband, Jordan Kimball, and I come from traditional, conservative Mormon families who have felt comfortable with *Dialogue* on the shelf as a positive rather than a negative influence on our faith in the Church," she wrote one supporter.[30] When Dan Maryon left *Dialogue* the following year, England took over as managing editor.

Linda Thatcher, collections management coordinator at the Utah State Historical Society, had served as the Newells' book review editor and agreed to carry on in the same position with the Peterson team. On the production end, the Petersons also retained the use of Don Henriksen, who specialized in hot-lead typesetting, working in the basement of his home. Henriksen had perfected this art, now made obsolete by desktop publishing, and according to Lavina Fielding Anderson, "he can tell by the rhythm of the matrices of type falling whether he's hit the wrong key or not."[31] Salt Lake City artist Warren Archer, who did the cover designs for each issue under the Newells, continued his work with the journal as well.

The Peterson transition marked a unique moment in *Dialogue*'s history, and that presented challenges. Each of the previous four editorships had lived and worked in different geographic areas: Stanford, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and Salt Lake City. For the first time, the journal not only stayed in the same city as the previous team, but in the same building. In addition, it retained much of its staff. Despite the obvious ad-

vantages of having staff already familiar with their roles, the scenario did create some tension at the office, where Maryon and Rebecca England both worked, often alone. According to Ross, he and Kay often felt like "intruders" in an established operation that they, as the people in charge, were new to.[32] This situation was obviously aggravated by the fact that the Petersons could be at the office only part-time until they began their sabbatical in Salt Lake City.

Maryon, recalling those early tensions in the office years later, has a new perspective. "I remember feeling a fair amount of frustration while the office was in Salt Lake City and the Petersons in Logan," he said in 2004. "I'd say a lot of that was due to my lack of maturity in a work setting. I had never worked in a similar setting and brought a kind of naive self-confidence into it." He remembers that he and England often felt that they were training the Petersons for their role.[33] Ross agrees that the staff felt they knew the job better and recognized their natural possessiveness: "Change is difficult and my guess is they doubted our credentials."[34] Because the Petersons were not in the office much at first, the staff's duties increased.

Maryon also remembers that, during that time, there was confusion among the staff about Kay's role. "I don't think we did much to welcome her as an editor," Maryon says regretfully, "and we could have handled it better." Until the Petersons moved to Salt Lake in the summer of 1988, Maryon and England were accustomed to working on their own much of the time, a situation that contributed to the awkward relationship at first.[35] The Petersons were fully aware of this uneven dynamic; and because of the extra load placed on Maryon, asked business manager Brad Oldroyd to reduce Kay's salary and increase Maryon's by $500 a year. "It is my feeling that Dan is essential to our operation and needs to be rewarded for the extra burden we have imposed by not being here this year."[36]

Despite the differences, however, each side maintained an appreciation for the other. "The Petersons are extremely thoughtful and kind people, and diplomatic to a fault," remembers Maryon. The Petersons, in turn, valued Maryon's work enough that they offered a "generous" pay raise after he received his job offer at WordPerfect, in an attempt to persuade him to stay.[37] "They [Maryon and England] are great people, and the journal's well being was the goal," said Ross in 2006, "and I think we earned their respect."[38]

Until the Petersons moved to Salt Lake City, the team held staff

meetings twice a month, alternating between Salt Lake City and Logan. In Logan, they were held either at the Petersons' house or at the home of Larry and Helen Cannon. "Ross used to joke that we could split the difference and meet at the Flying J in Ogden," remembers Maryon.[39]

First Fruits

Despite any in-house difficulties, the new team did not miss a beat in managing the business needs of the journal. As the staff was shaping up its first issue, they also worked on a year-end Christmas fund-raiser. To increase donations, the Petersons ordered one hundred copies of *Sisters in Spirit*, a collection of essays on Mormon women edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, at a cost of $1,317, or 40 percent off the cover price. Subscribers who donated freely to *Dialogue* received a copy of the book. This method of fund-raising was a common one during the course of the Peterson tenure.[40]

Fund-raising had, in fact, been vital to the long-term health of *Dialogue*; and under the Newells, the journal finally became financially solvent. However, the month after the Petersons began their editorial tenure, the stock market crash of October 19, 1987, took a tremendous toll on the journal's finances, and the Petersons were faced with the burden of rebuilding it.[41] Maintaining a consistent nest egg was not easy. At the time, *Dialogue* had 3,400 subscribers, and the $85,000 that subscriptions brought in each year was the highest source of revenue for the journal; back issue sales brought in around $7,000. The Dialogue Foundation paid out around $55,000 a year in salaries for the paid staff members, and the cost to produce each issue varied from $15,000–$20,000 to typeset, print, bind, and mail to subscribers. Those costs, along with office expenses (supplies, equipment, etc.), meant that a fourth of the operating costs had to be raised from other sources, mainly through donations and fund-raising.[42]

To increase the subscriber base, the Petersons encouraged people to subscribe for longer periods and urged supporters to give gift subscriptions. To spread the word, they, with permission, used the mailing lists of other organizations. "We really had good fund-raising support—key people who cared deeply about the journal," said Ross as he recalls the success of those endeavors.[43] Early on, the new team recruited *Dialogue* representatives who lived in various regions of the United States to try to increase subscribers, because, as the Petersons put it, "our staff has a growing con-

cern about the 'graying' of *Dialogue*. We really need more young people involved as subscribers and writers. The next generation needs to be made aware of the issues of the future." Representatives were sent lists of subscribers in their area and brochures for distribution, and were invited to tell their friends and encourage subscriptions. Although this effort did not continue throughout the entire Peterson tenure, Ross and Kay reported nearly two years later that these representatives had "done a good job of spreading the word."[44]

At the end of 1987 after only a few months' association with *Dialogue* for the Petersons, they were moved at how deeply, for all involved, managing the journal was a labor of love. For that, they felt nothing but gratitude. "Christmas time is always a time of reflection on the important events of the year. Certainly a highlight of 1987 has been our close association with *Dialogue* and our acquaintance and subsequent friendship with you and all the *Dialogue* family," wrote the Petersons to some of their key, yet unpaid staff members. "We appreciate the time, talent and dedication you so willingly give the journal."[45]

All that hard work bore fruit when the Peterson team made its debut to *Dialogue* readers with the spring 1988 issue, mailed to subscribers before the first day of the quarter. Ross and Kay introduced themselves to readers in their essay, "The Road to *Dialogue*: A Continuing Quest," explaining their own journeys in the LDS Church and their vision and goals for the future of the publication.[46] This first issue featured a personal essay by Eugene England, and theological pieces by Margaret and Paul Toscano. It was also rich in Mormon history, poetry, and fiction. Well-balanced and insightful, the issue sent a message that the journal was as relevant as it ever had been.[47] The first thing readers saw as they received each new issue of the journal was the cover design by Warren Archer. "We appreciate your diverse talents—the artistic eye and the irreverent nature," wrote the Petersons to Archer. "Thanks for keeping us all on our toes, and for making *Dialogue* so nice to look at!"[48]

Clearly the Petersons were committed to perpetuating the *Dialogue* legacy with the quality of its content and the beauty of its design. For their part, subscribers seemed happy. After having received the first three issues under the Peterson team by early October 1988, Bruce Lindsay of church-owned KSL-TV was probably not alone when he said that *Dialogue* "is the most welcome publication that arrives in my mailbox. A few weeks after each delivery I begin calling home in the afternoons to ask about the

mail hoping a new *Dialogue* will be there. I'm starting to itch for the Winter edition."[49]

Calling All Scholars

Although the Petersons inherited a healthy operation from the Newells and subscribers still received a quality journal, they became frustrated early on at the lack of good manuscript submissions, and office manager Dan Maryon soon noted that their backlog was "rapidly shrinking." Maryon was clearly disappointed as he wrote one supporter of the situation: "We are really pining away for lack of dazzling, take-your-breath-away essays, fiction, or poetry. Is good writing this hard to come by—or are writers looking for money and fame instead of the inner warmth that comes from contributing to *Dialogue*?"[50] This problem had plagued each editorial team at *Dialogue* at one point or another. Former associate editor Lester Bush, in a letter of advice, reassured the Petersons that "solicitation of manuscripts is absolutely essential to maintaining *Dialogue*'s central role in the intellectual life of Mormonism. Almost every really significant article published while *Dialogue* was in Washington was solicited."[51] The Petersons did what they could through individual contacts; and over the course of their editorship, *Dialogue* sponsored several sessions at the Sunstone symposium, from which they would consider the best articles for publication. Still, they learned that they were dependent on unsolicited submissions for the majority of each issue.[52] Those required an even greater sifting process, as most were rejected. Many came in the form of personal essays, which *Dialogue* had traditionally published; however, many of these submissions had little relevance to a thoughtful, scholarly audience. Other unsolicited manuscripts came from writers who attacked the Church, its leaders, or its history.[53] Because *Dialogue* was a peer-reviewed publication, essays that had potential still had to pass an arduous test. Ross and Kay explained that process to a supporter: "Prior to a manuscript's acceptance, it is reviewed by six staff people and then sent to three outside reviewers. After this process is completed and the evaluations are analyzed, we make a final decision." Ross had used this method with great success when working on scholarly publications in the past.[54]

Sometimes the failure to successfully solicit an article created a lopsidedness that the editors tried hard to correct. One such example was in seeking a response to two articles dealing with Evan Mecham, an active, conservative Mormon who was impeached as governor of Arizona and re-

moved from office in 1988. "After numerous phone calls and letters, we were unsuccessful in getting a pro-Mecham individual to write," wrote the Petersons to a supporter. "They seemed unwilling to participate in a debate that they felt was contrived and destructive. There also seemed to be an unwillingness to put in print what many held to be almost sacred opinions." They hoped that some pro-Mecham letters to the editor would appear to provide the desired balance, but the only one published (spring 1990) was also critical of the former governor.[55]

"*Alternate Voices*"

Another frustration the Peterson team felt in seeking scholars to publish in the journal was one that *Dialogue*'s editors had dealt with since the earliest days of the journal. From the beginning, some of the best minds in Mormonism refused to contribute to *Dialogue* or felt constrained from doing so due to their employment by or position in the LDS Church. Responding to Steve Benson, grandson of then-Church president Ezra Taft Benson about the "official Church attitude about *Dialogue*," Ross wrote: "Church Education people have been asked not to write for us as have BYU religion department faculty members. BYU administrators have the same charge and Institute libraries are advised not to display *Dialogue* or *Sunstone.* Individuals respond to these admonitions in a variety of ways, but there is not total freedom of thought or speech within the ranks of the paid employees of the Church."[56]

The Petersons would soon be reminded of these tensions all over again. The day after Ross wrote his letter to Steve Benson, Apostle Dallin H. Oaks spoke at the Afro-American Tenth Anniversary Symposium, sponsored by the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at BYU, celebrating a decade during which black men had been eligible for ordination to the LDS priesthood. His speech, "For the Blessing of All His Children," became of interest to *Dialogue*, as the Peterson team was planning to publish an issue addressing how the Church had dealt with the racial issue over the last ten years. Ross and Kay wrote Oaks on July 26, asking permission to publish his talk. "There are many ideas that deserve specific exploration, but your talk is an excellent overview," they said.[57] Oaks responded on August 18, but his letter, unfortunately, does not appear in the *Dialogue* correspondence. Yet quoting Oaks's response in a letter to a supporter, the Petersons said Oaks refused to allow *Dialogue* permission to publish his piece, explaining that "he no longer had a 'personal voice,'

only an 'official voice.' If he wrote for *Dialogue*, it would be perceived that he sanctioned what was published."[58] Kay later recalled that Oaks expressed disappointment in his letter that *Dialogue* had published David John Buerger's essay on the history of the Mormon temple endowment and that it had also been awarded a prize.[59] Oaks also made some suggestions regarding the mission statement that appears on the title page of every issue, particularly the sentence: "The views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Mormon Church or of the editors." Oaks apparently suggested that the Church be called by its formal name, since the Petersons replied: "We checked with the original editors and some of the editorial board concerning the use of 'Mormon Church' inside the cover. Their reasoning was that they wanted to include RLDS people. But that still does not work. Others have commented on the odd phrasing. Consequently, we will consummate a change that reflects accuracy."[60] Beginning with the winter 1988 issue, the relevant portion of the statement was changed from "Mormon Church" to the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

Appeasing Oaks on the wording of *Dialogue*'s mission statement may have created a degree of good will between Oaks, a former *Dialogue* editorial board member,[61] and the current editors, but at April general conference, the apostle decided to clarify the relationship between independent outlets for Mormon scholarship and the official Church. Speaking on "Alternate Voices" on April 1, Oaks told the Churchwide audience that "alternate voices are heard in magazines, journals, and newspapers and at lectures, symposia, and conferences," which, to the astute, was an obvious reference to *Dialogue*, *Sunstone*, the Sunstone Symposium, and *Exponent II*, among others. "Members who listen to the voice of the Church need not be on guard against being misled," Oaks assured the Church membership; however there was "no such assurance for what they hear from alternate voices." Oaks may have had his recent *Dialogue* invitation in mind when he added: "Members of the Church are free to participate or to listen to any alternate voices they choose, but Church leaders should avoid official involvement, directly or indirectly." However, the apostle clearly had *Dialogue* in mind when he reiterated what he told the Petersons about the Buerger essay, although he was intentionally vague: "For example, in my view a person who has made covenants in the holy temple would not make his or her influence available to support or promote a source that publishes or discusses the temple ceremonies, even if other

parts of the publication or program are unobjectionable. I would not want my support or my name used to further a public discussion of things I have covenanted to hold sacred."[62]

Although the speech was not a direct call to avoid independent scholarship and thinking, it was clearly one that average Mormons could easily interpret as such. It generated discussion among scholars and intellectuals throughout the Church, and the *Dialogue* office received many letters and phone calls asking about its effects upon the journal. Four months after the speech, Ross and Kay addressed the issue in a letter to long-time *Dialogue* supporter George D. Smith of San Francisco: "To this point we do not feel that the April Conference talks on 'alternative voices' affected us negatively. A number of people felt we should confront Dallin Oaks, but we chose to remain independent. Our feeling is that once we allowed ourselves to be *told* what is and is not acceptable, our independence was compromised. The journal must survive on its own merits and the loyalty of the subscribers."[63]

At least one *Dialogue* staff member did contact Oaks. On April 8, a week after Oaks delivered the speech, Helen Cannon wrote a three-page letter to the apostle, explaining the need for a voice such as *Dialogue* in the church. "As bishop of a student ward here in Logan, my husband was able to save testimonies of several young students by making them aware of such forums for thought and inquiry, and beyond that, by assuring them that it is not wrong to think independently, to weigh evidence, or to listen to divergent views. And for me, the journal has been a lifeline to the Church." Oaks, who had been in South America and Europe, responded on June 1 but did not address any of the issues Cannon raised, because, he explained, Cannon had sent copies of her letter to the Petersons, *Sunstone* editor Elbert Peck, and *Exponent II* editor Susan E. Howe. "I am always a little ambivalent about communications delivered in front of an audience, because I wonder whether the message is intended for the ostensible addressee or for the audience." He did affirm, however, that "I have read [the letter] carefully and I understand and respect your views. In turn, I ask you to consider the fact that I prepare my conference address[es] prayerfully over a prolonged period of time, and I consider that I have only one responsibility and that is to deliver the message that the Lord inspires me to deliver. What people choose to do with these messages is a matter of personal choice for which each person will be accountable, just as I will be accountable for the words I have spoken."[64]

A month later, Ross was able to gauge the fallout from the speech a bit better. Writing another concerned supporter, he observed: "In response to your inquiry regarding renewals following April Conference, our records indicate that renewals after the May issue [of the *Ensign*, containing general conference sermons] were down about ten percent. Most of our subscribers, (two-thirds) renew after Fall and Winter, so it is still too soon to tell. My guess is that about thirty-five more failed to renew in 1989 compared to 1988."[65] It was unknown, of course, just how many of those lapsed subscribers did not renew because of Oaks's general conference talk.

Oaks eventually responded to the issue obliquely in an unsolicited letter to *Dialogue* editorial board member Armand L. Mauss. Mauss had published his own response to Oaks's address in the April 1990 issue of *Sunstone*, entitled "Alternate Voices: The Calling and Its Implications."[66] In a well-balanced essay, Mauss acknowledged the limitations of intellectual inquiry but also argued that independent publications and scholarship had a clearly valuable role in the health of the Mormon community. What seemed to impress Oaks was Mauss's "Decalogue for Dissenters," ten specific principles that Mauss encouraged Mormon intellectuals to abide by in their writings or in their interactions with Church leaders. "You gave some good advice," wrote Oaks to Mauss on July 3, 1990. "Your article is insightful and should be helpful."[67] Unfortunately, Mauss's insights were read by few, in contrast to the Churchwide television audience who heard Oaks's address, with untold thousands reading the published version in the *Ensign* and the Church's international magazines.

The Meg Rampton Munk Award

Much of *Dialogue*'s content through the years had been free of the controversy that sometimes caught the attention of LDS leaders. From the beginning, its editors were committed to diversity, and that included publishing good poetry. Before the Petersons' first issue was released, they had given substantial thought to publishing an annual poetry prize. Margaret Rampton Munk, a well-respected Mormon poet, had died of cancer in 1986 at age forty-five.[68] Having also served on *Dialogue*'s editorial staff under Mary L. Bradford and published numerous poems and essays in the journal, Munk had established a solid place in Mormon arts. The Petersons began talking to Munk's husband, Russell, to discuss the possibility of *Dialogue*'s endowing an annual award in Meg's honor and soon received permission to go forward.[69] By mid-June, they had also discussed

the idea with Munk's parents, former three-term Utah governor Calvin Rampton and Lucy Beth Rampton and secured their approval.[70]

The award was then set up as an annual $300 prize, with the winning poem to be determined by a panel of judges independent of *Dialogue*. "Our *Dialogue* staff wanted it to be of such quality that it would attract the best poetry being written," wrote Ross and Kay to Russell Munk upon the decision.[71] In a letter sent to several supporters chosen by Russell Munk, the Petersons announced that *Dialogue* had set up an endowment where the interest would be rewarded to the prize's recipients by a committee established by *Dialogue* poetry editor Linda Sillitoe: "It is our intent to honor Meg through the continuing publication of new and meaningful poetry in her name while also encouraging young Mormon writers."[72]

The prize was first awarded in 1989, and the winners were announced in the winter issue.[73] It joined *Dialogue*'s other established writing awards, such as the Lowell L. Bennion essay (established under the Newells), and articles recognized as the best in theology and philosophy, contemporary issues, personal essays, and fiction.

Leaving Salt Lake City

The arrangements with Cooper-Roberts Architects would not last long into the Peterson editorship and, in fact, appeared tenuous the entire time their team operated there. Because the firm was expanding, the architects soon decided they needed the space occupied by *Dialogue*. Initially, they had asked that the *Dialogue* team vacate the office by April 1, 1988, and the Petersons and staff began looking hard for new space in the Salt Lake area, hoping to make arrangements similar to those they had enjoyed with Cooper-Roberts. They even looked into sharing space with Signature Books, an independent Mormon publishing house, or Dan Jones and Associates, a market research and public opinion firm. However, the pressure to find such a set-up was temporarily alleviated when Cooper and Roberts put their expansion plans on hold.[74]

By the end of 1988, however, the architects, still feeling the pressure for more space, decided to sell the building and buy a larger one. Therefore, the hunt was on again for a new office for *Dialogue*.[75] Because Ross's sabbatical would soon end, the Petersons decided to relocate the office to Logan where the offer of space on campus still stood. They arranged the move to occur in early June 1989.[76]

The transition was eased by having many current staff members

continue their duties in Salt Lake, where the Dialogue Foundation would keep a phone number and post office box to stay in touch with people unaware of the change.[77] Susette Green supervised the volunteer staff remaining there, and Marilyn White joined the staff as an editorial assistant. Final typing of manuscripts, typesetting, art, and publication would all continue in Salt Lake; business, including finances, subscription renewals, and all manuscript circulation would be handled by the primary office in Logan. Helen and Larry Cannon and Ray Minkler, all living in Logan, remained in their crucial roles as editing assistants.[78]

This move brought to the surface a tension that had been brewing for some time. Dan Maryon, still associated with the journal as an editorial assistant, sent a proposal to members of the *Dialogue* advisory board on May 5, 1989, in which he argued on behalf of himself and Rebecca England that "a complete move would be damaging to the long-term interests of the journal. *Dialogue* has reached a uniquely professional status since its move to Salt Lake City, and the disruption of moving the entire operation again will end many positive changes that have brought the journal to its present status." Because the Petersons lived in Logan, Maryon felt "that there must be a way to keep some kind of continuity and still allow the editors the freedom to work elsewhere." At the center of the proposal was the suggestion that the Dialogue Foundation be given a permanent office in the Salt Lake area with a professional, permanent office staff, mailing address, and executive committee. The executive committee would be responsible for selecting new editors every three to five years. "The essence of my proposal," Maryon wrote, "is that the editor of the journal be allowed to edit; that those who actually print and distribute the journal be qualified in their field and treated professionally; and that a third group oversee both sides of the journal, to prevent excesses or lapses that may otherwise occur, due to inexperience or poor judgment." Maryon asked Eugene England to organize a meeting with the advisory board and the Petersons to discuss the issue.[79]

At about the same time, another sign of discontent in the Salt Lake office manifested itself. Rebecca England, who had been managing editor for five months, sent the Petersons a letter of resignation to be effective on May 17. She explained: "I am convinced that my voice, no matter how reasonable, is not heard and that my work, no matter how competent, is not appreciated anymore. It's time for me and *Dialogue* to go our separate ways."[80] England did not specify the incidents giving rise to these feelings.

In a letter to England's father, Eugene, Ross and Kay acknowledged their difficulty in communicating with Rebecca, yet praised her as having "been an extremely competent and dedicated member of the staff, carrying on the fine England tradition of love for and support of *Dialogue*."[81]

As matters turned out, Maryon's proposal failed to gain support. Linda and Jack Newell, then part of the advisory board, declined to support the proposal, feeling it was "inappropriate and unprofessional" to lead such an effort or to rally support for it.[82] Kevin Jones, always supportive of the Petersons, felt the Logan move should have been effected much sooner and had even encouraged it. "Each editor has their own stamp, and they cannot do it correctly unless it is in their own backyard. Keeping *Dialogue* in Salt Lake City would have kept the old editors' style on it. It needed to be seen as the 'Ross and Kay Show.'"[83]

Although the Petersons were successful in making their move to Logan, there is no question that Rebecca England's resignation and Maryon's reorganization proposal were matters of dismay and regret for them, as is obvious in the gratitude they expressed for the loyalty of Susette Green. "Thank you," they wrote in a letter, "for really too many things to attempt to list, but among the most important are your loyal understanding and support during an intense and trying time, your encouragement that we didn't need to feel incompetent, and your wonderfully capable and totally professional job as associate editor."[84]

Lavina Fielding Anderson, although not a member of the *Dialogue* staff since the Newells' departure, also supported the Petersons in their difficulties, and again it is clear in Kay's response just how difficult their Salt Lake City sojourn had been: "Your common sense, no-nonsense approach to our particular predicament has helped us deal with an otherwise debilitating situation. Ross and I have *Dialogue* first and foremost on our list of concerns at this time in our lives. Though it looked to many like we might fumble the ball, we feel that we have every potential in the world to even win the game. Your vote of confidence is very important to us. Thank you from two grateful friends."[85]

For the Petersons, having the journal's office in Logan also meant that they could avoid the difficult commute to Salt Lake City that they endured during their first nine months as editors, where they could only be in the office part-time. However, there were clearly other important reasons in moving the office, as they learned during their first year and nine months as editors:

> In Salt Lake City, you get involved in a network: there is *Sunstone* and Signature Books nearby, which creates a Mormon rumor mill about things that were going on. We didn't want to become involved in current affairs, and we needed to remember that *Dialogue* was supposed to be a scholarly format with peer review, to take the time to be thoughtful, and try to get a good input on the articles. And so we thought it was better being up in Logan. It was still printed, bound, and sent from Salt Lake City. But there was a touch of independence by being farther away and being able to evaluate everything on its merits, and not being too worried about what others were thinking, or trying to rattle someone else's chain.[86]

A new phase of the Peterson era was about to begin. For the next three years, the Petersons did enjoy that "touch of independence" they needed, but at the same time, they learned on more than one occasion that they were still just a little too close for comfort.

VII: Logan, 1989–92

> *Our people in Logan, at USU, are working very well. They will obtain the experience specific to* Dialogue. *A university provides a reservoir of talented people and they are anxious to contribute to the journal.* —F. Ross and Mary Kay Peterson to Armand L. Mauss, July 11, 1989

> *During the past five years, we, as editors of* Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, *have enjoyed a unique relationship with Utah State University. The opportunity to be part of a campus intellectual community is very important to an independent scholarly journal. USU joins Stanford and UCLA as campus hosts during the journal's twenty-five year history.* —Mary Kay and Ross Peterson to Stanford Cazier, July 30, 1992

At the time the Petersons first decided to apply for the editorship of *Dialogue* in 1987, Stanford Cazier, president of Utah State University, and Blythe Ahlstrom, vice-provost, had offered the journal office space on the campus. When they finally took advantage of the university setting for the journal in 1989, they were able to set up a very effective operation. The new *Dialogue* offices consisted of two rooms in the building that housed the Utah State University Press, and a portion of the garage for storage.[87]

As in Salt Lake City, Kay ran the office, where she put in about thirty hours a week. Ross, back to teaching at Utah State, spent little time at the office but still worked about twenty-five hours a week on *Dialogue* related business—writing letters, responding to questions, attending planning and staff meetings.[88] Although some of the original staff continued to work from Salt Lake City, and the Logan editorial associates, such as the Cannons and Ray Minkler remained in their duties, the office staff

was entirely new. Rather than hire a managing editor as in Salt Lake, the Petersons set up a larger office staff consisting of Laurel Cannon Alder, Lisa Watson, and Lisa Godfrey. Later, Marilyn Hone, Lucia Rhodes, and Laura Chamberlain joined the staff as Alder and Godfrey left. "They were talented and knew computers inside and out," recalls Ross as he reflects back on this group. Together with Kay, they developed mailers, held sales, ran subscription drives, and launched ad campaigns.[89] By late June, Ross reported to Mary Bradford just how well the new operation was functioning. "Our move to Logan has been eventful in that volunteers are coming out of the woodwork and the transition is going well. Susette and Marilyn White are doing a fantastic job of coordination with our Salt Lake City volunteers and business. The fall issue will be out in August and Winter is ahead of schedule."[90] Green says modestly that she and White "were a great team." After Green edited and proofed the accepted manuscripts, she took them to White, who typed, copied, and mailed them. "We became great friends, and I am proud to say that we never missed a deadline." Because staff was divided between Salt Lake City and Logan, the team held most of its planning meetings at a conference room at the Weber County Library in Ogden in order to make the commute fair to both sides. Everyone came fully prepared to discuss manuscripts for consideration. "The group was diverse," Green says, "though none of us had been part of the close-knit Mormon 'intellectual' community that swirled around the Newells. I thought the new perspectives were refreshing, and I felt less intimidated to express my opinions than I did before."[91]

To fully professionalize the operation, the Dialogue Foundation also remodeled the offices, purchased new carpeting, and set up an efficient communication system by making use of the university phone system and on-campus mail thanks to the skills of Marilyn Hone. As a result of it all, Ross says proudly, "We were treated as an important part of the university—another scholarly journal enhances any school's reputation."[92]

A New Look

Most subscribers were aware of, but unaffected by, the change in *Dialogue*'s business office. However, they would forever notice the influence of the Peterson team for other reasons. Before the Newells stepped down in 1987, they, with the help of Gary Gillum and Dan Maryon had launched a project to publish a twenty-year index. Delays resulted in its ap-

pearance in early 1990. Because the Peterson team was publishing on schedule and was determined to keep doing so, the index essentially constituted a fifth issue that year. Because it would be sent free to all subscribers, the added expense would strain the budget. This forced the Petersons to consider some painful changes to maintain the journal's economic health.[93]

During the August 1989 Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, Kevin Jones hosted a *Dialogue* staff meeting at his home. Mary Ann Lush of Publishers Press addressed the group about the financial burden of the index project and demonstrated that the Dialogue Foundation could save money by changing the journal from the 6 5/8 x 10 format it had used for more than twenty years to a 6 x 9 format.[94] By late October, the decision was made. "We have decided to reduce the size of the journal beginning with the spring 1990 issue," wrote Ross and Kay to Levi Peterson. "The decision has not been easy for us to make. It has been on again off again for too long now. It is difficult for most long time subscribers to imagine the journal in any other format, but we cannot rationalize our financial status to accommodate an emotional attachment to size."[95] This move was not a hasty one. In weighing the decision, the Petersons spoke with editors of several journals that had also changed dimensions, and they examined bound copies in libraries.[96] When they tested the savings on the index, the benefits were seen immediately. As that volume appeared, Ross and Kay described their rationale in letters to advisory and editorial board members: "We literally wasted nearly as much paper as we use because of the unnatural size. The [annual] savings are over $10,000 in paper costs alone." About $3,000 in additional savings would be realized in mailing costs. Still smarting from the stock market crash two years earlier and with $50,000 in operating costs still dependent on donations each year, that $13,000 savings was significant.[97]

Despite the economic benefits, there were plenty of early criticisms. Former *Dialogue* editor Mary Bradford wrote a letter of complaint, but her criticisms had more to do with the timing of the size change. The index, printed with the new format, covered volumes one through twenty, all of which were in the original format. "You have published the index in a size that will not bind with the last of the 20 years that it is supposed to be indexing," she wrote. "If you had to change, and I am not convinced of that, you could have at least waited until after the Index was printed so it would match." The new size, she lamented, made the journal look like *BYU Stud-*

ies, and more important, she feared it would send a message that *Dialogue* was struggling.[98] Robert Rees, Bradford's predecessor as editor, had near-identical concerns and added that the new, smaller format would make it much more difficult to publish art. "I might also say that I would have wished that as an advisory editor I had been consulted about this decision rather than informed of it after the fact." Rees ended his letter by encouraging the Petersons to reconsider the decision if it was not too late.[99] Ross and Kay responded to Bradford, Rees, and others critical of the change in a letter written on March 8 explaining that they had "weighed all the arguments, but finally decided to move to the reduced size for both economical and ecological reasons."[100]

The new look premiered with the spring 1990 issue, which carried an announcement to the general readership explaining the reason for the change.[101] As expected, the Petersons experienced some negative reactions from subscribers as well. Some older readers complained that, because printing *Dialogue* on smaller sheets required it to become thicker, they had a hard time holding it comfortably.[102]

The Petersons made the decision to change the journal's size at a time that they also changed to a new computer system, which included computer-based typesetting, a savings over the hot-lead method.[103] Ross informed long-time typesetter Don Henriksen about the change, but Henriksen either did not get or did not understand the message. When he later called Susette Green to ask why she hadn't delivered the manuscripts for the spring issue, she was forced to break the news that the *Dialogue* staff had voted to change to the newer technology. Green "apologized profusely," but Henriksen did not take the news well and "called us every name in the book." When they hung up, Green immediately called Kay at the *Dialogue* office, and Kay in turn had Ross get in touch with Henriksen. Ross eventually smoothed things over by arranging some other typesetting work for him.[104] Ross remembers that the decision "was very hurtful—both to him and to us for having to do that," but it, too, was for the economic health of the journal.[105]

In the end, as the Petersons patiently explained the necessity of the changes, people began to understand. In fact, even before the first issue in the new format was released, Kay Peterson informed Linda Newell: "We are receiving many nice letters in support of this traumatic decision, and we're certain life will go on for both us and *Dialogue* after the size change."[106]

Prove All Things?: The Thomas Stuart Ferguson Essay

The first issue in *Dialogue*'s new format included an important yet controversial essay that epitomized the role of faith, doubt, and the conflicting nature of religious belief and empirical evidence. Stan Larson's "The Odyssey of Thomas Stuart Ferguson" examined the spiritual journey of the one-time Book of Mormon defender, author, and researcher who, before his death in 1983, had lost belief in the historicity of the Mormon scripture that he had spent a lifetime trying to prove. Larson, formerly with the LDS Church Translation Department, had since 1985 been an archivist in the Special Collections Department at the University of Utah's Marriott Library.[107] As a graduate student at BYU, he had prepared the register for the Ferguson papers housed there and was, in the late 1980s, cataloging the primary sources for his paper for the H. Michael Marquardt Collection at the University of Utah, which told a different story of Ferguson. In 1989, Larson presented a version of his essay at the Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City.[108]

Ferguson, a lawyer by profession whose passion for Book of Mormon lands led him to author two popular books and several articles on the subject,[109] was also founder of the New World Archaeology Foundation in 1952, serving as its president until 1961. During the course of his research, he made several trips to Mexico and Mesoamerica, where he believed Book of Mormon events occurred. Perhaps even more significantly, he maintained close contact with Church officials, who provided funds for his self-described "magnificent obsession" to unearth indisputable archaeological proofs of the Book of Mormon and, by extension, the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith.

The discovery of the Book of Abraham papyri in 1967, however, and their translation by renowned Egyptologists failed to demonstrate any relationship with the text contained in the Pearl of Great Price. These discrepancies raised insoluble questions for Ferguson that led to his eventual loss of faith in Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Although he remained active in the Church, found happiness in his involvement, and even continued to bear testimony of the Book of Mormon at LDS firesides, he was matter-of-fact in his dismissal of the text's divine authenticity in his later correspondence. Thus, two Fergusons, and a significant degree of confusion, emerged. Larson's essay establishes Ferguson's loss of faith and his peaceful resolution of being an active though nonbelieving member without the sensationalism of anti-Mormon or apologist spin.[110]

The Petersons' initial concern was that only Larson had access to the crucial sources from Ferguson's later life, as they were still being catalogued. The most critical documents were twenty-two private letters written between 1971 and 1983. Although anti-Mormon critics Jerald and Sandra Tanner had already published information about Ferguson's rejection of the Book of Mormon, it hadn't been evaluated in detail, nor had it been published for a scholarly Mormon audience.[111] As part of the review process, the Peterson team sent the essay to six readers, one of whom was John L. Sorenson, BYU anthropology professor and renowned Book of Mormon defender, whose own book, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, appeared in 1985.[112] The Peterson team also verified the sensitive source material to their satisfaction. "The sources did not lie and Stan was fine to work with," recalls Ross. *Dialogue* did receive pressure from some faculty at BYU not to publish the essay, who felt it might create an obstacle in funding their own research programs and might alter the archeological evidence for the Book of Mormon.[113] Larson, not surprisingly, faced pressure to refrain from telling such a personal story. Ross T. Christensen, of the archaeology department at BYU, urged him to give up the project because "it would stir up trouble." Christensen admitted to Larson that he was so upset about the proposed essay that he had to take antacids to calm his upset stomach.[114]

When the essay appeared, readers weighed in. "We have had some interesting responses to the Ferguson article," wrote the Petersons soon after. "As expected, one son [of Ferguson] is convinced his father died a full believer. Another reader saw the danger of basing faith on physical evidence. A third saw him in a role similar to [Mark] Hofmann. It is a provocative topic which has elicited some introspective responses."[115] The letter to the editor from Ferguson's son, Larry, appeared in the winter 1990 issue. It does not directly address any of the evidence in Larson's piece about his father's doubts but seeks to assure readers that, before his death, the elder Ferguson bore strong testimony to his family, declaring that "the Book of Mormon is exactly what Joseph Smith said it was."[116]

In an unpublished letter to the editor, Larson responded to the younger Ferguson. Larson acknowledged that some had concluded from Thomas Ferguson's contradictory statements that his crisis of faith was merely "a temporary state of questioning and doubt, but that after this troubled period he returned to his former enthusiasm and convictions." However, because Ferguson's letters, written all the way up to his death,

consistently told the same story, Larson concluded that there was no evidence that Ferguson only temporarily lost his faith.[117]

The larger question was the value in telling such a personal story. To some, it could be written off as gossip, serving no purpose. To others, however, it validates the purpose of a journal like *Dialogue*. The essay was not a study of Book of Mormon evidence; it did not advocate a position on the historicity of Mormon scripture. It was a story of one man's journey, yet in another sense, it was much more. Ferguson's journey does show that there can be a peaceful resolution to a crisis of faith when faith cannot be regained; it shows that, unlike the one-dimensional characters so easily portrayed in history when distanced by time, a loss of faith need not be based on sin, evil, or selfish motivation; on the contrary, it shows how tenuous faith can be. It is a testament to the fact that one can find value in a religious culture without necessarily accepting its truth claims and that religion can provide temporal happiness when hopes of eternal happiness no longer remain. Ferguson's struggle was not unique; neither was the embarrassment of family and friends who wanted to preserve a facade and protect the fragile faith of others. Clearly, the role of *Dialogue* in provoking "dialogue" was demonstrated here.

An Unfortunate Episode

The same month that *Dialogue* celebrated its new physical image, the Petersons experienced the most painful experience of their tenure, stemming in large part from the journal's misunderstood public image. In early April 1990, LDS temples throughout the world closed for a week in order to install a modified version of the endowment ceremony, much of which is presented to attendees on film and in tape-recorded instruction. The changes that temple-going Latter-day Saints were surprised, but apparently glad, to see were the removal of gestures representing punishments for revealing portions of the ceremony, the depiction of a Protestant minister as a hireling of Satan, and a pledge by women of obedience to their husbands. Despite the charge to maintain the sacred yet secret nature of the ritual, some Mormons who attended the temple after the revised ceremony was instituted on April 10 talked so enthusiastically about the changes that they soon got the attention of the press; and within a few weeks, reporters began to seek out Mormon as well as non-Mormon critics for comment. The first story, published on April 29, was written by Associated Press reporter Vern Anderson and appeared in the *Salt Lake*

Tribune. Anderson quoted only two Mormons in his article: Ross Peterson and former *Dialogue* managing editor Rebecca England, then associated with the Mormon Women's Forum. In his comments, Ross noted that, "The general consensus is that it's a breath of fresh air." In reference to the deletion of the negatively portrayed Protestant minister, Ross again indicated approval: "You don't put down other churches or imply that they are Satan's children."[118]

Within a week, more stories of the changes, featuring comments by other Mormons, such as Lavina Fielding Anderson, Robert Rees, and Ron Priddis, as well as anti-Mormon critic Sandra Tanner, appeared in the national media.[119]

Church leaders in Salt Lake City were displeased with the comments by Church members and took immediate action. What followed also made its way into the press. On June 2, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that local LDS authorities asked those quoted in the media to come in for discussions. In the article, Robert Rees said that his interview was "amicable," and Lavina Fielding Anderson said hers was "positive." In fact, her temple recommend was renewed in the process.[120]

Like the others, Ross Peterson was called into the office of his stake president to discuss his comments. The Logan Church leader informed Peterson that the Area Presidency over Northern Utah—William H. Bradford, Malcolm H. Jeppson, and Richard P. Lindsay—had requested that Peterson be disciplined by having his temple recommend revoked. According to the stake president, the area presidency wanted Peterson to come to LDS headquarters for an interview with one of them. Peterson agreed and went alone to Salt Lake City on May 10—something he soon decided was a "mistake," where he met with, not one, but all three members of the Area Presidency at the Church Office Building.[121]

Peterson later described the interview's focus, saying it was clearly "an attack on *Dialogue* and every other independent thinking, questioning, scholarly individual or publication." The presidency was adamant that Latter-day Saints should not discuss the temple in *Dialogue* or to the media and in any regard. They expressed particular displeasure about David Buerger's 1987 essay. "They were not deterred by any argument relative to the printed availability of the endowment ceremony or that all who were quoted viewed the historic changes positively," Peterson wrote to George Smith three months later. Bradford then threatened a Church

court (now known as a disciplinary council) should any further discussion of the temple appear "in any form of print media."[122]

Peterson was also shown what he described as a "large file of news articles, scholarly articles, and other material in which I had written or was quoted. Much of it was political, but Church security had done a thorough job on negative issues." If the existence of such a file was not distressing enough, the apparent motive was worse. "There was no attempt to gather any counter-information. To say the least, it was an unpleasant experience." Describing the file later, Peterson said that everything he saw "all described me as an anti-authority person—government or church." During the interview, Ross agreed not to discuss the temple changes any further with the media.[123]

Despite the personal pain the episode caused, Ross and Kay were immediately concerned for the well-being of *Dialogue* and held a meeting the following week with their Logan staff members. They also met with advisors and board members living in Utah. They offered to resign their position as editors if a consensus developed that staying on would be detrimental to *Dialogue*'s independence. During the course of the meetings, however, a decision was reached that Ross and Kay "should stay firm," Ross said, "and not give those challenging me any satisfaction by changing leadership." They also discussed an essay by Margaret Toscano, "Rending the Veil," scheduled to appear in the journal, but which discussed the temple ceremony in such a way that might provoke Bradford's wrath and the threatened Church court. "The timing could not have been worse," Ross explained, and all concerned wanted to avoid any situation that might expose Toscano to attack and Church discipline too. "Would the threat of the co-editor extend to an author?" he wondered. Since Toscano's piece was also set to appear in a forthcoming book she co-authored with her husband, Paul, the essay would still have an outlet. Toscano understood the dilemma but was saddened nonetheless. "In retrospect, it is the toughest decision that has faced us as editors."[124]

Ross still had to deal with what he clearly believed was unwarranted discipline on the part of his Area Presidency, and decided to respond. He first wrote letters to Bradford, Jeppson, and Lindsay, to Gordon B. Hinckley, then first counselor in the First Presidency, and to Apostle Dallin H. Oaks. In his letters, he explained why he spoke with the media and argued why he felt he was being misjudged and unfairly disciplined. Rather than mail the letters, Ross hand-delivered them to their respective

offices in the Church Administration Building and Church Office Building. By Monday, May 29, Ross and Kay reported that friends from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., had called with expressions of support. However, they had not heard (nor would they) from any of those to whom Ross had written.[125]

The Petersons' bishop, also upset by the discipline, encouraged Ross and Kay to formally push the issue through him if nothing had changed by May 31.[126] However, unbeknownst to Ross, others were already at work on his behalf. He soon learned that many of his friends wrote or called General Authorities whom they knew personally and told them of the injustice behind the discipline and the negative file. Then, in early June, someone whom Ross described as "a close personal friend with title" met first with a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and then with a counselor in the First Presidency and appealed to them in the matter. As a result of this effort, Ross was given assurance that the recommend would be restored and that his stake president was sent a letter with instructions to do so. After meeting with his bishop and the stake president, Ross was issued a new temple recommend on June 8. "I now want to put this issue behind me and trust that some good may come from the whole experience," he wrote two weeks later. "Hopefully, some of those in authority will become less arbitrary in their handling of individuals. I have learned that there are authorities who do care."[127]

A concern to Ross and Kay during the ordeal was the possibility of any "fallout effect on our family," explaining that it was "not an easy tightrope to walk."[128] However, reflecting on the episode four and a half years later, Ross found that at home, his support had been the greatest. It was also a moment of innocence lost, in case thirty-three months at the helm of *Dialogue* had not been long enough to pare away all naivete:

> A situation like this where your family knows you, and they also know the Church, then they know what is wrong or right. As a result they were very loyal to [me]. That is very important to me. The other thing that came out of that is the feeling that the organization isn't what it seems—that there are people within the organization who may be trying to advance their own careers. As a result, they can get people caught in the middle of something, who are really innocent, well meaning, and trying to help. But suddenly, that person is viewed as an enemy. That has been the hardest thing for me to deal with—having devoted so much time over the years in Scouting, the Aaronic Priesthood, missionary work, and as a bishop, bishop's counselor, and a high councilman—twice—to somehow be viewed as an en-

> emy to the Church. Then to have [the Area Presidency] try to convince the stake presidency that I was an enemy—people who have known me since I moved to Logan. That was very hard to deal with.[129]

Keeping with Tradition: The Women's Issue

During Ross's ordeal, business at *Dialogue* went on, and the *Dialogue* team was finalizing a special women's issue of the journal, the third published in its history.[130] Kay began the search for papers in February 1989 by placing an announcement in *Exponent II*, with a submission deadline of September 1. She later recalled that planning the issue was not as "orchestrated" as were its predecessors; she simply published the announcements and invited women to contribute.[131] There were pros and cons in publishing theme issues, the Petersons had learned and, in general, wanted to stay away from them. "The advantage of pursuing a theme is that it can help create research and writing," they noted to supporter Dixie Partridge. "Of course, a danger is that readers tire of the theme and are upset that an entire issue is so narrow, when usually [a typical issue] is general and universal." The editorial board, however, felt a women's issue would be greeted with enthusiasm.[132]

The response in terms of submissions was overwhelming. By early March, Mormon feminist Helen Candland Stark, nearly ninety years old, agreed to an interview as the basis for a biographical essay, and Kay sent her a list of questions assembled by Susette Green and Lavina Fielding Anderson.[133] The result was the opening article in the issue, by Anderson, called "A Strenuous Business: The Achievements of Helen Candland Stark." Anderson's work on the issue extended beyond her essay. Green recalls that she (Green) was busy editing the manuscripts for the issue at the time her father was dying of cancer. "I was sitting editing articles when the call came from my mother that he had died, looking at those articles on my lap and going to pieces." She immediately called Anderson, telling her that she could not continue under the circumstances. "In a flash she was at my house. She swooped them from my hands and told me that of course I couldn't think, and I should leave them to her. I've almost never been so grateful."[134]

The published issue included an essay by Stark called "The Good Woman Syndrome," first published in 1976 in *Exponent II*. There was also an essay by Amy L. Bentley on the 1978–81 Alice Louise Reynolds Forum, a feminist lunch group that grew out of the disastrous International

Women's Year conference held in Salt Lake City in 1977.[135] Other topics included women as healers, patriarchy, and domestic violence.[136] A first for *Dialogue* was the inclusion of an eight-page signature in full-color of paintings and sculptures by Mormon women. There was such an abundance of material that three essays were held over and included in the winter issue.[137] The Petersons planned to publish even more later but changed their minds, as they told one author, after they "received a number of letters and phone calls accusing us of 'overkill.'"[138] The women's issue provided the Petersons the opportunity to publicize *Dialogue*, and they sent copies to several newspapers, explained the theme, and asked religion editors to review it.[139]

At least one essay did generate some concern. "Speaking out on Domestic Violence," by Ann Castleton, was a personal story of abuse; and according to Ross, the *Dialogue* office received complaints. One person even came to the office to insist that there was another side to the story.[140] One reader said it was "little more than opportunistic 'ax-grinding' and I am disappointed that the editorial staff failed to see it for what it is." The reader questioned Castleton's motivation in sacrificing the privacy of even her own family to expose her ex-husband. "It was far too personal to be scholarly and the motivation of the author was questionable at best" she said. Ross and Kay responded that they too, had been troubled by these concerns but that their final decision was based on the fact that the author had presented her paper at the 1989 Sunstone Symposium, where over a hundred people were in attendance, and that a tape of the session was available for purchase. More importantly, the prevalence of domestic abuse was such that it needed to be addressed. However, they admitted, "in this case we may have erred."[141]

Overall, however, the response was positive. In a letter to the Petersons, Helen Stark defined the women's issue as "a vindication of the concept that even the life of an ordinary person has its place in the scheme of things."[142] For the Petersons, that said it all.

Dialogue and the Statement on Symposia

Throughout the remainder of the Peterson team's tenure, *Dialogue* continued to publish on schedule, but the editors also focused intently on finances. In May 1991, they wrote Armand Mauss to report that the foundation investment fund was approaching $100,000. "This summer, we are

going to make a giant push for increased subscriptions. By the August editorial board meeting, we hope to have an idea of our purposes."[143]

August, however, turned cold for the Mormon intellectual community as leaders of the LDS Church spoke out against its dangers, a warning reiterated at October general conference. In August, the Sunstone Foundation held its annual symposium in Salt Lake City. The *Salt Lake Tribune* gave it unprecedented news coverage this time, and especially highlighted some of the more controversial presentations. Non-Mormon University of Utah history professor Colleen McDannell presented a paper which discussed the Mormon temple garment (without details) in the larger context of religious symbolism. *Dialogue* staff member Helen Cannon was the respondent. BYU professor David Knowlton discussed terrorism against missionaries in South America; and John Sillito, archivist at Weber State University, presented the story of Richard R. Lyman, LDS apostle excommunicated in 1943.[144]

On August 23, in an unusual move, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve issued a joint "Statement" that criticized presentations given at "recent symposia sponsored and attended by some members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." The statement was printed in Salt Lake City in the *Deseret News* and the *Salt Lake Tribune*.[145] Although none of the presentations noted above were mentioned by name (in fact, neither was Sunstone), the references in the statement were clear. Alluding to McDannell's paper, the brethren "deplore[d] the bad taste and insensitivity of these public discussions of things we hold sacred." Knowlton's essay seemed to be the target of their statement that some facts were "seized upon in such a way as to injure the Church or its members or to jeopardize the effectiveness or safety of our missionaries." As to Sillito's revelations about Apostle Lyman, the Mormon leaders said "there are times when public discussion of sacred or personal matters is inappropriate." The statement advised "faithful members" who participated in the symposium that "there are times when it is better to have the Church without representation than to have implications of Church participation used to promote a program that contains some (though admittedly not all) presentations that result in ridiculing sacred things or injuring the church of Jesus Christ, detracting from its mission, or jeopardizing the well-being of its members."[146]

The *Tribune*, unlike the church-owned *Deseret News*, published reactions to the Statement, which included an apology by *Sunstone* publisher

Daniel Rector and editor Elbert Peck, who expressed regret "if some deliberations at our symposia gave offense or were interpreted as detracting from the mission of the Church." Lowell Bennion, beloved author and Mormon humanitarian, made comments of support, as did others.[147] At October general conference, Apostle Boyd K. Packer mentioned the statement and stressed "the dangers of participating in symposia which concentrate on doctrine and ordinances and measure them by the intellect alone." Apostle Marvin J. Ashton and Seventy Charles Didier spoke similarly.[148]

With such a message and its reinforcement by Church leaders, it is not surprising that *Dialogue* soon felt the sting. Chad Orton, of the Church Historical Department, withdrew a paper from the journal soon after general conference. "Although it is difficult for us to accept the current climate, we respect the decision you have made," the Petersons assured Orton. However, they lamented the larger issue. "It is very difficult for us to be considered either dissidents or enemies."[149] They weren't suffering alone; and that same day they sent a letter of comfort and support to *Sunstone* editor Elbert Peck. "Please remember that during times of difficulty and internal investigations, we are judged by the company we keep. Studies of McCarthyism emphasize the concept of guilt by association. There are times when friends need to be counted and thanked. We count you and we thank you. Be not discouraged or afraid, but take heart in the knowledge that you have friends."[150] Certainly, the Petersons' commitment to independent Mormon scholarship hadn't budged an inch.

The fallout from the situation could have been detrimental to *Dialogue*'s ad campaign, and at first there were signs of trouble. Although they had previously advertised in *BYU Today* without any problem, suddenly its editor, Jim Bell, felt compelled to renege on a verbal agreement to run the latest ad. The Petersons, again finding it "personally and professionally distressful to be considered enemies of the Church," assured Bell that the ads were "very low key and do not include a subscription form. As you might imagine, they are very well conceived."[151] However, in the current climate, it made no difference.

The *BYU Today* pullout and the renewed anti-intellectual climate at Church headquarters motivated the Peterson team to greater aggressiveness in their ad campaign. They created a new concept for the ad and secured space in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, the *Deseret News*, and the LDS magazine *This People*. Each ad showed *Dialogue* subscribers under a catchy headline tying

their occupations to their reason for reading the journal. For example, the headline for an ad featuring firefighter Nancy Avery, of Tucson, Arizona, said "Some *Dialogue* Readers Look for the Burning Issues." Each ad also included a caption by the featured subscriber telling why the journal was important to them; there was also an offer for a free trial issue at the bottom.[152] By December, the office had received requests for around fifty free copies as a direct result of the ad.[153] This greater awareness of the journal did not increase the subscriber base; however, it may have helped it hold firm. Yet in a surprising twist, in the weeks following general conference, the Petersons noted that manuscript submissions rose, especially "from a certain campus in Utah County," which was, of course, a reference to BYU. This was good news, as they reported to long-time supporter Obert C. Tanner. "If part of the strategy is to intimidate authors, it is not working." However, they acknowledged, "potential new subscribers might be frightened away because of the rhetoric. First time renewals are also down due to a timidity about 'sustaining the brethren.'"[154] In early 1992, Ross updated Armand Mauss on the situation: "There is no doubt that some less committed subscribers have not renewed. We will do our best to keep subscriptions up."[155] To persuade subscribers to renew, Ross said that his team would send out up to three reminders, call people, and allow them to renew over the telephone with a credit card. "It was a pretty persistent system, as we didn't want to lose people."[156]

Despite the relatively small difference the statement made to *Dialogue* during the Peterson era, observers see it as a turning point in the Mormon intellectual community. A debate about academic freedom at BYU and faculty participation at Sunstone forced many of the faculty to speak out, including twenty sociology faculty in a memo to BYU president Rex E. Lee, defending participation at the symposium. Eugene England and Edward L. Kimball, of the English Department and J. Reuben Clark Law School respectively, responded to criticisms that the symposium was "unacademic." Although the Church's statement was geared toward Sunstone and deeply affected moderate voices who participated in its symposium in the years ahead, the chilling effect went much deeper. Historian Martha Sonntag Bradley (who would become co-editor of *Dialogue* in 1992) argued that this polarization was "between the Church and any member who might choose to study Mormonism in depth from any academic or professional discipline."[157] If true, *Dialogue* was no safer than

Sunstone. It would be left to future editors to gauge, and then respond to that fallout.

The Best of Times, the Worst of Times

Even before the "Statement on Symposia," the Petersons had experienced all of the frustrations that come with editing an independent Mormon journal, yet over the course of their tenure, they also found it very satisfying and rewarding. On the downside, dealing with the occasional loss of significant articles was always disheartening. For example, Glen Leonard, administrator at the LDS Museum of Church History and Art, had presented a paper as part of a session on Nauvoo at the meeting of the Mormon History Association in Quincy, Illinois, in May 1989. He had considered submitting the paper to *Dialogue* but, in the end, chose to publish elsewhere because of possible repercussions from his supervisors. Two other papers presented at the session by RLDS historian Richard P. Howard and non-Mormon John Hallwas were submitted to *Dialogue*. Ronald K. Esplin, then director of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute at BYU, had presented a paper at the same session and agreed to submit his to *Dialogue*, but would not do it without Leonard's; in fact, he preferred that all four be published together. Leonard's decision doomed them all for *Dialogue.* Despite further pleas, the Petersons had no choice but to accept their loss. "Our concern was that the session be published, but we felt that your paper really fulfilled the philosophical aspirations of *Dialogue*," they wrote in a letter to Leonard. "We held on to our position as long as we could, but the integrity of the articles is more important than who publishes them."[158]

Two months before the Church issued its symposia statement, BYU history professor Carol Cornwall Madsen pulled a paper that had already been "edited and ready to go" because she worried her position at the Smith Institute could be jeopardized. Again, the Petersons were disappointed but understanding. "After a couple of weeks of contemplation, anguish, and concern, we want you to know that we understand the dilemma you face," they assured her.[159] Amid these moments, however, came good news. Richard Cracroft, English professor at BYU and former dean of the College of Humanities there, submitted an essay in 1990, despite once having been told specifically not to publish in *Dialogue*. The article, his first in the journal in nearly twenty years, appeared in 1991.[160]

The Petersons also had to deal with those whom they *chose* not to

publish. Usually a letter of explanation and a word of encouragement would suffice. Now and then, however, the rejection could be devastating. One man lashed out after the Petersons rejected an essay authored by his brother, a former LDS Church educator. "You and your editors and reading board have turned down the best article you have had or will have. Was it too convincing on the competency of the Prophet Joseph, or are you dummies too dumb to understand?" Ross and Kay responded calmly. They acknowledged that the author "was a kind and gentle teacher who devoted his life to compassion and understanding young people." Furthermore, his "statement of faith was beautiful, but is based on faith, not documented research."[161]

Sometimes it was the readers who were angry, and this was equally frustrating to the editors. Michael Fillerup's fictional piece, "The Bowhunter," contained some profanity, which bothered several subscribers. "We are very sorry that you were so upset by the short story in the Winter issue of *Dialogue* that you cancelled your subscription," wrote the Petersons to one subscriber. "We are enclosing the refund you requested."[162] A charter subscriber, who decided not to renew his subscription because most articles require a "PhD in some obscure field to even partially understand," also complained about the language in the short story. The Petersons explained that in publishing the piece they "had reservations, but we also found redeeming value. Fiction is a form allowing expression in avenues that are not those of scholarship." Clearly surprised by these complaints, however, Ross and Kay noted the irony that "our readers do not respond to an attack on Joseph Smith or Ezra Taft Benson, but if a swear word is printed, they go crazy."[163]

Yet many articles were simply relevant to Mormons anywhere along the spectrum. Some of these—often personal, always insightful—came from the panel discussions that *Dialogue* sponsored at the Sunstone Symposium. Each year of their editorship the Petersons published one. There was a panel of Relief Society presidents, and another that assembled workers in the Church's Primary organization. Each talked about their experiences and concerns as they served in their wards. There was a discussion about life in Utah from the perspectives of several converts, and two other panels about the experiences of Mormons married to nonmembers and vice versa.[164]

The Peterson era also saw the first article dealing with AIDS, in which the author, Steven J. Sainsbury, a physician and Mormon bishop,

compared the disease to leprosy, drawing parallels between the blame and emotional suffering victims of both diseases have had to endure. Urging greater understanding, the author states: "To be a leper in Israel or an AIDS patient in Zion merits a condemnation and ostracism that is as reprehensible and harsh as it is, for followers of Christ, inexcusable."[165] This essay was a call for greater compassion and Christ-like love comparable to anything found in the Church's official organs. Many made a difference. "We heard from bishops and stake presidents who asked for copies of an article so that they could use it to help somebody," remembers Ross.

The Petersons often provided words of encouragement themselves. They counseled one Latter-day Saint living in the Netherlands, who had been threatened with Church court action for his vocal criticisms of LDS Church business activities, to "remain active in your ward or branch, pay tithing, live the Word of Wisdom, and serve others. You must bring reform from within. Outside critics lose their objectivity and love for the gospel."[166] Ross believes that, during the five years he and Kay edited *Dialogue*, he wrote 100–120 letters to people who he says were "teetering." He always urged them not to give up on Mormonism. "We wanted them to stay intellectually involved, but we didn't want to destroy their faith." Susette Green praised Ross for helping many people, especially youth, stay in the Church, one of whom was her daughter, Erin. "He called at all kinds of odd times to make sure she was doing as she ought. She loves him dearly to this day," she said in 2006.[167]

Stepping Down

In the fall of 1991, the time had arrived once again to start looking for a new editorial team to take over *Dialogue*'s leadership in the following year. Jack Newell and Lavina Fielding Anderson agreed to lead a new search committee. Over the next five months, several interested candidates applied for the position and provided statements of their proposed editorial philosophy. The search committee, examining all proposals, narrowed the possibilities to a few finalists by early March 1992. After further scrutiny, a new editorial team was selected shortly thereafter. Replacing the Petersons as co-editors of *Dialogue* were BYU history professor Martha Sonntag Bradley and architect Allen D. Roberts. Their selection meant moving the journal back to Salt Lake City, where they would begin their operation on August 1, 1992. The Petersons remained editors officially through the winter 1992 issue as part of the transition. "The new editorial

group is going to bring the energy of youth to the journal," wrote Ross and Kay to Armand Mauss a few weeks after Bradley and Roberts were selected. "We admire the exhaustive organization and planning which went into their proposal. Now on to an effective transition."[168]

In June, the Logan *Herald Journal* featured an article about the Petersons as they were about to complete their tenure with the journal. The Petersons' comments provided some contrast to the negative publicity that the Mormon intellectual community had received over the past few years. "It [their editorship with *Dialogue*] has done nothing other than strengthen my testimony," Ross told the reporter, "and I've become a lot more tolerant of other people's views, especially in Utah." Kay agreed, adding, "I've just always been one who has been comfortable with my testimony, and that has just grown stronger through this. To me, this forum is so important because it helps me realize people have the same struggles I have."[169] During their final months, Ross and Kay also reflected on the benefits of their editorship, and what they found to be the most gratifying aspect. "Somehow it is fitting that one of the very last letters we write as editors of *Dialogue* is to you," wrote Ross and Kay to George Smith. "The most rewarding and lasting aspect of our experience is the expanded circle of friends. The journal's impact is broadened and enhanced because of the loyalty of those who are committed to independent thought."[170]

If the friendships were expanded, certainly those existing ones were strengthened. Ross summarized the relationship that existed with key staff members who had stayed throughout their tenure and provided support during difficult times. "They were great people," Ross said. "They hurt when you hurt, and they were happy when you were happy." Indeed, the staff felt the same way. Helen and Larry Cannon said in 2006 that Ross and Kay worked well together and that "both made important contributions" to the journal: "Ross's professional experience as a historian was important, but his personality was also an essential part of making the journal go, keeping the editorial board on an even keel, allowing a full range of expression of opinions, while having enough humor to keep us from taking ourselves (or outside influences) too seriously." Kevin Jones said in 2004 that "Ross and Kay Peterson are two of the most dedicated, compassionate, caring LDS members ever to edit *Dialogue*. They cared about the church and the community."[171] For Ross, however, "the best thing that happened was being able to work with Kay and to develop a greater appreciation for [her] talents."[172]

The Peterson team had set a goal of increasing the journal's subscriber base to 5,000, and saw it reach a high point of 4,100—higher than any since the late 1960s. Even with all the official negativity from the Church, subscriptions did not drop lower than 3,600. They also increased the number of libraries and universities subscribing to *Dialogue*, which meant that more people had access to the journal than ever before.[173] And by having *Dialogue*'s financial house in order, maintaining an impressively punctual publishing schedule, and preparing their remaining issues so as not to burden the new team, they created a simple, relatively painless transition. According to one of their successors, the journal was in such great shape when the new team took over "that anyone could have taken it and made it fly."[174]

* * *

Before the Petersons were selected as *Dialogue* editors in 1987, Jack Newell made a prediction. "Show me a new editor for *Dialogue* who will not be controversial within a year or two, and I'll show you the end of an institution—the institution we call *Dialogue*."[175] If remaining free of controversy could have been an attainable ideal, no one was better poised to at least try it than the Petersons. Although former *Dialogue* editors Eugene England and Robert Rees later become LDS bishops, Ross was the first to have served in that position prior to his editorship. The Petersons' commitment to Mormonism was beyond dispute, as the friends who later appealed to Church leaders in Ross's behalf in 1990 could attest. The Petersons wanted to manage the journal quietly, away from the rumor mills of Salt Lake City; and their happiest moments at *Dialogue*'s helm were when they were able to do that. During the Peterson editorship, *Dialogue*'s content was less controversial than it had ever been.

However, the Peterson era underscored the lesson that responsible, independent Mormon scholarship would not come without a price. *Dialogue* would remain suspect in the eyes of the official Church, if not for its content, then for its presence. The Petersons' successors, in addition to taking over a journal in good working order, came with the official warnings about "alternate voices," the "Statement on Symposia," and the disciplinary action against Ross Peterson. Although the climate seemed to cool for the time being, the new team knew that being back in Salt Lake City, in the shadow of the Church Office Building, predicted a bumpy ride.

To be continued.

Notes

1. For more on the story of Leonard Arrington's tenure as Church historian, see Davis Bitton, "Ten Years in Camelot: A Personal Memoir," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1983): 9–33, and Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

2. Linda Sillitoe and Allen Roberts, *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988).

3. Linda King Newell and L. Jackson Newell to "Dear Reader," December 1986, in Dialogue Foundation Collection, ACCN 385, Manuscripts Division, Special Collections, University of Utah Marriott Library, Salt Lake City. Unless otherwise noted, all documents quoted are in this collection. Interviews and correspondence to/from Devery Anderson are in his possession. Those initially part of the search committee were Douglas D. Alder, Thomas G. Alexander, Leonard J. Arrington, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Francine Bennion, Lowell L. Bennion, Mary L. Bradford, Richard J. Cummings, Fred C. Esplin, G. Kevin Jones, Randall A. Mackey, Armand L. Mauss, Sterling M. McMurrin, Grethe B. Peterson, Levi S. Peterson, William Smart, George D. Smith, Sharon Lee Swenson, and Linda Thatcher.

4. See various letters from Richard J. Cummings and Randall A. Mackey to nominated individuals, February 18, 1987.

5. "Report of Search Committee," to the *Dialogue* Executive Committee, April 21, 1987.

6. Levi Peterson, email to Devery S. Anderson, September 23, 2003.

7. F. Ross Peterson interview, conducted by Devery S. Anderson, November 29, 1994, Logan, Utah.

8. F. Ross Peterson, email to Devery S. Anderson, August 26, 2006.

9. F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to "Editor, Search Committee," March 23, 1987, *Dialogue* Collection; Ross Peterson to Anderson, August 26, 2006.

10. Report of Search Committee, April 21, 1987.

11. Robert F. Smith, letter to *Dialogue* Search Committee, February 23, 1987, *Dialogue* Collection.

12. Eugene England, letter to members of *Dialogue* editor search committee, March 19, 1987, *Dialogue* Collection.

13. For the story of the controversy over *Mormon Enigma*, see Devery S. Anderson, "A History of *Dialogue*, Part 3: 'Coming of Age' in Utah, 1982–87," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 40–48.

14. Richard Cummings and Randall Mackey, letter to Members of *Dialogue* Search Committee, March 23, 1987, *Dialogue* Collection. Richard Bushman was then teaching history at the University of Delaware. Well respected for his work in American history, as well as Mormon history, he had published his award-winning *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984) just three years earlier. Claudia Lauper Bushman, a founder of the Mormon feminist newspaper, *Exponent II*, was the editor of *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah* (Cambridge, Mass: Emmeline Press Limited, 1976).

15. Linda Newell, quoted in Cummings and Mackey, letter to Search committee, March 23, 1987.

16. "Report of Search Committee," April 21, 1987.

17. Ibid.; Richard J. Cummings email to Devery S. Anderson, September 25, 2003. Members of the executive committee were Jack Newell, Linda Newell, Lavina Fielding Anderson, Allen D. Roberts, Fred C. Esplin, and Randall A. Mackey.

18. Cummings, email to Anderson, September 25, 2003; Levi Peterson, email to Anderson, September 23, 2003.

19. Lavina Fielding Anderson, letter to Louis Midgley, September 21, 1987, F. Ross Peterson *Dialogue* Editorial Correspondence, Mss 252, Special Collections, Utah State University, Logan, Utah. Unlike the papers of all other *Dialogue* editorial teams, the majority of the Peterson correspondence is in the collection housed in Logan. All documents from this collection are hereafter cited as Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

20. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

21. Allen D. Roberts, email to Devery S. Anderson, June 13, 2003.

22. F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Wallace Cooper, November 20, 1987, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

23. Ross Peterson, email to Devery S. Anderson, August 26, 2006.

24. Daniel Maryon, email to Devery S. Anderson, February 21, 2004.

25. G. Kevin Jones, telephone interview with Devery S. Anderson, December 28, 2004.

26. Lawrence and Helen Cannon, email to Devery S. Anderson, December 31, 2006.

27. Susette Fletcher Green, email to Devery S. Anderson, December 3, 2006.

28. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

29. Maryon, email to Anderson, February 21, 2004; Peterson, email to Anderson, August 26, 2006.

30. Rebecca England, letter to Karen Coates, May 6, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

31. Susette Green, email to Devery Anderson, December 3, 2006; "Reflections from Within: A Conversation with Linda King Newell and L. Jackson Newell," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 21.

32. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

33. Maryon, email to Anderson, February 21, 2004.

34. Ross Peterson, email to Anderson, August 26, 2006.

35. Maryon, email to Anderson, February 21, 2004.

36. F. Ross Peterson, letter to Brad Oldroyd, July 7, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

37. Maryon, email to Anderson, February 21, 2004.

38. Ross Peterson, email to Anderson, August 26, 2006.

39. Maryon, email to Anderson, February 21, 2004.

40. Daniel Maryon, letter to Alan Steinberg, October 12, 1987, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence; Ross Peterson interviewed October 29, 1994.

41. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994. This crash, known as "Black Monday," was the largest one-day drop in stock market history, when the Dow Jones Industrial Average went down 508 points. Mark Carlson, "A Brief History of the 1987 Stock Market Crash, with a Discussion of the Federal Reserve Response," http://www.federalreserve.gov/Pubs/feds/2007/200713/200713pap.pdf (accessed October 2007).

42. F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Charles Hawkins, November 30, 1987; F. Ross Peterson, letter to Jeffrey Hardyman, March 30, 1989, both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. In 1989, an unfortunate episode at a major venue affected *Dialogue*'s subscription efforts. Two staff members flew to Washington, D.C., to oversee the *Dialogue* table at the Sunstone Symposium held there on April 7–8. Four boxes of journals were sent through UPS for the staff members to sell at the symposium. The boxes were delivered to an incorrect address, even though the labels were correct. By the time the boxes were delivered to the correct address, the symposium was over. Kay Peterson sent a letter to UPS, explaining that the misdelivery cost *Dialogue* $34.25 in shipping, $476 in plane tickets, and an estimated loss in sales of $800. She requested $1,310.25 reimbursement "for the total loss of this professional opportunity." Unfortunately, as per their shipping guarantee, UPS reimbursed only the shipping charges. Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Director, United Postal Service, April 21, 1989; UPS telephone call to *Dialogue* office, May 3, 1989, undated notes, both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

43. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994. One example of steady support for *Dialogue* came from the Charles Redd Foundation, managed by Hardy Redd. Redd sent a check for $2,000 to the Petersons for "the contribution that you and everyone at *Dialogue* are making toward the intellectual and spiritual climate within and without the church." Hardy Redd, letter to F. Ross and Mary Kay Peterson, February 17, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

44. Ross Peterson, letter to Steve Eccles, May 25, 1988; Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Jon W. Ahlstrom, May 26, 1988; F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Sharyn and Bob Larsen, June 3, 1988; Ross Peterson, letter to Randall Mackey, April 24, 1990, all in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

45. F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letters to Helen Cannon, Brad Oldroyd, Kevin Jones, and Ray Minkler, n.d., Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

46. F. Ross and Mary Kay Peterson, "The Road to *Dialogue*: A Continuing Quest," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 13–18.

47. The table of contents bears this out. See for example, Eugene England, "Easter Weekend"; Margaret Toscano, "Beyond Matriarchy, Beyond Patriarchy"; Paul Toscano, "Beyond Tyranny, Beyond Arrogance"; Mark S. Gustavson, "Scriptural Horror and the Divine Will"; Richard S. and Mary C. Van Wagoner, "Orson Pratt, Jr.: Gifted Son of an Apostle and an Apostate"; Michael W. Homer, "The Judiciary and the Common Law in Utah Territory, 1850–61"; Kenneth C. Driggs, "The Prosecution Begins: Defining Cohabitation in 1885"; Marian Ashby Johnson, "Minerva's Calling"; Gary James Bergera, "What You Leave Behind: Six Years at the MTC"; Terri Zaug, "My Journey with Doubt"; Marcia Flanders Stornetta, "Mothers and Daughters: Parting," and poems by Michael Collings and Kathie Rampton Rockwood.

48. F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Warren Archer, March 11, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

49. Bruce Lindsay, letter to F. Ross Peterson, October 4, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

50. Dan Maryon, letter to Ed Ashment, April 28, 1988; Dan Maryon, letter to Bruce Jorgensen, April 28, 1988, both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

51. Lester Bush, letter to "Editors," July 3, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

52. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Elbert Eugene Peck, May 6, 1991;

Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to J. Michael Cleverly, October 17, 1991, both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

53. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

54. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Todd M. Morley, December 5, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

55. Mary Kay Peterson and F. Ross Peterson, letter to Eduardo Pagan, March 27, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. The articles referred to were published as Karen Coates, "The Holy War Surrounding Evan Mecham," and Alleen Pace Nilsen, "Evan Mecham: Humor in Arizona Politics," both in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22 (Fall 1989): 66–89. The letter to the editor was Joseph A. Walkes Jr., "Shame on Mecham," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 7. For Mecham's own story, see Evan Mecham, *Wrongful Impeachment* (Glendale, Ariz.: Prime News Press, 1999).

56. F. Ross Peterson, letter to Steve Benson, June 7, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

57. F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Dallin H. Oaks, July 26, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. Although the race issue as a theme did not appear in *Dialogue* under the Petersons as originally planned, two essays on the subject appeared in 1990: Jessie L. Embry, "Separate But Equal? Black Branches, Genesis Groups, or Integrated Wards," and Mark L. Grover, "The Mormon Priesthood Revelation and the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple," both in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 11–53.

58. F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Phillip Barlow, July 11, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

59. Mary Kay Peterson, telephone interview by Devery S. Anderson, December 3, 1994, David John Buerger, "The Development of the Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (Winter 1987): 33–76, won the *Dialogue* $300 prize for first place in history in 1987. For the controversy surrounding this essay, see Devery S. Anderson, "A History of *Dialogue*, Part 3," 63–66.

60. F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Dallin H. Oaks, August 25, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Collection.

61. Oaks, a professor of law at the University of Chicago at the time of *Dialogue*'s founding, served three one-year terms on the editorial board from 1966 to 1969. See Devery S. Anderson, "A History of *Dialogue*, Part 1: The Early Years, 1965–71," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 22.

62. Dallin H. Oaks, "Alternate Voices," *Ensign*, May 1989, 28–29. The

talk immediately preceding Oaks's was also critical of intellectuals. Glenn L. Pace, a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, told the Saturday afternoon audience: "One activity which often leads a member to be critical is engaging in inappropriate intellectualism. While it would seem the search for and discovery of truth should be the goal of all Latter-day Saints, it appears some get more satisfaction from trying to discover new uncertainties. I have friends who have literally spent their lives, thus far, trying to nail down every single intellectual loose end rather than accepting the witness of the Spirit and getting on with it." He also criticized the individual who "testif[ies] that he knows the *gospel* is true but believes the *Brethren* are just a little out of touch." Glenn L. Pace "Follow the Prophet," ibid., 26. Two years later, Pace published a version of this talk in his book *Spiritual Plateaus* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), 38–44. Although the Pace speech was harsher in its criticisms, it did not receive the same attention as Oaks's within the intellectual community.

63. F. Ross and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, August 9, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

64. Helen B. Cannon, letter to Dallin H. Oaks, April 8, 1989; Dallin H. Oaks, letter to Helen B. Cannon, June 1, 1989, both in Peterson *Dialogue* correspondence.

65. F. Ross Peterson, letter to Milan D. Smith Jr., September 20, 1989.

66. See Armand L. Mauss, "Alternate Voices: The Calling and Its Implications," *Sunstone* 14 (April 1990): 7–10. Mauss had presented an earlier version of this essay at the 1989 Sunstone Symposium as part of a panel called "'Not Commanded in All Things': Alternate Voices in the Church" (audio cassette SL89–001) and on a panel at the 1989 Northwest Sunstone Symposium, entitled "Alternate Voices: Do We Need Them?" (Session 8), available from Sunstone Education Foundation, 343 N. 300 West, Salt Lake City 84103–1215, or for download at www.sunstoneonline.com.

67. Dallin H. Oaks, letter to Armand L. Mauss, July 3, 1990, Armand L. Mauss Collection, Mss B 1015, Box 6, fd. 7, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

68. In addition to her numerous poems and essays published in *Dialogue*, Munk compiled a collection of her poems which was published shortly after her death as *So Far: Poems by Margaret Rampton Munk* (Bethesda, Md.: Greentree Publishing, 1986).

69. Dan Maryon, letter to Michael R. Collings, March 23, 1988; Mary Kay and F. Ross Peterson, form letter to "Dear Friend," n.d., both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

70. F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Governor Calvin

and Mrs. Lucy Beth Rampton, June 1, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. Calvin L. Rampton (1913–2007), a Democrat, served as Utah's governor from 1965 to 1977.

71. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Russell and Debbie [sic; Debbye] Munk, June 16, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

72. Peterson and Peterson, letter to "Dear Friend," n.d. Linda Sillitoe succeeded Michael R. Collings as poetry editor in 1999.

73. The first winners of the Munk award were two $100 prizes issued to Timothy Liu for "Two Fishermen in Hong Kong," and Karen Marguerite Moloney, "Snowfall at Glenflesk." In time, the endowment fund emptied and all *Dialogue* awards and funding for the various awards came from *Dialogue*'s budget, which eventually totaled $1,950 each year. In 2004, when Levi Peterson's team began its tenure with the journal, new awards were created and new donors secured. Levi S. Peterson, email to Devery S. Anderson, October 27, 2007, and Lori Levinson, email to Levi Peterson and Devery S. Anderson, October 28, 2007.

74. F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, May 11, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

75. Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Reid Grawe, May 24, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

76. Mary Kay and Ross Peterson, letter to Lowell L. Bennion, May 9, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

77. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

78. Peterson and Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, August 9, 1989; Kay and Ross Peterson, letter to Susette Fletcher Green, June 22, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

79. Dan Maryon, letter to Members of the *Dialogue* Advisory Board, May 5, 1989 (with enclosed proposal), Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. Members of the advisory board were then Lowell L. Bennion, Mary L. Bradford, Jack and Linda Newell, Grethe B. Petersen, Robert A. Rees, and George D. Smith.

80. Rebecca England, letter to F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, May 3, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* correspondence.

81. Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Eugene England, May 24, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* correspondence.

82. Jack Newell, email to Devery Anderson, July 31, 2006.

83. Jones, interviewed December 28, 2004.

84. Kay and Ross Peterson, letter to Susette Fletcher Green, May 24, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

85. Kay Peterson, letter to Lavina Fielding Anderson, May 24, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

86. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

87. Ross Peterson, email to Anderson, August 26, 2006.

88. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

89. Ross Peterson, email to Anderson, August 26, 2006. I gathered the names of office staff from *Dialogue* mastheads, fall 1989 through winter 1992.

90. F. Ross Peterson, letter to Mary Bradford, June 22, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

91. Susette Green, email to Anderson, December 3, 2006.

92. Ross Peterson, email to Devery Anderson, August 26, 2006.

93. Ross Peterson, letter to Milan D. Smith Jr., September 20, 1989; Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Lawrence Foster, February 8, 1990, both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

94. Kay and Ross Peterson, letter to Helen B. Cannon, September 7, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

95. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Levi S. Peterson, October 26, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

96. F. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, March 8, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

97. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Armand L. Mauss, February 14, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

98. Mary L. Bradford, letter to Kay and Ross Peterson, February 15, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

99. Robert A. Rees, letter to Kay and Ross Peterson, February 20, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

100. See letters sent to Mary L. Bradford, Robert A. Rees, Allen Roberts, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, March 8, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

101. Editorial, *Dialogue,* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 4.

102. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

103. Mary Kay and Ross Peterson, letter to Jay Potter, October 23, 1991, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence; Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

104. Susette Green, email to Devery Anderson, December 3, 2006.

105. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

106. Kay Peterson, letter to Linda King Newell, February 16, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

107. In 1985, Larson was forced to resign his position at the Church Scriptural Translation Department after an unpublished paper he had writ-

ten made its way to his superiors in the Church Office Building. The paper, "The Sermon on the Mount: What Its Textual Transformation Discloses Concerning the Historicity of the Book of Mormon," maintained that Joseph Smith did not "translate" the relevant portions of 3 Nephi which are similar to Matthew 5 since the Book of Mormon version contains errors from post-1769 editions of the King James Version. See "Man Forced to Resign Over Translation Issue," *Sunstone* 10, no. 9 (1985): 38.

108. David J. Whittaker, letter to F. Ross Peterson, October 12, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence; Ross Peterson, email to Anderson, August 26, 2006. Larson also presented the paper on Thomas Stuart Ferguson at the Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City in August 1989. Garth Jones, professor at the University of Alaska at Anchorage, responded to the paper. Session audiocassette SL89–035, available from the Sunstone Education Foundation, 343 N. 300 West, Salt Lake City 84103–1215, or for download at www. sunstoneonline.com.

109. See, for example, Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, Calif.: Kolob Book Company, 1950); Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *One Fold and One Shepherd* (San Francisco: Books of California, 1958; 2d ed., Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing Company, 1962). After Ferguson's death, the latter was revised as Bruce W. Warren and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *The Messiah in Ancient America* (Provo, Utah: Book of Mormon Research Foundation, 1987).

110. Stan Larson, "The Odyssey of Thomas Stuart Ferguson," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 55–93.

111. Ross Peterson, email to Anderson, August 26, 2006. Ferguson's doubts had previously been published in Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Ferguson's Manuscript Unveiled* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1988), and "Ferguson's Two Faces: Mormon Scholar's 'Spoof' Lives On after His Death," *Salt Lake City Messenger* 69 (September 1988): 1–10.

112. Dan Maryon, letter to John L. Sorenson, May 31, 1988, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. Sorenson's major work is *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1985). Commenting on Sorenson's review copy of his manuscript, Larson recently noted: "He had a number of cases where he added first-hand details and a number of places where he offered critical comments. One is of interest. I had said, 'Every item from his [Ferguson's] hand should be utilized in understanding his thinking during this period. At present there are twenty-two letters and a twenty-nine-page study on Book of Mormon geography. Because this period of time is so critical, we can do no better than to discuss piece by piece each of the extant items. His first-hand writings provide

the best avenue of direct access to the radical change in Thomas Stuart Ferguson during the last fifteen years of his life.' Above my words 'the best avenue' Sorenson wrote 'but not the only [avenue].' That's O.K., but what is really interesting is his comment in the margin at this point: 'historian's bias.' Isn't that something! He criticizes me for limiting myself to actual documents written by Ferguson, rather than speculating on what I might think he meant or what others remembered him saying!" Stan Larson, email to Devery Anderson, August 3, 2006.

113. Ross Peterson, email to Anderson, August 26, 2006.

114. Larson, email to Anderson, August 3, 2006. Larson later published a book on the Ferguson saga, expanding his research. Stan Larson, *Quest for the Gold Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson's Archaeological Search for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Freethinker Press, 1996). As Larson continued his research, Millie Cheesman, widow of BYU religion professor and archaeology enthusiast Paul R. Cheesman, would provide information to Larson only if his book was "faith promoting." When he couldn't make that promise, she declined to help.

115. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, April 24, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

116. Larry Ferguson, "The Most Powerful Book," letter to the editor, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 9. Upon his book's release, Larson spoke at the Mormon History Association annual meeting in Snowbird, Utah, in May 1996, and shared his updated work on Ferguson. Daniel Peterson, closely associated with FARMS, responded.

117. Stan Larson, "Another Ferguson Letter Found," n.d., unpublished letter to the editor, in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. In 2006, Larson said that two of Ferguson's best friends gave him the answer to Ferguson's contradictory statements. When they asked Ferguson how he was able to continue bearing his testimony of the Book of Mormon at LDS gatherings when he no longer believed, his answer was "that he told people what made them happy." Stan Larson, email to Anderson, August 3, 2006.

118. "Comments on Temple Changes Elicit Church Discipline," *Sunstone* 14 (June 1990): 60; Vern Anderson, "LDS Leaders Revise Temple Endowment," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 29, 1990, 2B.

119. See *Arizona Republic*, April 28, 1990; *New York Times*, May 3, 1990; *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1990.

120. John Dart, "Mormons Summon Those Who Spoke to Media of Temple Rites," *Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 1990, 12.

121. F. Ross Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, August 9, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

122. Ross Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, August 9, 1990. Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

123. Ibid.; Ross Peterson, letter to D. Michael Quinn, October 18, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

124. Ross Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, August 9, 1990. Toscano's essay, "Rending the Veil," appeared as chapter 22 in Margaret and Paul Toscano, *Strangers in Paradox: Explorations in Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 265–77.

125. Ross Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, August 9, 1990; Ross and Kay Peterson, to Lavina and Paul Anderson, May 29, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

126. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Lavina and Paul Anderson, May 29, 1990.

127. Ross Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, August 9, 1990; Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to John and Linda Sillito, June 20, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. Kevin Jones, who also wrote to some General Authorities, recently described Ross as someone who "wouldn't hurt a fly" and believed, as did most of those closely associated with the Petersons, that Ross's temple recommend would never have been revoked had he not been editor of *Dialogue*. Jones, interviewed December 28, 2004.

128. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Kevin Jones, May 29, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

129. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

130. The first women's issue of *Dialogue* appeared in summer 1971, known as the "pink" issue. It was followed ten years later in winter 1981 by the "red" issue.

131. Kay Peterson, interviewed December 3, 1994.

132. Kay and Ross Peterson, letter to Dixie Partridge, May 24, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

133. Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Helen Stark, March 8, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

134. Susette Green, email to Devery Anderson, December 3, 2006.

135. For more on this conference and the Equal Rights Amendment, see Martha Sonntag Bradley, *Pedestals and Podiums: Utah Women, Religious Authority, and Equal Rights* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005).

136. See the table of contents, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* 23, no. 3 (Fall 1990). There were thirteen essays, three pieces of fiction, and seven poems in the issue, all by women.

137. These were Vella Neil Thomas, "Mormon Women and the Right to Wage Work," Eugene England, "On Being Male and Melchizedek," and

Lavina Fielding Anderson, "The Grammar of Inequity," all in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 45–95.

138. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Patty Redd Kennington, January 11, 1991, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

139. One such example of this is Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to the religion editor, *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 6, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

140. Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994. For the essay, see *Dialogue,* 23, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 90–100.

141. Deborah J. Kazlauskas, letter to F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson, November 28, 1990; Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Deborah J. Kazlauskas, January 7, 1991, both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. Castleton's paper was part of a panel at the August 1989 Sunstone Symposium, "Mormon Women and Domestic Violence: The Patriarchal Connection" (CD SL89–051), available from Sunstone Education Foundation, 343 N. 300 West, Salt Lake City 84103–1215, or for download at www.sunstoneonline.com.

142. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Helen Stark, October 2, 1990.

143. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Armand L. Mauss, May 10, 1991, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

144. "Church Issues Statement on 'Symposia,'" *Sunstone* 15 (September 1991): 58; Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Jim Bell, October 15, 1991, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. The papers under discussion were presented at the 1991 Sunstone Symposium at Salt Lake City: Colleen McDannell, "LDS Garments: A View from the Outside" (SL91–147); David C. Knowlton, "Terrorism in the Church in South America" (SL91–142); and John R. Sillito, "Enigmatic Apostle: The Case of Richard R. Lyman" (SL91–073). CDs available from Sunstone Education Foundation, 343 N. 300 West, Salt Lake City 84103–1215, or for download at www.sunstoneonline.com.

145. "Statement," *Deseret News*, August 23, 1991, B2; Peggy Fletcher Stack, "LDS Church Decries Sunstone Sessions, Calls Content Insensitive, Offensive," August 24, 1991, B1; "Statement," *Church News*, August 31, 1991, 3.

146. "Church Issues Statement on 'Symposia,'" 58; Martha S. Bradley, "Theological Discussion or Support Group?: A History of Sunstone Symposiums," *Sunstone* Issue 123 (July 2002): 38–39.

147. Stack, "LDS Church Decries Sunstone Sessions"; "Church Issues Statement on 'Symposia,'" 58.

148. See *Ensign*, November 1991: Boyd K. Packer, "Reverence Invites

Revelation," 21–23; Charles Didier, "Testimony," 62–64; and Marvin J. Ashton, "Strengthen the Feeble Knees," 70–72.

149. Mary Kay and Ross Peterson, letter to Chad Orton, October 16, 1991, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

150. Mary Kay and Ross Peterson, letter to Elbert Peck, October 16, 1991, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

151. Peterson and Peterson, letter to Jim Bell, October 15, 1991.

152. *This People* 13 (Fall 1992): 35. Other ads featured a pollster under the headline, "Some *Dialogue* Readers Are Real Questioning Types," and a cardiologist, under "Some *Dialogue* Readers Need to Get to the Heart of the Issue." See *This People* 12 (Holiday 1991): 53, and 13 (Spring 1992): 39.

153. Mary Kay Peterson, letter to Mike Dunn, December 4, 1991, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

154. Ross Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, October 29, 1991; Mary Kay and Ross Peterson, letter to Obert C. Tanner, October 29, 1991, both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. BYU professors who published essays in *Dialogue* between this date and the end of the Petersons' tenure were Marie Cornwall, James B. Allen, Thomas G. Alexander, David Knowlton, Tim Heaton, Douglas F. Tobler, and Jessie L. Embry.

155. Mary Kay Peterson and Ross Peterson, letter to Armand L. Mauss, January 8, 1992, Peterson *Dialogue* Collection.

156. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 2004.

157. Bradley, "Theological Discussion or Support Group?" 38.

158. Glen M. Leonard, letter to Mary Kay Peterson and Kevin Jones, June 22, 1989; Ross Peterson, letter to Glen M. Leonard, July 19, 1989; Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Richard P. Howard, January 10, 1990, all in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. The essays were Glen M. Leonard, "Remembering Nauvoo"; Richard P. Howard, "The Nauvoo Heritage of the Reorganized Church"; John E. Hallwas, "Mormon Nauvoo from a Non-Mormon Perspective"; and Ronald K. Esplin, "The Significance of Nauvoo for Latter-day Saints," *Journal of Mormon History* 16 (1990): 25–86.

159. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Carol Cornwall Madsen, June 19 and July 1, 1991, both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

160. Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Armand L. Mauss, February 14, 1990, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. For the essay referred to, see Richard H. Cracroft, "'A Profound Sense of Community': Mormon Values in Wallace Stegner's *Recapitulation*," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 101–13.

161. Julian Durham, letter to Ross and Kay Peterson, March 19, 1990;

Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Julian Durham, March 27, 1990, both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

162. F. Ross Peterson, letter to Richard J. Frantz, February 3, 1989, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence. See Michael Fillerup, "The Bowhunter," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 151–68.

163. Tony Fuller, letter to "Editors," April 15, 1990; Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Tony Fuller, April 24, 1990; Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Charlotte England, June 7, 1990, all in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

164. See *Dialogue*: "How Do You Spell Relief: A Panel of Relief Society Presidents," 21, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 75–101; "Life in Zion after Conversion: Hazed or Hailed?" 22, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 97–118; "Eternity Be Damned? The Impact of Interfaith Vows," 23, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 109–33; "I Married a Mormon and Lived to Tell This Tale," 24, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 115–31; "Hazardous Duty, Combat Pay: Working in the Primary," 25, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 83–105.

165. Steven J. Sainsbury, "AIDS: The Twentieth Century Leprosy," *Dialogue* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 77.

166. Carlos E. Asay, Hans B. Ringger, and John R. Lasater (Europe Area Presidency), letter to Eric Von Empel, May 9, 1989; Ross and Kay Peterson, letter to Eric Von Empel, May 23, 1989, both in Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

167. Susette Green email to Devery Anderson, December 3, 2006.

168. Mary Kay and Ross Peterson, letter to Armand Mauss, March 30, 1992, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

169. Christopher Williams, "Petersons Leave Dialogue with Stronger Faith," *Herald Journal*, June 3, 1992, 5–6.

170. Ross and Mary Kay Peterson, letter to George D. Smith, July 29, 1992, *Dialogue* Collection.

171. Cannon and Cannon, email to Anderson, December 31, 2006; Jones, interviewed December 28, 2004; Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

172. Ross Peterson, interviewed October 29, 1994.

173. Ibid.

174. Martha Sonntag Bradley and Allen Dale Roberts, interviewed by Devery S. Anderson, November 14, 1994, Salt Lake City.

175. Jack Newell, letter to Eugene England, March 21, 1987, Peterson *Dialogue* Correspondence.

"The Grandest Principle of the Gospel": Christian Nihilism, Sanctified Activism, and Eternal Progression

Jacob T. Baker

In February 1895, the editors of a small journal known as *The Index* (an obscure periodical produced by the Mutual Improvement Association of Salt Lake City's Twentieth Ward) submitted the following inquiry to ten prominent Church leaders: "What, in your opinion, constitutes the grandest principle, or most attractive feature of the Gospel?" The Church leaders' answering letters were published in *The Index* and shortly thereafter as a symposium in the pages of *The Contributor*, one of the many Church magazines in publication at that time. One respondent said that eternal marriage was the grandest principle. Two more replied that love was the most crucial component of the gospel. Another answered, in essence, that all the principles of the gospel were so grand that he could not choose just one. Interestingly, there was a consensus among the remaining six Church leaders (among whom were such well-known leaders as Joseph F. Smith, B. H. Roberts, George Reynolds, and Orson F. Whitney) that the grandest and most attractive feature of the gospel was the doctrine of eternal progression.[1]

Why eternal progression? There was no mention in the survey of such critical doctrines as the atonement, continuing revelation, or salvation for the dead. Yet many Mormon writers and thinkers, from founding prophet Joseph Smith through early twentieth-century intellectuals discussed in this essay—B. H. Roberts and John A. Widtsoe—undeniably had a fascination with the doctrine of eternal progression, which I will loosely

define for purposes of this discussion as the belief that all human beings can advance and improve from one qualitative level of existence to the next forever—until the attainment of godhood and beyond—and that God also advances in like manner under this same system. These thinkers clearly believed that, of all Joseph Smith's teachings, eternal progression was his most innovative idea, rich in possibility and potential. They have not been alone in this assessment of Joseph Smith's unique theology. Former Mormon and skeptic Fawn Brodie believed that Joseph Smith borrowed this concept through reading philosopher Thomas Dick,[2] but nevertheless conceded that Joseph's own notion of "the boundless opportunity for progression throughout eternity" was "the most challenging concept that Joseph Smith ever produced, and in a sense the most original."[3] More recently, Evangelical scholar Carl Mosser, when asked by BYU professor of philosophy David L. Paulsen to identify Joseph Smith's possible contributions to the Christian theological world, replied, "Too often, in my view, Christian theologians are content to reflect on how we are redeemed (the mechanics) and on what we are redeemed *from.* Smith's teachings about the eschatological potential of men and women challenges Christian theology to think more deliberately about what we are redeemed *for.*"[4]

While much of the appeal and significance of eternal progression in Mormon thought at the beginning of the twentieth century centered on Mormon intellectuals' fascination with the progressive science of their era, eternal progression in fact had a much broader, deeper, even existential appeal. These Mormon thinkers and writers viewed eternal progression in terms which, for them, instilled unique meaning and purpose into this life and the post-mortal eternities. A quest to infuse human existence with special significance and value underlay sweeping notions of unlocking the eternal laws of the universe and becoming gods. Key to their conception of eternal progression was a philosophy that described eternal progression in direct contrast to what LDS writers perceived as the meaningless, unsatisfying, and even nihilistic nature of the conventional Christian heaven.

At the heart of early expositions on eternal progression is the concept that eternal, godlike *activity* is what provides meaning and purpose to any and every stage of human existence. This understanding of an eternally progressive heaven was juxtaposed against what early twentieth-century LDS writers believed was the traditional model of the Christian

heaven, in which the human soul is forever statically immobile and eternally at rest. LDS writers wholeheartedly agreed with the assertion of Charles W. Eliot, former president of Harvard University and biographer of Henry James: "The idea of an eternity of rest is positively repulsive to any man or woman, primitive, barbarous, or civilized, who has had joy in his work."[5] For these Mormons, the only happy heaven is the one in which activity is eternalized, a heaven where the acquisition of new knowledge leads to higher and higher realms of meaningful existence.

It is not my intent in this paper to make an in-depth study of eternal progression throughout Mormon theological history. Instead, I will focus on common expositions of the doctrine during the critical decades following the Manifesto of 1890, which withdrew Church permission for new plural marriages, and the reordering of LDS theology that followed. This paper asserts two arguments: First, key Mormon writers in this period sometimes misrepresented the eschatological doctrines of other Christian churches—particularly Protestant churches—as a foil against which to describe and exalt Mormon notions of eternal activity and progress. And, second, although the idea of an afterlife of everlasting activity was not unique to Mormons, Mormonism nevertheless evoked its own novel conception of activity that was dissimilar to conventional Protestant ideas.

Mormon thinkers of this period understood the purpose of all activity—premortal, mortal, and postmortal—to be the achievement of human deification and also understood that the joy of eternal progress applies to all intelligences,[6] including God. Though Mormons and Protestants at this time held quite similar views of the family-centric, social nature of heaven, Mormons were additionally theologizing a cosmology of deification and the eternal mastery of existence, a cosmology ultimately discrete from more secularized Protestant beliefs of eternal family life, worship, and labor, beliefs that were essentially an extension and projection of earthly activities into the heavenly realm.

To provide a context for the development of early twentieth-century Mormon thought on eternal progression, I will begin with an overview of its roots by briefly examining the origins of eternal progression in Joseph Smith's thought and the expansion upon his ideas in the theology of Brigham Young. Many Mormons writing on eternal progression (and especially John A. Widtsoe and B. H. Roberts) expand upon Young's particular vision in their attempts to provide a rational basis for a theology of eternal activity. Widtsoe and Roberts develop a theology in which they

hope to show that the quest for higher realms of truth and being discloses the true meaning of human joy and meaningful existence. I will conclude with what I believe are some of the potential philosophical and theological implications of Roberts's and Widtsoe's views on eternal progression and how these might be viewed through a contemporary lens.

Eternal Progression in Early Mormon Thought

Eternal progression in Mormon thought was originally taught by Joseph Smith. His views on the progressive nature of the afterlife and the divine potential of humanity were not wholly original; other theological and philosophical traditions in Joseph Smith's time promulgated similar concepts, including most denominations of nineteenth-century New England Protestantism, remnants of neo-Platonist hermeticism,[7] and American transcendentalism.[8] However, Joseph Smith erased the ontological rift that separated divinity from humanity by including, within his philosophy, ideas of human deification, a plurality of gods, and the advancement and progression of all intelligent beings, including God. This conceptualization seems to be a genuinely unique amalgamation.[9] Unique or not, Joseph's most detailed explication of eternal progression, the King Follett Discourse, was revolutionary and even polarizing to its first hearers, many of whom praised it as proof of the Prophet's inspiration, while many others denigrated it as "a worse doctrine than taught by the Devil himself in the Garden of Eden."[10]

Though the seeds of eternal progression in Mormon thought were planted by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young nurtured them into a full-fledged forest of doctrinal exposition. Young seems to be, in fact, the first to use the phrase "eternal progression" to describe and embody several interrelated concepts promulgated by Joseph Smith concerning the nature and purpose of God and humankind.[11] In Young's system, eternal progression became an expansive vehicle for unlimited learning and advancement. For Young, the unlimited nature of God and man was key to his understanding of progression. He believed in an eternal chain of gods with no beginning and no end, a chain to which man was in the process of becoming connected in his quest to become divine. The unlimited nature of Godhood led Young to posit that God and man could increase in knowledge and power for eternity. He reasoned that limiting the capacity to attain knowledge would be to limit the universe itself, which would in turn limit humankind and God.[12] While such an idea about God's capac-

ity for unending knowledge acquisition may be considered controversial today, it was a key to Brigham Young's theology. Fundamental to his ideas of eternal progression was an existential engagement with the meaning of life itself. Eternal progression was a way of *being*, a means of considering oneself and one's activity in the world as infinitely (and eternally) valuable and meaningful. Young wanted to get at the heart of what motivates us to continue to propagate our own existence: "The first great principle that ought to occupy the attention of mankind, that should be understood by the child and the adult, and *which is the mainspring of all action* (whether people understand it or not), is the principle of improvement. The principle of increase, of exaltation, of adding to what we already possess, is the grand moving principle and cause of the actions of the children of men."[13]

Thus, the *capacity* to acquire knowledge (in addition to "increasing" in other valuables such as posterity, kingdoms, etc.) is a desirable end in and of itself because acquiring knowledge makes life meaningful and enjoyable and will continue to do so forever. For Brigham Young, this vision of the purpose of existence made salvation genuinely attractive, because it describes salvation in understandable, "this-worldly" terms. What moves and motivates us to action and improvement in earth life will likewise motivate our activity in the eternal worlds.

In endorsing this particular view of eternal progression, Young was implicitly giving voice to the anxiety of considering its reverse proposition—not progressing, or regressing, which is to experience "the second death." He explained: "The first death is the separation of the spirit from the body; the second death is . . . the dissolution of the organized particles which compose the spirit, and their return to their native element. . . . The one [choosing life] leads to endless increase and progression, the other [choosing death] to the destruction of the organized being, ending in its entire decomposition into the particles that compose the native elements."[14]

Contemplating an afterlife with no progression, Wilford Woodruff gives pointed expression to the despair that he saw as inherent in an existence in which progression is ultimately so limited: "If there was a point where man in his progression could not proceed any further, the very idea would throw a gloom over every intelligent and reflecting mind. God himself is still increasing and progressing in knowledge, power, and dominion, and will do so world without end. It is just so with us."[15]

Eternal Progression in Early Twentieth-Century Mormon Thought

At least from the time of Brigham Young through the end of the nineteenth century, eternal progression was inextricably connected to plural marriage. To cite a single brief example, Susa Young Gates, a daughter of Brigham Young, in the pages of the *Young Woman's Journal*, declared, "[Plural marriage] is the law that crucifies the flesh that it may sanctify the Spirit; the law that marks the way to eternal progression."[16] The family was the vehicle for eternal progression. One progressed by entering into the patriarchal order of marriage, or celestial marriage, popularly called plural marriage. Progression was then measured by the "eternal" increase of wives and posterity in one's family kingdom, both here and in the eternities. Such enlargement of family was a holy act that mirrored God himself, who also progressed in like manner.

By the turn of the twentieth century and after, the Church, with increasing resolution, turned from plural marriage in the three decades following the Manifesto; the eternal family kingdom and its link to eternal progression disappeared almost entirely from official discourse. Mormonism sought to distance itself from its polygamous past and, through a variety of measures, integrate more fully into mainstream American society. Ironically, while Mormonism's Protestant counterparts were at the height of explicating their family-centric social heaven, the idea of eternal family in Mormonism, always previously situated within the framework of plural families, was drastically muted.

The principle of eternal progression, however, lived on under the influence of the scientific and philosophical rationalism that was beginning to take hold of the Western world. The philosophies of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, John Fiske, Henri Bergson,[17] and other influential thinkers exercised profound influence upon secular and religious society. Mormon intellectuals were among the many converts to contemporary scientific and philosophic thought. It was during this time that systematic expositions of Mormon theology began to appear, among them three important works by B. H. Roberts: *The Gospel: Exposition of First Principles* (1888), *The Seventies Course in Theology* (5 vols., 1907–12), and *The Truth, the Way, the Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology* (1930); James E. Talmage's *Articles of Faith* (1899) and *The Vitality of Mormonism* (1919); BYU English professor Nels L. Nelson's *The Scientific Aspects of Mormonism* (1904); and John A. Widtsoe's *Joseph Smith As Scientist* (1908) and *A Rational Theology* (1915). These works, as well as many others, were attempts

by Mormon intellectuals to explain and defend their religion by incorporating contemporary ideas into their theologies.[18] Eternal progression was recast within this modern conceptual framework, and unsurprisingly it did not escape a naturalistic, rational interpretation.

Under the hands of academics like chemist and college president John A. Widtsoe and BYU English professor Nels L. Nelson—and heavily influenced by the social evolution theories of Herbert Spencer—eternal progression became the centerpiece of a Mormon teleological cosmology in which God, man, and all of creation are eternally evolving within this cosmology. The universe's clear purpose is the manufacturing of gods. In this universe, God becomes the Master of Science, the Supreme Intelligence who masters the eternal laws of the universe. Widtsoe offers what is probably the clearest, most concise definition of God as ultimate scientist in this way: "God undoubtedly exercised his will vigorously, and thus gained experience of the forces lying about him. As knowledge grew into greater knowledge, by persistent efforts of will, his recognition of universal laws became greater until he attained at last a conquest over the universe, which to our finite understanding seems absolutely complete. . . . His Godhood, however, is the product of simple obedience to the laws of the universe."[19]

The implication here for humankind is clear. As God learned to master and control the laws of the universe, so we, under His guidance, are to discover and obey these same laws; doing so will result in our own attainment of godhood. Widtsoe and other Mormon thinkers clearly believed that the ushering in of the modern era was both a sign of the onward progress of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and a forward leap toward the ultimate achievement of mastering the world and universe.

As one surveys the literature on eternal progression from this time, a pattern emerges that is common to almost all existential descriptions of the great hope, joy, and meaning Mormon authors found in this expansive doctrine. Familiar to all of these writings is a dualism of activity and inertia, eternal motion and everlasting fixity. A theology of activity lies at the heart of discussions on eternal progression. Consider the following, from an unknown author in the 1931 *Improvement Era*: "The idea of progress and the emotions arising out of discovery in the world of intellectual achievement are both lure and urge to mental activity, and when the idea is connected up with a belief in the endlessness of progress, it takes hold of the believer and holds him to the task of reaching higher levels and

viewing broader fields in a way that wearies not, but develops to the utmost."[20]

Apostle and agricultural scientist John A. Widtsoe similarly conceived of eternal progression as an exultant state of experiential and cognitive increase. He wrote, "What then is eternal progress? It is an eternity of active life, increasing in all good things, toward the likeness of the Lord. It is the highest conceivable form of growth." However, the totality of activity can only be possessed by those found in the highest heaven, the celestial kingdom: "One thing is known through the revelations of God. Those in the higher, the celestial glory, the one that we all hope to achieve, are in *full* activity . . . Not so in the lower glories."[21] He further declared, "If we seek, we shall forever add knowledge to knowledge. That which seems dark today, will be crystal clear tomorrow. Eternal progress means the unending elucidation of things not known or understood today."[22]

Although Mormons obviously found eternality of activity as the most essential and appealing component of a meaningful existence, they were far from alone in such a belief. Several theological traditions in Joseph Smith's time held quite detailed theologies of heavenly progression. Concepts of heavenly progress can also be found in the writings of early Church Father Origen all the way through the Protestant theology of the 1930s. Consider the following striking parallel between B. H. Roberts's concept of perfection and that of German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz. Roberts writes: "There are no ultimates. Each succeeding wave of progress may attain higher, and ever higher degrees of excellence, *but never attain perfection*—the ideal recedes ever as it is approached, and hence progress is eternal, even for the highest existences."[23] Though he did not conceive of any form of eternal progression per se, in a striking anticipation of B. H. Roberts's thinking on the apparent deliciousness of almost, but not quite, attaining perfection, Leibniz wrote in 1704, "I feel that restless activity is an essential part of the happiness of creatures." Therefore, happiness "never consists in perfect possession. . . . [T]here must be a continuous and uninterrupted progress toward greater good."[24] Though the Scholastic, liturgical heaven of the changeless and static beatific vision would survive into the modern era with Catholicism and certain Protestant hymns such as "Jerusalem" and Longfellow's "Resignation,"[25] Protestantism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries embraced a heaven of eternal motion and activity that fit squarely with Leibniz's conception. In fact, though they condemned one another on many points of theology, Evan-

gelicals and liberal Protestants agreed that activity and spiritual growth in heaven were certain. Methodist Leslie Weatherhead, for example, wrote in his 1936 *After Death:* "It is inconceivable to believe that the life after death is a life without continuous growth and progress."[26]

The emphasis on heavenly progress had surged among Christian writers in the decades just prior to Widtsoe's and Roberts's time. Inspired by the depiction of detailed eighteenth-century portrayals in art and literature of after-death reunions with loved ones, women fiction writers in the second half of the nineteenth century created domesticated literary visions of a heaven conducive to every ideal of home life. Within this comprehensive heavenly society, one could find husband, wife, children, siblings, parents, friends, pets, and even celebrities. By the end of the nineteenth century and continuing into the first three decades of the twentieth century, most Protestant ministers and theologians, as well as Spiritualists, were preaching the anthropocentric heaven of social community, where believers would mingle with family and friends and enjoy "productive work, spiritual development, and technological progress," in which, as German theologian Isaac A. Dorner put it, "the blessed will never be in want of an arena of satisfying activity."[27] The eternally changeless beatific vision of the God-focused theocentric heaven continued to be promoted among many (though not all) Catholic theologians and in Protestant hymnody, but theocentric notions of heaven remained a minority during the early twentieth century. A motion-oriented afterlife captured the imagination of nearly all of Protestantism and not a few Catholic theologians. Transcendental philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson had encapsulated well the utterly unimaginable idea of a static, changeless heaven when he wrote in 1839, "God invents, God advances. The world, the flesh, & the devil sit & rot."[28]

Mormon thinkers during this time sometimes failed to recognize the change in mainstream Christian eschatology. To promote what they apparently saw as Mormonism's unique vision of heaven and the purpose of life, they sometimes mischaracterized the vigorous Protestant heaven of sociality and activity that flourished during this period. For example, although B. H. Roberts allowed that "the creeds of men" possessed some truth, he found those creeds woefully unimaginative, failing to go far enough to comprehend the meaning of existence:

> What other conceivable purpose for existence in earth-life could there be for eternal intelligences than this attainment of "joy" arising from prog-

> ress? Man's existence for the "manifestation of God's glory," as taught by the creeds of men, is not equal to it. . . . It is written that "the glory of God is Intelligence" (D&C 93:36); and it must follow, as the day follows night, that with the enlargement, with the progress of intelligences, there must be a constantly increasing splendor in the manifestation of the glory of God. But in our doctrine, the manifestation of that glory may be said to be incidental. The primary purpose is not in that manifestation but in the "joy" arising from the progress of intelligences.[29]

Similarly, Nels L. Nelson offered perhaps the most scathing critique of what he saw as the almost laughable, meaningless nature of the Protestant afterlife:

> Here is the way in which a noted Presbyterian delivered himself on this theme: The question is often asked, "What shall we do when we get to heaven? Wherein shall consist our happiness?" I shall answer this question for myself. When I get to heaven, I shall spend the first five million years of my life in gazing upon the face of God; then if my wife is near I shall turn and look at her for five minutes. Then I shall gaze upon the glory of God again for a million million years; and when the longing of my eyes shall have been satisfied, and my soul is suffused with the beatific vision, I shall snatch up my harp and begin playing.

Comments Nelson scornfully, "What kind of being must God be, if we suppose him to get pleasure from having a billion billion . . . eyes glued upon Him from all sides for millions of years at a stretch? And then to have a certain quadrant of the enraptured gazers suddenly seized with harp-madness for other millions of years! Surely he will need the full measure of his infinite patience and long-suffering!"[30]

Mormon intellectuals, dissatisfied with what they perceived as the immobile and inert state of heaven in other Christian denominations, presented a straw-man depiction of the conventional Christian heaven which they then could effortlessly tear down. In reality, these Mormon authors were deconstructing the theocentric, immobile, and changeless heaven of Catholic neo-Scholasticism.[31] However, they mistakenly misrepresented Protestantism by superimposing their arguments (and sometimes ridicule) upon a portion of Christianity that was, in some ways at this time, even more drastically anthropocentric than Mormonism was.

Though these Mormon authors at times utilized obsolete theological data to characterize the doctrines of their Protestant counterparts, they were not totally unaware of competing contemporary views. Both Roberts and Widtsoe conceded that Mormons were not wholly alone in consider-

ing the eternal activity of immortal humanity in the universe. Roberts cites the ideas of Sir Oliver Lodge, whose theology is "far removed from modern Christian orthodoxy, though splendidly true": "The universe is not a 'being' but a 'becoming. . . . ' Monotony, in the sense of absolute immobility, is unthinkable, unreal, and cannot anywhere exist. . . . Such ideas, the ideas of development and progress, extend even up to God himself."[32]

Similarly, Widtsoe admitted, "Many men, the world over, not of our faith, now hold to the doctrine of eternal activity and progress. Note these words of Thomas Curtis Clark in the *Christian Century*: 'We serve no God whose work is done, / Who rests within His firmament: / Our God, His labors but begun, / Toils evermore, with powers unspent.'"[33] However, another good reason for their mischaracterization of other religions is that they sometimes simply did not do their homework. According to Sterling McMurrin, Roberts often totally ignored advances in religious and biblical studies or at least rarely commented on them in his writings.[34]

On the other hand, despite Mormon theologians' lack of awareness, there was much at stake in what they were attempting to describe by pitting the "creeds of men" against the restored gospel. Roberts and Widtsoe were concerned with what they saw as the nihilistic nature of the Christian heaven. A life of rest and happiness "gazing into the face of God" for eternity was completely unsatisfying. For Mormons, happiness and meaning in the life after death did not exist on a separate ontological plane radically distinct from that of mortality; on the contrary, happiness existed along the same ontological continuum as earth life. As Brigham Young had surmised half a century before, that which makes one happy and satisfied in this life is not very different from what will satisfy and appeal to one in the next life. Consequently, "eternally resting from labor" "glorifying God forever" and "staring into God's face" for eternity were impossible concepts to understand, inasmuch as there was no experiential basis for grasping them. They could see no motivation for desiring this type of heaven, and they were left with not only an incomprehensible heaven, but even a painful one. As Nels L. Nelson put it, "Think of the agony involved in an eternity of stagnated bliss, of monotonous, never-varying joy!"[35]

For Roberts and Widtsoe, the type of Christian heaven against which they were battling was a heaven completely empty of any rationally

conceivable value. By that term, I mean that Mormonism, because of its commitment to ontological monism, can posit that heaven and earth are ontologically the same. Thus, the only truly conceivable values are those of this world. Christianity, on the other hand, held that all real value exists in another, metaphysical realm. For Mormons this separate metaphysical realm does not exist; consequently, there is nothing of value in the Christian heaven and therefore it is truly meaningless. Though Mormons would not have known to employ the terminology, they were fighting against a kind of Christian nihilism, or the meaninglessness and worthlessness of a heaven that does not recognize or even remember any of the hard-fought prizes and accomplishments of mortal human achievement, where any and all progress and meaning gained in this life are annihilated. As James E. Faulconer, BYU professor of philosophy, has observed, "Mormons like Roberts could see traditional views of salvation as the bookend opposites of creation *ex nihilo*: we come from nothing; we become nothing."[36] Mormons used their outdated ideas of Protestant heaven as a foil against which they sought to illuminate and enhance their system of eternal progression and advancement.

Activity in Mormon and Protestant Thought

What was the nature of the "activity" that Roberts, Widtsoe, and others had in mind when they enthusiastically proclaimed their theologies of eternal progression? Justin Collings, a participant in the 2006 Joseph Smith Summer Seminar, quite aptly characterizes this theme, which was beginning to emerge in the Mormonism of the middle to late nineteenth century, as "eternal restlessness." He writes, "Mormons were an eminently busy people, a people who adopted the beehive as a community symbol and whose descendants still categorize each other as 'active' or 'inactive.' . . . Renouncing the conventional Christian yearning for eternal rest, Mormons longed for eternal restlessness."[37] Indeed, as religious anthropologist and interested Mormon observer Douglas Davies notes, "To be active is a key Mormon value. . . . 'Activity' is as distinctive an LDS noun as 'active' is an adjective describing involved Church members."[38] He theorizes an important connection between activity at the local level of Mormon life and the activity of the temple, both being locations where various types of "sacred work" take place, in contrast to simple sanctuaries of meditation and prayer alone. The sacred work of the temple in par-

ticular he labels, "sanctified activism." Thus, activity is institutionalized and ritualized at nearly every level of the Church.

It is through the lens of this "sanctified activism" that a clearer picture of the Mormon interpretation of being eternally active emerges. However, for purposes of this essay, I propose a definition of sanctified activism as activity that is entirely religious in nature—activity with a wholly theological purpose, e.g., gaining knowledge in order to master the elemental universe and save fallen beings, create and populate worlds, learn to become gods, etc., in other words, engaging in the type of activity that it is imagined God Himself engages in. This type of activity contrasts with the more secular activism of Protestant activity in the afterlife, which mirrors the everyday activity of human beings in a human society, e.g., working, playing, socializing, etc. Taking Carl Mosser's insightful inquiry of considering that *for* which we are to be saved, we may profitably ask the question: For what or in what way are Mormons to be eternally active? I will briefly consider Protestant formulations of activity after death to clarify and contextualize Mormon formulations of the same.

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Protestant afterlife theology, though not unified in all details, is nevertheless saturated with the teaching of continued Christian service in heaven after death. Baptist preacher William Ulyat taught in 1901 that "heaven is a workshop," "and each of its residents have their appointments and daily avocations."[39] In heaven, secular activities involving social life, marriage, sexuality, and all types of labor-intensive and intellectual work continue in much the same manner as on earth, except that Christians are free from pain and suffering. They continue to advance from "perfection to perfection," though it is not clear in the literature what this means or how it is to be accomplished, nor is there any sense of this process as a vehicle for advancement toward any sort of distinctive, external goal.[40]

A close reading of Mormon concepts of activity reveals that Mormons like Roberts and Widtsoe were attempting to elucidate what was, in their view, a higher purpose to activity, which I have described as "sanctified activism." In what way or ways were Mormons active? Roberts did theorize (in step with Protestant theologians) that in the next life we will build and inhabit houses and buildings. However, contrary to any Protestant strand of thought from his time, he also anticipated participation in interplanetary travel and counsel with the Gods concerning the salvation of other intelligences.[41] Widtsoe stated that we will engage in build-

ing our kingdoms and increasing our posterity.[42] Other authors wrote that we will be creating worlds of our own.[43] For such Mormons, these are the activities of Deity, activities in which they imagine God himself engages. It is a conceptualization of heavenly activity that surpasses the more subdued, secular Protestant notions of activity and advancement.[44]

Mormons wanted to say that that which inspires and motivates God is also what inspires and motivates humans in the process of becoming gods. What, then, inspires and motivates the progression of God himself? Protestants, still steeped in traditional notions of God's utter ontological otherness, were not asking this question. For Mormons, however, the question was critical because God's progress and activity were also their own progress and activity. Thus, the following quotation from Roberts is significant: "And is it too bold a thought, that with this progress, even for the Mightiest, new thoughts, and new vistas may appear, inviting to new adventures and enterprises that will yield new experiences, advancement, and enlargement even for the Most High?"[45] The joy and meaning inherent in progression for human beings is not qualitatively different from that which satisfies God as well. Furthermore, when Roberts writes that "the ultimate of truth will always be like the horizon one pursues over the ocean—ever receding as one approaches it . . . never hoping to encompass it,"[46] he is saying that the moment God ceases to learn, the moment he no longer anticipates the next great adventure, is the moment that progress ceases and, with it, the possibility for joy. The same holds true for humankind. Here Roberts describes the world and the universe, as William James put it, as a "real adventure"[47] with real risks, real heights, and real depths, even for Gods. Similarly, Widtsoe's notion of "full activity" seems to partake of this understanding. Those in the celestial kingdom (those most nearly like God) can most nearly engage in the same type of activity in which God participates.

This view of sanctified activism collapsed the chasm between the godly and earthly realms of activity and allowed Mormons to religiously ground all their activity in this process of deification. This point is the major departure of Mormon theologies of activity from Protestant ones. Where Protestants are active in heaven in engaging in the same Christian work and service, the same modes of play and worship with which they were familiar in life, Mormons found meaning and joy through the extravagant proposition that eternal activity could and would result in deification. Consequently, the purpose of all activity in mortality and

postmortality is not happiness per se or even preparation for eternal rest within the family circle. Instead, its purpose is centered on training and instruction for becoming gods.[48]

The Roberts/Widtsoe Philosophy of Eternal Progress and Activity

Eternal progression for Mormon writers during this period (especially through the writings of Widtsoe and Roberts),[49] whether through an intense fascination with modern science and evolution, or through a detailed polemic against Christian nihilism, was a theology of activity, a response to the existential problem of the meaning of life. However, Mormonism has a long tradition of equating the meaning of existence with joy (or, at the very least, in declaring that joy is intimately connected to existential meaning and value), and Roberts and Widtsoe were no exception. B. H. Roberts often quoted the familiar, pithy Book of Mormon passage: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy" (2 Ne. 2:20). But what was joy to Roberts? Certainly, joy was more connected to eternal progression and activity than to the eternal sociality of friends and family in the kingdom of God, though Roberts wholeheartedly embraced that aspect of immortality in the eternal realm.

In one of his more extensive passages on joy, he wrote, "The joy [here contemplated] is a joy that will be born of the consciousness of existence itself—that will revel in existence—in thoughts of realizations of existence's limitless possibilities. A joy born of the consciousness of the power of eternal increase. A joy arising from association with the Intelligences of innumerable heavens—the Gods of all eternities."[50] It is not totally clear what Roberts means here. Is he referring again to the "great eternal adventure" that the universe provides its inhabitants? Or perhaps the mere event of achieving godhood is what produces joy? It is also possible that Roberts has a notion similar to Hegel's unbounded absolute self-knowledge/consciousness, in which joy is equated with complete consciousness of self. If so, it seems that to know oneself is to understand that one's capacity for improvement is endless, a notion that seems to fit well with the rest of his philosophy.

The far-reaching nature of this joy prompts Roberts to boldly proclaim that the universe itself is "optimistic" in that, once we understand its nature and function properly, optimism becomes the appropriate response to it: "For to intelligence there is no end of progress; however great its present attainment, there is still a beyond to higher glory. . . . There are

no ultimates to progress for intelligences, there is always becoming, but no end. This constitutes the joy of existence—the possibility of eternal progress . . . all this makes the universe an optimistic universe."[51]

Similarly, John A. Widtsoe connects progress to joy:

> One may exist who is only static, who stands forever in the same place, who adds nothing, by his own effort, to himself or others. Under the law of the gospel, all who have dwelt on earth are entitled to eternal existence. But that does not lead to joy. One who is active, increasing, progressing, who accepts and obeys the gospel law, ever moves into higher zones of existence, and carries others along in his onward course. He receives the gift of eternal life, with its unending conquest, progress, development, and growth. He feels the quivering, thrilling response called joy.[52]

Not all philosophers, however, have been confident that a meaningful life—in this case, eternal progression as the vehicle for deriving meaning and value for existence—is a *sine qua non* for a joyful existence. Leo Tolstoy wrote that, for life to be meaningful, some activity pertaining to life must be worth doing; and it is worth doing only if it makes a permanent difference in the world.[53] However, although we can see evidence for some concrete notions of progress and activity after death in Mormon thought at this time, it is more the *fact* of activity taking place than any sort of particular through which activity is realized. In other words, the simple awareness or understanding that human beings have the capacity for self-directed spiritual and intellectual enlargement is more fundamentally important to the human experience of joy than any specific activity derivable from such a capacity. Philosopher Harry Frankfurt (b. 1929) takes up the same theme, theorizing that life becomes meaningful when we lose ourselves in some particular activity or experience. His idea is that concentration and engrossment in activity intuitively provide meaning to our existence, regardless of the specifics of the activity.[54] Thus, while what we do may be implicitly worth something, what is important is that there is work at all—that there is something, anything, that needs to be done. From the Roberts/Widtsoe point of view, one finds meaning in existence simply because one *can* work and advance, and can do so forever. Thus, John A. Widtsoe confidently writes, "It matters little what tasks men perform in life, if only they do them well and with all their strength. In the eternal plan they are given progressive value."[55]

However, others have argued, along the lines of German thinker Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), that our lives will always lack meaning

because we are never satisfied; either we have not obtained what we have sought; or once we have obtained it, we become bored and dissatisfied with it.[56] Nonetheless, this idea assumes that there is necessarily some object that we must obtain to give our lives meaning. However, it does not seem that there exists or could exist any such object in the universe, the attainment of which guarantees a meaningful existence. The Roberts/Widtsoe answer to this objection is that meaning, within the ever-expanding structure of eternal progression, is performative, not ultimately objective. Eternal progression is the exaltation of the ordinary man or woman, not defined and labeled according to his or her vocation or the "objects" of his or her possession, but given meaning and purpose through capacity to act. Hence, human beings, like God, have the potential for radical ontological transcendence, not simply in transcending the world as immortals but also in transcending the self as gods. Consequently, humans, like God, can be eternally "self-surpassing,"[57] and this essential characteristic of human and divine existence, in Roberts's and Widtsoe's view, is the very essence of a meaningful (and joyful) existence.

There is an essential element of adventure and novelty in the Roberts/Widtsoe cosmology, of which eternal progression serves as the dynamic vehicle and foundation. The idea that the universe can be fully explored, that both God and humankind can reach a limit of experience is wholly unsatisfying. Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), a profoundly innovative contemporary of both Widtsoe and Roberts, wrote, "Progress is always a transcendence of what is obvious."[58] Similarly, Roberts and Widtsoe insisted that reality should not and, indeed, thankfully, could not ever be fully described.[59] For Roberts and Widtsoe, an infinitely transcendent and eternally self-surpassing existence of adventure and new discovery was the essence of a celestial existence.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of their book, *Heaven: A History*, Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang observe that the idea of a progressive, social heaven has survived after the 1930s in only three ways: (1) in contemporary popular culture, (2) in glimpses of the afterlife in near-death experiences, and (3) in Latter-day Saint theology.[60] Protestant ideas of an active heaven were the product of a particular historical moment and did not endure. This cultural observation points to the unique adaptability of eternal progression in LDS theology, though contemporary discourse on eter-

nal progression is also quite distinct from that of the early twentieth century. With the controversial world of polygamy in the distant past, Latter-day Saints once again speak of eternal family, eternal marriage, and eternal progress in the same breath. Nevertheless, the doctrine continues to take on meanings suitable to its proprietors. Where Mormons once spoke of the joy of God's and humankind's unending progression in knowledge, they now speak of eternal families. Where they once discoursed on the eternal activity of progression as necessary for development into godhood, Mormons now speak of the "plan of salvation" or "eternal plan of happiness."[61]

In spite of such drastic changes in LDS doctrine concerning polygamy and priesthood restrictions, eternal progression is a doctrine that has nevertheless remained largely intact. Certainly its connection to eternal marriages and families is a key factor in its longevity, but I have argued that there is also something more—an existential component that provides a possible motivation for Latter-day Saint activity here and in the hereafter. For Mormons who embrace the faith, that component speaks to the possibility of the excitement and thrill of, as B.H. Roberts wrote, "yielding to new thoughts, new vistas, new adventures, new experiences."[62] Eternal progression in Mormon thought allows for the exaltation and qualitative self-transcendence of human beings that are not available in most other theologies. In the complex of denominations in the contemporary Christian universe, this doctrine of LDS theology uniquely echoes Catherine Albanese's description of religion for the Transcendentalists, that "the most salient characteristic of religious reality is that it moves."[63]

Notes

1. "The Grandest Principle of the Gospel: A Symposium," *The Contributor* 16 (1894–95): 610–14. Eight of the ten church leaders surveyed considered eternal progression as at least a candidate for the "grandest" gospel principle, though only six finally gave it that preeminence. The other respondents were Henry W. Naisbitt, T. B. Lewis, David McKenzie, S. W. Jenkinson, George G. Bywater, and Thomas Hull.

2. Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 2d. ed., rev. and enl. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 172. See also Thomas Dick, *Philosophy of a Future State* (Brookfield, Mass.: E&G Merriam, 1830). Though Dick posited that the stars were home to "progressive beings" in various stages of evolution toward perfection (101), his philosophy (which was mostly a theory of metaphysical astronomy) was still quite

distinct from Joseph Smith's system of human beings progressing into individual deities after death.

3. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History,* 300.

4. Carl Mosser, email message to David L. Paulsen, February 2005; used with Paulsen's permission.

5. Charles W. Eliot, *Henry James*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin), 300, quoted in John A. Widtsoe, *Understandable Religion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1944), 35.

6. The scope of this paper is too narrow to adequately describe the notion of "intelligence(s)" in Mormon thought. This concept embodies complex philosophical, theological, historical, and even scientific dimensions. However, for the sake of brevity and clarity, I will use here the definition of B. H. Roberts, which is as precise as any. An "intelligence" in Mormon thought is (1) the individual, uncreated, self-conscious "essence" of each human person, which essence includes freedom of will and the potential for endless enlargement and expansion, and (2) intelligence "en masse" or the general "power" or "force" that emanates from and inheres in dynamic, complex, intelligent entities. Stan Larson, ed., *The Truth, the Way, the Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology: The Masterwork of B. H. Roberts* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 282–83. Generally speaking, when the word "intelligence" is used in Mormon theological discourse, it is often synonymous with "spirit," as in the spirit of a human person. For more expanded treatments on this doctrine, see Blake T. Ostler, "The Idea of Pre-Existence in the Development of Mormon Thought," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 59–78, and especially Truman G. Madsen, "Eternal Man," in *Five Classics by Truman G. Madsen* (Salt Lake City: Eagle Gate, 2001), 3–68, esp. 18–19. In my view, Madsen's exposition of Roberts's philosophy of "eternalism" (the core of which is the doctrine of intelligences) is the best available.

7. Scott Goodwin, "Joseph's Ladder: Principles of Eternal Progression in Three Theological Traditions," in *Archive of Restoration Culture: Summer Fellows' Papers 1997–99* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, 2000), 103–5. Goodwin argues that, though these traditions reject *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing), they favor a model called creation *ex deo* (creation out of God) in which all things emanate from a single, divine essence. Joseph Smith, on the other hand, rejected creation out of nothing in favor of creation *ex materia*, or a creation out of previously existing materials, in which God is organizer rather than originator (104–5).

8. L. Mikel Vause, "Eternal Progression: The Higher Destiny," in *The*

Search for Harmony: Essays on Science and Mormonism, edited by Gene A. Sessions and Craig J. Oberg (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 278.

9. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling, a Cultural Biography of Mormonism's Founder* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 457–58, on the subject of Joseph Smith's detailed cosmological narrative, writes, "No other nineteenth-century religious imagination filled time and space with stories like these."

10. Goodwin, "Joseph's Ladder," 101, quoted in Van Hale, "Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (1978): 211–12.

11. Eugene England, "Perfection and Progression: Two Complementary Ways to Talk about God," *BYU Studies* 29, no. 3 (1989): 35. See also Lisa R. Adams, "Eternal Progression," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:465–66.

12. Boyd Kirkland, "Eternal Progression and the Second Death in the Theology of Brigham Young," in *Line upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine*, edited by Gary James Bergera (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 175.

13. Brigham Young, February 6, 1853, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:90, emphasis mine, quoted in England, "Perfection and Progression," 35.

14. This statement in Kirkland, "Eternal Progression and the Second Death," quotes two Brigham Young addresses from the *Journal of Discourses*, 9:149, 1:349, 352. Young is here describing the ultimate fate of the sons of perdition, the definitive examples in his thought of those who will regress instead of progress. Though the sons of perdition will be included in the universal physical resurrection (D&C 76:17; Alma 11:42–42), it appears that their resurrected bodies are "devoid of glory" in that they do not participate in the celestial, terrestrial, or telestial glorified states immediately following the resurrection. It is therefore theoretically plausible under Young's system that the unglorified body of a son of perdition could "decompose into its native element," if one assumes that it is the glorified state of the body that staves off the effects of death and corruption. However, 1 Corinthians 15:22 and Alma 11:46, among other scriptures, assert immortality for all humans after death due to the resurrection. Alma says of the sons of perdition: "for they cannot be redeemed according to God's justice; *and they cannot die,* seeing there is no more corruption" (Alma 12:18; emphasis mine). Nevertheless, it is clear that the sons of perdition are the only individuals who will experience the "second death," which various scriptures define as a "spiritual death" (Alma 12:16; Hel. 14:18; D&C 29:41). The nature of the second death is not totally clear. The sons of perdition will be cast into the "lake of fire and brimstone" with the devil and his followers and are unique in that they cannot be redeemed

(D&C 76:36–38). In one popular exposition on the second death, Apostle Bruce R. McConkie surmised that the sons of perdition who experience the second death die to spiritual things, being cast out of God's presence forever. However, they cannot be utterly disorganized; they continue to live eternally as resurrected beings or unembodied spirits. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 756. Still, questions remain. Why can they not be redeemed? Is it because God knows that they will eternally reject Christ and His gospel and therefore does not grant them salvation, or is it because they physically and spiritually regress, as Brigham Young believed, into their native element and therefore dissolve as beings capable of repentance and transformation? I will only state here that, although Young's statement appears to be hypothetically plausible, the issue is murky enough to draw speculation from various authorities but no authoritative conclusions have been explicated.

15. Wilford Woodruff, December 6, 1857, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:20, quoted in England, "Perfection and Progression," 38.

16. Susa Young Gates, "The Editor's Department," *Young Woman's Journal* 2, no. 6 (1891): 284.

17. Particularly influential works from these thinkers include Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859; 5th ed., New York: D. Appleton, 1871); Herbert Spencer, *A System of Synthetic Philosophy*, 9 vols. (London: Williams and Northgate, 1862–93); John Fiske, *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy, Based on the Doctrine of Evolution, with Criticisms on the Positive Philosophy* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1874); Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, translated by Arthur Mitchell (1911; rpt., New York: Dover, 1998).

18. Though I unfortunately do not have space to expand upon it here, there is also evidence that the American Progressive movement (fostered by the political ideologies of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson) and the Social Gospel movement in American mainline Christianity—both of which exemplified a culture of exuberance that was typical of this time period—also influenced the LDS development of the idea of eternal and earthly progression. See Armand L. Mauss, "Assimilation and Ambivalence: The Mormon Reaction to Americanization," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 30–67; Thomas G. Alexander, "Between Revivalism and the Social Gospel: The Latter-day Saint Social Advisory Committee, 1916–1922," *BYU Studies* 23 (Winter 1983): 19–39, and his *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

19. John A. Widtsoe, *A Rational Theology* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1937), 25.

20. "Mutual Messages: Provisions for the Doctrine of Eternal Progression," *Improvement Era* 35, no. 2 (December 1931): 661–65.

21. John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations,* arranged by G. Homer Durham (1943; rpt., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 185; emphasis mine. Widtsoe seems to here imply that those in the lower kingdoms of glory lack in some degree the ability to act, in contrast to residents of higher kingdoms of glory whose capacity for activity is somehow enhanced.

22. Ibid., 33.

23. B. H. Roberts, *The Seventy's Course in Theology. Third Year: The Doctrine of Deity* (Salt Lake City: Claxton Press, 1910), 151; emphasis mine.

24. Gottfried Leibniz, *Nouveaux Essais,* 2:21; in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe,* edited by Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962), 6th ser., 6:189, quoted in Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 2d ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 277.

25. McDannell and Lang, *Heaven,* 288. A frequently quoted stanza from "Jerusalem" reads: "Where congregations ne'er break, up, / And Sabbaths have no end." Similarly, Longfellow's "Resignation" reads: "She is not dead, the child of our affection, / but gone unto that school / where she no longer needs our poor protection, / And Christ himself doth rule."

26. Leslie Weatherhead, *After Death* (New York: Abingdon, 1936), 54, quoted in McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 276.

27. McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 283.

28. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*, edited by William H. Gillman et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1969), 7:172, March 9, 1839, "God invents, God," quoted in McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 278.

29. Stan Larson, ed., *The Truth, the Way, the Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology: The Masterwork of B. H. Roberts* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 302.

30. Nels L. Nelson, *The Scientific Aspects of Mormonism; Or: Religion in Terms of Life* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), 217.

31. In addition to a straw-man representation of Protestant eschatology, Mormon authors were also committing the fallacy of composition, declaring that since one denomination—albeit the largest—of Christianity (Catholicism) advocated the changeless, beatific heaven, therefore the whole of the Christian tradition must also do likewise. Perhaps a partial reason for

this approach was the 1902 Roberts-Van Der Donckt debates, in which Roberts and the Catholic Reverend C. Van Der Donckt of Pocatello, Idaho, engaged in a series of debates concerning the nature of God in Catholic and Mormon thought. Nels Nelson actually references the debates in a chapter on his views of the afterlife by inserting Van Der Donckt's description of the beatific vision. Nelson, *Scientific Aspects of Mormonism*, 216. The debates were significant and influential enough to be published in the *Improvement Era* and later in a fuller, more expanded form in a book by Roberts. Blake T. Ostler, *The Attributes of God*, Vol. 1 of EXPLORING MORMON THOUGHT (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2001), 93, for one, considers it Roberts's finest defense of the Mormon faith. Moreover, confusion on the part of Mormon authors may be even more understandable when one considers that virtually the entire Christian world for the most part agreed, following St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, on the nature of God as incorporeal, simple, timeless, impassible, etc., a fact highlighted by the Roberts-Van Der Donckt debates themselves. It was in their notions of heaven that Catholics and Protestants differed—and that only recently, a point perhaps too subtle and fine for Mormons to grasp at that time. For the text of the Roberts-Van Der Donckt debates, see *Improvement Era,* August 1902; for the expanded version, see Roberts, *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1908).

32. Sir Oliver Lodge, *Science and Immortality* (New York: Moffat, Yard, and Co., 1908), 292, quoted in Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, 477.

33. Widtsoe, *Understandable Religion*, 38.

34. Sterling McMurrin, "Introduction: The Mormon Theology of B. H. Roberts," in Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, xxiv.

35. Nels L. Nelson, "Eternal Progression," *Young Woman's Journal* 10, no. 5 (May 1899): 219.

36. James Faulconer, email to Jacob Baker, July 20, 2007.

37. Justin Collings, "Longing for Eternal Restlessness: The Mormon Kingdom in the Spirit World," Paper presented at the 2006 Summer Seminar on Joseph Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, Brigham Young University, photocopy in my possession courtesy of Richard L. Bushman, seminar director.

38. Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation: Force, Grace, and Glory* (Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), 76.

39. William Ulyat, quoted in McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 282–83.

40. However, in a sense, the anthropocentric and family-oriented heaven was not a theological option for Protestantism. Considering their Au-

gustinian and Thomistic understanding of God's nature as timeless, and therefore eternity as timeless (as opposed to the LDS interpretation of eternity as unending time), one couldn't work, have projects, or progress in any way. Such things seem impossible in a timeless realm. My thanks to James Faulconer for elucidating this point.

41. B. H. Roberts, "The Mormon Point of View in Education," *Improvement Era* 2, no. 2 (December 1898).

42. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations,* 185.

43. "Mutual Messages: Provisions for the Doctrine of Eternal Progression," *Improvement Era* 35, no. 2 (December 1931).

44. Mormon eschatology agreed with Protestant progressive eschatology on many points, but it was what Mormonism had to say about *God's* place in the progressive theological framework that radicalized and distinguished it. Consider the following LDS missionary story from 1914: "Elders who have been on missions will, no doubt, confirm the writer's missionary experience in teaching eternal progression. Many were fascinated by such an attitude towards life and growth. In fact, some intelligent, conservative people became enthusiastic over the richer and fuller life this doctrine held out. However, when carrying the principle to its ultimate conclusion, and applying it to God himself, intense opposition was encountered. . . . What! God not at the end of progress! The idea appeared unthinkable." William J. Snow, "'Mormonism' a Dynamic Force," *Improvement Era* 17, no. 6 (April 1914): 533.

45. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, 476.

46. Ibid., 16.

47. William James, *Pragmatism* (1907; rpt., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 121, quoted in Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 536.

48. Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling,* 537, comments on Joseph Smith's theology on this topic, "They [the Mormons under Joseph Smith's leadership] subordinated themselves to the higher power in preparation for assuming that power themselves. The purpose of allegiance and obedience was not order and happiness but training. The subjects of the king were learning to become kings."

49. My thanks again to James Faulconer for an illuminating critique regarding the topics in this section.

50. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life,* 301.

51. Ibid., 91.

52. Widtsoe, *Understandable Religion,* 37–38.

53. Leo Tolstoy, *My Confession, My Religion: The Gospel in Brief* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1899).

54. Harry Frankfurt, "The Importance of What We Care About," *Synthese* 53, no. 2 (November 1982): 259.

55. Widtsoe, *A Rational Theology*, 22.

56. See R. Martin, "A Fast Car and a Good Woman," in *The Experience of Philosophy*, 2d ed., edited by D. Kolak and R. Martin (Belmont, Mass.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1993), 589–95. See also Thaddeus Metz, "The Meaning of Life," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2007 ed., http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2007/entries/life-meaning (accessed February 2008).

57. Ostler, *Attributes of God*, 99.

58. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 1929; corrected ed., David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1978), 9.

59. See Anna Case-Winters, "System and Dynamism in Whitehead's Thought: The Category of the Ultimate and the Concept of God," in *Schleiermacher and Whitehead: Open Systems in Dialogue*, edited by Christine Helmer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 138.

60. McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 307–8. Additionally, Richard Bushman, in *Rough Stone Rolling*, 537, notes that some of its appeal may be in its "Americanness": "Mormons themselves have labeled the doctrine of eternal spirits 'eternal progression,' as if it meant rising ever higher in society, the essence of the American dream. It is the one teaching of Joseph Smith that Americans are most likely to admire."

61. For example, in the "Newsroom" section of the LDS Church's official website {www lds.org}, the phrase "eternal progression" links directly to a separate section of the site entitled, "Plan of Salvation." http://www.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=25ca9c137b69f010VgnVCM100000176f620aRCRD&vgnextchannel=3e0511154963d010VgnVCM1000004e94610aRCRD (accessed February 2008). Additionally, Apostle Joseph B. Wirthlin commented in a 1998 general conference address: "Right now, this very moment, is part of our eternal progression towards returning with our families to the presence of our Father in Heaven." Wirthlin, "The Time to Prepare," *Ensign*, May 1998, 14. LDS discourse on this subject (especially with its renewed emphasis on families and family life) has, in fact, moved a little closer to the contemporary Protestant mainstream in its language and focus. O. Kendall White Jr., *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy: A Crisis Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987).

62. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, 476.

63. Catherine L. Albanese, *Corresponding Motion: Transcendental Religion and the New America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977), 94, quoted in McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 278.

"Rising above Principle": Ezra Taft Benson as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, 1953–61, Part 1

Gary James Bergera

What a strange game is politics. —Ezra Taft Benson[1]

I

Contemplating the 1952 U.S. general elections, David O. McKay, lifelong Republican and president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, eagerly anticipated a Republican sweep. At the news of Dwight D. Eisenhower's decisive win as the thirty-fourth American president, McKay was elated. "In my opinion," the venerable seventy-eight-year-old Church leader recorded, "it is the greatest thing that has happened in a hundred years for our country."[2] The next day, he wrote in a letter to the president-elect, "Your being placed at the head of the United States Government at the time of the present crises in our history . . . is a manifestation of Providential watchfulness over the destiny of this land of America. . . . I pray that Divine guidance may be yours continually as you assume the responsibility of directing the destiny not only of the United States of America but of the entire world."[3]

McKay's faith in the sixty-two-year-old retired five-star U.S. Army general was cemented two weeks later when he learned that Eisenhower wanted to appoint a member of the Church's second-tier Quorum of the

Twelve Apostles as his new Secretary of Agriculture. The LDS prophet knew that the invitation represented an unprecedented honor in Mormon history and a new phase in the acceptance of the million-member church into mainstream American society. He also realized that the appointment would require that he take the extraordinary step of granting the churchman a leave of absence from his full-time ecclesiastical duties.[4]

Arriving home from his office on November 20, 1952, McKay answered a long-distance call from Arthur V. Watkins, Utah's two-term Republican senator. If Ezra Taft Benson, fifty-three years old and serving as an apostle since 1943, were offered a position in Eisenhower's cabinet, would he be allowed to accept? Yes, McKay quickly replied.[5] Only moments earlier, Benson himself had told Watkins: "I'd be glad to try anything President McKay asks me to do."[6] The next morning, Benson ran into McKay as the two men arrived for work at the LDS Church Administration Building in downtown Salt Lake City. "Brother Benson," McKay said, "my mind is clear in the matter. If the opportunity comes in the proper spirit I think you should accept." "I can't believe that it will come," Benson replied. "I've never even *seen* Eisenhower, much less met him or spoken with him." (Both men had originally supported Ohio Senator Robert Taft as their party's 1952 presidential candidate.)[7]

The following day, Benson and a colleague were forty miles south in Provo, preparing to help divide a local LDS stake. While browsing in a downtown clothing store for a suit to fit his six-foot-one-inch tall, 220-pound frame, Benson was told that his wife, Flora, was on the telephone. Eisenhower's office was trying to reach him, she said. "There's really something to it," Benson told himself moments later, concluding "to get off by myself for a while" to "quietly consider a course of action." He drove to the campus of nearby Brigham Young University, where he soon located a vacant office and knelt in prayer. Afterwards, he telephoned McKay, who again stressed that he should "accept if it was a clear offer."[8] For the devout Benson, McKay's counsel was received not simply as friendly advice but as heavenly inspiration.

When Benson finally returned the call, he reached Milton Eisenhower, whom Benson had known when the younger Eisenhower worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the 1930s and who now served as his brother's advisor. Could Benson fly to New York City to meet the President-elect at 2:00 P.M. on Monday, the 24th? Benson said he would be there, then immediately notified McKay, who urged that he leave the

same evening. After meetings, Benson rushed home and caught a plane east departing a little after midnight. Arriving in New York City less than twelve hours later, he spent the rest of the day in his hotel room nursing a new cold.[9]

Meeting first with Milton Eisenhower, Benson learned he was the sole candidate for the cabinet post and that his nomination had been urged personally by Senator Taft and others.[10] Though the outreach to Taft was an expression of political reconciliation, Milton Eisenhower's role in Benson's appointment was presumably the decisive recommendation.[11] The morning's newspapers had already announced Benson's nomination—in Salt Lake City, McKay's pleasure appeared in print that afternoon[12]—so Eisenhower's announcement probably did not come as a complete surprise. Though he worried he might be "expected to rubber-stamp programs" he did not agree with, Benson had already decided: "I would have a rare opportunity to fight effectively for my beliefs as an American." When eventually introduced to President-elect Eisenhower, Benson, much relieved, remembered "lik[ing] him immediately."[13]

Benson began by noting his initial support of Taft and belief that the country would probably be better served by a civilian president. He then cited the need for increased research and more effective marketing of American agricultural products, together with minimal-to-no federal involvement in the actual business of farming: "Farmers should be permitted to make their own decisions . . . with a minimum of government interference." "You'll never be asked to support a program you don't believe in," Eisenhower promised. What about the compatibility of his calling as a Church leader, Benson also wondered.[14] "We have the great responsibility to restore the confidence of our people in their own government," Eisenhower said. "That means we've got to deal with spiritual matters."[15] He then pointed out that he had earlier met David O. McKay, and felt certain McKay would support Benson's appointment.[16] "I didn't want to be President, frankly, when the pressure started," Eisenhower admitted. "*But you can't refuse to serve America.*" McKay's conditions having been met, Benson realized he had no other option but to accept.[17] If Eisenhower wanted him, Benson said, he would "serve for not less than two years—if he wanted me that long."[18] "No true American would refuse a call . . . to serve our country," Benson later commented publicly. "I shall do my best, God being my helper."[19]

II

For the strait-laced, strong-willed Ezra Taft Benson (born August 4, 1899), the call to national service was an unmistakable manifestation of "God's will."[20] Four days later, on November 28, McKay, aided by Second Counselor J. Reuben Clark, placed his hands on the apostle's head and set him apart—a ritual usually reserved for Church callings—as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.[21] "You will have a responsibility, even greater than your associates in the cabinet," McKay prayed,

> because you go . . . as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are entitled to inspiration from on high, and if you so live and think and pray, you will have that divine guidance which others may not have. . . . We bless you, therefore, dear Brother Ezra, that when questions of right and wrong come before the men with whom you are deliberating, you may see clearly what is right, and knowing it, that you may have courage to stand by that which is right and proper. . . . We seal upon you the blessings of . . . sound judgment, clear vision, that you might see afar the needs of this country; vision that you might see, too, the enemies who would thwart the freedom of the individual as vouchsafed by the Constitution, . . . and may you be fearless in the condemnation of these subversive influences, and strong in your defense of the rights and privileges of the Constitution.[22]

However stunned, Benson believed firmly that God's hand had guided him toward his new "calling." He had graduated with honors from BYU in 1926, then earned a master's degree from Iowa State College (Ames) the next year. On September 10, 1926, he had married Flora Amussen, daughter of a well-to-do jeweler and Danish convert in Logan, and the first of their six children was born January 2, 1928, in Salt Lake City. In 1927, they relocated to the small farm in southern Idaho which he and his brother, Orval, had purchased several years earlier. Some eighteen months later, Benson began working full time as a countywide agriculture agent, helping farmers to improve stocks, rotate crops, and organize farm-oriented cooperatives. Soon he was employed by the University of Idaho (Boise) as an extension economist and marketing specialist. In 1933, he helped to organize the Idaho Co-operative Council and became its first secretary, a position he held for the next five years. During this period, he took a leave of absence to enroll in additional graduate classes at the University of California in Berkeley. In 1938, after consulting with the Church's First Presidency (then consisting of Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark, and David O. McKay) and with Flora, Benson agreed to become executive secretary of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, head-

quartered in Washington, D.C. The council represented more than 2 million American farmers and 5,000 farming cooperatives. "I love the co-operative movement," he explained, "I believe in it. It squares with my philosophy of life, my religious philosophy."[23] When, in 1943, he was invited to join another large cooperative association at nearly double his $25,000-a-year salary,[24] Benson again sought the advice of Church officials. Informed instead that he was being called to join the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (at an annual salary of $6,000),[25] Benson quickly resigned his job and soon relocated his young family to Utah.

For the next nine years, he devoted himself full time to the challenging duties facing Christ's newest latter-day emissary. Benson routinely visited the Church's stakes and missions, offering advice, nurturing faith, and superintending LDS growth. He also made certain, as instructed by Church leaders, to continue his support of farming and cooperation, regularly combining both interests at home and during his Church tours away from Salt Lake City.[26] In fact, in addition to his Church assignments, he served as vice-president, trustee, member of the executive committee, and chair of the American Institute of Cooperation (founded in 1925 and composed of 1,500 farmer cooperatives).[27] Because of his "celebrity status," Benson received more non-ecclesiastical speaking invitations during these years than most other LDS officers,[28] and Church leaders evidently valued the worldly cachet of Benson's secular activities.

For Benson, the cooperative movement tapped the very best of human nature, blending in mutually beneficial ways the principles of freedom and self-reliance that he believed found their fullest expression in American capitalism. Benson was convinced that God's direct intervention was evident not only in the founding of the United States as a democratic Christian republic,[29] but in the development of a self-regulating economy based on hard work, individual responsibility, and private ownership. Terming himself a "libertarian," "constitutionalist," and "conservative conservative,"[30] Benson believed that the divine "truths" of the LDS gospel, American Constitutional government, and Western capitalism were intimately intertwined.[31] "A sound agriculture is vital to the national economy," he told Church members in 1945. "Let us not be inclined to run to a paternalistic government for help when every problem arises, but let us attack our problems jointly, and through effective, cooperative effort, solve our problems at home."[32] Benson also subscribed to the anti-Communist rhetoric that marked much of American political discourse during these years. Commu-

nism, he said in 1947, "is a total philosophy of life, atheistic and utterly opposed to all we hold dear."[33] "I'd rather be dead," he insisted, "than lose my liberty."[34] "He is a man," a non-Mormon observer commented, "whose religion elevates the economic interests of propertied men to the level of universal moral principle."[35]

Benson was nothing if not a man of deep-seated, seemingly dogmatic conviction.[36] "My faith is the dominant force in my life," he wrote in 1962.[37] In enunciating that faith, Benson was uncompromising: "These truths will, if you are wise, take precedence in your lives 'over all contrary theories, dogmas, hypotheses or relative-truths [from whatever source] or by whomsoever advocated.'"[38] His belief in the human ability to access God's will circumscribed his behavior, determined his values, and governed his roles as husband, father, and leader.[39] "He deeply believed his commitment to serve his country could only be fulfilled," two of his biographers commented, "by making his actions accountable to God."[40]

At the same time, Benson's cherished convictions also sometimes engendered a rigidness of thought and action—"unrelenting righteousness" both "blunt and unyielding," in the words of two other commentators[41]—that did not always best serve life's complexities. Benson himself described this characteristic as "resolute resistance."[42] "I had this bad habit—I guess you call it bad," he explained, "of laying things on the line economically just as hard and cold as I could based on the facts, so they'd register with people, and not giving them a lot of soft soap, try and build up good will immediately."[43] Following a sermon that he sensed might be controversial, he confided to his diary in April 1952: "If I come in for criticism so be it, I spoke only of principles vital to the future of this nation."[44] For Benson, government involvement in the lives of citizens was justified only when it could be undertaken more efficiently than state, local, or private intervention; and when its effect on the "morale and character of the people," including "our free institution[s], our local government, the home, the school, the church and our other institutions" was demonstrably positive.[45] Generating more controversy than any other member of Eisenhower's cabinet,[46] Benson was predisposed by temperament and experience to ask "advice from no mortal person," an early assistant remembered. "[H]e felt he had supernatural powers."[47]

From the beginning of his tenure, Benson insisted that he had not sought the secretaryship. "I can't imagine anyone in his right mind wanting it," he told BYU students on December 1, 1952, a week after his meet-

ing with Eisenhower. "Because I know something of what it entails; I know something of the crossfires, the pressures, the problems, the difficulties."[48] Yet in accepting the prestigious assignment, Benson was motivated as much by godly patriotic obligation as by religiously fueled secular ambition. He had pursued a path, both before his calling as an apostle and afterwards, that had propelled him to the forefront of the American agricultural industry. "I knew that I was well known and favorably known," he later admitted.[49] In fact, when Thomas E. Dewey ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. presidency in 1948, Benson had been approached about a possible cabinet position—also Secretary of Agriculture.[50] Eisenhower's invitation may have come as a shock, but it was neither wholly unexpected nor entirely unwanted.[51]

III

A man reinvigorated, Benson moved decisively into his new $22,500-a-year Cabinet position (later $25,000),[52] not waiting for nomination hearings or official swearing in. He arranged to have his Church assignments shifted to other apostles, easily cleared the FBI's background investigation,[53] began "prayerfully" gathering a coterie of like-minded associates—some of whom were LDS[54]—and embarked on a whirlwind cross-country tour to assess the needs of America's farmers.[55] Two of his first employees, both age thirty-six and nearly twenty years Benson's junior, were Frederick W. Babbel, Benson's traveling companion during a 1946 LDS relief mission to post-war Europe,[56] and D. Arthur Haycock, former secretary to LDS Church President George Albert Smith. Haycock became Benson's personal secretary, Babbel his administrative assistant.[57] "My husband realizes his limitations," Benson's wife subsequently commented, "and so in his work it is always his desire to surround himself with the very best of counselors."[58]

Babbel later recalled of Benson's invitation: "That night . . . I . . . prayed just as sincerely as I knew how to pray. I told my Heavenly Father that I needed to know definitely. I was not reluctant to go if He was willing to have me do so. The answer came through as clearly as any answer I've received in life—and I've received hundreds of them—'If he wants you, go.' I thanked Him. Then I picked up the telephone and I said to my wife, 'I got the answer; we're leaving.'"[59] One of Benson's first non-LDS appointees, Don Paarlberg, added: "He asked me whether I liked my [current] job . . ., which I said I did. He asked me whether I was happily married. I told him

I was. He asked me whether I was active in church affairs, and I told him I was. Then as I was about to leave, he asked me if I could come on his staff and serve as his economic advisor. I said I wanted some time to think about this. He said, 'Fine, let me know in about two days.'"[60]

Having suggested that the new cabinet's pre-inaugural first meeting begin with prayer, Benson was overjoyed when Eisenhower invited him on January 12, 1953, to offer the invocation. For Benson, "beseeching the Lord for spiritual strength was as necessary . . . as eating or sleeping."[61] "We are deeply grateful for this glorious land in which we live," he paraphrased LDS scripture. "We know it is a land choice above all others, the greatest under Heaven. . . . We thank Thee for the glorious Constitution of this land which has been established by noble men who Thou didst raise unto this very purpose. . . . Help us ever, we pray Thee, to be true and faithful to these great and guiding principles."[62]

The next week, however, Benson was "deeply disappointed" when Eisenhower chose not to begin the cabinet's meeting again with prayer. Had he done something wrong, Benson wondered. That evening, he "broke down and wept aloud" in his small apartment. Five days later, he summoned his courage and sent Eisenhower a letter urging that all cabinet meetings thereafter "be opened with a word of prayer." Eisenhower did not act immediately, looking instead for a practice that would be acceptable to everyone. Then, on the second Friday morning cabinet meeting after Benson's letter, Eisenhower announced that, barring any objections, he would like to start with a moment of silence. "And that's the way it was . . . from that time on," Benson wrote.[63] (Benson made certain that his own departmental staff meetings always began with a vocal invocation—a "custom," he termed it.)[64]

One of Benson's first priorities was taming a massive $730 million federal bureaucracy. Even before assuming office, he began to reorganize his department's twenty agencies, and 8,000 Washington-based employees, into four main divisions. (This also reduced the number of agency heads participating in weekly staff meetings.) Some agencies were combined; some transferred to other departments; and some eliminated. The goal was to reorient Agriculture away from what Benson viewed as interventionist-driven farm policies and toward the department's real mission: improved marketing and better commodity-related education and research. He was convinced "he had to alter the ideological temper of his department and acquire some measure of direction over its vast opera-

tions."[65] "A new administration must be able to choose enough players for its team," he explained; "otherwise, it cannot give the electorate the type of government they voted for."[66]

Collectively, Benson's upper-level appointees "inclined toward a conservative brand of economics and only a few had any practical experience in politics."[67] As expected, Benson's desire to surround himself with similarly oriented undersecretaries and assistants was seen as a purge by some long-term department staff—notably those whose own employment had begun during the previous twenty years of Democratic leadership—as well as by some Republicans looking to reward party faithful. Benson, "unaware of senatorial prerogatives and unmindful of partisan demands," was strictly concerned with "merit and department needs."[68] His refusal—at least, initially—to accommodate patronage prompted one Republican senator to complain privately of Benson's "lack of political savvy." Others pointed more generously to "political inexperience, and possibly bad advice from disloyal subordinates."[69]

Benson tried not to terminate outright the employment of anyone whose services he no longer desired—especially high-profile appointments—preferring instead to arrange for lateral reassignments. But the transition was not always smooth.[70] Fred Babbel, whose personnel-related duties earned him the "lovable" nickname "Hatchet Man," recalled: "Secretary Benson asked me under no circumstances to ever deprive a person of his job or his livelihood without first making an effort to have them placed in another job that would be equal if not better in terms of income and fundamental responsibilities. . . . As far as I know, I never moved a single person without being sure that he had an equal if not better job in terms of livelihood."[71]

While Benson favored close past associates—which included LDS Church members—for senior advisory and administrative positions,[72] he also sometimes acted, according to Babbel, as if membership in the Church were a detriment: "He leaned over backwards not to show them any kind of favoritism or special privilege. He did not want to feel beholden to them in any respect, and this caused some people to wonder because he seemed actually to discriminate against those of his own faith rather than favoring them in positions of the department."[73]

"He regard[ed] his ecclesiastical responsibilities [as being] of such an important nature," Babbel continued,

> that he wouldn't want to ever have to compromise even in the least, under

> any circumstances, because of friendship or anything else [regarding] that relationship. So he [could] be very friendly to those who [weren't] close to him, but to the people who work[ed] directly with him he [was] very, very businesslike. . . . [T]his caused him to be a little overly severe in his normal desired relationships with his own people because he didn't want to establish a relationship that would make them feel that they could w[h]eedle in and ask for special responsibilities or special favors or something like that.[74]

In conjunction with the reorganization and new hirings, Benson's office also issued a memorandum regarding his expectations of all department employees. The generally benign statement read, in part: "The people of this country have a right to expect that everyone of us will give a full day's work for a day's pay."[75] This one sentence was immediately interpreted by some as proof that Benson believed "the Department was filled with loafers and that we were going to crack down on them."[76] Benson insisted that the statement was not intended as criticism (and later commented on having to learn that "every word needs to be twice weighed").[77] But the damage had been done, the incident giving rise to the belief that Benson was focused on perception, not on people. Babbel remembered:

> His first press secretary . . . wrote out the first press release from the department in which he quoted Secretary Benson as having said, among other things, "I expect an honest day's work for an honest day's pay." And the press immediately picked this allegation up as being [from] a man who was critical and caustic of the people who were working in agriculture and that he was chastising them or trying to put them in line . . . Secretary Benson . . . was embarrassed that it was put out under his name as an official thing that had been done, and, in a sense, so far as his effectiveness in the department with the regular line employees who really didn't know him as a person, he lost his battle the first day.[78]

To demonstrate the secretary's warmth, Babbel thought that Benson should personally shake the hand of every employee at least once. Benson agreed. However, when others urged that Benson ask employees to come to work early to meet him, Babbel protested that this would create more problems. Babbel's fears proved true; and when the feeling among some employees became "more bitter than ever because . . . here again was evidence of a man that you had to do his bidding," the plan was dropped. Though Benson had been able to meet about a third of his employees, the experience "left an indelible mark on the people," Babbel noted.

> There had been sufficient damage done that there were nice little ways in

> which they could divert this or undercut this and cause things to happen in a way that did not always reflect to his credit. . . . He still felt that if people could really get to know him that he could somehow ride over it, but, through the years, there were many things said perhaps in the department or leaked from the department that would tend to try and build up a wrong kind of picture of the man.[79] . . . [I]f they had gotten to really know the man, they would have found that he was probably one of the greatest Americans who has ever lived.[80]

Benson usually arose by 5:00 A.M. each day, devoted an hour or more to prayer, meditation, and memo-dictating (sometimes referred to by department employees as "epistles from the Apostle"), and was in his office by 7:30 or 8:00 A.M. At first, he tended to put in fifteen- to sixteen-hour days, six days a week.[81] Often he could be found praying. "For the Benson machine," *Time* magazine reported, "prayer is the basic fuel." "He spends as much time on his knees as he does on his feet," one associate observed. Benson also removed all ash trays from his and adjacent offices—or converted them into containers for paper clips and other small objects—and by his example discouraged smoking in departmental meetings.[82] And he tried not to be photographed holding any glass that looked as if it might contain alcohol.[83] In addition, he made certain that the temperature in his office almost never exceeded 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Babbel explained: "When people came in there if it was a warm room they would just relax and be comfortable. If it was cool, they tended to want to get their business over with and get out. And he enjoyed a cooler room anyhow. He had made this a practice in his life to keep his room slightly on the cool side so people would be more interested in trying to get their business over with and move out."[84]

Benson also posted two small signs in his office. One, a quotation attributed to Abraham Lincoln, read, according to Babbel: "I will never do that which I feel to be wrong even though it may be a means of helping me achieve that which I feel to be right."[85] The other, and better known, was attached to the marble base of a pen set usually "in full view of all who stood before his desk": "O God give us men with a mandate higher than the ballot box."[86] The mottoes served as constant reminders of Benson's guiding philosophy and as gentle warnings of what guests could expect—a commitment to principles over politics.

Benson learned over time to build support for the implementation of new policies, thereby endowing his views with the weight of consensus. J. Earl Coke, one of his non-LDS assistants, later asserted, with some frus-

tration, that while he agreed with Benson's "fundamental philosophy," Benson did not always use staff counsel in seeking advice for those departments for which Coke was responsible.[87] Babbel, in contrast, remembered that Benson sometimes could be too collaborative:

> I believe at first he found it rather difficult to make decisions. He was so anxious to make the right decision in every case. He is a man of very high principle and he felt that every decision should be based on principle and not on expedience in any way. So, he arranged to have advisory groups in every one of the commodity areas. . . . When they would come up with [a] final answer, which was acceptable to him, he would usually phrase his decision on the basis that, I have brought together the best men I could in this area; it has been their judgment that we should move in this direction. I endorse what they have said and we will move in this direction. But it frequently seemed to many people to be a way of trying to avoid making a direct decision on his own. . . . Undoubtedly, there were some decisions made which were, perhaps, not popular and there may have been some that were made that were in error. This will always happen regardless of who you are if you make decisions.[88]

Benson also made certain to try to commemorate privately the weekly meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve back in Salt Lake City. Babbel reported:

> Secretary Benson always made it a practice, which he continued throughout his eight years, that since these men would always use Thursdays as a fast day, a day on which they went without their meals until after they had had their meeting, he too not only observed the fast on Thursdays, but he would always, wherever he was, when the ten o'clock rolled around out in Salt Lake—which would be twelve o'clock here—he would always arrange to have on his schedule fifteen or twenty minutes when he could go into the room by himself and kneel in prayer and join his feelings with the people who were making decisions that affect the Church. He did this wherever he was, on travels, on trips, wherever it was.[89]

"The thing that used to amaze me about the Secretary," Babbel summarized,

> was that his average load, daily load, of decisions that had to be made—program and policy decisions—ran close to 100 a day that had to go out under his signature. Yet he was traveling between 300,000 to 450,000 miles a year all over the world. . . . Oftentimes he was not in the department for two weeks at a time, and by the time he would come back he would have handled anywhere from 200 to 1,000 decisions. We had to try and brief him someway so he would know what he [we] had done in his absence. . . . And it taught me one thing: that people at the high administration levels

> with this kind of problem facing them in terms just of the sheer number of decisions that they have to make each day and for which they are responsible without even knowing what they have decided, puts them in a very, very bad light.[90]

"In most Cabinet posts, and especially in agriculture," Benson echoed, "few decisions are made with adequate time for reflection, for checking [with] all interested and responsible parties. You do what you can, what there is time for. But it's a steady round of decisions and emergencies; emergencies and decisions."[91]

IV

When hearings regarding Benson's nomination began in mid-January 1953, some senators wanted to know if he anticipated any major revision of existing U.S. farm policy. Benson's supporters had already been quoted publicly as saying that he would seek "a return to a free market, with gradual discontinuance of high support programs"; and Benson himself had asserted: "I don't think any real American wants to be subsidized."[92] But Benson also knew that, during the 1952 campaign, Eisenhower had insisted that price supports—specifically 90 percent of parity for six basic commodities (corn, cotton, peanuts, rice, tobacco, and wheat)—would remain unchanged through 1954. To have suggested otherwise would have been to "court disaster."[93] Though Benson believed Eisenhower's promise had been a "mistake,"[94] he agreed to abide by the president's pledge. As for adjustments after 1954, he declined "to be drawn into specific commitments about what I would do or recommend in hypothetical situations."[95] (Benson already knew what he wanted to achieve and did not want the disclosure to cloud his appointment.) Six days later, on January 21, 1953, Benson was officially installed as the fifteenth U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.[96]

Benson inherited a federal farm policy that had, over the past two decades, been crafted to achieve greater price stability for America's farmers "by limiting . . . the flow of products onto the market."[97] In practical terms, the government's attempts to control production, including price supports and other programs (such as acreage allotments), had become "tantamount to a form of national management for agriculture."[98] During the early 1930s, the federal government had restricted production; by the decade's end, it had encouraged over-production. Consumer demand had peaked—with prices and income rising dramatically—during World War II and the Korean War. However, by the time Benson took office, de-

clining prices resulting from the previous decade's over-production had reached "statutory levels of price support,"[99] and Benson was legally required to enforce the now artificially high prices, which he and others believed functioned primarily to subsidize farming inefficiencies.

The prices the federal government paid for farm products reflected a balance between the prices farmers received for their goods and the prices they paid to purchase goods.[100] "Parity" was the "balance" price that originally prevailed for farmers during the early 1910s. "The price of wheat, for example," Benson explained, "would be 100 per cent of parity when the selling price of a bushel of wheat would buy as much of other goods as it did in 1910–14."[101] "In 1914," a wheat farmer illustrated, "I could take a bushel of wheat to town, sell it, and use the proceeds to buy a good shirt. I figure I should be able to buy the same shirt for a bushel of wheat today."[102] Over the years, the government's purchasing programs had resulted in the stockpiling of huge amounts of agricultural products—worth some $1.3 billion in 1952.[103] These growing reserves were then stored (possibly indefinitely), sold at a loss (because of the artificially high prices paid), or destroyed (when no longer consumable). If warehoused, they required ever larger storage facilities and the paying of ever-increasing rents and other fees—$1 billion annually in 1952.[104] The result was a government-subsidized cycle of over-production, often by marginal farmers—numbering an estimated 1.5 million[105]—who greeted any change in supports as a tangible threat to an already precarious way of life.

Shortly after taking office, Benson oversaw the distribution of a 1,200-word official "General Statement" on farming. As much a personal testimony of the "eternal principle" of freedom as a secular pronouncement of U.S. policy,[106] the declaration was "influenced to some extent," Benson explained, "by an *old-fashioned philosophy* that it is impossible to help people permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves. It is a philosophy that believes in the supreme worth of the individual as a free man, as a child of God, that believes in the dignity of labor and the conviction that you cannot build character by taking away man's initiative and independence."[107]

Benson's blunt statement put America's farmers on notice that government supports were intended as temporary mechanisms to help protect and stabilize free markets, and not as permanent relief or subsidies. Federal programs should aim "to obtain in the market place full parity prices of farm products and parity incomes for farm people so that farm-

ers will have freedom to operate efficiently and to adjust their production to changing consumer demands in an expanding economy."[108] For Benson, "Any infringement upon personal liberty . . . would in the long run stifle initiative, destroy character, and demoralize the people."[109] Toward that goal, Benson proclaimed, the Department of Agriculture would henceforth support expanded research and education programs; emphasize domestic and foreign markets; and—most controversially—push for the elimination of all federal subsidies. Directly impacted were small family farms—the very institutions Benson himself believed formed the "backbone" of American agriculture and "bulwark of our free way of life."[110] The political value of small family farms was greater than their steadily decreasing numbers indicated;[111] and ironically, given his own advocacy-driven experiences in Idaho farming, Benson now found himself having "to play the role of the hard-hearted administrator seeking the welfare of all agriculture."[112]

In his first public speech as secretary, Benson continued his warning cry. To cattlemen facing falling prices, he announced in February 1953 that they should no longer expect to rely on government help, insisting that he "would not be stampeded into any unwise action by present price declines."[113] ("The only really effective way to get out of the beef mess," he told one critic, "[is] to eat our way out."[114]) "*We need a nationwide repentance* to rid this land of corruption," he also proclaimed. "We must return to the fundamental virtues that have made this nation great. . . . May we have the courage to stand up and be counted to stand for principle, for those noble concepts and ideals which guided the founding fathers in the establishment of this great land."[115] "It was a matter of conscience," Benson's biographers observe, "that farmers be educated as to where their real interests lay."[116] Such religion-infused rhetoric, however, stressed what Benson viewed as farming's unhealthy elements and, for many listeners, not only blamed farmers and ranchers themselves—ostensibly, the inefficient—for their predicament, but presumed to lecture them on patriotism and loyalty to country.

Not unexpectedly, Democrats—and some farm-state Republicans—accused Benson of repudiating longstanding national policy. The backlash caught the new secretary off guard. "The roof fell in," he remembered. "There was a depth of feeling, a sacredness attached to the existing price support programs far greater than I had imagined. . . . I felt pretty low."[117] Fortunately, he was relieved to discover that Eisenhower agreed

with him. "I believe every word you said," the president consoled, then tempered this support with the comment, "but I'm not sure you should have said it quite so soon."[118] Others concurred that Benson's statements needed to be "couched in more acceptable" terms.[119] In fact, one of Benson's ecclesiastical seniors, J. Reuben Clark, frankly urged him "to get better acquainted with Congressmen, and try to work it out so that they would believe, the Congressmen would think they were proposing things that he wanted, rather than that he was proposing them"; and "to submit everything to the White House, and to secure approval for all announcements of policy which he made, not in a general way, but specifically." Clark, a former federal bureaucrat himself, also worried that Benson "was traveling too much; that a good deal could happen in the Home Office while he was away"; and that "he was talking too much."[120] Clark's advice fell on deaf ears, as Benson was convinced his "back-breaking" speaking tours were "essential" to his program.[121] "By being such an outspoken critic," his biographers note, "the Secretary made it difficult for himself when he [later] faced Congress with legislative proposals."[122]

In mid-1953, Benson announced he was tackling a sweeping review of federal farm policy, insisting "it has been undertaken without a preconception of what it should reveal."[123] He was speaking of the future of the U.S. government's various programs, not the elimination of price and other supports. "Agriculture needed 90 per cent of parity supports about as much as an athlete needs a strait jacket," he quipped.[124] Still, many congressmen responded with alarm, convinced that the fledgling bureaucrat—"a lamb among a pack of wolves," according to J. Reuben Clark—should have first met with congressional farm bloc representatives to appraise the acceptability of his proposed policies.[125] Renewed rumors of Benson's departure were quickly refuted by Republican and administration supporters.[126] With the establishment of a broadly constituted, eighteen-member National Agriculture Advisory Commission, Benson hoped to fashion "a more positive image of his leadership" and "build a groundswell of bipartisan support for future programs by calling for unity."[127] More importantly, David O. McKay reassured him by letter: "Your Agriculture policy is sound. Political dem[a]gogues seek to undermine your clear thinking. Loyal citizens are with you. Hold to your standards. God bless and guide you!"[128] Benson showed some weariness in his reply: "The days are difficult. . . . We go from one emergency and one fight into another."[129]

For example, just as he was able to point to some preliminary successes—a reorganized department, a fully staffed Advisory Commission, the granting of special loans and purchases of government stocks at reduced prices, the selling abroad of more than 40 million bushels of wheat, and the securing of increased storage space—Benson learned that his department was also beginning to incur large operating deficits: an estimated $35 million by 1955. Much of this sum had been incurred by funding research into new uses for agricultural products. He responded by trying to shift the costs for some federal programs to states receiving such aid as well as by cutting programs that could, he believed, be addressed more effectively locally.[130] "What we need," he told Eisenhower, "is some means of obtaining an understanding and acceptance of the principle of greater reliance on local effort."[131] But expenditures resulting from acts of God, such as droughts which periodically devastated portions of the country, proved to be more responsive to federal intervention than to local fiscal restraint.[132]

"Except for the President," Benson lamented to concerned Mormons toward the end of his first year in office,

> I am assured that no man in public life has a heavier responsibility at the present time [than I]. I feel the weight of it very keenly. The cross fires, pressures and political maneuvering associated with the office make the burden almost unbearable at times. I know that I have the faith and prayers of millions of people who are hoping and praying that the philosophies and principles which I am trying to advocate will prevail.
>
> Of course, the Church is on trial. This emphasizes the importance of all of us living our religion fully and maintaining every standard of the Church. Only in this way can you be of your greatest help.
>
> I hope you will not become unduly depressed when you read items deeply critical of me and my activities. This seems to be a part of the office and will be so, particularly during the ensuing year, which I feel confident, will be a crucial one and one fraught with political chicanery and political pressure to an unusual degree.[133]

V

Facing 1954, Benson knew it "was going to take a considerable amount of White House leadership to secure legislative support" for his reforms.[134] His penchant for sometimes taking sudden, seemingly "drastic" action without laying the groundwork with members of Congress or the administration—one of J. Reuben Clark's concerns—underscored what some observers insisted was an uninformed naivete about "the ways

of Washington" that both threatened to derail his momentum and to compromise unintentionally U.S. policy in other areas of national interest.[135] For his part, Benson saw such action—in this particular instance, the lowering of supports for butter—as decisive and necessary. "I would be appreciative," Eisenhower aide Sherman Adams cautioned him, "if you would have those in your Department cooperate more fully with the standard operating procedure."[136]

Benson's farm policy, which Eisenhower presented to Congress on January 11, 1954, was a "carefully constructed compromise" balancing a hard-line drive for lower price supports with the administration's politically nuanced advocacy of "gradualism."[137] It proposed, in part, that after 1954, federal price subsidies be slowly adjusted to reflect supply, thereby obtaining for farmers "greater stability of income." Then, effective January 1, 1956, supports on agricultural commodities would be based on "modernized parity"—reflecting the past decade's prices instead of those from 1910–14—with allowances made for incremental shifts from "old" to "modern" by permitting moves of up to 5 percentage points per year,[138] with supports and adjustments varying according to commodity. The intent, Eisenhower explained, was to reduce production and to stimulate consumption to the general benefit of "all 160,000,000 of our people," and not principally the agriculture sector.[139]

Immediately, Benson embarked on a countrywide speaking tour to drum up support, often addressing audiences he remembered as being latently hostile.[140] He announced: "I am unalterably opposed to programs that substitute government aid for reasonable self-help," insisting that success not be measured according to a "political applause meter."[141] He knew that small farmers could be hurt but was adamant that "most of agriculture's present problems can be met through increased research and education and improved marketing methods."[142] Benson's usual strategy was "to predict dire consequences . . . unless administration proposals were adopted immediately and in their entirety."[143] The need for such reform seemed obvious: The old parity system encouraged overproduction, diminishing markets, and ballooning storage costs. "I am fearful," Benson told the Senate Agriculture Committee in April 1954, "that if we do not heed the storm warning now on the horizon many positive gains in the field of agricultural legislation will be swept away."[144] Predictably, his program received a cool reception from most farm states and their representatives—Republicans and Democrats alike. Their response was to portray

Benson "as an enemy of the farmer."[145] Benson held his ground. "It's easy to keep calm," he told readers of *American Magazine,* "if you have inner security and peace of mind. . . . I try to do the thing I believe to be right and let the chips fall where they will."[145] Still, he took at least some of the opposition personally. "We are all our Father's children," he later wrote, "and as such we must love all men. I think I do. But at times I love some more than others."[146]

When Congress ultimately decided against lowering price supports, Eisenhower joined Benson in arguing the administration's case publicly, insisting that a transition to more flexible price supports would not bankrupt American farmers. "I know," Eisenhower asserted (with Benson concurring), "that what is right for America is politically right."[147] Farm states were not so sure, however, agreeing in principle with the notion of incrementalism but arguing for a more gradual implementation. As expected, Benson opposed any compromise, whereas Eisenhower was "prone to take half a loaf rather than none." Eisenhower knew that support in Congress was building to maintain parity at 90 percent and decided instead to settle for ranges from 82.5 percent to 90 percent, rather than 75 percent to 90 percent. The compromise passed and was signed into law on August 28, 1954.[148]

"We have had a weak and vacillating leadership," an annoyed Benson complained. "There is too much effort, too much action based on expediency and not enough on principles, eternal principles, which constitute the very foundation of all we hold dear as a great Christian nation."[149] Later, he reported, more judiciously:

> It had always been my characteristic to determine an objective and then drive directly at it, with no detours. But one day the President talked about this characteristic of mine and the difficulties it engendered when applied to political realities.
>
> The President took a pad of paper and with a black pencil marked a bold X at the top of the page. At the bottom, he drew a rough square. "Ezra," said he, "in the military you always have a major objective. This X is the objective. Here are our forces," pointing to the square. "Now, it might seem that the simplest thing to do is to go straight toward the objective. But that is not always the best way to get there. You may have to move to one side or the other. You may have to move around some obstacle. You may have to feint, to pull the defending forces out of position. You may encounter heavy enemy forces, and temporarily have to retreat. There may be some zigs and zags in your course as you move toward the objec-

> tive." I nodded. "That may have to be the way you work at this farm problem."
>
> I was thinking of General Ike's lesson in tactics when I agreed to the compromise, if necessary, on the level of support in order to get the principle of flexibility established.[150]

"While our principles have remained unchanged for a hundred years," Eisenhower explained, "the problems to which these principles must be applied have changed radically and rapidly."[151]

The Agriculture Act of 1954—which Benson credited with helping to "break" an obdurate "farm bloc"[152]—exempted $2.5 billion of stockpiled commodities from the calculation of federal price supports, introduced flexible parity to begin in 1955, and mandated that incremental parity take effect in 1956 until a transition to modern parity could be achieved.[153] In addition, the Department of Agriculture received $20 million more for 1955 than it had for 1954, this despite overall cuts in the federal budget totaling $12 billion. "All in all," Benson's biographers suggest optimistically, "rural America had been treated quite favorably by this legislation."[154] In his speeches, Benson was upbeat: "A new direction has been set toward greater responsibility and freedom for agriculture."[155] Yet he also found it impossible to suppress his own tendency toward paternalism: "The problems of agriculture cannot be solved through political hocus-pocus—through a government handout here and there—through this or that pressure group."[156]

To some, Benson seemed heartless. "You ask about my advice to farmers who face losing their homes, equipment, and life savings," he commented. "If I were in that condition, I would check closely to see if I was operating as efficiently as possible. . . . If this still did not prove satisfactory and I had a small farm that did not require my full attention, I would attempt to supplement my income through outside work."[158] Such simplistic, if well-intended, advice did not make Benson's job easier, or the opposition less vocal; and he began to wonder about his continuing value to the administration. But when, toward the end of 1954, he reminded Eisenhower he had originally agreed to serve for two years, the President was emphatic: "When you leave . . . I will leave."[159]

Central to Benson's plan for decreasing surpluses was maximizing sales overseas. When Benson took office, U.S. farm exports were at $2.8 million, a seven-year low.[159] With the passage of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act in mid-1954, the administration was au-

thorized to sell surpluses for foreign currencies at losses of up to $700 million annually; to sell to friendly (i.e., non-Communist) nations at costs not to exceed $300 million during a three-year period; to distribute to distressed regions within the United States under certain conditions; and to acquire by barter products necessary for national security. Implementation devolved upon Benson and Harold Stassen (U.S. Director of Foreign Operations), with oversight by Clarence Francis (a former Eisenhower consultant). To no one's surprise, the "task of getting rid of surpluses . . . was a very involved and complicated process." Foreign currencies "had to be spent within the country making the purchase"; sales involving bartering or trading, preferential prices, or give-aways "tended to disrupt the normal channels of international trade"; while "selling below the world market price or invading territory traditionally belonging to another country was explicitly prohibited in the General Agreements on Trade and Tariffs (of which the U.S. was a signatory)."[160]

Because of the "monumental" challenges of disposing of crops long priced too expensively for world markets, Benson determined that "extraordinary" effort was required; and in 1955, he embarked on a trade mission to Latin America, Canada, and Europe.[161] He concluded he was "going to have to fight for markets and not be intimidated by retaliatory threats of import quotas."[162] (McKay thought that Benson at this time was "the strongest man in President Eisenhower's Cabinet."[163]) Within the administration, however, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles worried that Benson's approach to trade—which might be perceived as dumping—would alienate some countries. He consequently "pressed for a lenient trade policy which yielded if not outright forfeited markets to our allies and the non-aligned nations."[164] Given the competing goals, Agriculture "often found itself at odds" with State.[165] "We are not engaging in any cut-throat race for markets," Benson said, trying—unsuccessfully—to calm Canadian officials in mid-1955, "but there is no reason why we should not set an example for the world of friendly competition."[166] He also promised equally skeptical Europeans: "(1) we will compete fairly; (2) we will stress quality; and (3) we will seek mutually profitable deals."[167] Benson's assurances failed to convince, and countries lodging formal complaints regarding U.S. dumping included Australia, Burma, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Thailand, and Uruguay.[168]

Without question, the largest untapped foreign market for U.S. products was Communist countries.[169] Although both Benson and

Dulles were reluctant to trade with Communist regimes, they knew that a too-strict application of U.S. policy could be counter-productive to American interests. For example, when America refused to sell wheat—its most stockpiled commodity—to Poland, Polish leaders instead purchased it from Canada. Yugoslavia, after being turned down, bought from Russia, even though U.S. policy encouraged rapprochement.[170] As a result, the administration came to embrace the principle of "net advantage," believing that the United States gained "more by selling to Communist nations than by refusing to."[171] Benson opposed strengthening the economies of Communist countries; but bowing to pragmatism—as well as to U.S. farmers—he offered no public criticism of the new policy. After all, his biographers note, he wanted "desperately to get rid of domestic surpluses and this turn-about . . . would soon open up new markets heretofore sealed off."[172] Still, some congressmen complained that Benson favored sales over resisting Communism.[173]

As if to emphasize his department's anti-Communist credentials, Benson in mid-December 1954 announced that Agriculture would not be retaining Wolf Ladejinsky, a lateral transfer from State. Ladejinsky, an expert in Asian land reform, had entered U.S. government employ in 1935. Benson's initial reason for firing him was that the Russian Jewish immigrant was not sufficiently skilled but later asserted that he was also a security risk. When Ladejinsky's supporters protested, a public relations "hurricane" ensued. Soon it became known that Benson had relied on the advice of two aides, both of whom, according to historian Mary S. McAuliffe, had made "errors in procedure and judgment in handling the case." In particular, Milan D. Smith,[174] Benson's new executive assistant, had "inaccurately and incompletely briefed Benson, by furnishing him an inaccurate and incomplete summary of Ladejinsky's case file." Smith also wrote the announcement of Ladejinsky's termination "without a prior USDA investigation" and "circulated an anti-Semitic letter . . . as 'classic' evidence of what 'thinking people' believed about the Ladejinsky case." Though he emphatically disavowed any anti-Semitism, Benson refused to consider that his aides—both of whom were LDS—could be mistaken. Less than a month later, Eisenhower intervened to secure Ladejinsky's employment elsewhere in the government. Eventually, Benson retracted—but never repudiated—his claim that Ladejinsky was a security risk.[175]

As the Ladejinsky affair wound down, Benson returned to championing expanded research. At the time, industrial uses accounted for only

7 percent of the total quantity of American farm products produced.[176] The basic components of most agricultural commodities are cellulose, starch, sugar, oils, and protein; and Benson decided to authorize contracts with private industry to "(1) [develop] commercial uses for dialdehyde starches; (2) [manufacture] paper products from cereal starches; (3) [find] uses for wheat glutens; and (4) [extract] substances from grain for the making of resins, plasticizers, and chemicals." He also supported "seeking new uses for carbohydrates, dried whole milk, and cotton," together with "raising such new and exotic crops as bamboo, kenaf (for twine), jojoba (for wax), safflower (for oil), sesame, pistachio nuts, sunflowers, and high amylose corn for starch."[177] But some administration officials believed that he should have relied even more heavily on the private sector, and expressed concerns when annual expenditures for research consistently exceeded appropriations. More money, they worried, was being spent on "developing more productive varieties of seeds, finding better fertilizers, discovering new pesticides, and improving cultivation techniques" than on finding new uses.[178]

Benson's efforts, especially at improving farming methods, actually helped to "create more surpluses—not to find ways to dispose of them."[179] "I knew how a ship captain must feel as he watches his badly leaking vessel take water," he remembered. "Surpluses had become the number-one problem in U.S. agriculture. No real hope of improving farm income was in sight until the surpluses could be liquidated."[180] Benson quickly came to appreciate that more concrete results were needed—"there simply is no easy way to unload a surplus"[181]—and by 1955 also admitted that "no administrator in government could function without taking cognizance of political cross-currents." In practical terms, this meant "seeking to placate certain segments of the farm population"[182]—in other words, compromise or, as Benson now ruefully quipped, "rising above principle."[183]

VI

Knowing that as Republicans prepared for the 1956 general elections "the farm situation has worsened while we have been in office,"[184] Eisenhower directed Benson to take "temporary or specific action" to "meet any current emergency with which the American farmer and his family are faced." In other circumstances, Benson would have "resisted any thought of allowing pure politics to enter into his decision-making." However, Eisenhower's instruction was not a request, and Benson was a

mostly loyal foot soldier. After consulting with staff, he responded by proposing a "retirement plan" to remove arable land from cultivation and transfer it to a federal "Soil Bank." Thus, surpluses would be "prevented by bringing commodity production into adjustment with market demands."[185] *"We would use the surplus to use up the surplus"* was how Benson expressed it.[186]

Though the idea was not new, Benson's proposal centered on the concepts of "acreage" and "conservation" reserves. Under Benson's plan, American farmers would be paid for productive acres taken out of cultivation and deposited in acreage reserves at rates approximately one-half of what they normally received from the government for their crops, usually corn, cotton, rice, and wheat. Preliminary estimates placed the cost at $455–$650 million annually. Lower yielding land could be placed in conservation reserves. Estimates here were reportedly more difficult to make, but "it was obvious that this type of program would cost substantial sums of money."[187] Benson insisted that acreage reserves was strictly a "short-term emergency program . . . intended to hit the surplus a mighty blow."[188] He knew the Soil Bank was far from ideal;[189] but, his biographers point out, he "was under White House pressure to find a way to help farmers financially while simultaneously solving the dilemma of overproduction."[190]

As he recuperated from a minor heart attack, Eisenhower in early 1956 responded to renewed calls for a return to 90 percent parity by stressing that retiring land from cultivation would help to prevent the accumulation of new surpluses.[191] Benson worked to convince himself and others that the program, in fact, complemented his own drive for flexible-to-no price supports. He wanted "passage of a Soil Bank without any encumbrances."[192] What Congress eventually handed him and the administration, however, was a partisan-friendly "omnibus measure with many attractive but costly vote-getting features."[193] ("The two times when people are apt to be most unstable," Benson observed, "are when they are in love and when they are running for office."[194]) Most distressingly, in Benson's view, the bill "surreptitiously returned price supports back to 90 per cent of parity."[195] "In a democracy such as ours," one of the administration's congressional supporters countered, "we must always compromise."[196]

Benson, disgusted by the strong-arming, again contemplated resigning.[197] Despite some staff support for the bill, Eisenhower was disappointed as well and responded that he would have to veto it: "In the long

run it would have hurt all farmers."[198] He then "let it be known" that he would be willing to compromise on parity, intimating that while he could not support a return to 90 percent, he would not insist on 75 percent, but would allow it to remain at 82.5 percent. When the revised bill was finally signed into law, Eisenhower believed the Soil Bank was "rich with promise" for "improving our agriculture situation."[199] The bill authorized a Soil Bank for three years, with $750 million for acreage reserves and $450 million for conservation reserves. Approximately half a million farmers deposited 11 million acres in the acreage reserve and about 1.5 million acres in the Conservation reserve.[200] As it turned out, however, the Soil Bank passed too late in the year to affect production levels significantly for 1956.[201]

Although hopeful about the Soil Bank,[202] Benson was dismayed at Eisenhower's concession on price supports. "This was the first, and I guess the only time that I was really disappointed in the President," he wrote in his memoirs. "His veto was an act of raw political courage. Why negate it in part by putting off the inevitable dropping of support levels? He did it, I knew, out of good motivation; because he feared there might be no protective legislation enacted at all that year for farmers. And he did it, too, because he believed in the gradual approach."[203]

Stumping for the Republican Party that fall,[204] Benson tried to position himself as a "rational reformer," pointing out "the weaknesses of the price support system which had frozen production into uneconomic patterns by ignoring new consumer preferences and market demands." However, opponents portrayed him as a "callous businessman interested only in serving large landowners or big corporations."[205] While many economists favored flexible supports, their views "could not compete with the oversimplified political rhetoric of [Benson's] detractors."[206] In the end, Eisenhower's considerable popularity returned him to office,[207] but Republican support in six Midwestern farm states was slipping.[208] And Democrats gained slightly greater control of both Houses. "The election proved one thing," Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn (D-Texas) observed, "and that is that the people like and want President Eisenhower, but they do not like or want the Republican party." Benson may have genuinely believed that the "headlines in agriculture are not all bad,"[209] but a less partisan analysis would have foreseen a second term as turbulent as the first.

[Part 2 follows in the winter 2008 issue.]

Notes

1. Ezra Taft Benson, *Cross Fire: The Eight Years with Eisenhower* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962), 212.

2. David O. McKay, Diary, November 5, 1952, photocopy, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

3. McKay, letter to Eisenhower, November 6, 1952, copy in McKay, Diary, November 6, 1962. At Eisenhower's inauguration, McKay commented that the new administration "is the turning point in United States, if not in world history." Quoted in "Pres. McKay Hails Ike as Good Omen," *Deseret News,* January 22, 1953, clipping in McKay, Diary, January 18–24, 1953. Two years later, Eisenhower invited McKay to join him at one of the president's informal men-only "stag dinners." "I was thrilled with it," McKay recalled, "just to be there in the headquarters of the nation which Destiny has placed at the head of the world." McKay, Diary, April 15, May 7–12, and May 13, 1955.

4. See McKay's comments to Ned Redding, in McKay, Diary, November 25, 1952; Henry A. Smith, "Elder Benson's Selection Distinct Honor to Church," *Church News,* November 29, 1952, 4; and "Congratulatory Messages Pour into Elder Benson's Office," *Church News,* December 6, 1952, 3.

5. McKay, Diary, November 20, 1954. Later, Watkins told McKay that "he was grateful to God that a prophet of God was in the Cabinet." Ibid., November 25, 1952. LDS apostles are sustained by Church members as "prophets, seers, and revelators."

6. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 4. Benson's memoir draws largely on the ten volumes of personal diary—containing "some three-quarters of a million words"—he maintained during this time. Ibid., xvii. Benson's authorized biographer, Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 525, notes that his diary "for this period was particularly detailed."

7. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 5; and Edward L. Schapsmeier and Frederick H. Schapsmeier, *Ezra Taft Benson and the Politics of Agriculture: The Eisenhower Years, 1953–1961* (Danville, Ill.: Interstate Printers & Publishers, 1975), 14. Taft, a prominent mid-twentieth-century American conservative, had also campaigned unsuccessfully for the nomination in 1940 and 1948. "I admired [Taft] more than any other man in political life," Benson later wrote. "He was that rare specimen—a dogged, dedicated bulldog fighter of character who knew how to lose." Benson, *Cross Fire*, 23. For McKay's support of Taft, see his comments in J. Reuben Clark, Diary, July 1, 1957, Clark Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. The Greek Revival Church Administration Building at 47 E.

South Temple was known as the Church Office Building until 1972 when the name was assigned to the newly constructed twenty-six-story building through the block at 50 E. North Temple.

8. Nearly twenty-four years later, Benson recalled telling McKay: "I had hoped you'd have a different feeling. I don't want that job." "Prophet Remembers Telephone Call from President Eisenhower in '53 [sic]," *Church News*, June 1, 1984, 6.

9. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 8–9.

10. See Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 12–15. The Schapsmeiers' study focuses on Benson's agricultural policies. See also their "Religion and Reform: A Case Study of Henry A. Wallace and Ezra Taft Benson," *Journal of Church and State* 21, no. 3 (Autumn 1979): 525–35; and "Eisenhower and Ezra Taft Benson: Farm Policy in the 1950s," *Agricultural History,* 44 (October 1970): 369–78.

11. See Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President,* Vol. 2 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 24. Compare Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 285 note 5.

12. McKay, Diary, November 24, 1952.

13. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 10–11.

14. The last clergyman to have served in a U.S. president's cabinet was Unitarian minister Edward Everett, appointed Secretary of State to Millard Fillmore (1852–53).

15. By this time, Eisenhower attended Presbyterian services, though he would tell nationally syndicated columnist Drew Pearson that "freedom" and "God" comprised his religion. Geoffrey Perret, *Eisenhower* (New York: Random House, 1999), 428. During the months prior to his election, Eisenhower had commented: "Our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is. . . . [B]ut it must be a religion that [teaches that] all men are created equal." Quoted in Mark Silk, *Spiritual Politics: Religion and America since World War II* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 40.

16. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953–56* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1963), 89.

17. "When President McKay had encouraged him to accept it, he had no viable alternative." Francis M. Gibbons, *Ezra Taft Benson: Statesman, Patriot, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 180.

18. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 8–12.

19. Quoted in Smith, "Elder Benson's Selection," 4. A month before, Benson had visited the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. "As I stood looking up," he recalled, "there came into my heart, such a surge of gratitude

for the privilege of being a citizen of this land, for the priceless blessing of being an American, as I had never known before." Benson, *Cross Fire*, 571. Benson would have interpreted such a feeling as personal revelation. He does not mention this incident in his diary. Diary, October 17–24, 1952, photocopy of holograph courtesy of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

20. Frederick W. Babbel, Oral History, interviewed by Maclyn P. Burg, November 12, 1974, and February 5, 1975, 42, photocopy courtesy of David F. Babbel, in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation; Merlo J. Pusey, *Eisenhower the President* (New York: Macmillan, 1956), 69; and Benson, *Cross Fire*, 13.

21. McKay, Diary, November 28, 1952. Unlike most entries in McKay's diary, which are typed, this one is in McKay's handwriting.

22. Dew, *Benson*, 259.

23. Quoted in Merlo J. Pusey, "Ezra Taft Benson: A Living Witness for Christ," *Improvement Era,* April 1956, 269.

24. Pusey, *Eisenhower*, 69, reported an increase to $40,000. Benson said it was closer to nearly three times $25,000.

25. Ibid. The dramatic decrease in salary was difficult for the Bensons. They regularly drew on personal savings to cover routine living costs and reluctantly, but gratefully, accepted cash and other gifts from friends, notably restaurateur J. Willard Marriott. For a time, they also contemplated selling their Salt Lake City house. See, for example, Benson, Diary, November 19, 1949.

26. By February 1948, the Church newspaper was reporting favorably on Benson's speaking to scores of "farm bureaus and cooperatives." "News about the General Authorities," *Church News,* February 14, 1948, 3.

27. See "Set of Farmer Cooperative Yearbooks Given to Church," *Church News,* April 10, 1949, 6C. In mid-1952, the First Presidency permitted Benson to chair the institute provided that it did not engage in activities that "interfered with individual liberty" and that Benson "not devote so much of his time to other interests that the Twelve would be deprived of his help." McKay, Diary, August 1 and 5, 1952.

28. Gibbons, *Benson*, 162; also "Two Members of the Twelve Noted Birthday Anniversaries Last Week," *Church News,* August 6, 1952, 3.

29. "It is my firm belief," he explained, "that the God of Heaven guided the founding fathers in establishing this great nation for His particular purposes. This is *not* just another nation. We in this choice land have a great and glorious mission to perform for liberty-loving people everywhere." Benson, *Cross Fire*, 578.

30. Ibid., 571; also 571–81.

31. Benson's embrace of individual freedom and a religion "in which the ultimate executive, legislative, and judicial authority is vested in one man, the prophet," may seem inconsistent. In this case, Benson's belief in the LDS Church and its leadership trumped his views on government and economics. As a former secretary to the First Presidency explains: Benson "approved of the Church system because of its greater efficiency and the unquestioned integrity of the prophet. Moreover, he found in the leading councils of the Church a disposition to hear the views of all and a reluctance to move forward unless there was a unanimity of feeling, despite the authority of the prophet to act unilaterally." Gibbons, *Benson*, 140. Benson also saw membership in the Church as voluntary and thus not at odds with personal liberty.

32. Benson, *Principles of Cooperation* (Salt Lake City: N.p., 1945), not paginated. See also Benson's comments in "News about the General Authorities," *Church News,* September 6, 1947, 5, and November 15, 1947, 5. References to Benson's speeches to farmers' and cooperative groups may be found in this regularly appearing column in issues of the *Church News*, a weekend supplement to the Church-owned *Deseret News*.

33. Benson, "Concerning Principles and Standards," BYU Commencement Address, June 4, 1947, *Church News,* June 14, 1947, 5. Benson repeated this advice three years later. See "Concerning Values," Utah State Agricultural College Baccalaureate Address, May 28, 1950, *Church News,* June 4, 1950, 15. One of the fullest expressions of Benson's political views during the late 1940s is the talk he delivered at the annual conference of the Church's Relief Society on September 28, 1949, reprinted in Reed A. Benson, comp., *So Shall Ye Reap: Selected Addresses of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1960), 220–31.

34. Benson, "The L.D.S. Church and Politics," an address to the BYU student body, December 1, 1952 (Distributed by the BYU Extension Division and Delta Phi Organization), 8.

35. Kenneth S. Davis, *New York Times Magazine*, quoted in "New Agricultural Leader Brings Farm 'Co-op' Movement to Front," *Church News,* January 24, 1953, 14.

36. Benson, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 24.

37. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 587.

38. Benson, "Concerning Principles and Standards," 5. Benson repeated this advice eight years later; see his baccalaureate address to BYU students, June 2, 1955, in "Speeches of the Year" (Distributed by the BYU Extension Division and Delta Phi Organization), 20, and in "'Jesus Increased in Wisdom and Stature and in Favor with God,'" *Church News,* June 11, 1955, 6.

39. "When a man is ordained to the apostleship of this Church," one of

Benson's colleagues told Church members following Benson's appointment as Secretary of Agriculture, "that is not just a job, but is a power from Almighty God, and that power will remain in him so long as he knows that down in his soul there is a fire of testimony and a determination to serve God at all hazard and keep His commandments, and then there will be given inspiration and revelation." Harold B. Lee, Address, March 1, 1953, quoted in Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 28.

40. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 28–29.

41. Chester J. Pach Jr. and Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, rev. ed. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 35, 55. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 363, acknowledged that he could sometimes be seen as "dogmatic."

42. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 390.

43. Ezra Taft Benson, Oral History, Interviewed by Maclyn Burg, May 21, 1975, 23–24, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.

44. Benson, Diary, April 5, 1952.

45. Benson, "Responsibilities of Citizenship," an address to BYU students, October 22, 1954 (Distributed by the BYU Extension Division and Delta Phi Organization), 7.

46. "Secretary Benson was the target for more organized and sustained attacks than anyone else in high government office," was how an article in the official LDS Church press later described it. Derin Head Rodriguez, "Flora Amussen Benson: Handmaiden of the Lord, Helpmeet of a Prophet, Mother in Zion," *Ensign*, March 1987, 19.

47. J. Earl Coke, "Reminiscences on People and Change in California Agriculture 1900–1975," Interviews conducted by Ann Foley Scheuring, University of California Davis, Oral History Center, 1976, 111, photocopy in Perry Special Collections.

48. Benson, "The L.D.S. Church and Politics," 6, 9.

49. Benson, Oral History, 8.

50. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 5–8. Pusey noted: "In 1948, Governor Dewey had been so confident that he would be the next President that he did not wait until after the election to sound out his friend Benson about becoming his Secretary of Agriculture." Pusey, *Eisenhower,* 67. For contemporary references to Benson's possible nomination to a Dewey Cabinet, see Benson, Diary, September 30, October 27, and October 30, 1948. "This is all very interesting, and no doubt flattering," Benson noted on October 30. "My only interest is the good I might be able to do for the Church and the country. I have no desire for political office as such."

51. "The appointment seems to be a natural one," is how the Church's press secretary described it. Smith, "Elder Benson's Selection."

52. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 142.

53. Asked about his years with Benson, McKay reassured the FBI: "There was never an intimation of his being connected in any way with subversive organizations." McKay, Diary, November 25, 1952.

54. Gibbons, *Benson*, 185, notes that these appointees were sometimes called the "Mormon Mafia."

55. McKay, Diary, November 26, 1952; "Congratulatory Messages"; Benson, *Cross Fire*, 31–32.

56. Gary James Bergera, "Ezra Taft Benson's 1946 Mission to Europe," *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 73–112.

57. "Elders Haycock and Babbel Join Secretary Benson's Staff," *Church News,* January 10, 1953, 4; McKay, Diary, December 5, 1952. Haycock had been secretary to LDS President George Albert Smith. When McKay succeeded Smith, McKay retained his own secretary. Thus, the invitation that Haycock join Benson was fortuitously timed. Haycock remained with Benson for eighteen months until called to preside over the Church's Hawaii Mission. Heidi S. Swinton, *In the Company of Prophets: Personal Experiences of D. Arthur Haycock . . .* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993), 45–47. Following McKay's death in 1970, Haycock served as secretary to the next four Church presidents.

58. "'What I Admire Most in My Husband,' by Mrs. Ezra Taft Benson [Flora Amussen Benson], as told to Leonard J. Snyder," *Capper's Farmer,* June 1955, 47.

59. Babbel, Oral History, 39–40.

60. Don Paarlberg, Oral History, Interviewed by Ed Edwin, January 17, 1968, 3–4, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.

61. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 35.

62. "Complete Text Given at Request of Readers," *Church News,* February 7, 1953, 2–3. See also "Elder Benson Gives Prayer for Cabinet," *Church News,* January 17, 1953, 10; "Sec. Benson's Prayer at Initial Cabinet Meeting," *Church News,* January 31, 1953, 4; and Benson, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 261–62. The version of Benson's prayer in *Cross Fire*, 37–38, varies only slightly from that printed here. For parallels to LDS scripture, compare 1 Nephi 2:20; 2 Nephi 1:5; Ether 2:7, 10, 15; Doctrine and Covenants 101:77, 80.

63. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 33, 49–50, 59–60. One of Benson's assistants later quipped: "At the first [Cabinet meeting] Ike had Ezra do the praying, but I am informed that after the first one he decided that he'd have silent prayer because Ezra took too darn much time to pray." Coke, "Reminiscences," 112.

A notable exception occurred when Eisenhower began one meeting without the minute of silence, then exclaimed: "Goddammit! We forgot the silent prayer!" Perret, *Eisenhower,* 437. Later, Benson seemed to imply that this moment of silence was actually a vocal prayer: "For both terms (eight years) of the Eisenhower presidency," he reported in 1969, "Cabinet meetings were opened with prayer." Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 127. This misstatement was subsequently repeated. See, for example, "Prophet Remembers Telephone Call"; Gibbons, *Benson*, 184; and Reed A. Benson, "Ezra Taft Benson: The Eisenhower Years," in *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 54–55. At least once, however, in Eisenhower's absence, Benson was invited to pray vocally. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 246.

64. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 47–48.

65. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 51, also 50–54.

66. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 108.

67. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 47. "They were from an agricultural background, or economics or law or administrative things, organizations," Don Paarlberg agreed. "Some of them had had political experience, but a limited number. So it was a little bit like getting on an express train that hadn't really slowed down for the station. I had that feeling for some time." Paarlberg, Oral History, 3.

68. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 41.

69. Ibid., 41–42.

70. See, for example, Benson, *Cross Fire*, 108–9.

71. Babbel, Oral History, 68–69, 73, 108. See also Benson, *Cross Fire*, 32.

72. Other LDS appointees, in addition to Babbel and Haycock, included Hulda Parker (who replaced Haycock), Ralph S. Roberts (administrative assistant secretary), and, in succession as Benson's executive assistant(s): Daken K. Broadhead, Lorenzo N. Hoopes, Milan D. Smith, Miller F. Shurtleff, and Mark Kirkham. Hoopes recalled: "I've never worked harder than I did in that two year period [1953–54]." Lorenzo N. and Stella S. Hoopes, Oral History, Interviewed by Matthew K. Heiss, May 23, 1989, 7, Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives).

73. Babbel, Oral History, 76–77. For a discussion of Benson's non-LDS appointments, see Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 47–50.

74. Babbel, Oral History, 99–103.

75. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 53.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Babbel, Oral History, 87–89. Contemporary accounts of the incident bear out some of these perceptions. A Washington, D.C.-based journalist reported: "Employees of the department, who had become accustomed to knocking off for the day 15 or 20 minutes early to catch a bus or to get in a little shopping, were notified that he [Benson] expects a full day's work for a full day's pay." Quoted in "Secretary Benson Rearranges Things in Agriculture Offices," *Church News,* February 7, 1953, 15.

79. "The Secretary was a rather forgiving type of person," Babbel subsequently asserted, Oral History, 109, "so that he had not regarded this with too much misgiving."

80. Ibid., 90–92.

81. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 31, 87. See also "Revolution, Not Revolt," *Time,* May 7, 1956, 30: "When he [Benson] arrives at the office shortly before 8, he has already done about two hours of work."

82. "Apostle at Work," *Time,* April 13, 1953, 26; and "Secretary Benson Rearranges Things." Benson's daily work schedule as secretary did not differ much from his routine as an apostle and earlier.

83. Dew, *Benson*, 268.

84. Babbel, Oral History, 143.

85. Ibid., 120.

86. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, xviii. According to *Time* magazine, "Revolution, Not Revolt," 30, the slogan was placed "where only he could see it." In addition, Benson displayed on an office wall a photograph of Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvalden's massive *Christus* statue. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 463.

87. Coke, "Reminiscences," 111.

88. Babbel, Oral History, 135–36, 137–38. Benson "had what we called a squawk box where he had intercommunications," Babbel continued. ". . . [W]e always had free access to him on any matters that seemed to be urgent" (140–41).

89. Ibid., 145, 146. From his perspective as a non-Mormon, Coke, "Reminiscences," 111, concurred: "He had, however, I think, a more basic interest in his church work than in being secretary of agriculture."

90. Babbel, Oral History, 122–23, 124.

91. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 88.

92. Paul Friggens, "Meet the New Secretary and His Family," *Farm Journal* (Western Edition), January 1953, 28. Benson's advocacy of free enterprise was well known to readers of the LDS *Church News.*

93. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 7–8.

94. Benson, Oral History, 21.

95. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 38–39; see also Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 36–37.

96. One night, shortly after assuming office, Benson returned to his apartment and, feeling suddenly overwhelmed, "broke down and wept aloud." Benson, *Cross Fire*, 50.

97. Willard W. Cochrane, *The Development of American Agriculture: A Historical Analysis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 287.

98. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, xvi.

99. Cochrane, *American Agriculture,* 287.

100. Fixed price supports were introduced in the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933. Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace believed that "rugged individualism and unregulated competition were outmoded and actually immoral, since they fostered the existence of poverty amid plenty." Quoted in Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, "Wallace and Benson," 529.

101. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 39 note 3.

102. "Apostle at Work," 27 note. The early 1910s were chosen because "it was one in which farm and nonfarm prices appear to have been in reasonable balance with one another." Ezra Taft Benson (as told to Carlisle Bargeron), *Farmers at the Crossroads* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1956), 107.

103. Cochrane, *American Agriculture,* 140.

104. Ibid.

105. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 58. Benson defined the typical marginal farm as "small, ill-equipped, poor soil farm run by an operator with subpar education and skill and very little capital." Ibid. For Benson's critics, he seemed to be singling out poor, black, Southern sharecroppers.

106. According to Harold H. Martin, "Elder Benson's Going to Catch It!" *Saturday Evening Post,* March 28, 1953, 23, "For all his interest in farms and farming," Benson is "at heart a preacher."

107. Benson, "America: A Choice Land," an address to the National Conference of Christians and Jews, May 11, 1953, 14, copy in Ernest L. Wilkinson Papers, Perry Special Collections; emphasis his.

108. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 603. A decade later, Benson wrote: "There is not a single basic thought [in the statement] I would change." Ibid., 62. In a treatment more critical than their book-length study, two of Benson's biographers contend: "Benson's moralistic pronouncement about the virtues of laissez-faire economics sounded like an ideological edict from a spokesman of the radical right. . . . In one stroke the new Secretary had created a politically damaging image of himself as an uncompromising disciple of a Hoover-type

individualism and unregulated free enterprise." Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, "Eisenhower and Benson," 370.

109. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 39. "While we might effectively bridle or destroy every so-called Communist within our own borders," Benson told graduating seniors at the University of Utah in mid-1953, "we shall not vanquish this political virus, and its common forerunner, state socialism, so long as people are determined to achieve security through state-imposed materialistic schemes rather than through righteous living and wholesome activity as free men." "Courageous Leaders Great Need of Our Time," *Church News,* June 13, 1953, 7.

110. "An Exclusive Interview with Secretary of Agriculture Ezra T. Benson," *Agricultural and Food Chemistry,* August 5, 1953, 657; and Benson, *Cross Fire*, 59. "We should remember," Benson added in "Exclusive Interview," 660, "that one out of every six persons in the Nation lives on a farm and that their well-being touches directly or indirectly on all of us."

111. Five percent of American farmers owned half of all farm-related acreage and produced half of all farm-related produce. Perret, *Eisenhower,* 513–14.

112. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 58.

113. Ibid., 39–40; see also Benson, *Cross Fire*, 63–67. Most of Benson's farming-related speeches were ghost-written. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 119.

114. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 64.

115. Ibid., 66; emphasis his. "My biggest problem," Benson later confessed, "is a tendency to speak too long." Ibid., 122.

116. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 54.

117. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 67, 68–69. In mid-1958, Benson reported that the response to this early speech had bothered him most as secretary. See "A Cabinet Member Says: 'Don't Let Unpopularity Scare You,'" *This Week Magazine,* August 17, 1958, 8.

118. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 40; and Benson, *Cross Fire*, 70. According to Utah's Republican senator, Eisenhower had "complete faith in Ezra Benson." Wallace F. Bennett, letter to "Dear Family," February 19, 1953, in Bennett Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, "Eisenhower and Benson," 371, point out: "The Administration was forced to defend an Agriculture Secretary even before a farm program had been sent to Congress." "For all his rough talk about getting rid of the incompetent," Eisenhower's biographer explains, "Eisenhower found it extremely difficult to fire anyone who had been loyal to him." Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* 298.

119. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 44. Benson may have

sensed as much. "Many of our friends feel that we have talked enough about self-sufficiency and freedom," he wrote in mid-1953. Ibid., 57.

120. Clark, Diary, April 9, 1953.

121. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 113. "It was absolutely essential that we have the cooperation of, and make use of, the mass media," he explained. "Because of this, I deliberately held rather frequent press conferences, in Washington and out in the country." Benson, Interviewed by Ed Edwin, June 23, 1967, 1, LDS Church Archives.

122. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 45–46. On the other hand, some Benson supporters believed he "should fight for what he thinks is right." Karl D. Butler, memorandum, September 18, 1953, carbon copy attached to Ernest L. Wilkinson, letter to J. Reuben Clark, September 24, 1953. "I wonder," J. Reuben Clark wrote back, "if the writer is as wise as he writes. It does not look too rosy for our friend [Benson]." Clark, letter to Wilkinson, September 29, 1953; both in Clark Papers.

123. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 59.

124. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 73.

125. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 59–60; Clark, letter to D. Arthur Haycock, October 21, 1953, Clark Papers.

126. See, for example, Wallace F. Bennett, "The Story behind the Attacks on Secretary Benson," October 27, 1953, mimeographed copy in Clark Papers.

127. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 65.

128. In McKay, Diary, October 28, 1953. "Do not become discouraged," one of Benson's colleagues in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles added. "Remember that you are just like a missionary back there. You are doing more good than one hundred missionaries in the field. It is just marvelous the splendid reports we hear about you." Mark E. Petersen, Letter to Ezra Taft Benson, November 4, 1953, in Ezra Taft Benson Scrapbooks, microfilm, LDS Church Archives.

129. Quoted in McKay, Diary, October 28, 1953.

130. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 65–66.

131. Ibid., 67.

132. Ibid., 68. For a long time, Benson believed that "in the drought problem, in particular, there was altogether too much dependence on the Federal Government." Benson, *Cross Fire*, 348.

133. Benson, Open letter to "My Brothers and Sisters," November 9, 1953, in Benson Scrapbooks.

134. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 69.

135. Ibid.

136. Ibid., 70.

137. Ibid., 70–71. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 401, thought of compromise as "the favorite political dodge of those in difficulty."

138. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 71–72. See also Benson, *Cross Fire*, 164–66.

139. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 73. Eisenhower's biographer notes: "Farm policy was an area in which he [Eisenhower] had deep and unchangeable convictions . . . [and] the only area in which Eisenhower called for a repudiation of the basic New Deal economic structure." Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* 160.

140. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 175. Benson tried to combine such trips with ecclesiastical visits to local LDS congregations. See, for example, "Sec. Benson Greets Elders at Border," *Church News,* July 10, 1954, 3.

141. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 75.

142. Ibid., 76.

143. Ibid., 79.

144. Ibid., 78.

145. "The American Magazine Says: Secretary Benson Coolest Man in Capitol, Sitting on Hottest Seat," *Church News,* May 29, 1954, 15.

146. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 182.

147. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 81.

148. Ibid., 83–84. See also Benson, *Cross Fire*, 211. Henry Wallace, Benson's predecessor, also supported a concept of flexibility. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, "Eisenhower and Benson," 373.

149. Benson, "Responsibilities of Citizenship," 8.

150. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 203. Eisenhower's comments "impressed the Secretary very much," Paarlberg recalled, "and he passed this on to his staff. His nature was exactly opposed to that. He was a forthright man, and fainting [sic] and retreating and zigging and zagging were not really part of his makeup. I'm not sure that the President's point really got through to the Secretary." Paarlberg, Oral History, 13. "It was a lesson that Benson remembers but not one he chose to absorb," one of Eisenhower's biographers observes more bluntly. Perret, *Eisenhower,* 514.

151. Eisenhower, quoted in Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 273. Eisenhower "possessed the native instinct for adapting to the exigencies of politics," allowing "himself sufficient latitude . . . to remain flexible." Ibid., 272–73. According to Benson's authorized biographer, in contrast, "Subtlety was not Secretary Benson's forte." Dew, *Benson*, 289.

152. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 213.

153. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 84–86.

154. Ibid., 86–87.

155. Ibid., 88–89.

156. Ibid., 90.

157. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 238.

158. Ibid., 221; Clark, Diary, March 21, 1955. Eisenhower added: "My gratitude is equaled only by my profound hope that I may continue to have your invaluable assistance as long as I shall be called on to bear any governmental responsibility." Quoted in Benson, *Cross Fire*, 225. Also during the fall 1954 campaign season, Benson found himself briefly entangled in the Douglas R. Stringfellow affair. Stringfellow, elected as Utah Congressman in 1952, portrayed himself as a decorated World War II hero, his paraplegia the result of wounds suffered during the war. In early October 1954, Benson endorsed the colorful, conservative Republican. Two weeks later, Stringfellow, after being threatened with exposure, admitted publicly that he had lied about his past and that he could walk with the aid of a cane. He was replaced on the ballot by Henry Aldous Dixon, who won. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 217–18, intimated that he first learned of Stringfellow's deception on October 17, 1954. However, David O. McKay and he had confronted Stringfellow four days earlier, and McKay had kept Benson apprised of developments. McKay, Diary, October 13–16; Arthur V. Watkins, *Enough Rope* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 155–68; "Douglas R. Stringfellow," www.museumofhoaxes.com (accessed December 7, 2005); and especially Frank H. Jonas, *The Story of a Political Hoax* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1966).

159. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 238.

160. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 99–100.

161. For Benson's visits-in-tandem to local LDS congregations, see McKay, Diary, March 8, 1955. Benson was "intensely interested" in Latin America—site, he believed, of events narrated in the Book of Mormon. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 238.

162. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 101, 117.

163. McKay, Diary, March 10, 1955.

164. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 110. J. Reuben Clark felt that Dulles "had an acquaintance with world figures and the views of those figures," which "would appeal to anybody who did not have it," but that personally he doubted if Dulles "had much wisdom." Clark, Diary, March 21, 1955. Benson, at least publicly, held Dulles "in high respect and deep affection" and considered him "as one of the few great Secretaries of State." Benson, *Cross Fire*, 439, 443.

165. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 111. Eisenhower aide Sher-

man Adams thought that Benson was "enveloped in a kind of celestial optimism." Quoted in Perret, *Eisenhower*, 516.

166. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 102.

167. Ibid., 103.

168. Ibid., 111. "Comparatively speaking," the Schapsmeiers conclude, "the United States showed considerable restraint at a period when it could no longer ignore the plight of its own domestic agriculture." Ibid., 118. Benson unloaded 4 billion bushels of wheat, 2.5 billion pounds of dairy products, and 4.5 billion pounds of cottonseed products. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, "Eisenhower and Benson," 374.

169. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 105.

170. Ibid., 109–10.

171. Ibid., 110.

172. Ibid.

173. Ibid., 113–16. "I'd trade with the devil if I got a good deal," Benson told farmers in Washington state in early 1957. "I won't just barge ahead and trade with the Iron Curtain countries. I plan to keep close contact with the State Department on any such trade." "Benson Urges Market Fight," *Salt Lake Tribune,* February 13, 1957, 2.

174. Prior to joining Benson's staff, Smith had served the LDS Church as president of the Union Stake in Oregon. See "Pres. Milan D. Smith Named to High Office," *Church News,* November 6, 1954, 5. Smith left Benson's employ in late 1957.

175. See Mary S. McAuliffe, "Dwight D. Eisenhower and Wolf Ladejinsky: The Politics of the Declining Red Scare, 1954–55," *Prologue: Journal of the National Archives* 14, no. (Fall 1982):109–27. Benson later said he was "sorry about this regrettable case" but believed his initial decision had been correct. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 226–29. McAuliffe, 119 note 43, concludes that some of Benson's version of events is "distorted" and "misleading." Merlo Pusey adds: "Some months later Secretary Benson belatedly expunged all reference to Ladejinsky as a security risk from the records of his Department." Pusey, *Eisenhower*, 281. In 1963, Benson asserted that "the first communist cell in our government, so far as we know, was organized in the United States Department of Agriculture in the 1930's." Ezra Taft Benson, *Title of Liberty,* compiled by Mark A. Benson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), 43.

176. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 119.

177. Ibid., 120–21.

178. Ibid., 122. Like many others, Benson believed that "with proper safeguards there was no danger involved from residues [from pesticides] that remained in the water or soil." Ibid., 229. Following the publication of Ra-

chel Carson's indictment of the pesticide industry, *Silent Spring,* in 1962, Benson was widely rumored to have wondered why a "spinster with no children was so concerned about genetics?" Because she "was probably a Communist." However, Carson's biographer could find no evidence that Benson ever actually made such a comment. Linda J. Lear, *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), 429, 573 note 4.

179. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 122.

180. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 257, 258.

181. Ibid., 259.

182. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 123–24. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 272, agreed: "There was a need for legislation that would help farmers get rid of surpluses."

183. "Revolution, Not Revolt," 32.

184. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 126–27.

185. Ibid., 130.

186. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 293; emphasis his.

187. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 133.

188. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 291.

189. Initially, Benson called the program a "land rental scheme." Quoted in "Revolution, Not Revolt," 32. He later explained: "The idea of paying farmers for not producing—even as a one-shot emergency measure—outraged my sensibilities. The only real justification was that the government itself had been so largely responsible for the mess farmers were in." *Cross Fire*, 294.

190. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 134, also 153: "What worried Benson was the prospect of not being able to remedy the situation because of overconcern with the political maneuverings of electioneering." "It was the major instance," Gibbons notes, "in which Secretary Benson placed pragmatism ahead of his farming philosophy while he served as secretary of agriculture. He was always apologetic in mentioning it." Gibbons, *Benson*, 203.

191. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 139.

192. Ibid., 158.

193. Ibid., 158–59.

194. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 280.

195. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 161–62.

196. Ibid., 163.

197. "Never had I known a legislative process to be so indicative of political expediency and so devoid of principle," he recalled. *Cross Fire*, 313; for thoughts of resigning, see 317.

198. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 163. "It was probably the worst piece of farm legislation ever approved by either House of Congress," Benson added. *Cross Fire*, 313; see also 318–20. "I don't very often go against my staff," Benson later quoted Eisenhower as saying. "In this case the staff is wrong and the secretary is right." Benson, Oral History, 20.

199. Eisenhower quoted in Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 169.

200. Ibid., 170. Fred Babbel thought the Soil Bank during its first year could be administered for $500,000, rather than the $20 million some Agriculture staffers proposed. His reduced appropriation created "quite a storm in the department amongst people who had planned in terms of their careers and so forth to take advantage of this very excellent opportunity." Benson had warned that, if difficulties ensued, Babbel might have to resign. Three weeks later, Babbel left the department voluntarily. Babbel, Oral History, 156–65.

201. Annoyed to learn that the biggest beneficiaries of the acreage payments were large farming operations, Eisenhower tried unsuccessfully to impose limits. Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* 496.

202. "While he was anything but a political pragmatist," Benson's authorized biographer writes, "the Secretary was learning that, at times, half a legislative loaf was better than none." Dew, *Benson*, 316.

203. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 321. "He [Eisenhower] told me after that he regretted it," Benson later said, "that it was a mistake so far as agriculture was concerned. That's the only time I can recall when he went contrary to my counsel on a matter of agriculture." Benson, Oral History, 14.

During this same period, Benson was also "sick at heart" with the administration's response to the anti-Communist uprising in Hungary. Hoping for more militant intervention, he had to be content with helping to draft an official statement condemning "the moral infamy of the Soviet government." "No project that I helped initiate outside agriculture gave me more satisfaction," he remembered. Benson, *Cross Fire*, 337–40. "I confess," he reported some twenty years later, "I was ashamed of the feeble response of this great nation—a nation which the Lord intended to be an ensign of freedom to all others. Freedom did not die that day—October 23, 1956—for Hungary alone. Hope died for many in other captive nations. . . . As a nation, we act as though we are afraid to offend the devil." Benson, "Some Personal Recollections on the Struggle for Freedom in the 20th Century—Part 1," 4, June 2, 1978, photocopy courtesy of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

204. Benson interjected himself into Utah politics that same year when he endorsed George Dewey Clyde, Republican candidate for governor. Clyde, a Mormon, defeated J. Bracken Lee, a non-Mormon, by 8,000 votes.

Twelve years earlier, Benson had backed Lee's unsuccessful candidacy for governor. Dennis L. Lythgoe, *Let 'Em Holler: A Political Biography of J. Bracken Lee* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1982), 24, 208–9.

205. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 174–75. A late-term effort to publicize the positive aspects of Benson's views appeared in October 1956 in Benson, *Farmers at the Crossroads,* and in the twenty-four-page summary (also titled *Farmers at the Crossroads)* published by the Constitution and Free Enterprise Foundation (1956).

206. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 176–77.

207. "People at home and abroad are blessed by your re-election," McKay wired. Diary, November 7, 1956.

208. Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, *Benson*, 177.

209. Ibid., 179.

FICTION

The Gilded Door

Kristen Carson

It sat on a quiet end of Main Street, just a block down from the Shoreline State Bank and the Sunshine Laundry. Within its dark cavern, you could lose yourself in fantasy. It was the place where Tevye first eyed his sons-in-law, where Herbie squirted oil on the bad guy's shoes, where John Wayne turned Maureen O'Hara over his knee and delivered a good spanking.

Then, when the credits rolled and the lights went up, you were still in another world, gaping at the gilt-edged ceiling medallions and the sparkling chandeliers, at the towering half pillars that bulged out of the walls. And even if the place had slipped into a genteel decrepitude, you could still see what the great Gilberto Massanopoli had in mind when he designed it all. It was still a fantasy palace, this place that everyone in Boxford knew as the Gilded Door Theater.

So imagine the surprise of Boxford's best piano teacher, Ada Runyon, when she walked by the Gilded Door, her arms loaded down with pinch-pleated draperies fresh from the Sunshine Laundry. She saw the poster of coming attractions. "LIMITED ENGAGEMENT!!!: Xaviera del'Abunda, star of *Sky-High Stewardesses*!!! Coming soon in *Amazons in Hard Hats*!!!"

The April-day bliss fell from Ada's face. Whatever happened to the *Planet of the Apes* sequel, which had been playing all winter? She emerged from the shadow of the marquee. She walked backward as she looked up at the title trumpeting itself there: Yes, it was true. Even worse, *Amazons in Hard Hats* was no longer COMING SOON! It was *here.* And so was Miss del'Abunda in that poster, where great mounds of her flesh bobbed, barely restrained in their bindings.

The first person Ada called was her best friend, Ruthalin Feldsted.

Ruthalin must have talked to her husband, Erval. Who went straight to the bishop.

That was why Bishop Keating walked in on Latham Runyon's Gospel Doctrine class. He looked like Dr. Bad News, and the class looked up like all the relatives in the waiting room.

He rubbed the bare dome of skin on top of his head. He hoisted the belt around his potatoes-and-gravy paunch. "We've got a problem," he told them.

Even his wife looked somber, and Jeralee Keating was the cheeriest person on the planet.

She wore her entire history on her face. You could see her at age thirteen, dressed in gingham, her hair in a ponytail, as she headed out the back door after breakfast to deliver cantaloupe rinds to the cows.

Today, tracks of gray shot through her short little bangs. They ran back across her head, caught up in that ponytail. And the figure underneath the gingham had gone all pillowy. But she still looked thirteen.

"Why isn't rating it 'X' enough?" said Jeralee.

"You wonder," said Ruthalin, "how much worse it can be when they're calling it 'Triple X.'"

"There's a law against that sort of thing!" boomed Erval Feldsted. "Or if there isn't, there oughta be!"

Other voices declared that "We should run them out," or "We should attend a meeting!" But how? And what meeting?

Who in the Boxford Ward even knew how the town worked? Half the ward had moved here from the deserts of the West, drawn by jobs at the Crayton Poultry Company (Darold Keating), or Tidewater General Hospital (Erval Feldsted), or Boxford State College (Latham Runyon, who now shoved his lesson materials aside and sat on the edge of the table).

These transplants filled the center pews each Sunday. Each man wore a white shirt and a look of bemused fatigue. The women dressed in home-sewn frocks. They wielded thick, useful arms as they herded their many well-scrubbed children.

A center-pew family could live here ten years and still not know a thing about City Hall. Who had the time? Fathers worked all day. In the evenings, they taught Boy Scouts how to tie knots, or they drove about seeking lost members. On the weekends, they fixed whatever was broken in the house, unless they were asked to weed melons at the Church farm

or attend a priesthood meeting. Which happened often enough that the list of broken house parts never, ever shrank by much.

The women cooked, sewed, gardened, and canned. If that did not take up enough time, they cut out flannel-board figures to use in their Church lessons. And if that did not take up enough time, they looked for somebody who was sick and needed soup; and if no sick person could be found, then somebody who looked a little tired would do.

What you had was a people who believed in civic duty and voting and all that. But when faced with the ballot, they just didn't know whether to keep Joe Green as sheriff or throw him over for Bill Brown.

In the side pews, folks with tattoos, droopy mustaches, and faces deeply lined by hard living filled the rows. These folks were the converts. Native to the county, they straggled in every week or two in family fragments. And even though they had lived around here a long time, they had no idea how to fend off a smutty movie house. The dinette waitresses and the union welders usually saw civic life from the wrong end.

Take, for example, Sister Kilby. Didn't her oldest son still have to report to his parole officer? Now, nobody was saying Sister Kilby didn't have a good heart. But what kind of advice could she offer when the Gilded Door turned its back on Disney movies forever and the Sunday School class wanted to fight back? Yes, fight back! They would all write a letter! They would call the . . . the . . .

"Brother Runyon, can you figure out who to call and get back to us?"

Brother Runyon was a history professor. He knew stuff. Maybe he could figure out what to do.

"Yes, Brother Runyon, we cannot let them get away with this!"

But they were getting away with it. That's the way things were going now. Why just last week, Ada had popped on the TV and there was Woody Allen on *Afternoon with Doug Michaels.* The two of them chatted over Woody's new movie and how it shocked people from Tallahassee to Minot. But why worry? they laughed. The people who didn't like Woody's movie were rubes that probably enjoyed having their teeth pulled by barbers with big rusty pliers.

The sexual revolution was on the march and those who refused to cheer along its parade route felt . . . lonely.

* * *

Ada Runyon could see the ladies of the Boxford Music Club through the windows as she walked up the Weston-Welshes' sidewalk on Thursday evening. She paused before the door to shake the water off her umbrella. She barely got the bell rung when Lucy Weston-Welsh opened the door and filled its frame amply. As she smiled, her cheek wrinkles dug deep into her face. "Has it stopped raining out there yet?" *'Esit stawped rehning ought theh yet?* Oh, that New Zealand accent. Ada forgave Lucy a lot, just because she was fun to listen to.

Lucy moved aside, fluffing at her cap of white hair.

The club ladies clustered here and there in the living room. They were the kind of women you might find in any college town. Most were reasonably slender, because they lived the life of the mind. This fed their souls, so they didn't need cheese puffs and doughnuts like other people did. And most left the gray strands in their flat hairdos unretouched because, thanks to that life of the mind again, they didn't panic at the first signs of aging.

"You can see, though, that the place is crumbling," said Emily Stinchfield, music instructor at Beaglin Elementary. "The pieces chipped off the columns, the carpet wearing thin."

"Well, I would gladly pay more for popcorn, if it would help," said Rachel Lowenstein, private piano teacher (Ada's competition, actually).

"Are you talking about the Gilded Door?" asked Ada.

"Some people are calling it 'The Guilty Door,'" said Emily.

"And why do we need it here?" said Rachel. "Isn't that what people go to Philly for? To do the things they don't want to get caught doing?"

"You'd think," said Lucy, "that the blokes could get what they needed from those magazines at the top of the rack, far up where the little pikers can't see those girls on the cover and their . . ." Lucy fluffed her hands before her chest. Everybody knew what she meant: *And their ballooned bosoms*.

"People! This is 1974!" said Rachel. "Haven't we learned by now to stop objectifying women?"

Ada frowned. She still wasn't clear on the meaning of the word "objectifying." But before the evening ended, Lucy Weston-Welsh said she had an idea that might be worth a try. Relief washed over Ada. Until Lucy pointed around the room at the ladies that would help her. Her finger pointed straight at Ada Runyon.

Who could say no to Lucy Weston-Welsh? Her stout form, her bel-

lowing laugh, her exactitude, which made her just right for playing the grand organ every week at St. Abelard's Episcopal Church, added up to a woman who either got what she demanded or hung you out to dry. Ada never forgot how, the year Lucy led the Music Club chorus, she cackled every time the pianist made a mistake. "Ha-ha! I gotcha! I gotcha!"

So on a day chosen by Lucy, Ada found herself in a car parked outside the Gilded Door. She got out when Lucy got out. She looked at Emily Stinchfield to see if Emily had a clue about what Lucy might make them do.

Lucy looked up at the marquee, tightened her lips, and set her rudder for the door.

And there, in the lobby of the Gilded Door, stood Mr. Elroy Skibbey, proprietor.

* * *

"Odd man. *Odd* man, that Mr. Skibbey," said Ada.

She and Ruthalin Feldsted wandered among the craft tables at the Poultry Festival. It was their last best chance for a day out together. In another week, Ruthalin's advancing pregnancy would cross the line from evident to huge-and-miserable. Then she wouldn't want to walk around all afternoon anymore. Ada noticed that Ruthalin was reaching the huge-and-miserable stage weeks earlier with baby #10 than she had back with baby #5.

"But what did he look like?" asked Ruthalin, fingering pot-holders laid out on a sunny table.

"Mr. Skibbey? Well, the lobby was dim. And I was hiding behind Lucy . . ."

"Whatever for?"

"D'you think I want to be mentally undressed by a man who spends his working hours in a dark triple-X theater?"

Ruthalin considered this. "I see your point," she said, moving on to a table of wooden toys. "And Lucy would be big enough to hide behind."

"I was just relieved that she didn't pull a bundle of picket signs out of her trunk. I wouldn't put it past her, you know."

"Oh yes, your Lucy would be that sort. Didn't she live through a couple revolutions?"

"Oh. You mean Kenya. She was teaching there when the natives fi-

nally got fed up with the British. But she got out before they smashed the store windows beneath her flat."

Ruthalin nodded. "So. Mr. Skibbey?"

"Yes. Well, I was expecting this swarthy villain-type, a real mustache-twirler, you know? But he was just this homely, ruddy man. Probably was the ugliest boy in his grade, the only sort that ever got crushes on me." Ada followed Ruthalin to a patch of wrought-iron lawn ornaments. "Not tall. Not short. Standing there with his hands in his back pockets, looking at us over his glasses, then tipping his head back and looking through his bifocals."

"So what happened?"

"Oh. Lucy. She was *so* smooth. Went right into this speech. 'Now, Mr. Skibbey, we know that you just want to make money. And we know it's getting harder these days, what with people staying home to watch their color televisions.' And he says, 'Actually, the twin theaters out at the new mall . . .' And Lucy goes on: 'And we know that the Gilded Door was once a vaudeville house, and the stage is still back there behind that screen, am I right?'"

"And how did he take all this?"

"He looked over his glasses. That was his I'm-sure-you're-here-to-cause-trouble look. But Lucy just went on about the music club and about Boxford being a decent town and how she could find things to put on that stage that Boxfordians would pay to see."

"And how did he take that?" By now, Ruthalin had arrived at a table of curiously constructed blouses. She fingered the pleats and turned out the seams to study the workmanship.

"He looked at us through his bifocals," said Ada. "That was his I'm-really-a-nice-guy-I-just-have-to-make-a-living look."

"So he listened to all this and didn't throw you out?"

"Most people listen to Lucy, if they know what's good for them. And that's how we got two Friday nights a month to use the old stage at the Guilty Door."

"You mean he didn't give up the triple-X completely?"

"Oh, Lucy's good. But she's not *that* good. We have to prove we can make money for him. She's lining up the shows. We've got a concert pianist coming July 12th, so mark your calendar."

"I see. July 12th," said Ruthalin, absently. She held up a blouse,

pointing to the buttoned flaps across the chest. "Are these slits for nursing?"

"That's right," beamed the craft lady behind the table.

"Clever!" said Ruthalin.

"I'll say. With one of these," said Ada, "you could actually sit through Kevin's football games, instead of excusing yourself to feed the baby."

"I could. Though I don't know why I'm hiding *my* bosoms when Xaviera's showing hers off down on Main Street."

The craft lady moved close to her cash box. She beamed as Ruthalin exclaimed over the precision of the zipper installment.

"Well, are you going to buy?" Ada whispered. She could not believe the look in Ruthalin's eye. Was Ada about to witness the county's foremost tin-foil re-user spend money?

Ruthalin held the blouse out for a final admiring look.

"I could make this," she said, and hung it up.

As they walked away, Ada looked back at the craft lady, whose smile had grown brittle but brave.

* * *

"And so, the first will be Mr. Koji Yoshimoto, a classical pianist," Ada told the Boxford Ward.

The people in her husband's Sunday School class broke into a babble of happiness.

"We'll show that Mr. Skibbey a thing or two!"

"He may find out he never needed to go over to the blue movies to make a buck!"

"Yes, well, you can call me for tickets." Ada moved through the room. She passed by Ruthalin's husband Erval as he rocked on his heels next to Bishop Keating. "A thing like this wouldn't happen back home in Wales, Utah," said Erval. "Something like this . . . well, it's been one of the hardest adjustments, you know? I just think that children grow up better out west. They don't have all the problems you see here."

"You can get away from it there," said the bishop.

"Exactly. I mean, I know we saw it as an adventure, coming back east. But sometimes I wake up early in the morning and I wonder if we did the right thing. I mean, this place is so *old.* It's already made a long list of mistakes."

"Like?"

"Well, the fellas at work say gangsters run all the ports."

"And they say the governor takes bribes."

"Exactly! And now we all have to live with these mistakes. And it's just not like that out there. Boys who grow up out there become *men.*"

"They meet better girls, too. When Jerry brought home that girl from New Jersey . . ." The bishop shook his head.

Erval nodded deeply. "And sure, the kids say, 'It's dusty out there. It's empty,' but . . ."

"Empty can be a good thing. It's like a clean slate. Give people a clean slate and maybe they'll get it right this time."

"Exactly."

Ada, who herself had left the desert behind, sailed on to where her husband Latham listened to Jeralee Keating. "I told Jerry, 'We used to entertain ourselves. We didn't have all these movie theaters and bowling alleys and spinball arcades.'"

Spinball?

"'And we had more fun then!' I told him. Isn't that right? I told him, 'Why don't you invite your friends over and we'll show them how to have a taffy pull. Or we'll teach them to play Wink 'Em.' And he just can't understand it! Why, I'll bet you remember the days when you pulled back the chairs in the kitchen, invited the local fiddler, and had a dance."

Latham nodded politely, even though Ada knew he remembered no such thing.

"It really was more fun then," Jeralee went on. "I tell you, when a town fills up with these places that lure young people away from wholesome, homemade fun, trouble is right around the corner."

What places? Like the paddle boats in the park? Like the concerts in the college auditorium? Like the new mall out beyond the bypass? Why, Boxford was a fine town. Oh, sure, the boulevard was junked up with too many power lines and car lot pennants. And you didn't want to be out on Homecoming weekend, with all the hijinks on the quad over by College Hall. Still, Boxford was getting to be a nice place to spend a Saturday night.

Or at least it was until the Gilded Door started showing triple-X movies.

But Ada envisioned the Guilty—that is, the Gilded Door's auditorium right now, filled so full that the fire marshal would march in on a

gust of importance, plant his fists on his love handles, and decree that the aisles must be cleared or else.

And Mr. Skibbey would look through his bifocals and then over the rims of his glasses. He would notice how his naughty movies never packed 'em in like this, no matter how much he might like to watch them himself.

* * *

The Boxford Music Club was a busy crew. They not only had to rent a grand piano and haul it into the Gilded Door. They had to make reservations for their guest, Mr. Koji Yoshimoto, at the Best Rest Inn. Somebody had to pick him up at the Philly airport. When Lucy asked who wanted to do it, a half dozen ladies protested that they couldn't handle all those freeway lanes. So Lucy—confident, fearless, dangerous, if you want to know the truth—took on the job herself. Ada pitied Mr. Yoshimoto.

Then, when he arrived, they fed him a dinner of crabcakes and Emily Stinchfield's famous Grasshopper Pie. They dusted the black lacquer finish on the grand piano and placed a glass of cold water on a little table in the wings and offered their guest a lint brush for his pants. They passed out programs and explained to a stray customer or two that, sorry, it wasn't the usual fare at the Guilty Door tonight. It was the second Friday of the month, given over to classical music and wouldn't they like to come in and give it a try? They found themselves saying all this to the customer's back as he hurried out.

"I hope he finds relief somewhere," said one music-clubber.

"The 7–11's magazine racks aren't but five minutes away," said the other.

Not until Mr. Yoshimoto's opening arpeggio did Ada catch her breath and look around at the auditorium. *Not bad*, she thought as her eyes traveled all the way up to the seats under the balcony. *Not exactly a fire-marshal crowd but . . .* Mr. Yoshimoto's Brahms was so beautiful, she looped her arm through Latham's and lost herself in booming, wide-shouldered chords that she would never, ever hear from her students.

When he finished his Brahms, she scanned the half-shadowed faces in the audience again. Did Ruthalin like this? Did Erval?

In his final moment under the lights, Mr. Yoshimoto bowed and bowed. He nodded toward the smiles of these, his newest friends, all of them clapping hard enough to sting their hands. He was the ultimate gen-

tleman—starched, pressed, polite. Blue-haired ladies gathered around him onstage, pumping his hand. Young girls in velvet dresses—Rachel Lowenstein's students, no doubt—gripped their rolled-up programs until it was their turn and their mothers pushed them forward.

Lucy appeared at Ada's side. "I knew we'd forget something. Did we ever decide who will drive him to the motel?"

Ada thought a minute. "I could ask Latham."

Ada found Latham, deep in discussion with Theodore Stinchfield, head of the math department. Latham said yes, he would drive Mr. Yoshimoto. He jingled the keys in his pocket. He looked around for Mr. Yoshimoto, now in the lobby, who bowed and autographed yet more programs.

One young boy stood before the pianist. "Can you sign in my autograph book?"

"Yes, certainly."

"But I left it in the car."

"Would you mind waiting?" asked the child's father.

"Okay. Is okay." As Mr. Yoshimoto looked around the lobby, Ada hoped he didn't notice the burnt-out bulb just over his head, or the carpet threads hanging from the stairs up to the balcony. She hoped he couldn't see how badly little old Boxford needed him. Let him just stand there, wearing his permanent-pasted smile, trying not to eavesdrop on Lucy and the autograph boy's mommy (apparently another good Episcopalian) as they discussed the results of Reverend Anglesey's biopsy.

"Do you know what kind of cancer they're looking for?"

"Nobody's saying."

Mr. Yoshimoto studied the lobby, the mirrors behind the empty candy counter, the dormant popcorn machine stuffed into a corner, the worn velvet ropes lining the walls.

His eye fell on something tucked behind the display case. He cocked his head, reading sideways. Elroy Skibbey stepped forward from the shadows. Mr. Yoshimoto looked up with inquiring eyes. "You collect?" Mr. Skibbey pulled it out—a poster of Xaviera del'Abunda in her hardhat and not much else.

Mr. Yoshimoto gave the poster a long appreciative glance. Even if he only spoke tourist English, he seemed to comprehend perfectly well, as Skibbey explained what went on at the Gilded Door all the other nights of the month. "Ah!" His eyebrows rose up. "I see! I see, yes!"

Skibbey rolled up the poster and gave it to Mr. Yoshimoto, who tucked it under his arm with a secret smile. He signed the little boy's autograph book. He bowed one last time.

Ada's husband broke away from Dr. Stinchfield, shook out his car keys, and said, "Ready to go?"

* * *

And he had seemed like such a gentleman. He had seemed like the kind of man that if, say, he were locked into a room at the Best Rest Motor Inn (accidentally, of course) with someone as pretty as Emily Stinchfield, he would never lay a finger on her. He would let Emily have the bed, while he slept upright in the little square chair. And Emily would never wake up to find him standing over her, breathing heavily.

But men could shock you. Latham had. When Ada first met him, he had been one of the most upright young men in her congregation, the kind that took every last commandment seriously, the kind who walked blocks out of his way to avoid a bathing beauty on a billboard.

But when she finally had his ring on her finger, when she finally got him alone behind the door of Room 824 at the Hotel Bonneville, she was shocked at how ably, how eagerly he undid the buttons of her going-away suit.

Not that she minded, oh no! But the next time she sat in church and saw all those suited men up front, her world had turned so fast that the sun now came up in the west and water flowed uphill. Here were men who delivered thundering sermons to the teenagers, sermons about bridling one's passions. They were so convincing that you were sure these men had no passions at all.

Didn't need 'em!

Bathing beauty on a billboard? They didn't *want* to see it. It was something they didn't *like*, just like they didn't like cucumbers, or Preparation H commercials.

At least that's what virginal Ada thought.

Newlywed Ada knew better. Newlywed Ada understood that it took monumental will for these fellows to stare straight ahead when that billboard loomed.

This morning, as she wiped up an orange juice spill, she remembered Mr. Yoshimoto's delighted face as Xaviera del'Abunda came out from behind the concession counter. As she shook the dust cloth out on

the back porch, she pictured him in the passenger seat of Latham's car. And as she sorted socks on the bed, she wondered if Mr. Yoshimoto had tried to share his little souvenir with her husband.

Had Latham looked?

No. She knew Latham pretty well. Ogling the wife was okay. Everybody else was off-limits.

But would he secretly wish that he could look? Did he long, deep-down, for his wife to look more like Xaviera (that is, what little he could see of her as he turned away from Mr. Yoshimoto's poster)?

Ada tucked the folded socks into the drawer, reached down for the laundry basket, and caught sight of herself in the mirror beside the door. She stood up straight and studied the image.

The shock of gray at her temple was not that bad. It didn't detract much from her minstrel-boy haircut. And she was still slender, aside from the little pooch-out left over from three pregnancies.

Hers was not the kind of beauty any man would associate with wild midnight fantasy. But maybe she wasn't trying hard enough.

She turned sideways and lifted her chin just so.

She thrust out her bosom until her back muscles complained.

She flared her nostrils and composed her face into its most Xaviera-like pout.

She posed her arm behind her head and stared at herself in the mirror, her body all S-shaped. S for Slithery, for Siren. Then she . . .

The bedroom door burst open. "Ada, have you seen my white notebook? I'm late already for pries. . ."

Latham stopped.

He looked her up and down, his eyebrows jacked up with surprise.

"Don't scare me like that!" Ada undid her pose. "Well, what are you staring at?"

"I wish I knew."

"Oh, this is too much!" She picked up her laundry basket and batted at the air. "Too much Guilty Door! Too much Xaviera! We can't get away from that woman. I just . . . well, tell me Latham. Do you ever wish I was more like . . . like that?"

"Ohhhhhh," he moaned, low in his chest. He moved close, nuzzlingly close. He looked at his watch. "Darn priesthood meeting," he muttered. "Next time you're wondering," he whispered, "you let me know. And right away."

Then, after one last hungry look, he left.

* * *

The women of the Boxford Ward, as warriors go, were fierce but undirected. They were fierce in the church kitchen on a Thursday morning, with the air conditioning broken and the hot water steaming out of the faucets as they washed up all the sticky utensils and blender parts with which they had conquered four bushels of peaches. They were fierce with the mop and the vacuum as they cleaned up the morning's food spills in the children's room. They were fierce with a plate of lunch as each woman ripped into her dinner roll and mopped up every last bit of salad dressing.

They could be fierce about the Guilty Door, too, if they only knew what to do. So, that Thursday morning, when Ada Runyon mentioned that the next show would be the Halifax Fiddle Band all the way from Nova Scotia, they gathered around, these warriors, ready to be told which direction to throw the spear.

The Halifax Fiddle Band was fifteen high school kids, their fiddles, their drums, their accordions, and their keepers. A band like this, Ada told them, didn't have the budget to put themselves up at the Best Rest. They needed homes to stay in, and they must be fed, of course.

The women of the Boxford Ward took them on. Ada scribbled wildly as they volunteered: Galvins, two spare beds; Buckmans, another two. Jeralee offered a potato salad. Ruthalin was good for a cake.

Lucy would be proud. She had an opinion about Mormon women, who knows where she picked it up. When she faced the club and barked off all the tasks that it took to bring in those fiddlers from Halifax, and when the ladies raised their hands and offered this and that and still there were gaps on the list, Lucy looked Ada's way. And that look said, *I know your people will come through.*

So here Ada's people were, coming through. No problem. They changed bedsheets and made cakes all the time anyway. What was one or two more?

Especially when they were still furious about that Guilty Door. Every time they hit the stoplight at the boulevard and Main and saw that marquee, it bothered them like a grease stain on a new skirt. They remembered how things once were, and how they could still be if only *that* hadn't happened.

* * *

It was Ada's job to sweat the small stuff. It was all listed in the carbon-smudged contract Lucy had typed up:

Stock orange juice for a diabetic drummer.

Arrange a hair appointment for the band director.

Provide buttons. One dozen, black, round, 7/8 in., four holes. When showtime loomed ten minutes away and a costume fell apart, that was no time to knock at the locked doors of Chandler's Fabric, or search the bottom of a purse, or snip what you needed off Lucy's husband's suit coat.

When Ada stepped into Chandler's and found the wall of buttons, she also found Ruthalin, which was no surprise. Chandler's and its aisles of pincushions and seersuckers was Ruthalin's guilty pleasure.

Ada sighed before the wall. "Did they used to have this many?" Pearlies. Shiny metals. Buttons big as stethoscopes and small as aspirins. "Where are the plain black ones?"

"What do you need?" Ruthalin looked at Ada's list. "Oh, don't buy those. I have bunches of 'em back at home."

"It's not a problem buying them. No, really! It's in the contract. That means it's reflected in the ticket price."

Ruthalin grimaced. "Why spend money when you don't have to?"

"It's covered. It's not a problem."

"No, I can't let you do this. Well, if buttons were on sale, maybe, but . . ."

So Ada found herself standing in Ruthalin's kitchen, while Ruthalin sorted buttons like dry beans and poured all her black, round, 7/8 in., four-holed ones into Ada's cupped hands. It was more trouble than Ada needed, driving all the way out to the Feldsteds' house today. But Ruthalin looked so pleased with herself. *The cause needs buttons. Therefore, I have helped the cause.*

* * *

The cause also needed bodies.

Or so Lucy said one evening as she packed up her music after chorus rehearsal. When the last alto was out of earshot, Lucy leaned close to Ada. "You know, I was surprised to see none of your people at the Yoshimoto concert."

Ada felt like she'd been caught playing with Lucy's baton. "Oh, that

can't be," she said, when she could stop stammering. "We're all very much . . ." But could she remember where Ruthalin sat? Which aisle she walked down? Whether she wore the blue maternity dress or the peach one? Had Ada seen Jeralee waving across the room at other ward members? Lingering in the lobby after the show?

"Several years ago," said Lucy, "I taught in a place called Idaho Falls—don't know if you've ever heard of it—but it was just crawling with Mormons. And they were the backbone of the symphony there. Wonderful people. And when I met you here, and heard about your ward, I thought the arts in Boxford would be in fine hands."

Lucy picked up her music bag. "But now, I'm just . . . puzzled." She walked off to her beater car.

* * *

"As if the whole burden was on us!" Ada dipped her fingers into the cold cream and looked out the bathroom door at Latham. "We're just a teeny part of this town. Yes, there are more Mormons here than you might expect, far off the beaten path and all, but . . ."

"But she's right." Latham lounged on the bed. "It should be us filling that theater."

"There's not enough of us!"

"Oh, come on. Put the Feldsteds in there and you've got a crowd. They even look like more than they are, because none of 'em can sit still."

"No, here's the problem." Ada wiped her face clean. "Does someone like Lucy even understand what it is for Erval and Ruthalin to buy *eleven* tickets? How much money have they got left after the groceries and the shoes? After the tithing and the mission funds?"

"It still should be us."

Ada laid her head on the pillow. "I know. But she can't be unfair about this. I don't know how they did it in Idaho Falls. But, Idaho Falls or Boxford, it's tougher for us than for the average Episcopalian. That's the part Lucy doesn't see."

"Just go buy a couple dozen tickets and spread them around. We're good for it."

She looked into his face. "Why is it I never think of these things?"

He shrugged, proud of himself.

"All right," she said. "Two dozen tickets. That Mr. Skibbey's not

gonna drag Xaviera del'Abunda into this town without a fight on his hands."

"Oh, Xaviera del whatever! She's got nothin' on you. Say, could you do that little pose thing again?"

"No!"

"Come onnnn."

"No, really, I hurt myself."

"Where does it hurt? I'll make it better."

"Stop that!" she laughed. "*Stop that!*" And she was still laughing when the light clicked off.

* * *

On the Friday of the Halifax Fiddle Band's appearance, Ada's phone rang non-stop. If it wasn't seventeen different people wondering when the coffee and barbecue meat were supposed to be at the theater, it was a host family's bathroom out of order.

Finally, she tucked the extra tickets in her purse. She had promised them all around the ward. Now, it was time to deliver.

She drove through town. Heat shimmered off the sidewalks. She rang at the Keatings' house. When Jeralee's sober-faced eight-year-old daughter answered, music floated faintly through the door.

Inside, Jeralee sat before a reel-to-reel tape recorder. She pressed the off button. "I don't like the scratchy sounds," she told her teenage son.

"That's just you, handling the microphone."

"Well, I have to hold it."

"No, you don't. You can put it here." He planted it on the coffee table. "It'll pick up."

"Oh, hi!" Jeralee stood up. "I was just recording some songs. I've been procrastinating this for years. But this week I said to myself, 'Jeralee, They'll be lost! Lost! Your little granddaughter will never hear the songs your grandmother sang.' Sometimes, you have to put aside the dusting and the green-bean canning and just do what's really important! Isn't that right?" She walked into the kitchen. "The potato salad's in here." She raised a foil-covered bowl from the kitchen counter.

Ada took the bowl. "And I brought those tickets I promised. I don't want anybody breaking the bank or anything."

"Oh, we won't be needing them."

"Really? Well, good, you got your own then."

"No."

"No?" asked Ada.

"Um . . . " Jeralee fingered some loose hairs that escaped her ponytail, "Are you aware that the Guilty Door is still showing those other movies?"

Ada studied Jeralee's face, where Doing the Right Thing did battle with Being Nice. "Jeralee, that was part of the deal. Mr. Skibbey has to make money. We're just trying to show him that he can make more with our kind of show than with his."

Jeralee knitted her brows. What a world! Good and evil were so marbled together that a spoonful of one picked up a stripe of the other. "Well, I couldn't feel right about going there. Someone might see. They might misunderstand."

Ada gripped the bowl of potato salad, an edge of foil jabbing into her finger. She left Jeralee's house, with Jeralee singing something about "Old Uncle Ned" into a microphone that her teenage son would not let her handle, for a granddaughter who was—what?—six months old?

Ada rehearsed, all the way down the Feldsteds' road, how she would tell it to Ruthalin: "*Someone might see. They might misunderstand." Can you believe that, Ruthalin? Let's just lock up and go home now!*

When she arrived, their garage yawned open. Erval puttered in the dark. He emerged, shaking out a rope.

"Good news, Erval!" Ada sang out. "I finally brought your tickets."

"Tickets for what?"

Ada stopped. She stared at him and his rope. "You're kidding me, right?" She watched him toss the rope into the little trailer attached to his van. A tent, a Coleman stove, a couple of ragged lawn chairs sat packed into the corner. "Okay, I can see you're going camping. But you're leaving after the show, right? You remembered the Halifax Fiddle Band is playing tonight, right?"

"Is that so?" He dropped new batteries into a big yellow flashlight, clicked it on, and watched the bright new beam of light dart around the rafters.

"Yes, that's so. You and Ruthalin remembered, didn't you?" She followed him around like a child whining for ice cream money. The very idea, a grown woman pleading like this! Giving up on him, she stepped through the door into the hall, picking her way between the bedrolls, the canteens, the mosquito repellent.

Ruthalin, in the kitchen, sweated over a counter of half-made sand-

wiches. She looked up, shoving back a loose tendril at her forehead. No, no, she hadn't forgotten the Halifax Fiddle Band, she said, but she had forgotten the Scout camp-out. "You know how these things sneak up on you," she said.

"Maybe the Scouts could skip this time." said Ada. "Wasn't there a camp-out just last month?"

Erval joined them in the kitchen. "There's a camp-out *every* month."

"Well, that's what I'm saying. With plenty of chances to build fires and track raccoon prints all year long, one month off won't hurt."

Erval laid his flashlight on the table. "Those boys need consistency. You haven't got a program at all if one month it's yes and the next it's we'll-let-you-know."

"Erval, we need to fill that theater tonight. If we don't . . . well, Mrs. Weston-Welsh says she's surprised that the Mormons haven't turned out."

"I'll buy a ticket, if that'll help."

Her smile felt brittle but brave.

* * *

Fifteen shadows stood on the old vaudeville stage at the Guilty Door. The lights went up. A hand gripped a drum. Another stretched its fingers before the white of the accordion keys. Another raised a flute to a pair of lips. Then the first bow struck the strings and they were off.

Behind the music, extension cords twined through the wings. Instrument cases gaped open. Up the tar-papered stairs, a lone light shone in a dressing room littered with open garment bags and hair-clogged brushes.

Down the hall, the scent of barbecue slowly died on a long table. Sheets of tin foil, smeared with frosting, potato goo, and melon juice, threw light up to the ceiling. Paper plates slouched in the garbage and a small pool of coffee dried in a Styrofoam cup.

And the music reeled on and the dimly lit bodies out in the house seats sat like a wave that had tried for high tide but fallen short of the wet sand line. Toes tapped along helplessly to the beat.

Meanwhile, at the back of the house, dark men straggled in. They stirred in the shadows, too restless to sit. They scowled at the stage.

One made his way unsteadily down the aisle. He found a nice

mid-house seat and fell in. The metal fittings wheezed under his bulk. He scratched his lumberjack beard. He yawned the long and thorough yawn of a door creaking open.

His scrawny buddy sat three seats away.

"When do they take their clothes off?" said Mr. Big Beard.

Heads turned. Eyes glared.

"Shut up, Mugly!" whispered Mr. Scrawny. "Gaaa, I can't take you nowhere."

Lucy bolted from her seat and charged up the aisle.

Everybody was too busy being uncomfortable to notice the beads of perspiration growing on a flute player's forehead. Nobody noticed how deeply she swayed or how off the beat she was. Nobody noticed until her wooden flute fell to the floor and she rushed into the wings. Then, before the audience could finish murmuring in surprise, a fiddler ducked through the same gap in the curtains.

By the time Ada arrived backstage, Emily Stinchfield mopped the brow of the waxy-pale flautist. The toilet behind a closed door flushed and platoons of Halifaxers who could not wait for the bathroom retched into cups, shopping bags, and the already pungent garbage can.

Ada surveyed the food table. She stood over Jeralee's glistening potato salad. She laid her hand against the bowl. Feeling its wan room temperature, she counted the hours back to Jeralee's kitchen counter.

Out on the stage, the Music Club ladies laid out the sick. They offered up blazers, stacks of programs, even instrument cases as pillows. Ada walked among the bodies. Even on a night like this, the Gilded Door couldn't help playing like the movies. Scarlett O'Hara in the Atlanta train yard came to mind.

She heard Lucy shouting up in the lobby. "Mr. Skibbey, it's *our* night at the Guilty Door!"

"A man buys a ticket. A man gets in the door."

And, from the orchestra seats, "All I asted was, when they gonna take off their. . ."

"Cut it out, Mugly! I heard ya the first time. *Ever'body* heard ya."

"I should think, Mr. Skibbey, that you can tell the difference between *your* kind of ticket buyer and *our* kind!"

"I'm a businessman, Mrs. Weston-Welsh. I don't much care where a dollar comes from."

"I'm sorry, ma'am. Mugly, he's had a little too much tonight. He don't know what he's sayin'."

"Well, then, take him home and tuck him in for the night!"

"Right, ma'am. Come on, Mugly. Mugly? . . . Mugly? Hey, anybody seen a guy with a big beard?"

Mugly, meanwhile, did his best not to trip over the power cords, the instrument cases, the tar-papered steps.

And when he saw the long table, he found a spoon and dug into the potato salad.

* * *

It sat on an even quieter end of Main Street.

Parents used to drop their children off at the curb on Saturdays. Even when the Disney movies left, the children still came to browse the comic book store next door. But with the likes of Kandi Lotusblossom and Xaviera smirking out over Main Street, the mothers of Boxford feared that comic books wouldn't keep their children's attention. So they didn't bring them anymore.

The comics were a steal, though. "5 cents!!!" said the sign in the window. "Close-out sale!"

At the Sunshine Laundry, smashed cigarette packs and rumpled brown bags blew against the chipped wall. Inside, empty spaces grew on the revolving hanger. The owner spent more time at his new branch out by the mall, where the profits were tidy, and the atmosphere as fresh as a newly starched shirt.

Without customers or a boss to bother her, the Sunshine attendant found time to read each and every story in her *True Confessions* magazine.

And at the Shoreline State Bank, little old ladies pulled up to the teller window, safely encased in their Buicks. They gripped their passbooks and drove down Main the other way, so they wouldn't have to creep past scowling men who looked this way and that before they entered the Guilty Door.

Who Brought Forth This Christmas Demon

Larry T. Menlove

Tim's wife left him with three dozen blue spruce still trussed up on the truck and better than fifty juniper, Scotch, red cedar, and Douglas on the lot. She left him when he was finishing up a sale with a stunning customer. He remembered this—and he had a photo of her foot on his phone to remind him. The thing was, this gorgeous woman, with flaxen-honey hair, green eyes, perfect cheeks, and a white-teeth smile that singed the needles of the junipers next to her, smelled like unholy hell: some foreign and eccentric perfume. She was no doubt a beautiful woman, but she smelled like a fancy toilet bowl tablet. His eyes were watering, and he was about to sneeze as the lady handed over a crisp fifty for the nine-foot Scotch that she said would fit nicely in the home's great room.

That's when his cell phone rang. It was Karri. His wife.

And Tim had asked Karri to hold on just a minute. And then he had asked this perfect, yet fetid, customer if she wouldn't mind holding the phone. Just hold it for the moment it would take him to hoist the perfect tree into the immaculate bed of her big Dodge truck. And after he'd done that, the smelly goddess had handed the phone (along with the freshly snapped photo of her foot) back to him with a smile because he had given her a deal on the tree—not that she needed a deal. And off she went to the doubtless warmth and love of her home, her husband, two blessedly ideal daughters, and the spayed purebred chocolate Labrador. And then Karri from down deep inside the electronics and mystery of the little phone pressed against his ear said she didn't love him anymore. Told him she was tired of his silly business ventures and waiting to have his children. She was leaving. Today. She had the cat and all she needed. And that

was that. And there he was, dead phone, alone, and the chemical stench of that beautiful woman lingering in the still air of winter.

* * *

It wasn't until early May that the city letters regarding the trees started to get ugly. Tim had an acquaintance—poker buddy—on the Payson City Council who had pulled strings with ordinances and covered up non-actions for as long as he could. But when it came right down to it, it was bare-naked obvious: Right there in the middle of town there were Christmas trees for sale—in May.

Tim had leased the old parking lot at the defunct Safeway from a business man in Provo. The man was out of reach due to an extended vacation in Guatemala, and the city had no recourse but to go after the lessee. And in fairness, the city had taken its time about it. It had been a wet winter and spring, and all the merchandise in its fading cheer had weathered it fairly well up until the end of April when someone had reported a rat scurrying in and around the tired trees. And please, in such close proximity to the public library and the Flying Wheel pizzeria across the street. There was no other course of action. The trees had to be removed.

It was a Thursday. Tim got out of bed and poured himself a crystal tumbler of bourbon and water. It was bottom-shelf bourbon and it was early, nearly noon. He could do nothing about the hour; it was what it was. And the economical bourbon? Well, it was alcohol. His once comfortable savings were nearing closure, and of necessity he had to make concessions somewhere.

Tim ventured out to the mailbox in his "T" monogrammed robe, gathered his mail, and retreated back to the house. He read the final letter from the city, used the envelope as a coaster. The Payson city fathers had given him until the day after tomorrow to remove all the merchandise from the lot or they would do it and it wouldn't come cheap.

In truth, the trees were not a priority for Tim. There was the high-def TV. There was his belly, becoming quite illustrious and swollen. And there were his cigars.

By the end of February, he had burned through all the lovingly preserved premium hand-mades in his humidor—even the box of Cubans he'd smuggled up from Cancun. And as much as it had torn at his hubris lining, he had walked right into the nearest convenience store and bought up twelve packages of the biggest Swisher Sweets they carried. At home in

the den he dumped them into the cedar-lined humidor Karri had given him two Valentine's Days ago. He had checked the humidity, added some distilled water to the water pillow, and, praying for a Havana miracle, had closed the lid.

And so Tim lit one now, right there in the kitchen. Like he had lit one of the Cubans up on a Saturday last summer after lunch. Karri had taken the broom up at him then and swept him out onto the deck into the sunlight. It was funny. Then.

He took a long draw on the miserable cigar there at the table and flicked open his cell phone and scrolled to the photo of the woman's foot. It was clad in a black Mary Jane shoe of sorts with a tiny buckle over the top. The parking lot pavement was slushy-gray and the buckle shone like a diamond. Tim looked at the photo of the woman's foot ten, twenty times a day. He knew this snapshot captured the very minute everything fell apart for him. It was the proverbial foot put-down.

Tim licked all along the sweetened cheap cigar until the sugar was gone. And then he dunked the head into his bourbon and sucked on that. He smelled bad. His eyes hurt. His private areas were dank and musty from overuse and under-cleansing. He finished his cigar and took a shower.

He got out of the steaming water and quaffed back his tumbler of bourbon. Then he shaved. When he was done, he looked in the mirror and saw a stranger. He saw a man from six months before. A man who risked stability in pursuit of riches in ways he thought were calculated. He saw a man who did not realize then what that risk truly was.

He lifted his eyebrow to the clean visitor in the mirror, gave him a very inquisitive observation. This was not the person he'd come to know and scorn over the course of the last four months. This person might just pick up the phone and call his wife. He might take that risk. Tim was curious to know what the old stranger in the mirror would accomplish on this day.

What he accomplished was measured out in exactly 4,707 calories, 2.2 hours of web-surfing, 12 flat hours of television, and three hours of staring at the walls waiting for fate to smolder, lick the edges of his being, and combust.

Tim had last heard from Karri on March 7. She'd called him from her mother's in St. George.

"What ya doin?" she'd asked him then, like the past three months of estrangement hadn't even been a week, a day.

Tim took a deep breath on his end of the connection. He had read somewhere on the internet about confrontation and getting what you want. He had read all of Karri's *Oprah* magazines that kept coming with their Dr. Phil advice. Tim had even renewed Karri's subscription. He thought he was an expert on recognizing relationship foibles and summits and overcoming. He was prepared for this. Knew what he was going to say to convince Karri to come home, to work out this misunderstanding and make her know that he was a good man, a solid, faithful, loving man.

"Bitch," is what he said.

And so that conversation hadn't gone as well as Tim had planned.

After Karri had yelled and screamed and cried and finally, in a tired and quiet voice, let the word "divorce" creep out into their world, Tim hung up the phone, scratched his belly, and went into the pantry. He foraged the potato chips, the oatmeal bars, the gorp, and a marshmallow brownie mix he was certain that Karri had bought well back before Halloween. And Tim ate. He crunched and smacked his way through mountains of oily processed-wheat flour, peanuts, and whey. He had eaten steadily until the word she'd unleashed that day was choked beneath piles of protein, carbohydrates, and both saturated and unsaturated fats.

It was Friday. Tim rolled out of bed and had his bourbon and cigar for breakfast. He looked at the lady's foot on the phone. Donned his robe. The divorce papers were waiting for him in the mailbox.

"Irreconcilable differences."

He didn't know what that meant.

Tim sat at the kitchen table and read through the decree trying to find an explanation. Finally, at the end of the document, he spilled bourbon on the line he was supposed to sign. He held a pen over the puckered smudge, thought he should let the paper dry before flourishing his "Tim Oberman" in the ostentatious hand he used, and got side-tracked by the city letter discarded there beside the divorce decree. Two different sheets of paper: one threatening action for not removing nuisance merchandise, one clearly stating the terms of removal from the union of holy matrimony.

So here it was, he thought. What better time to begin scratching his way out of the passive, suicidal spin he was in? His blood seemed to be pumping a little quicker. The day was brighter. And the ground bedrock.

Tim went into the den and scrounged through his deep and sometimes dubious business drawer and found the number of the sixteen-year-old kid who had helped him on the Christmas tree lot all those months ago. The kid had helped unload the trees, set them on their stands, sell them with a smile, and tie them up on car roofs. He was a good solid worker. A first-rate employee until Tim hung out the hand-written "closed until further notice" sign. He remembered the boy was handsome in a Nordic way, all the long hair and the cleft in his downy chin. Tim remembered the hangdog look in the boy's eyes when he told him to go home the day Karri dropped the bomb, told him he didn't need him anymore, told him pissin' merry Christmas to you and yours.

Tim felt bad about that last and was going to apologize for it first thing, but the boy wasn't home. He was at school where he belonged. The boy's mother had suggested Tim call a fellow by the name of Brick.

"Brick?" he'd asked.

"Yes. Brick," the handsome Nordic's mother had said, and gave Tim his phone number.

So Tim called Brick.

Brick answered with a slow, humble, old-Mormon-prophet drawl, "Hello."

"Hi, Brick? This is Tim Oberman. You were referenced to me as someone who might be looking for a little day work. Is that so?"

A pause, and then the sluggish, retiring enunciation. "Well, yes. I am a body looking for work, yes."

"I've got something for you, if you'd like."

Another pause. "What did you say your name was?"

"My name's Tim Oberman. I got some old, ah, trees to clear out."

"Oberman. Can't say as I recognize the family," said Brick. "You live in the ward?"

Tim adjusted the phone in his ear, took a swallow of bourbon. It stuck, and he choked it down, coughed. "I can tell you're of a good Mormon family. I can hear it in your voice."

"Yes," answered Brick, "I am."

"Me, uh, that is, my family fell away from the Church some years ago, might be why you don't recognize us. I'm across town anyway. Wouldn't be in your ward, but I've got these trees."

"Trees?"

"Yes. Had myself an investment enterprise last winter. Christmas trees. Fell on hard times."

"Hard times," said Brick. "I understand, yes."

"Are you available today? Need to get these trees moved ASAP."

"You that one down on the highway by the old Safeway?"

Tim finished the finger of bourbon left in his tumbler, glanced around for the bottle. "Yes. That's me."

For the first time in months, Tim felt like a man. A man with underlings, and he pulled his BMW 3 Series into the hired man's driveway. Tim leapt from the car and walked across the dull grass and vivid dandelions to the front door. The house was submissive, submissive and meek like all the other homes in this rundown district on the west side of Payson. He opened the screen door which fell loose from the clasp and rattled with no spring or closer. Tim knocked on the weathered front door. He pivoted there on the little porch and looked down the weary street. It was a neighborhood where mere continuation seemed to be the greatest pleasure of life. Tim realized he must have booze on his breath and slipped a mint in his mouth.

He heard a rustling behind the door. He turned to face a much younger man than he'd imagined standing there in a pair of moss green slacks and a begrimed, short-sleeved, button-down shirt that was open at the collar. He appeared close to Tim's own age, possibly even younger. Handsome under it all.

"Brick?"

A long pause. Tim was about to say he was sorry, he had the wrong house.

"Yes." Drawn out, a whole sentence in a word.

"Oh, good, good. I'm Tim Oberman. Nice to meet you." He extended his hand, grateful to be making a business deal—modest as this one was.

Brick laid his moist hand into Tim's.

"Are you ready to move some trees?"

A pause, a moment of slow movement, backing up. "Yes. Let me get my gloves."

In the car, Brick insisted on a short prayer before traveling. He bowed his head, and Tim could hear mumbling and an exhaled amen.

"Thank you," Brick said as he looked up and smiled at Tim.

"Sure thing. We all have our ways."

Brick buckled himself into the black leather seat. "Say, this is a nice car."

"Thank you. I like it."

While Tim drove out of the old neighborhood, Brick dug at his left ear with the tip of his finger. He twisted his hand with quick jerking motions as though he were revving a motorcycle throttle. Then he started in on the right ear. His mouth opened as he did, and Tim saw he was missing a canine. The man had watery eyes.

"You lived here long?" asked Tim.

Brick worked his ear and then examined his finger. Gave it a good look. "Oh, not in this ward, but I've lived here in town most of my life, yes."

"Are you married?"

Brick's head twisted and he looked at Tim full on. Tim glanced over. The look on Brick's face was one of fear and incredulity, a mite lost. Brick turned back to face the windshield.

Tim backtracked, "I mean, ah, if that's too personal a question, I apologize." He faked a cough.

Brick said, "You haven't heard?"

"What's that?"

After a sigh, "It's all over town. The bishop . . . son-of-a—" Brick lifted his hands from his lap in fists, held them there in suspension over his crotch. He lowered them against his legs.

"I haven't heard anything," said Tim. "You having some trouble?"

"Well, yes," said Brick, "but I'm not at ease talking to anyone other than my bishop about my worries. I thank you for your concern, though."

Five minutes later they arrived at the Christmas tree lot. Brick lowered his chin and mumbled some more and unbuckled his seat belt.

The air in the lot was warm and dehydrated. A faint odor of musty pine permeated everything like dried-over forest sweat. Several trees lay on their sides, and there were old newspapers and grocery sacks wrapped around the trunks and tangled in the branches. The trees still held some green in their needles. But it was deceptive. The green was brittle, like old trout bone or diseased and desiccated heart sinew.

Tim and Brick stood beside the BMW and looked over the sad mess of it all. A long piece of red ribbon, burned almost white from sunshine and weather, fluttered in the top of a Douglas fir, one of the tall ones, a ten-footer. It was as though they were returning to some forgotten place,

an abandoned carnival or festival. A May Day celebration gone wrong. The big GMC was there at the back of the lot next to the old Safeway. The truck's side-paneled bed was filled with trees heaped up on themselves lying on their sides. Shadows hid, buried inside the branches, deep down in, ghosts of Christmas never was.

The two of them stood there and stared at the lot.

Tim said, "Well, I guess the first order is to see if that truck'll start. We'll get that load out first."

He had brought the key from home, though he'd had to search for it. Finally he'd found it in a half empty can of peanuts next to the bed. Tim put the key in the door lock of the truck now. It wasn't even locked. He opened the door and slid up into the cab behind the wheel, turned the key. The battery was dead.

"I was afraid of that," Tim said. "How about you move these few trees over so I can get the car in there to jump it?"

Brick took his finger out of his ear and leapt to it. Needles showered off the trees leaving crunchy paths from where the trees had stood for five months to where Brick was putting them now, bunching them together like condemned refugees, each on its own X-ed pedestal. Tim idled the car in up next to the big truck.

While he was hooking up the jumper cables, he asked Brick about his name.

"Is it short for Brickowski or something like that?"

"No," answered Brick.

"No?"

"It's just my name. Last name's Smith."

"Brick Smith. Hmmm, that's unusual."

"Just my worldly name. Will have it only as long as I am tried here on this earth."

Tim hooked up the cables and let the Beamer's engine idle a while. He said, "I guess you're wondering why the trees have sat here."

"Couldn't sell them?"

Tim sucked at his teeth, craved the Swisher Sweet in the baggie tucked in the Beamer's glove box. He wished he had brought some bourbon. "I gave it up," he said. "My wife, ah, she and I, ah, we had a separation during the holidays."

Tim hadn't spoken openly with anyone since Karri had left. He had suffered the division from his wife in isolation. His parents and siblings

were not very close. A few kind words of encouragement were all he got from them. It was just as well for Tim. He preferred enduring the drinking and awful smells emanating up from his body in a self-imposed seclusion. A few friends dropped by for the first month, brought him Christmas gifts, tried to match Tim's drinking while they were there, ultimately giving up or passing out on the couch. They cooed, told him it was going to be all right. Karri would come back. If she didn't, there were a million other superior women out there who would jump at the chance. After all, he was youngish, established, respected, still had his hair and physique. Well-intentioned flattery, but his body was shot through and his hair was a mess. He was forty-two, and the city was breathing down his neck to clear out his Christmas trees, of all things, in May. Respected? That description was in some serious peril.

Brick was quiet, his finger poised a foot from his ear. He gazed at Tim. The car idled there beside them.

Finally Brick said, "I am sorry to hear that, Brother Oberman, I truly am."

Tim was getting used to Brick's slow Mormon cadence. He found it soothing in an odd way. It was as if Brick's slow deliberate words held more mass, more value.

"Are you divorced then?" asked Brick.

Tim dropped his chin. He drew his hand over his disheveled hair. He looked up at the truck. He scratched his day's growth of beard, listened to the idle of his car, blinked his eyes. "Got the papers this morning."

"That is a tribulation. I am sorry."

The car idled.

"I guess I could rev it."

Tim got in behind the wheel and pressed the accelerator. The engine whooshed like a vortex, sucking in the air around it and pushing it through its works, converting stillness into energy. Brick slipped into the passenger seat beside Tim.

He said, "I am your kindred in troubles, Tim."

Tim was the one to show incredulity now. "Your wife leave you?"

"I have had my trials."

"Your trials?"

The pause.

"Brother Oberman, may I speak to you in openness?"

And then Brick told Tim a story. A story that astonished him. A

story of unequaled perversion the likes of which Tim had only heard rumor of, full of all the bits and pieces of every dirty joke and every deep-buried thought of man. A story of love, hate, brawling, balling, propagation, alcohol and drugs, ruination, and, above all, abomination. And at the end of his story, Brick gazed over at Tim and said, "That's why I pray now."

"Yes," said Tim.

"Yes," said Brick.

"All this, ah, happened?"

"Yes."

"To you?"

"I am in the process of forgiveness or of damnation," said Brick. "I often wonder which path I am on."

The car idled with the jumper cables snaking from under the hood to the truck's battery in an umbilical connection. Tim and Brick looked out the windshield at the black hood.

"I suppose we should try to get our work done," Brick said. He smiled, and Tim looked over at him. He could see some gleam in Brick's eye, a mote lifting.

The truck started with a backfire and a tremble that shook the trees in the bed as blue smoke rose up from under the truck. Tim moved the car, and they got in the truck and drove west to the landfill. Pine needles rattled and blew out in the slipstream.

"Where are your kids?" asked Tim.

Brick fidgeted with his ear. "They are with their grandmother in Salt Lake City."

"Do you ever see them?"

"I haven't much, no." Brick leaned up from the vinyl seat, made it squeak, and pulled his wallet from his hip pocket. He leafed through the scant billfold and pulled out a few photos that were cupped in the shape of the wallet. Brick fanned them out and looked them over. He smiled. "Here they are." He stretched over the long bench seat and held the photos up for Tim to see.

There was a boy, about seven with white hair and crossed eyes; a girl a couple of years younger, missing a tooth like her dad; and an infant that looked to Tim like the very embodiment of peace. The baby was in a woman's arms. The photo showed the woman's lap, an elbow, part of her nose and chin and a spill of chestnut hair over her shoulder.

"That's my wife holding Chelsie. They're all a little older now."

Tim thought about showing him the lady's foot stored in his phone photo archive.

"Must be hard," said Tim. "Is your wife still around?"

Brick settled back in his seat, put the photos in his wallet and put the wallet back in his hip pocket. He sighed. "I don't know where she is. Bringing pleasure or pain—or both—somewhere I am sure." He revved his ear with his finger.

The truck engine droned on. Pine needles glittered into the warm afternoon and settled onto the road.

"Ah," Tim started after a long silence, "how do you, I mean, how does that happen? You know, I mean, I feel like I know what is going on around here. I mean I'm not a prude or anything. I've been around. I just never knew all that kind of stuff was going on. I mean, this *is* Utah."

Brick watched the fences line out along the field road they were traveling down. He dropped his face and then looked up. "I don't know. It's what's behind doors." He lifted his hands over his thighs. "It's fun, you know. I had a blast. I . . . " He sat there with his mouth open. Words stuck. Then, resigned: "How does anyone know when Satan is at work on them?"

Dust billowed up around the cab as Tim stopped the truck at the landfill gate next to a tiny shack. A lean man who looked as if he were undergoing chemotherapy slipped out of the shack and stood with his legs apart and arms crossed and looked in at Tim. Tim rolled down the window and offered the man his driver's license.

"Got a permit?"

"I'm a resident." Tim pushed his license toward the man again.

"Don't matter."

"What do you mean?"

"Won't take that much yard waste without a permit." The man turned and went back into the shack and sat on a tall stool. He flipped open a dusty, ruffled *Playboy* magazine.

Tim shouted, "Where do I get a permit?"

"City."

"Hmm," Brick murmured. "Unhelpful little jerk there."

At the city offices, Tim got the runaround. No one seemed to have heard of the need for a yard waste permit. It was a mystery. Finally, he told the snooty man with greasy hair at the front desk to go kiss the mayor. And then Brick added, "And the governor, too."

"I'm sorry. I don't understand why the man at the dump told you you needed a permit," the man's shrill voice raised to reach their backs as Tim and Brick wandered down the hall and out the door and down the steps into the fine afternoon.

"I need a drink," said Tim.

Brick chuckled, "I don't blame you."

"Well, tell you what," said Tim, "These trees be damned. I'm going home for a nice tall cold Manhattan. You want to join me?" Then he looked at Brick. "I don't mean to tempt you. Your struggles and all."

"Well. I'm coming with you, sure. As for the drink, I prefer straight Scotch."

Tim looked at Brick. Brick was walking to the truck with his head up. He appeared to be grinning and his shoulders held a degree of straightness—even his green slacks had a jump in them that wasn't there before.

"I've got Scotch," said Tim.

"Single malt?"

"Blended. Cheap."

They got in the cab and slammed the doors. Brick bowed his head and prayed.

"Praise our Heavenly Father, I'm ready for a drink," Brick shouted after his amen, sounding more like a jubilant Baptist than an old Quorum-of-the-Twelve Mormon.

"You sure?"

"I feel the Spirit in this, Brother Oberman."

They drank through the afternoon at Tim's house on the back patio under the deck umbrella. The truck sat out front in the driveway full of Christmas trees. Brick told more stories of sin and debauchery, his suffering for redemption, and the need of forgiveness from his children. Tim opened up about his wife and their problems in the marriage. Brick gave advice and clucked his tongue and prayed and quoted scripture and prophets. They drank bourbon and Scotch and beer and smoked Swisher Sweets. They argued the finer points of the Word of Wisdom. They relieved themselves in the hollyhocks lining the patio in full view of Tim's neighbors. Brick bore his testimony. Tim promised to go to church with Brick on Sunday. They got to know each other, agreed and disagreed, made pacts, and before long the sun found its way down in the west and the air gathered cold. They sat in the gloom and felt each other's presence

like a warm vapor circulating on currents of barely whispered breath. From out of this slow, calm broth, they determined what was to be done with the trees, talked it through, saw the plan, the first plan. They waited. At midnight they got to it, shook themselves, rising from the patio like stone men resurrected.

It was 2:00 A.M. when they finished. The quarter-waxing moon was long gone down in the west sky. Tim and Brick had piled all the trees in the center of the lot. Their arms were scratched and marked from branches and needles. They were tired, the adrenaline and Christmas songs exhausted from their systems.

"Our finest gifts we bring, pa rum pum pum pum," Brick trailed off and was quiet. They sat in the back of the empty truck. "Shoot, I miss those kids," he said under his breath.

Tim looked at the dark mass of trees in front of them. He pulled out the divorce papers he had stuffed in his pocket.

"You gonna do it?" asked Brick. The last of the Swishers dangled from his lip. The cigar was burning hot and dry. The red spot of coal seemed to breathe a few inches from his face.

Tim slipped off the truck. He walked up to the edge of the tree pile. He was sober. He lifted his torch cigar-lighter and flicked it. Butane mingled with the pine scent. Tim held the hissing flame near the divorce decree, read Karri's name typed clearly there on the front page. Plaintiff. His name below.

He had no defense. But he could try.

He let the lighter go out, and he folded the decree and put it back in his pocket as he walked to the truck.

"Plan B, then?"

Tim sat down next to Brick. "Yeah," he said, "I suppose." He took out his cell phone and opened it to the lady's foot. Looked at it and sighed, then: "u-u-A-A-Ah!" He lurched up and threw the phone into the pile of trees. The light from the phone was swallowed up by the branches and needles. "I'll get a new one tomorrow." Tim breathed out and settled back down into the bed of the truck. "I'll call her. And the city, too."

Brick took the cigar from his mouth and studied the hot tip of it. "Not gonna miss these," he said. He leaned up and threw the cigar at the trees. It turned over and over in the air and disappeared in an explosion of sparks as it struck a Douglas mid-trunk.

"You feel like praying?" Brick asked. He stuck his finger in his ear, held it there frozen for just a moment and then took it out.

"I guess it wouldn't hurt," said Tim.

For a while there was nothing, just the cold silent air of a May night, both men reciting quiet appeals to their respective higher powers. Then the glow started from deep in the pile. And the crackling grew, some pagan deity coming to life. And the men who brought forth this Christmas demon fought the urge to run, to hide, and they leaned back on their elbows, humble and amazed under the tongue of fire that roared all their collective love and hate and fear in a strange and beautiful voice at the darkness above.

Candor, Craftmanship, and a Worthy Subject

Edward L. Kimball. *Lengthen Your Stride: The Presidency of Spencer W. Kimball.* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005, 470 pp., $29.95. Includes CD.

Reviewed by Lavina Fielding Anderson, an editor in Salt Lake City

In the interests of full disclosure, I hasten to acknowledge that I was involved in the early stages of editing this manuscript and, as I recall, continually urged Edward Kimball, whom I count, with his wife, Bee, a dear friend, to add more detail. (To see how my wish was granted, read on!) When the book came out, my husband, Paul, and I chose it for our bedtime reading-aloud, an acid test of prose quality, which it passed with flying colors. Thus, this review makes no pretense of cautious objectivity.

I consider this biography to be essential reading for anyone who lived through the last quarter of the twentieth century as a Mormon or who wants to understand Mormonism for that time period. Not only was Spencer W. Kimball the "main Mormon," to borrow the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s phrase about Gordon B. Hinckley, but he was also the "model Mormon," living a life of such Christian compassion and generosity that this biography is something of a handbook on how to follow the Savior. The combination of a genuinely inspirational life portrayed with remarkable candor, care, and craftsmanship also makes this volume a model biography, fully worthy to stand beside the remarkable earlier work that Ed wrote with his nephew, Andrew E. Kimball Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977).

Ed Kimball sets out his own standards for the book in a preface that describes his sources and his approach. He confesses that, "as a son," he probably cannot be "completely free from bias," but his own historical and legal background—in addition to his father's own commitment to candor—"impressed me with a determination to tell the story as fairly as I can." Therefore, he explains, the fact that the anecdotes "almost all illustrate good character comes not by conscious selection" but because those who reported their experiences with President Kimball to him "admired"

his father and remembered their encounters favorably. And what they remembered was "a truly good man, with unusual measures of intelligence, kindliness, integrity, commitment, patience, and unaffected love. I did not exclude any evidence to the contrary" (xiii, xvii). Ed Kimball also describes his sources, including gaps in his father's monumental diary and its decline in quality as his secretary took over making more of the entries until finally, by 1980, "it constituted little more than a list of appointments and visitors" (xv). Ed's own background research included scanning the entire run of the *Church News, Ensign, Conference Reports,* and *Deseret News Church Almanac* for 1974–85.

The book is organized thematically rather than chronologically, since it focuses on the presidential years, including President Kimball's landmark address to the Regional Representatives in which he first used the injunction, "Lengthen your stride." Major topics are President Kimball's personal style (a genuinely inspirational depiction of his humble but compelling leadership-by-example), dominant conference themes, missionary work, "Controversial Issues," the 1978 revelation extending priesthood ordinances to worthy black men, program innovations and developments, his truly impressive criss-crossing the globe to meet with Church members, a focus on temples and temple work, and his final four years of declining health, which can only be described as a season of sadness and suffering. Spencer's capacity for work was a plus that became a minus as his health failed and he fretted through his final years of frustration, limitation, and disorientation. Edward Kimball records this period compassionately but with the same unflinching honesty as the other chapters, and it becomes a sort of final witness that the other chapters are equally unromanticized.

I also greatly appreciated Ed's candor in dealing with the sensitive topic of his older brother, Spencer Levan, who had come to consider Mormonism's "truth claims" as "unfounded wishful thinking" (61). The son's inactivity was a source of "anguish" to the father. Ed's respectful but forthright description of this conflict between Spencer W.'s relentless attempts to lecture Spencer L. back into conformity and the son's resentment at never being really "heard" by his father is a model for how to record unresolved conflicts in family history.

A double treasure is the accompanying compact disk that includes twelve previously published articles, thirteen audio clips, 185 photographs, and complete documentation on the sources. The notes that are

included on the printed page are not conventional citations or source references but a sort of running interpretation/commentary on points that the reader may find difficult. In a rather unusual move, the publisher has a separate preface (actual author unidentified) that admits to disagreement between "publisher and biographer . . . on the interpretations or weight of importance given to a number of events, or the choices of characterization of some of the people" (ix).

Perhaps one of the resulting compromises was the CD, which goes far beyond merely providing documentation. It includes three versions of *Lengthen Your Stride*: (1) the text of the book as printed, but also (2) the same text with about 1,600 footnotes, and (3) the "working draft" that includes much additional text and about 3,200 footnotes. Obviously the third version is the "real" book. Having it on CD enables keyword searches, another bonus. The CD also includes a rich library of resource material: the published version of the 1977 biography in English and in Spanish translation, President Kimball's short and poetic reminiscence *One Silent, Sleepless Night* (about his throat operation), a brief 1985 biography *A Short Man, A Long Stride* authored by Ed and Andrew, and Edward's two works about Camilla Kimball, both originally published as books. One is a biography co-authored with Camilla's sister, Caroline Eyring Miner, and the other is a collection of Camilla's writings and speeches.

In a private conversation, Ed explained that some people mistakenly assume that the short version is an expurgated version of the working draft which contains sensitive material. On the contrary, the publisher assumed (probably correctly) that not many people would read the working draft and gave top attention to going over the printed text. If Ed insisted that an item stay, the publisher conceded the point. But Ed was also accommodating about suggestions for different phrasing or a more nuanced explanation. In describing Elder Benson's endorsement of the American Party, for instance, Ed agreed to add the clarification that the endorsement was extemporaneous, not planned (160), and several times he omitted the name of an apostle if the anecdote was about President Kimball, not about the apostle.

Helpfully, the printed text of the biography appears on the CD working draft in blue ink, so it is easy to spot additional material (in black ink) at a glance. For example, the published introduction to Chapter 22, "Decision and Confirmation," about the extension of priesthood and temple blessings to worthy black men omits Ed's careful analysis of seven

factors that "set the stage for change, although it is impossible to determine how much each contributed." They include continued requests for missionaries from Africa coupled with President Kimball's emphasis on missionary work and the Church's responsibility to take the gospel to the world, the "decisive" shift in American attitudes against racism with the accompanying perception of "Mormons as bigots," the "insoluble dilemma" of Brazil where the construction of a temple meant that "application of the policy [against ordaining men of African ancestry] would be accompanied by the near certainty of error, . . . and finally, the person responsible for directing the Church had changed" (CD, working draft, chap. 22, pp. 1–2).

Also omitted from the printed biography, as the working draft shows, is a thoughtful letter from Chase N. Peterson, then at Harvard but soon to be president of the University of Utah, suggesting that the current moment (he was writing in May 1978) presented a window of opportunity in which members' preparation coincided with a decline in external pressures that might not come again soon (ibid., 6). This brief chapter, eleven pages in typescript, ten typeset, includes sixty-eight footnotes; only seven appear in the published version and only one of the seven provides documentation. A real contribution of this section in the working draft is Ed's careful documentation of how much background work preceded the revelatory policy change.

Given President Kimball's remarkable concern about and compassion for what was clearly the most pressing social issue of his time—equal rights for African Americans—I was very interested in his stance on two other crucial issues of social justice for underrepresented and even misrepresented Church members: women and gays. In neither area, on the basis of this biography, was President Kimball ahead of his time. Even though it seems obvious from my perspective that both homosexuality and women's issues are unfinished business that the Church must still deal with, Ed Kimball deals with the difficulties in a thoroughly professional way.

As an apostle, Spencer Kimball had been assigned, with Mark E. Petersen, to "counsel" homosexuals. He apparently never reappraised his "strongly negative" attitude ("abhorrence") that homosexuality "was unnatural. . . . His logic was simple: homosexual acts are sinful and, since sin can be overcome with God's help and sufficient effort, failure to overcome is a moral shortcoming" (86). One wonders what answer he might have received had he asked a different question. He obviously "had great

empathy" for those seeking counsel and was willing to spend enormous effort and time in his sincere efforts to "persuade and encourage" change. A footnote mentions one letter in Kimball's papers of twenty-three single-spaced pages and another of twenty-six (86 and note 5).

Incidentally, this discussion takes place in Chapter 9, "Persuasion to Chastity," a much-pared version of which appears in the published text. The CD is the best place to find documentation on the perennially popular email topic about the First Presidency letter in 1982 prohibiting oral sex and, eight months later, instructions to bishops not to "deviate from" the questions listed on the standard temple recommend interview form (working draft, chap. 9, p. 5).

Generational assumptions, obvious in President Kimball's attitude toward homosexuality (as mine are) were also at work in the case of women's issues. Although a chapter on Camilla Kimball is subtitled "Equal Partner," the equality had some severe restrictions on information-sharing and decision-making that do not meet my definition of partnership. An obvious limitation was Church business, and Spencer assured confidentiality by not talking about it at all. Ed acknowledges that "one of my mother's long-standing complaints was that 'he never tells me anything'" (xvi). (For the record, President Kimball didn't tell Ed anything either.) As a result, Camilla fretted for months about what could be troubling Spencer when he repeatedly made solitary trips to pray in the temple about extending priesthood to worthy black men. When word reached her indirectly that Spencer was spending these hours in solitary prayer and contemplation, Spencer "gently" chastised his security personnel for the leak (217). When the announcement of the revelation was made, Camilla learned about it, not from her husband but from her daughter, who had heard the announcement on the radio (231).

Although it seems like nit-picking to see unsatisfactory elements in a relationship that obviously worked well, for the most part, for the couple involved, the same combination of traditionalism and paternalism is also apparent in the two chapters (17–18) involving women's issues, particularly the Equal Rights Amendment. Ed Kimball's summary of the ERA fight and the Church's opposition to it is concise and fair. He balances President Kimball's conviction that "women should concentrate on family care and leave to men the responsibility of financial support" with his counsel to and support for his daughter to return to the workforce after her husband became disabled (174). Given the glacial pace of the

Church's change where women are concerned, Ed's charting of the small but significant steps is a salutary reminder. It was President Kimball who publicly called for "marriage as a full partnership" (161) and commented in 1978: "When we sing that doctrinal hymn and anthem of affection, 'O My Father,' we get a sense of the ultimate in maternal modesty, of the restrained, queenly elegance of our Heavenly Mother, and knowing how profoundly our mortal mothers have shaped us here, do we suppose her influence on us as individuals to be less if we live so as to return there?" (164). His presidency took active steps to increase the visibility and status of Young Women and Relief Society programs. His presidency also, in 1978, rescinded the policy set in 1967 that permitted only priesthood holders to pray in sacrament meetings (166). And although he refused to meet with Sonia Johnson, he reportedly "repeatedly prayed for her by name during temple meetings" (181).

The anecdotes with which the book is peppered add both spice and tenderness to the narrative. One illustrating President Kimball's sense of humor is when "a hurried Mitt Romney" stopped a closing elevator door late one night at Hotel Utah with his suitcase, then was embarrassed when he saw the Kimballs in it. He introduced himself and Spencer remarked, "You look like a Romney." "Thank you. I guess," responded Mitt. Queried Spencer, "What do you mean, I guess?" "Well, we Romneys have such huge jaws," explained Mitt. Spencer "with a straight face" commented, "Camilla is a Romney," then burst out laughing at Mitt's dismayed expression (442).

Equally characteristic are the anecdotes of President Kimball's unselfconscious concern and overflowing love for others, which frequently manifested itself in hugs, kisses, and words of blessing, even to complete strangers. In 1978, the president of BYU-Hawaii introduced President Kimball to Jack Sing Kong, age eighty-three, who was receiving an award for his fifty-seven years (including service as mayor and branch president) at Hawaii's leper colony. "Despite the continuing stigma of leprosy and without hesitation or any apparent shred of self-consciousness, Spencer greeted the former leper with a warm embrace and kissed his disfigured face" (427–28).

The radiance of such moments, captured in carefully crafted and unpretentious prose, makes this book a masterpiece: not only a model of the disciple's life but a model biography.

The Scholar as Celebrant

Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, 432 pp., $29.95.

Reviewed by Nathan B. Oman, Assistant Professor, William & Mary Law School

Terryl Givens is doing a great deal in *People of Paradox*, winner of the Mormon History Association's 2007 Best Book award. He offers an ambitious interpretation of Mormon beliefs and then sets out to show how the paradoxes that he identifies as the deep structure of Mormon thought can be traced through 180 years of Mormon culture. He builds on the massive outpouring of scholarly research on Mormonism since 1950, but he firmly transcends the narrow confines of the new Mormon history[1] by doing something that it seldom did: He offers up Mormonism as a big story about big ideas.

The new Mormon history, in contrast, was mainly interested in nailing down the details of past events and chronology, its primary intellectual spur being the constant need to assert its professionalism and legitimacy against both traditional Mormon hagiography and anti-Mormon polemics. To the extent that it offered up a narrative of intellectual drama, it was virtually always the much-touted tension between "official" history and "honest" history. Indeed, at times it seems as if the searing end of Arrington's Camelot was so traumatic as to have crowded all other historiographic narratives to the margins.[2] (Think of the reviews of Richard Bushman's biography of Joseph Smith, *Rough Stone Rolling*; how many of them had anything to talk about other than the question of whether a believing Mormon could write a "real" biography of Mormonism's founder?[3]) In many cases, the result has been a steady march into the chloroform of internecine debates over minutiae that the protagonists try—with increasingly less success—to endow with enduring ideological significance. As Jan Shipps observed recently in the *Journal of American History*, "The books and more especially the articles that made up the new Mormon history sometimes belabored arguments about issues that readers unfamiliar with LDS historiography probably regarded as minor."[4] For a concrete example of what I am talking about, consider debates over the dating of the restoration of the priesthood[5] or the nineteenth-century meaning of the term "secret combinations."[6]

Givens manages to transcend the genre of the new Mormon history

by doing two things. First, he engages the substance of Mormon beliefs but does so using language different than that used by Mormons themselves. In contrast, previous scholarly treatments of Mormonism have tended to either ignore Mormon theology or to treat it in a purely descriptive way. Givens, in contrast, sets forth Mormonism as a system of thought worthy of dignity in its own right. For Givens, the Restoration need not be confined to its own patois for the same reason that one can be a Platonist in a language other than Attic Greek: The interest of both conversations exceeds their particular historical context. It is not clear, of course, that Givens is always correct in how he presents Mormonism in the first part of his book. Carlyle-quoting-Romanticist that he is,[7] Givens has a penchant for "great man" history, inscribing in the minds of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young cultural tensions that may well have exceeded their thoughts, if not their thought.

Givens's second strategy is to catapult Mormonism into big conversations, both historically and intellectually. Trench warfare over the precise nature of Joseph Smith's brush with the law over treasure digging in the upper Susquehanna[8] is replaced with primal dialectics of freedom and authority, certainty and questing, or the need for a God who both transcends the world and connects intimately to it. And so on. Indeed, the conflicts of the new Mormon historians are not presented as a historiography at all, but rather become a single character in a much larger intellectual drama. Although not quite mingling with gods, in Givens's book Joseph Smith rubs shoulders with Blake, Jefferson, and other intellectual worthies. Likewise Mormon culture, despite the frequent evidence of immaturity that Givens trenchantly discusses, becomes a theater in which fundamental—and unavoidable—paradoxes are played out. The parochialism of youth reveals a depth worthy of attention.

In this work, I think that Givens is also offering us a model of how Latter-day Saints might conduct scholarship on their own tradition. After publishing his monograph *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*, Sterling McMurrin, so the story goes, was accosted by Sidney Angleman, a colleague in the University of Utah Philosophy Department, who complained that the book "made the Mormon religion look better than it is." In response, McMurrin quipped, "I am aware of that. I attempted to make it look as good as I possibly could because the church's leaders make it look so bad. The church doesn't do justice to its own theology."[9] Givens lacks the smug condescension that often characterized McMurrin's dis-

cussions of Mormonism, but the story has possible application to Givens's work. Givens is a critic in the technical sense of the word and, occasionally, in the popular sense as well. It is clear that he is annoyed at the cultural gaffes of the Saints and that he recognizes spiritual and aesthetic dangers within the tensions of Mormon theology. But above these concerns, I think that it would be safe to describe Givens as a scholarly celebrant of Mormonism. He makes it look good.

There is depth and critical bite in Givens's work. Still, he labors hard to dispel the myths of utter Mormon conformity, Mormon banality, and—above all else—Mormon boringness. What he sees is not the stasis of either an inspired perfection of triumphant answers or an empty wasteland of anti-intellectualism and mediocrity. Rather his vision of Mormonism is agonistic: a constant struggle of paradoxical ideas locked together with one another in an arena where no one approach ever claims final victory. There is something very Romantic, in my mind, about the sensibility that Givens seeks to capture and place at the heart of his story. It casts Mormonism as a kind of tragic—or, at any rate, interestingly conflicted—hero. Such an approach ultimately refuses to package itself as simple analysis, however elegantly presented. Rather Givens's book itself is an artifact of Mormon culture, one, I think, that seeks to transform the very thing it describes. In the end we have more than a history; we have a roadmap to the tensions where Givens sees the drama of art as possible. It is not simply a description of Mormon aesthetics, but the construction of a Mormon aesthetics. This construction, however, recasts the materials from which it is built in ways that change them subtly, bringing out what Givens sees as their latent virtues. For those predisposed to see Mormonism as little more than an idiosyncratic offshoot of American fundamentalism, Givens's treatment will seem bizarre. For those (inside and outside the Church) willing to risk a more nuanced picture of Mormonism, it offers a powerful vision of its cultural possibilities.

Notes

1. To forestall the inevitable accusations of intellectual ingratitude that always follow any criticism of the new Mormon history, let me say, for the record, that I like the new Mormon history, I think that it represented a quantum leap forward in the quality of Mormon intellectual discussions, and I do not favor the suppression of events uncomfortable for Mormons when writing Mormon history. More original research is always better than less original research.

2. On Arrington and the end of Camelot, see Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

3. See, e.g., Roger D. Launius, "Defending the Prophet," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 26 (2006): 314; Walter Kirn, "Latter-day Saint," *New York Times Book Review*, January 15, 2006; Larry McMurtry, "Angel in America," *New York Review of Books*, November 17, 2005, 35–37.

4. Jan Shipps, "Richard Lyman Bushman, the Story of Joseph Smith and Mormonism, and the New Mormon History," *Journal of American History* 94, no. 2 (2007): 498–516; the quotation is on p. 502.

5. See, e.g., D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 17–26.

6. For my own contribution to this sometimes less-than-exciting genre, see Nathan B. Oman, "Secret Combinations: A Legal Analysis," *FARMS Review* 16, no. 1 (2004): 49–73.

7. See Terryl Givens, "'Lightning Out of Heaven': Joseph Smith and the Forging of Community," *BYU Studies* 45, no. 1 (2006): 5–21.

8. See, e.g., Gordon A. Madsen, "Joseph Smith's 1826 Trial: The Legal Setting," *BYU Studies* 30 (1990): 91–108; Wesley P. Walters, "Joseph Smith's Bainbridge, N.Y. Court Trials," *Westminster Theological Journal* 36 (1974): 123–55; Marvin S. Hill, "Joseph Smith and the 1826 Trial: New Evidence and New Difficulties," *BYU Studies* 12 (1972): 223–33.

9. The story is recounted in L. Jackson Newell, "Introduction" to Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000). McMurrin's book was originally published in 1965.

Glaucus

(for Leslie Norris, 1921–2006)

Patricia Gunter Karamesines

"I am no monster . . . nor a fierce beast, but a god of the sea . . ."
—Ovid, *Metamorphosis*

We can't say what Glaucus knew
From watching storms crush and reshape
The surge, what voices he'd heard
When the tide swelled onto the beach,
Or what he'd seen in fish guts dropped
On sand. He merely husbanded the waves,
Throwing his web over that endless face
Of expression. Not a fisherman
To prowl safe waters for dependable yield,
He went daily before the backward stepping sea.
That's how he came upon the water meadow
Where no bees dipped the flowers.
The grass had never borne a footstep.
Glaucus was its only creature. He cast
Net offshore, watched it sink away,
And with a few lines running between himself
And some place beyond clear prospect,
Waded through eye-watering glare angling off
The sea's hooked and changeful scales.

He laid his catch on the old grass,
Saw dead fish shudder, retake life, lift
Themselves upright. Dorsal, caudal fins
Manipulated air as though liquid,
And under his look, they swam overland
Back to the breathable deep.
It's hard to grasp how Glaucus thought, "The grass."
Harder still to imagine his eating it.
He must have decided during some untold history
To bid farewell forever, to leave lines and nets
Masterless upon the sand, and the swale
As he found it, at the edge of his gone world.
What should we make of the desire that took him?
We, too, have stood on the shore of the thousand-fold myth,
And still we stand, awaiting science or some parent.
What occurs instead is the muteness of vast event
And the crash of the breakers of mystery.

Thus Glaucus went beyond strands
Of the imagination, god with a raveling green beard,
Hair an undertow in itself, heroic shoulders,
Blue arms, and legs fused, each curving
Down thigh and ankle into a fluke.

But we can't envy him. If he came to us
We'd spurn him—like Scylla did—as a monstrous innocent,
The changed creature of some obscure devotion.

Multi-Level Marketing

R. A. Christmas

You may not appreciate this but
I once ran into Hugh Nibley—
at Smith's market in Provo—
you know, the guy who wrote all
that deep stuff about the Book of
Mormon, and how the Egyptians
had temple ceremonies just like us. . . .
Haven't you read *any* of them?

Anyway, I was shopping—I'd just
turned down this all but deserted
aisle—when lo! Nibley unmistakable
(I'd seen him at BYU)—he's ninety
at least—just two twinkling eyes
in this shrunken (pre-mummified?)
body. I ran to get my boys—they
were over in videos, as usual.

"Who's Hugh Nibley?" "I'll tell ya later."
Well, he was still there, looking for I
forget what—we helped him while
I did the introductions. And he was totally
gracious. Finally I said, "I'm so-and-
so the poet" (as if he'd know); but
all he said, as he shuffled off, was, "Ah!
Poetry! We need more of that!"

(We do?)

Man, dust

At the birth of my daughter

Joshua Stewart Weed

My holes remained whole
at your arrival.
I stood there, watching, impotent—
cut the purple Nike rope,
heard your voice cry out like an E string, taut.
I saw your victorious robes in a metal cup.
There was nothing I could do
but watch.

My nipples do not bleed at your munching mouth,
I do not feed you with milk and blood.
The quell of your cries comes,
But not at my cold chest.
I watch.

But you—
you will one day flush in the glow
of heat: the furnace of life.
You will be that furnace.
And I—
I will envy that you,
like God with dust,
make man
whilst man looks on and on.

Change

Mark R. Birch

It's coming on fall,
time for a change, whispers the wind through the leaves.

Limbs twitch,
joints prepare,
blood increases its pulse through my mind.
It's neither news nor knowledge that cause this deferent air,
nor any remarkable ripple in the masses.

Lone though it is,
it is change.

Curious

Mark R. Birch

Curious it is
the simple means employed by God
to bring great things to pass.

A simple boy with simple tool
set free that ancient ageless epic
from time when seers roamed the earth.

What uncommon thing unbound
by that lever under stone.
Not merely golden leaves released,
much more
the minds of men.

Always with Us

Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

Years later, at a high school reunion,
a girl gave a tribute to a classmate who had died.
Not knowing another way to end
her remarks, she did so
"in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen."

I thought of Mr. Stone who was always with us:
in church on Sundays,
and driving the school bus five days a week.

He sat at the wheel
in jacket and leather gloves, a blue ironed shirt,
and hair leafed with gold.

On coldest mornings, he'd reward
some one child with the chance to sit beside him
near the heater. It was enough.

He kept his bus tidy—
no unclean or fractious thing was allowed
to enter his chapel on wheels
that, despite journeying children twice a day,
smelled always renewed.

Abruptly,
perhaps once or twice a year,
he'd pull over,
stop the bus, and with surprising passion,
pull the emergency brake,

lift from the plastic pocket above his head
the tablet of rules,
turn toward the congregation—
even the innocent repentant now—
bend his head to necessity,
and read them aloud,

always straight through from 1 to 10
never raising his voice,
never commenting on any certain one,

never shaming who it was
who needed to be reminded . . .

in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Jesus Was There

Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

on the wall behind the choir chairs,
and the ladies
brushing the warm chapel air
with round cardboard fans were there,

and the men losing hair
and holding hymn books up
with rough sun-burned hands were there,

along with my father and his counselors,
and the stake president
in his special chair beside the pulpit.

And I, a white-stockinged child, was there
trying to keep my Sunday feet still,
especially during the prayers
as they hung there mid-air.

The grown-ups kept their backs
straight to the benches
or choir's semi-circle
of pale cushioned chairs.

I knew why the ladies' legs barely bent.
It was perfectly clear
for I'd watched my mother
dressing herself for the Sabbath.

From the girdle
under her best pressed dress,
rubbery garters dangled,
and pinched into place
reinforced tops of nylon stockings
she'd carefully unrolled so neither would tear,

one of the pair at a time,
from inside out with fingers and thumb,
beginning with toes,
moving over the knees
with habitual reverence.
I tried not to stare.

And I knew about the men
with the knots at their necks,

and knew that for Jesus
even my father would wear thin manly bands
which circled, like elders at a blessing,
the white-root flesh of his calves.

He'd slide the fasteners,
copper tithing coins, snugly along
with the tops of his argyles
into their slots
which held them up and perfectly square
like a sanctified prayer.

Garters those days
could keep any sort from slouching,
even in warm Sabbath air.

The Local Police Report

Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

At sixteen, I'm listening
to the sounds of a fractured frame house:

my older sister sobbing
over hard news
about a religious leader she has long admired,

and Mother saying absolutely nothing
so deliberately
the whole neighborhood can hear.

She's ripping worn towels into rags,
twisting from them dirtied water,

scouring previously perfect patterns
from the kitchen linoleum,
and in such swift circles
veins I didn't know she had
pop up and scowl.

To the tune of Eileen's sorrow,
she scrapes picked-over food
into the smelly trash,
fork tines squealing against plates,

then turns to bludgeon the risen white dough.
She chops carrots, potatoes, celery
with her sharpest steel knife,
and skins the onions. Oh, the many onions
she drops, tears splashing,
into the boiling pot.

"The Day Not to Be Forgotten": How I Learned What Happened in Tian'anmen Square

John M. Paxman

I was in Beijing during the first week of June 1989, ostensibly to explore legal and policy options relating to the "one-child" policy with China's State Family Planning Commission. As it turned out, they wanted to know how they could do a better job of enforcing their approach to population growth. That was the weekend when many hundreds of Chinese protesters, most of them university students who hoped to see China become more democratic—less corrupt—were massacred by the Chinese Northern Army in and near Beijing's Tian'anmen Square. My reaction to the events, that of distress, a bit of fear, had antecedents in my Mormon American background.

I had grown up in Provo, Utah, unaccustomed to large-scale political protest. At Brigham Young University, I even have a vague memory that in late 1969 or early 1970, more than 20,000 signatures were gathered supporting bombing in Cambodia. By the spring of 1970, though, I was at the University of Virginia, founded by Jefferson, and attending law school. Anti-war protests in the rest of the country were reaching their apogee. Students had been killed at Kent State. At the University of Virginia there were student strikes, the ROTC classrooms were torched, the university was closed, and state troopers were on the scene, quashing student gatherings. There was much talk about canceling final exams. I think I actually fretted, initially, more about losing a year of school than about

the larger issues that were so much on the scene. I walked past the student picket lines on my way to continue studying. I now see my attitude as somewhat silly and self-centered.

For the first time, I was forced to deal with the turmoil and clatter of a vociferous, visible opposition exercising its rights. I was unprepared. I had been conditioned to something more lock-step in support of the soothing status quo, something more "conservative" of order. I saw this Constitutionally guaranteed dissent as somehow a bit unpatriotic! The distance between Provo and Charlottesville suddenly became immense, personally immeasurable. I struggled to bridge the gap, and that struggle changed the way I viewed my world, my surroundings, the institutions that dominate my life. Among other things, I came away with the deep conviction that people should not have to die for expressing their views. It makes no sense to kill the generation who must inevitably inherit leadership and governance. Yet it happened in Paris in 1968—this violence against students. It happened in my own country in 1970. And it happened in Beijing in 1989.

Though I had a sense that I was privileged to look first-hand on a political event of international importance, I also felt myself nauseated and imperiled by moments. Some of that feeling no doubt resulted from my imprudent curiosity. Yet in the face of what can truly be called a horror, I was on the receiving end of acts of kindness that reinforced my sense of a common humanity. That does not diminish the gravity of the offense against the Chinese students and others.

Now, nearly twenty years later, with the help of notes I made at the time, this is what I recall.

Saturday, June 3rd: I spent the better part of the day with some of my hosts from the State Family Planning Commission, visiting the most famous of the historical sites near Beijing—the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs. I was there to give a series of workshops on the use of law and policy in population programs. It was late afternoon. During the day, there had been much congenial discussion among us about the students in Tian'anmen Square, and my new acquaintances had naively offered to come back at 9:00 P.M. to accompany me there so I could see what was going on. How were they to know what was about to occur? Fever-pitched confrontations between the soldiers and the students had already begun with the turning back of foot troops and vehicles from the Beijing Regiment the day before. I was curious but declined. The jet lag from half a

world had crept up on me, and I went to bed. We did settle that, on Sunday afternoon, they would fetch me, and we would visit the Summer Palace. As it turned out, we never did. Had I gone we would have been in the square about the time that the troops from the Northern Army began their move to put a stop to the student protest once and for all.

Sunday, June 4, 6:00 A.M.: Despite jet-lag, I woke up early. I needed to get some exercise, work up a sweat, so I went for a run. It's always a good way to get a sense of where you are. I was staying at the Friendship Guest House in a complex constructed in 1957, principally as a residential area for foreign diplomats and missions. It is in the northwest quadrant of the city, part of the Haidian District. The Chinese People's University, some of whose students and professors were in Tian'anmen Square, stands across the way. I went to the left out of the gate; and as I turned off West Beisanhuan Road south onto Xisanhuan Road, I began to notice groups of people, ten to fifty of them, mostly men, standing at street side, dark trousers, white shirts. Some were standing in front of neighborhood bulletin boards.

The groups were talking animatedly, sometimes shouting in loud, interrupting voices. Some sort of debate was going on. My first thought was: "Is this the typical way that Beijingers spend the early hours of their Sundays before they go to church? Gathering in the streets, discussing the issues of the day? Or is this something out of the ordinary?" Every few hundred meters all the way down the street to Zizhuyuan Road, I encountered little knots of people. There I turned to the left and passed the park of the same name. Along this part of the run were fewer groups. I went left again to go up Baishiqiao Road, back north, before reaching the Beijing Zoo and the famous pandas, a little farther straight along. The day was cloudy, and Baishiqiao Road was gray-dark due to the sycamores that line either side. They break only to accommodate large buildings, like the National Archives, just above the junction at Minzu Xueyuan.

Sunday, June 4, 6:25 A.M.: A few hundred meters on, I saw two things that caught my interest: a group of twenty or so people gathered by the road and a large articulated dark-green bus traveling in my direction. The bus had makeshift Red Cross flags, red on white, flying out of the front windows on either side. The bus halted near what I took to be a bus stop before a set of buildings with an entrance gate. (It turned out to be the University for Ethnic Minorities.) It struck me as odd that no one got off, no one got on, and the bus did not move forward into the street. Com-

ing closer, I could see, in the front of the bus, a few white-coated individuals. I took them for medical students or young doctors. I wondered if they were part of the shuttle system set up to take severely disabled hunger strikers out of the square, as the Western press had reported. They looked unusually distraught, some looking at the ground, others now with comforting arms around their colleagues at the side of the road.

Then, I saw, along the tops of the seats, scattered randomly, front-to-back, ten to fifteen unoccupied stretchers. No bodies. Perhaps they were just waiting for strikers or had already taken them to hospital? But the colors were odd. Many were made of army khaki green, but two or three were white, blotched with dark red. I realized it was blood. All of what I had seen in the last half hour connected with that sight of deep red. This was not a usual Sunday morning. Something beyond a hunger strike had happened. Blood had been shed. Had it happened in Tian'anmen? Or in some mammoth traffic accident? I did not consider stopping. I was not yet part of the grief, only an observer—an out-of-place foreign observer at that.

Sunday, June 4, 6:40 A.M.: The images stayed with me for a few minutes. And the questions mounted. What had happened? Still running, I came again to the crossroads of Baishiqiao and Beishanhuan, next to the Friendship. My forty-five-minute run had completed the four sides of the city rectangle. Ahead, at the intersection, in the morning shadows, it was difficult to tell whether there was a large crowd or just the accumulated vision of white-shirted bicyclists coming down the street toward me.

The answer came soon. Flames leaped skyward from the guts of an overturned car, one of those black, official-looking older sedans that newscasts show shuttling Chinese leaders here and there. Students from the People's University stood in the street, screening each of the few vehicles that came down the road. They let some cars through, turned others back. Were the students checking out the drivers with some kind of loyalty oath? One or two cars had been overturned. Students filled both sides of the tree-lined, medianed avenue in front of the university. People were photographing the burning autos. You could see the result of the students' anger in the flames. But you could also see it in their faces. One or two faces kept reappearing around the vehicles that were being stopped. One student in a brown shirt was violently angry. He involved himself in the interrogation of all drivers, yelling and gesticulating wildly. At one point, the driver of an overturned van must have said something the students didn't

like. He began to run away but the students caught him, knocking him to the ground. Ten or twelve sets of fists raised and lowered, like sledgehammers, pummeling the man. They lifted him up, now bloodied, and dragged him through the gates, into the university. I wondered if he would survive.

A little farther on, the crowd was larger, denser, congregated around the university entrance. Faces of mourning and disbelief. Loudspeakers blared. The tone sounded harsh, rapid-fire, almost screaming. I spoke no Chinese. I edged to the back of the crowd on the other side of the street, as close to the wall as I could get, fifty or so meters from the speakers. I wanted no one behind me. I didn't want to draw attention to myself but forgot I was wearing a Union Pacific Railway engineer's cap. I might have been wearing a label: "Foreigner! American!"

Sunday, June 4, 7:10 A.M.: After a few minutes, a small, older man sidled up next to me from the left, repeatedly glancing up into my face. I tried not to acknowledge him. I was beginning to feel reluctant and scared. He tugged on my T-shirt sleeve and said something. I replied, "I don't speak Chinese." He smiled and said he *was* speaking English. He repeated: "Did you hear what happened?"

"No. Obviously something. What is going on?"

"They are upset about Tian'anmen Square. The soldiers went there last night and chased the students out. Between 200 and 2,000 people have been killed," he asserted. I found out later that he was quoting the figures being broadcast on the BBC. At the same time, loudspeakers in the square were announcing: "The rebellion has been suppressed." All day long, large helicopters could be seen buzzing in and out of Tian'anmen on a line from east to west. I imagined that they were carrying bodies, shuttling them out of sight.

I asked the man to translate some of the banners that hung from the windows. The two I can remember said: "Those who should have died, have not," an allusion to the Chinese leadership, and "Blood for blood," a call for retribution. He said that the first was a phrase initially used after Hu Yaobang's death in April. As I turned to go back to the hotel, the crowd up-ended another black sedan and ignited it. Street fires bracketed the crowd and the university. I began to wonder how long it would take the troops to reach the university.

Hu Yaobang was a long-time colleague of Deng Xiaopeng but had taken the position that political reforms lagged behind the economic and

that this gap should be redressed. The system was now out of balance, he had argued. Comparable political change was needed. For this heresy, according to outside observers, he had been removed from the leading triumvirate two years before, collapsed during an angry speech to the Central Committee, and died on April 15. His funeral triggered mass demonstrations in the streets in several cities, a near-revolution. Hu Yaobang was openly praised as the "the soul of China." By early May, people were getting bolder about public demonstrations. A million people—not just students—took to the streets as part of the seventieth anniversary of the first public campaign of students and intellectuals, protesting weak diplomacy and corruption in the republic's early days.

Sunday, June 4, early afternoon: I felt compelled to go out into the street again, a curious way to quell my own fears. I had made it only a block or two down Baishiqiao Road, when I heard the unmistakable sound of a loud diesel engine coming up the road. I ducked quickly behind some tall shrubs and waited, adrenalin making the heartbeat thump in my ears. I imagined that the tanks were finally coming up the road to the People's University. The sycamores are so large they form a canopy, making the street into a virtual tunnel. I froze when a personnel carrier emerged from the trees' shadows into the intersection, then relaxed. The carrier, #426 painted in white on the side, was being driven by a student. Ten or twelve others were on top, waving widely and shouting. Below them, attached to the carrier's front, were four or five bicycles. I waited at the corner. They drove up to the university, then after fifteen minutes, turned around and came back down Baishiqiao. Two days later, I encountered its burned-out shell at Baishiqiao curbside. Had the students torched it after it ran out of diesel? Had something more sinister happened?

Down near the Ethic Minorities University, faxed copies of photographs from Hong Kong newspapers were pinned to the sycamores. They showed bodies and flattened bicycles along the streets near Tian'anmen Square, apparently mangled by tanks and personnel carriers. Seeing those pictures made it suddenly all very real, and I began to tremble, feeling completely unsettled for the first time.

I studied the notices, some of them impromptu, hand-scrawled, on the community bulletin boards in the neighborhood around the Friendship complex. I finally asked a young man who spoke English what they

said. From the lettering I could tell that one, writ large, was repeated at many sites. Its message: *The day not to be forgotten.*

That same afternoon, the English-language Beijing television station began showing selected scenes, recorded by the various security cameras around the square. In one, masses of white-shirted people came out of the sycamores' shadows along a main avenue, accosted an army truck as it stood in convoy, punctured its gas tank, and set it alight. Others showed soldiers getting out of the vehicles, taking off their army tunics and disappearing into the white-shirted crowds. It might have been a scene from Saturday when the Beijing Regiment failed—some say refused—to enter the square. Hundreds of the Beijing Regiment's vehicles, including tanks and personnel carriers, were abandoned and burned along Changan Avenue, leading into Tian'anmen Square. Perhaps this was the moment when the iconic photo of the single, white-shirted man was taken as he stopped the tank, waving a handkerchief, standing in front of it, then moving to the left or right as the tank tried to maneuver around him. Commentators said that the crowds had killed hundreds of soldiers. There were scenes of bodies and burnt-out vehicles. One, eerily, showed a charred human carcass, helmet still in place, hanging from a window strut of an incinerated bus. They said that troops from the Northern Army, brought in the following day to repress the students, moved toward the square chanting, "We love the people of Beijing!" They did the same a few days later as they withdrew. The English-speaking news reports praised the army for acting with courage and in "self-defense" to protect the people of Beijing.

Back at the hotel Sunday night, I tried to doze, wondering whether, now that the information counter-offensive had started, it would become, not the day to be remembered, but the day that never happened. Would it be erased from everyone's historical consciousness by an artfully orchestrated information campaign? The Chinese seemed to sense this possibility also. Those around me when I left Wednesday night, whisked out of the country by the United Nations people, kept repeating: "Please tell others what has happened here." During each of my subsequent visits to China, I was given a blue-covered publication that explained from the government's perspective what had happened.

In the papers gathered from this time, I have a copy of a rather dark poem written by Lu Xun, one of China's best twentieth-century authors,

lamenting the execution of a group of young writers in 1930. It also fits Tian'anmen in 1989:

> I am growing accustomed now to these endless nights of spring,
> Fleeing with my wife and child, my hair turning gray.
> In dreams I make out a loving mother's tears
> While on the ramparts of the city the banners of the ruling warlords are forever changing.
> Watching as this generation of my friends is turned into ghosts,
> Angrily I try and snatch a poem from all the swords.
> But once recited, I must bow my head, for there is no place to write it down.
> Moonlight reflects like water off my black robe.

How many were turned into ghosts in Tian'anmen we may never know. Most place the figure at about two thousand, the same number repeated by the little man who tugged on my sleeve in front of the Chinese People's University.

Wednesday, June 7th: During the days following that turbulent Sunday, I wandered the streets, even to the edge of Tian'anmen Square. Some citizens told me to go back, gesturing with imaginary rifles in their hands, warning me that the soldiers might shoot. I could see the tanks in nearby streets. On Wednesday, my last day, I was curious about the other large universities in the northwest of the city—Beijing University and the Language Institute. I'd heard rumors that the students had built large barricades, hoping to prevent troops from reaching the universities. At 6:00 A.M. I began what I intended as an hour's run up Haidian Road which is the extension of Baishiqiao Road. After a half hour of running, when I had not reached the universities, I turned around after crossing the railway line that leads out of Beijing North Railway Station, the line that goes toward the Great Wall and on to Mongolia. At that point, the road passes into open fields before arriving at the universities.

As I returned along the same route, crossing the rail line for the second time, I passed through a small commercial area, just about where Qinghuayuan and Lanqiying Chengfu roads intersect. Uncharacteristically, these streets had no bordering trees. I could not run, as I had been doing, in their shadows. I was in the street, alone and clearly exposed, save for a few early risers who were milling around in front of the small shops. I passed one small group at the head of an alley, and someone shouted,

"Lao wai!" twice. I had never heard anyone do that in all the time I had spent in the streets. As I moved farther away, the shout came a third time. (I learned later that it may be either a respectful, or a damning, way of addressing a foreigner.) It unsettled me, and turned to active alarm when I heard the unmistakable click, click, click of a three-speed bicycle falling in behind me, trailing me. Click, click, . . . click, click, click whenever the person was not pedaling.

I hoped that it was just coincidence that the cyclist was just traveling at my speed. I wondered—incredibly, for the first time—if I had wandered into an area I shouldn't have been in. I started varying my speed but didn't dare slow to a walk. The Friendship Hotel was still almost a half hour away. I shifted from one side of the street to another. The unknown cyclist followed religiously, just a few feet behind me. Click, click, click. Whenever we passed small groups of people, I could hear voices, from them and from the cyclist. Whoever it was drew comments from others. I imagined that they were asking why the cyclist was following the runner, a foreigner wearing a Union Pacific rail engineer's cap. Click, click, click. At one point, I slowed so much that the bicycle nearly overtook me. Using only my peripheral vision without turning my head, I caught a glimpse of an aged face and a white Chinese pith helmet. It seemed official, possibly the police. Adrenalin shot through my system. What was going to happen? When would I be stopped? How could I possibly understand what was being said to me?

I had intended to stop at the People's University, just across from the Friendship Hotel. I had heard color photographs were pasted on the walls of the interior courtyard, showing Tian'anmen Square on Sunday morning. They would be telling evidence of what had happened. Now, with someone following me, I didn't dare do that. I decided to go straight to the hotel, then wondered if I should run to another place, rather than revealing where I was staying. As I passed the university gates, I noticed that the banners were gone. Only a large single black-ribboned mourning wreath hung on the main gate. I decided to go directly to the hotel complex. Surely the cyclist would stop at the gate, respecting what essentially was a diplomatic area?

As I rounded the corner, I crossed to the other side of Beisanhuan Road, then turned onto a side road, going the wrong way. I thought I would lose the cyclist there. I had yet to see any Beijinger riding the wrong way down a one-way street, but the cyclist continued just behind

me. I seemed to be pulling the cycle along. I was caught between the relief of being near the hotel and the anxiety of being stopped at the last second. A few meters from the gate, I stopped. The cyclist, caught a bit off guard, rolled beyond me, then stopped. He was one of those quintessentially aged, wizened Chinese gentlemen with a wispy gray beard. Some of the long hairs grew out of moles. He wore a white pith helmet, a clean, white scarf, probably silk, around his neck, gray trousers, a black silk tunic, and white linen gloves. He must have been in his seventies, maybe older.

As he got off the bike and turned to face me, it toppled over; but without paying attention to it, he stepped toward me and embraced me. He was tiny, the top of his head reaching only to my mid-chest. As he hugged me, his helmet nearly fell off. I patted him on the back and shook his hand, repeating again and again one of the few Chinese phrases I had learned: "Shur shay" (thank you). Together, we righted the bicycle. He said something, but I will never know what it was. I took his hand in both of mine and shook it one more time. Then he pedaled back up the street. What he had done was escort me all the way down Haidian Road, watching out for me. That half hour of compassion for a stranger stands in contrast to the violence of Tian'anmen Square.

* * *

The China of today is not the China of 1989. China is moving toward being the dominant world power. The children of the four-toed blue dragon are rising. In many ways, Americans are dependent on China for many of our creature comforts. China's economic engine is roaring, but political arrangements still lag. China's leaders are acutely aware of how they are regarded. During this Olympic year, much is being done to polish the country's image. Yet even as I write, Tibetans led by saffron-robed Buddhist monks are protesting in Lhasa. Chinese troops patrol the streets, and China has just announced that its one-child policy will stay in place for another generation.

It has taken almost twenty years for me to write about my experience in China, keeping at last the wishes of my colleagues there. As I reconstructed those days, the images rose with their own power, resulting in this memoriam poem to the students at Tian'anmen Square on June 3–4, 1989:

Arc Flashes in Beijing

This night the harsh lights in the square
stay longer than the hapless students.
In the darkness, they wander arm
in arm into the arcing flashes,
muzzles striking reddened evil,
cobras spitting and blinding
out their uncorrupted lives.

Seen from afar, the silence of heat lightning
ricochets around the midnight horizon,
as it does from behind the dry mountains
on summer nights before the arrival of storms in
high valleys of Utah. There, the bolts once
thrown threaten to burn everything on the ground.
The same is happening in the darkened streets
of Beijing. The sightless cobra is lashing
out at children of the blue four-toed dragon,
attempting to weld sprung steel back into place.

Were this all just about a weld, the metal
would snap in response to the hot hit,
fuse hard to itself, cold. But it is not.

The yellow buzz would repeat again and again.
The iron would sing on its way to yielding into one.
The white-hot weld, molten and aglow for a second,
would make sure the blue fit gave no resistance.

The instrument's twisting reptile cord would coil
and dance, then stiffen and jump as the hot, hissing
charge rushed through the line seeking the cold steel.
It would want it liquid, if only for a moment,
to freeze one oriental metal to another. Fix it firmly.
This is more about shredding and ripping apart.
The students welded in their own unity at the arm
lie mangled by tank tracks, torn by the steel that
runs ahead of the tracer arcs wiggling from rifle barrels.

Bicycles twisted soft on the pavement.
Bodies twisted hard in the lanes and doorways.

Through the night, as I lie in my bed,
flashes of light enter the room,
as in a dream, bouncing capriciously
off the blue-hued wall. The storm of troop work
rages through the night outside the walls.
In the morning metal forms lie dead,
stiffened on the walk, stung over and over by
the unyielding vipers in Tian'anmen Square.

What were strips of soft humanity the night
before now together have become hard,
lifeless sticks burned and bruised by
the menace of Li Peng's strikes.

They are melded together in death,
with only a red priming to hide
their hideous wounds and stain their stretchers.

The Goddess of Democracy has been frightened away.

In Memory of Dr. Bill

Mary Lythgoe Bradford

Dialogue—and, indeed, the world of Mormon literature and history—have lost a loyal friend and critic in William Mulder, who died quietly in his sleep in March 12, 2008, in his ninety-third year. The influence of "Dr. Bill," as his former students affectionately call him, continued long after his retirement as a professor of English at the University of Utah. When my fellow classmate Fred Buchanan phoned me with the news of his death, saying, "The light has gone out. Our mentor has left us," I thought, "No, the light will not go out until we stop hearing his voice in our heads." Whenever I write anything, I hear his wise voice, speaking of the introduction to my M.A. thesis as "wooden and flatfooted" and advising me to put it aside until "You have something to introduce." (I took his advice; and my introduction to Virginia Sorensen's work, written after I finished the work, was much better.)

Fred and I and another former student, Dale LeCheminant, acquired the habit of taking Dr. Bill to lunch during my visits to Utah. Bill usually suggested a favorite haunt, and he usually gifted us with books from his commodious library. At the dinner celebrating his honorary doctorate, bestowed by the U of U in 1999, he introduced us and thanked us for nominating him, saying, "Here are my students who have excelled me." He was always gracious—and always had the right word at the right time, like jewels placed carefully in the necklaces of his perfect sentences.

Interestingly, English was not his native tongue. Born in Holland, he emigrated as a child with his parents to the United States, where, as he reported in an interview with Dennis Lythgoe of the *Deseret News*, he "had to learn English in an academic way before it became my native tongue. That might have led to particular attention to how things could be said. The building block is the sentence. I always rewrite."[1] As a result, his writing and teaching style were characterized by a quality that his colleague Professor Ed Leuders describes as "always civil, always delivered with dig-

nity and directness. He never had to search for the right word—it was always there." The grace and polish of his writing may be sampled not only in his many essays but also in his landmark study of the Mormon Scandinavian migration, *Homeward to Zion,* which was based on his Ph.D. dissertation at Harvard.[2]

As a graduate student searching for a thesis subject, I submitted plans for original poetry based on the Book of Mormon. (Poet John Ciardi had recommended it at a writers' conference. "You have a ready-made mythology," he said.) When the English Department rejected this idea, I approached Bill Mulder, who suggested that, if I was really interested in creative writing, I should choose a Mormon author whom I admired as my topic. The result was a thesis on the writings of Mormon novelist Virginia Sorensen, who had a background similar to mine.[3]

Interestingly, Dr. Bill proved similarly inspirational for Virginia, who was his near contemporary. Because of her own Danish ancestry, she had read an article about Bill's *Homeward to Zion*, and, as she put it, "felt the call." A Guggenheim fellowship took her to Denmark where she followed Bill's directions while researching her ancestors and visiting their sites. The results were two Danish novels: *Kingdom Come* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1960), and *Lotte's Locket* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1964). Dr Bill was famous for his ability to lead his students *and* his friends along fruitful career paths.

I felt it a privilege while I was one of Bill's graduate students to index his fascinating study of Mormon history, *Among the Mormons*, a collaboration with Russell Mortensen of eyewitness accounts about the Mormon migration and the founding of the Church. Subtitled *Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers*, it was brilliantly organized into biblical sections—Genesis, Exodus, Chronicles and Judges, Lamentations and Psalms.[4]

After I moved away from Utah, Bill continued to follow my activities in *Dialogue* and elsewhere. When my Bennion biography came out,[5] he phoned me, "You have hit a triple header." He was equally supportive of my plans for a Sorensen biography, which sad to say, has not yet appeared. He and I had such a good time reading his file of letters to and from Virginia that we collaborated on a paper that I delivered at an Association for Mormon Letters meeting in Ogden in 1994.[6]

I hadn't realized until I began researching Bill's influence on *Dialogue* that a group of which he was a member was an influential forerunner

of a new generation of scholarly journals and societies. The group, which named itself the Mormon Forum (humorously nicknamed "the Swearing Elders") met from 1949 until 1955 at the University of Utah to hear addresses about important subjects being researched by other academics. According to Thomas Blakely, "The Swearing Elders came into being in the 1950s, *Dialogue* came on the scene in the 1960s, *Sunstone* and the Mormon History Association were born in the 1970s [sic; actually MHA was founded in 1965] with the history and theological symposiums gaining popularity in the 1980s. . . . In retrospect, it is clear that the Swearing Elders played an integral part in the founding of a movement that stressed intellectual honesty, scholarly integrity, and reflective pondering. If the glory of God and man is intelligence, then the Swearing Elders were glorious indeed."[7] Bill Mulder and Sterling McMurrin became leaders of the group after it had flagged and Lowell Bennion had begged them to take over. As Lowell later recalled, "We wanted to use our minds in relation to religion, as well as to exercise them in hope and faith."[8] The list of the intellectual luminaries who presented papers before the group is impressive. It includes such persons as Leonard Arrington, Hugh Nibley, and Juanita Brooks.

Bill would go on supporting a scholarly and artistic investigation of Mormon life for the rest of his life. Through a long retirement, he remained a familiar figure at cultural events along the Wasatch Front, lending quiet support, encouraging authors and artists, and always speaking with grace and good will. As Mario De Pillis—a non-Mormon scholar of Mormonism and a friend of Bill's—puts it, Bill possessed a "rarely appreciated aspect of great scholarship: what I call scholarly citizenship, such as helping others with their research, encouraging young people, and being sensitive to discrimination against women and the racially different in the fields of history and English. . . . Bill Mulder was a great citizen in the world of learning. For me an almost unique part of his greatness as a citizen was his ability to navigate the dangerous currents of Insider/Outsider life in the Mormon world. . . . Bill did great good, made few enemies, and survived."[9]

Although Bill left the Mormon Church, becoming, as he said, a "secular humanist," he never ridiculed the Mormon faith, or any other faith; and he continued to nurture his own keen interest in Mormon studies. Always a supporter of *Dialogue* (being its fiction editor in the early 1980s), he published a brief but eloquent statement, "Problems of the

Mormon Intellectual," in the autumn 1970 issue,[10] which he later used for a lecture at the Humanist Society of Utah in 2002. In this and in his important article, "Telling It Slant: Aiming for Truth in Contemporary Mormon Literature," presented before the Association for Mormon Letters, he clarifies his credo: "Although I find myself badly out of step with institutional Mormonism . . . I feel myself in tune with the Mormon *experience,* by which I mean the sum of Mormon history and culture as lay Mormons have lived it and lay writers have striven to describe, critique, and celebrate it."[11]

I was moved by an email message Bill sent after the publication in *Sunstone* of my brief spiritual memoir and statement of faith, presented originally at a Sunstone symposium.[12] He called it "beautiful. Its beguiling simplicity is a firm foundation for your belief. A secular humanist like me stands at the window looking in and wishing he could share your faith but grateful for your friendship and forgiveness." Needless to say, I reciprocate his sentiments, being profoundly grateful for his friendship and tolerance.

Notes

1. Dennis Lythgoe,"The Eloquent Dutchman: Literary Giant Being Honored for Service," *Deseret News*, Sunday May 22, 2005, E12.

2. William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion* (1957; rpt., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2000).

3. Mary Lythgoe Bradford, "Virginia Sorensen: An Introduction" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1956).

4. William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958).

5. Mary Lythgoe Bradford, *Lowell L. Bennion: Teacher, Counselor, Humanitarian* (Salt Lake City: Dialogue Foundation, 1995).

6. Mary Lythgoe Bradford, "Virginia Sorensen: Literary Recollections from a Thirty-five Year Friendship," *Association for Mormon Letters Annual* 2 (1994): 97–104.

7. Thomas A. Blakely, "The Swearing Elders: The First Generation of Modern Mormon Intellectuals," *Sunstone,* Issue 53 (December 1985): 13. I am remiss for missing this connection in my biography of Lowell Bennion, one of its founders.

8. Ibid., 11.

9. Mario S. De Pillis Sr., email to Mary Bradford, May 6, 2008.

10. William Mulder, "Problems of the Mormon Intellectual," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1970): 121–23.

11. William Mulder, "Telling It Slant: Aiming for Truth in Contemporary Mormon Literature," *Association for Mormon Letters Annual* 2 (1994): 225.

12. Mary Lythgoe Bradford, "It Takes Many Villages," *Sunstone*, Issue 140 (December 2005): 37–41.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Sharon Alderman

Sharon Alderman has been weaving cloth by hand since 1969, specializing in apparel fabrics, upholstery, and color studies. Her work has won many awards, and she lectures, gives keynote addresses, acts as a juror, and leads workshops for guilds, art centers, colleges, and state, regional, and national conferences. Her writing and work have appeared in *Shuttle, Spindle & Dyepot, Interweave, Textile Artists' Newsletter,* and *Handwoven*, and her books include *Handwoven, Tailormade, A Handweaver's Notebook,* and *Mastering Weave Structures*, all published by Interweave Press, Inc. She lives in Salt Lake City where her fabrics are on exhibit at Phillips Gallery. More information is available at http://www.sharonalderman.com/.

The Artist's Statement:

Color is my passion. While I occasionally weave a cloth using only one color, the joy of combining colors in the cloth is the major reason I am a weaver.

These pieces are double woven (two layers of cloth everywhere) from cotton sewing thread which provides me with a large palette and the fineness to make a smooth optical mixture. I "gather" the colors I use from many sources but mainly use the natural world as my inspiration. I carry sewing thread color charts and a notebook with me when I travel and record what I see, the place, date, and the time of day of these observations. Sometimes I sketch a shape or the landscape so that I can remember the proportion and placement of the colors.

When I am in my studio, I assemble the colors I have noted, arrange and rearrange them until I have something that pleases me and evokes the original observations. There are nearly 200 threads per square inch in these pieces and nothing happens fast. As I weave them, I revisit their sources in my mind. In a sense, I am weaving memories.

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