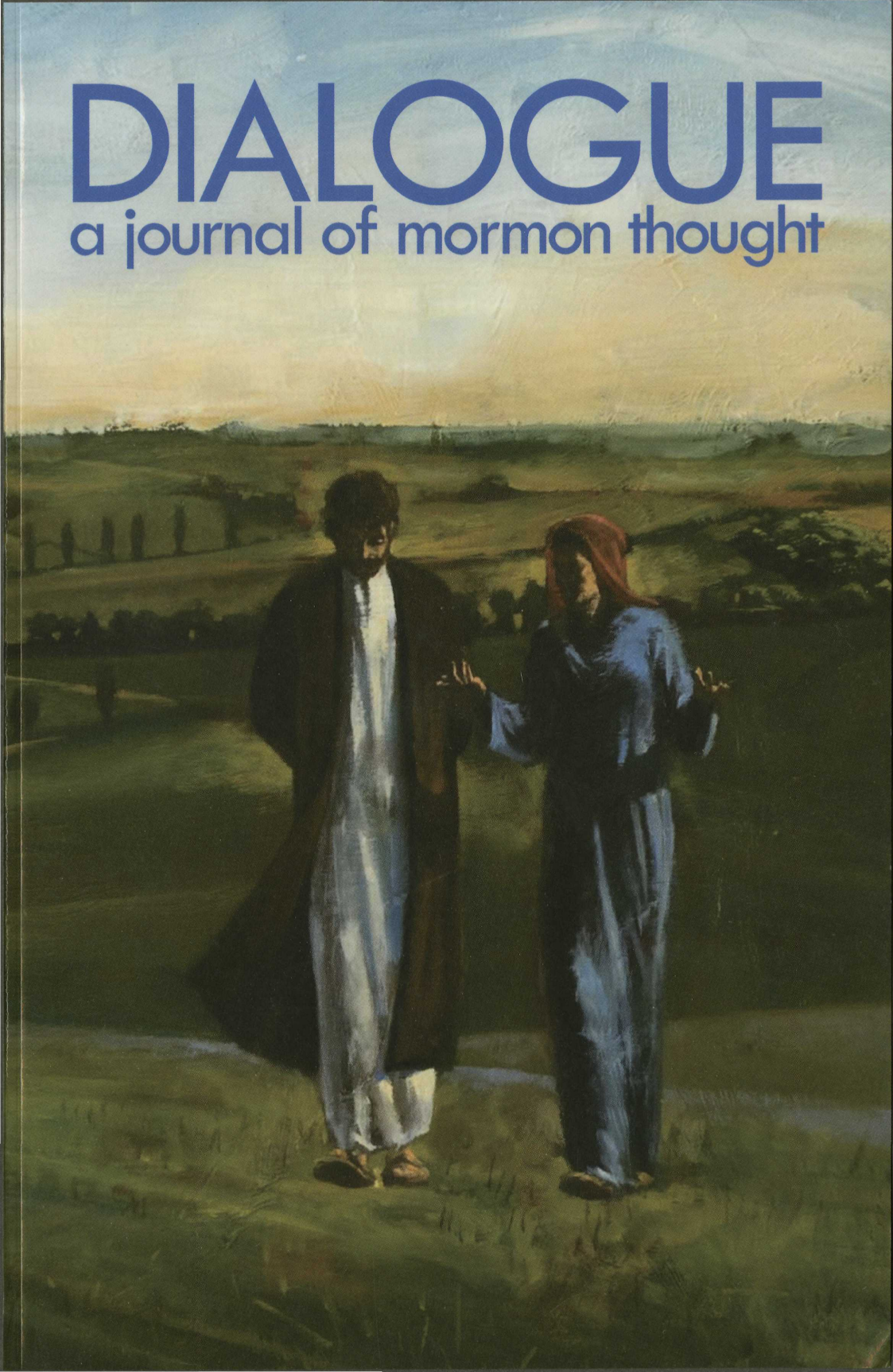


# DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought



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# DIALOGUE

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

## *Crosses to Bear*

When I come home to my parents' house in Utah each year, I inevitably find myself thumbing through a recent issue of *Dialogue*, a last bastion of Mormonism for me as a gay Mormon before leaving the state, the country, and then the Church, a decade and a half ago.

It's always a pleasure to find one or two familiar voices of compassion still carrying the *Dialogue* torch, most recently, Robert Rees and his essay on "The Goodness of the Church" (41, no. 2 [Summer 2008]: 162-73). Rees writes that churches "create a home for us, let us in. When they fail to let all of us in (including the homely, the heretics, and the homosexuals), they fail in their fundamental purpose" (171).

My niece will be married in the Provo Temple later this week; and, again, I will be on the outside, not only for the ceremony but for a part of her that doesn't quite know how to include me in her life. In Utah Valley, having a gay uncle, no matter how distant, becomes her cross to bear.

I hear from my parents about the official Mormon campaign against gay marriage in California and feel confused. When the gay community moves in the moral directions

you would think the Church would encourage (that is, committed relationships manifested in marriage), the Church raises the rhetoric against us to new heights. They not only say they want us on the outside, but by denying us marriage, they seem to want us to slide deeper in non-Church directions.

Some might see as a threat the dawning realization that gay people are no less morally responsible in their choices than they themselves are. But after two decades on the outside, I still have hope that my Mormon community will take this opportunity to reach across the barrier that the Church is building and demolish it with an embrace of welcome.

No matter how we currently draw our lines in the sand, we are all in this together and for the duration. As Rees points out: "The Church is us; it is no better or no worse than we are (and that includes "you" and me), for the Church is what we make it" (171).

Craig Watts  
Beijing, China

## *More Upside*

I enjoyed the article, "The Goodness of the Church" by Robert Rees (*Dialogue*, 41, no. 2 [Summer 2008]:

162–73). This has been a hot topic around our household the last couple of years. In 2005 my wife felt that she was spiritually starving to death in the LDS Church and began attending a fundamentalist evangelical church. Although not very happy at our ward, our teenage children did not follow her. She has not taken her name off the records and still attends sacrament meeting for the sake of family unity, but she is connected to this other community of faith now.

I do not wish to compare and comment on each and every point in the article by Brother Rees from an LDS versus an evangelical perspective. Obviously, many of the points of LDS goodness in the early part of Rees's list are considered revolting non-biblical heresies by evangelicals (Mother in Heaven, eternal marriage, man becoming a god, etc.) However, I find that we share almost every point in the second portion of the article by Brother Rees with evangelicals.

Our family came up with a few more points of strength and goodness of the LDS faith that we feel are as important and that other faiths, including evangelicals, do not come as close to exemplifying:

1. Pioneer heritage. This heritage belongs to all of us, including Brother Rees, a first-generation Saint and hence a modern pioneer. One of the most fascinating chapters in American history is the story of the Mormons. We have the heroism of the handcart companies, the

cooperation to tame the desert, and the building of hundreds of rugged communities. And we have the colorful events of plural marriage, murder and massacre, and our gunfighters and muleskinners.

2. Genealogy. Family history goes far beyond what is for many, both in and outside the Church, a hobby, beyond the enormous Ancestral File now on the internet, and even beyond esoteric theology that fuels temple ceremonies. LDS people have a clear sense of identity and feel a strong connectedness to their extended family and to history because of this concern with genealogy. I believe it forms part of the mentality of the ward-as-almost-like-family, a blessing that exists for many.

As an aside, I became aware of an unusual cardiac disease called LQTS. It is inherited, causes sudden death, and is treatable. One extended family I know of turned out to have a handful of living members with this condition, and it solved a couple of unexplained early deaths in previous generations. Very satisfying to know. Upon further inquiry into LQTS, I discovered that a Danish kindred originating in pioneer Utah has more than 150 living members with this condition and several other not-much-smaller families are also described among the Mormons. What a contrast in how many more relatives could be found and treated for this inherited condition because of the work

of both physicians and genealogists in the LDS family.

Extensive LDS genealogical records and a moderate degree of social isolation for part of a century, coupled with modern molecular biology, may prove to be the Rosetta stone for making medical advances in the fight against atherosclerosis, cancer, dementia, and other conditions. I will go out on a limb and predict that submitting your four-generation sheet might turn out to have more benefit to the health of future generations than keeping the Word of Wisdom.

3. The Church Educational System. Where the LDS people are numerous, high school and college students can take elective religious classes. This wonderful opportunity is often matched by many religions, especially in private schools run by churches. Where LDS people are less numerous, the ingenious early morning seminary program shines forth as truly inspirational. The key is to find a dedicated and compassionate teacher, without which the program is a nightmare.

My teenagers get up at 5:45 A.M. It is a great time to practice driving safely before the streets get dangerously congested, so they are better drivers than their friends. The kids go through the scriptures thoroughly, hopefully gaining some sort of a religious conviction, and they form bonds of strong friendship. (My kids' teacher also feeds them and sometimes they sleep). Most of these LDS teens have an ex-

tensive network of non-LDS friends so that shy or new LDS seminary-goers get plugged in with far more decent friends than they might have otherwise. Because of differences in start times for their various regular schools and commute times, many students have half an hour or more after seminary to finish up their homework and make final plans for the school day.

Because they are organized and motivated, they take harder classes and get involved in many other activities which means they are often up past midnight doing homework. Young people can survive on only four or five hours of sleep daily for several days. But by Friday and Saturday night, the early morning seminary students at my house are too tired to stay up and go to parties. They are home without protest and sound asleep in their own beds, when their peers are out getting drunk, high, laid, robbed, murdered, or killed in car wrecks.

4. Nannies. LDS girls make the best nannies. Whether this claim is empirically demonstrable or not, the demand for Mormon nannies is high. People who are too busy or too lazy to raise their own children and can afford to pay others to do it believe this claim. I recommend that any LDS girl who is thinking that she doesn't want to further her education beyond high school and who just wants to get married should consider becoming a nanny for a season. She can gain experience and see what it is actually like

to fight the “mommy wars” before she gets irrevocably committed. Furthermore, the experience will expand her horizon in other ways. Even in the less obvious babysitting industry, LDS girls are in high demand.

5. Active men. Most religions have a real problem getting adult men to attend church. Usually there is a 2:1 or 3:1 or higher ratio of female to male worshippers. Most LDS congregations are much closer to parity. I think it is the LDS lay priesthood that keeps more of our men active in the church. The downside of this situation is the stereotypical Mormon bishop with six wild kids who has little time to spend with them and also the way some women feel mistreated. In addition, Mormon men are more likely to be doing things with their children and spend less time on their own hobbies, in my observation.

6. Racism. We have an ugly history of racism, the memory of which continues to hamper missionary work. But I have observed that today our ward is more racially integrated than any other local church of which I’m aware. I believe that black people would generally feel more comfortable and accepted in our wards than in any other historically all-white church, by a long shot.

In the Deep South and across much of America, most churches are still highly segregated along racial lines. U.S. President Barack Obama attended a racially segre-

gated church and his former reverend would have never been able to get away with his radical theology if there had been more white faces in his congregation—especially if they were on the church board of directors.

Our ward is approximately 15 percent black. We have had black members in the bishopric and at other levels of ward leadership. Our current stake president is black (but he is so much more than that). At least two of the wards in this stake are about 50 percent black, judging by the percentage of their youth who attend activities. (I don’t have access to accurate statistics.) We also have a few Latino families in our ward, a few handfuls of people from just about anywhere, and a Spanish branch in the stake. No other church in our city comes close to this level of racial integration. The only exceptions are a few churches that have specific ministries for biracial couples, and the fact that such a ministry exists proves my point.

I realize that this integration is not ubiquitous and that our city is ringed by large and growing suburban wards that are as lily white as they are anywhere else. I don’t know if our level of integration holds in other large cities in the Eastern United States or out west. I suspect that it does to various degrees.

7. Finances. The LDS Church is wealthy. More than once, the LDS Church has been in severe financial

difficulty, like most churches. The source of the current wealth was explained to me by a non-LDS financial wizard at a Girl Scout campout during a weekend of steady torrential rain so severe that he could not get his gas stove lit, and I traded him bowls of warm chili for steak while he talked. He had made a careful study of the LDS investment strategy, which he greatly admired, and simplified his findings for me: When you give a hundred bucks to most churches they spend it, generally on a good cause. When you give the LDS Church a hundred bucks, it invests it, often in companies that the Church controls. These investments are usually safe with a good return. After several years, the hundred bucks grows to a thousand bucks or more. The Church spends some of the profit but generally keeps the principal intact. The do-

nation becomes a source of perpetual wealth. Our ward expenditures are modest in comparison to those of other nearby churches and in comparison to the amount of money collected by tithing. Where this extra money goes is not obvious to me—perhaps to education (BYU), temples, buildings in other countries, etc. But how we spend the money is a separate issue. That we have more than ample funds and therefore choices for the leaders in how to spend them is a tremendous strength and the envy of every other church on the landscape.

Thank you, Brother Rees, for your article. I look forward to more articles that trumpet the strengths and goodness of the LDS Church from the perspectives of the writers of *Dialogue*.

Michael Heninger  
Atlanta, Georgia



Nathan Florence  
*Bring me my spear; O Clouds unfold!*  
oil on printed cotton, 30"x40", 2008

# Becoming a “Messenger of Peace”: Jacob Hamblin in Tooele

*Todd M. Compton*

On March 13, 1852, two men, one white and armed with a rifle, the other a Goshute armed with bow and arrows, confronted each other in the Stansbury Mountains west of Tooele, a small, two-year-old settlement some twenty-five miles southwest of Salt Lake City. The first man, Jacob Vernon Hamblin, a lieutenant in Utah's Nauvoo Legion, had been given specific instructions by his military and ecclesiastical superior to kill all Indians, as they had been raiding the whites' cattle.<sup>1</sup> However, when Hamblin and the Goshute faced each other in the mountains, neither could kill the other despite multiple arrows loosed at Hamblin and multiple attempts to shoot the Indian. Finally the Indian fled after Hamblin threw a stone at him. This was a tense, dangerous, yet almost comic confrontation that would profoundly shape Hamblin's subsequent life. He concluded that the incident was a sign given him from God that he should not kill Indians and that, if he followed this directive, he himself would never be killed by them.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, though Hamblin is known for his missions, explorations, and diplomacy in southern Utah and Arizona, Tooele was the place where he changed from a militaristic soldier sent to achieve success by killing Indians to a person who strove to avoid killing and bloodshed when dealing with Goshutes, Paiutes, Utes, Navajos, and Hopi. Through the rest of his life, in many dangerous situations on the frontier, he relied on this experience in Tooele and felt that he could travel among dangerous Indians in perfect safety if he did not seek their blood.

Hamblin's "conversion" is especially remarkable given that

many Mormons had harsh and militaristic attitudes toward Utah Indians in the early 1850s. The story of the relationship of Mormons and Native Americans in early Utah history is complex and riddled with ambiguities. In some ways, the Book of Mormon caused Mormons to regard Indians highly, as descendants of Israel; according to this scripture, the pre-European inhabitants of North and South America were descendants of Lehi, a Hebrew prophet who had sailed to America with his family. Thus, Mormons often felt a high mission to convert and educate Indians. On the other hand, the culture gap between Mormons and Indians was vast; and when Indians did not convert quickly, as the Mormons had hoped, and in fact acted with hostility, Mormons sometimes viewed them as decadent, fallen children of Lehi, especially since they were regarded as descendants of Lehi's two wicked sons (Laman and Lemuel) rather than descendants of his righteous sons.<sup>3</sup> The Saints in Utah in Hamblin's day often referred to Indians as Lamanites. In fact, Mormons developed many typical American attitudes toward Indians<sup>4</sup>—pursuing the policy of harsh punitive actions against them whenever it was deemed necessary.

Brigham Young has been regarded by historians as a generous friend to the Utah Indians, and his saying that it was cheaper to feed Indians than to fight them is often quoted.<sup>5</sup> Mormons certainly were not involved in genocidal massacres of Indians, such as occurred in other parts of the West.<sup>6</sup> For good and practical reasons, Young wanted Indians to be allies and friends. Nevertheless, Young's colonization of Utah and the Southwest, brilliantly carried out from one point of view, nevertheless consistently pushed Indians from their traditional homelands and away from precious water resources. Mormon settlements and herds made progressively ruinous inroads into ecosystems on which Indians relied. Historian John Alton Peterson comments: "Often conducting themselves more like conquerors than missionaries, the Latter-day Saints displaced native societies and colluded with federal officials to place them on reservations."<sup>7</sup> Peterson remarks on the tragic irony that the Saints, a displaced people, were now themselves displacing a people.

If Young was moderate in his policies to Indians on the whole, historian Howard Christy, in an influential article, "Open Hand and Mailed Fist: Mormon Indian Relations in Utah, 1847–52," has

argued that Young was initially more punitive than conciliatory with Utah's Indians.<sup>8</sup> Although LDS historian Ronald Walker has argued that Christy's conclusions need tempering,<sup>9</sup> nevertheless, some of the primary documents Christy relies on in fact show that many Mormons—including Young in this early period—dealt harshly with Indians, who were admittedly sometimes hostile to Mormons. Historians of Utah Indians Floyd O'Neil and Stanford J. Layton write, "Although the rhetoric of Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and others contained the promise of accommodation and respect for the Indians, at that moment Young was pursuing a policy of extermination against the Utes of Utah Valley. Under his direction, and extending well beyond his tenure as superintendent, the Mormons continued to crowd the Indians off choice land, using force as necessary, until 1869 when the Utes were finally relocated to the Uintah Reservation and the other Indians were expelled from the territory or confined to its remote corners."<sup>10</sup> Though "extermination" seems a harsh characterization, LDS leaders actually used the word in their dealing with Indians. Apostle Willard Richards stated, in a January 31, 1850, meeting dealing with Indian conflicts in Utah Valley: "My voice is for war, & exterminate them [the Indians]." Later in the same meeting, Brigham Young articulated an equally extreme position: "I say go & kill them." Those present voted in support of this plan.<sup>11</sup> Young advised military leader Daniel H. Wells, on February 14, 1850: "If the Indians sue for peace grant it to them, according to your discretionary Judgment in the case.—If they continue hostile pursue them until you use them up—Let it be peace with them or extermination."<sup>12</sup>

Thus, when Hamblin arrived in Tooele on September 20, 1850, his arrival coincided with a period of the "mailed fist" in Mormon-Indian relations.

### Settling Tooele

The town of Tooele was founded in late 1849. Tooele Valley, about twenty-five miles long and fifteen miles wide, is separated from the Salt Lake Valley by the Oquirrh Mountains, bounded on the north by the Great Salt Lake and on the west by the Stansbury Mountains. West beyond this range is Skull Valley and, farther west still, lie the Cedar Mountains. Beyond these mountains lie

sixty miles of the most forbidding salt desert in the United States. These valleys, mountains, and deserts were the home of the Goshute tribe.

Early descriptions of Tooele Valley emphasize its grasslands. In November 1849, Salt Lake explorer Howard Stansbury, an officer in the U.S. Corps of Topographical Engineers, wrote that Tooele Valley "forms an excellent pasturage for numerous herds of cattle, wintered here . . . under the charge of keepers. The grass is very abundant and numerous springs are found on both sides of it."<sup>13</sup> When Brigham Young and other Church leaders had explored the valley briefly in July 1847, they described the valley only as "apparently quite dry."<sup>14</sup> It did not look like an inviting settlement and farming site. A second exploring party, again including Young, visited Tooele Valley two years later and documented the Goshute presence: "Some Indians were encamped on the west side of the valley, who put out their fires on discovering us. Antelope, cranes, snipes, gulls and mosquitoes abounded in the valley . . . [which] was covered with dry grass."<sup>15</sup> Philip De La Mare, a Mormon who settled in Tooele in approximately 1854, described the valley as "a waving mass of grass three to four feet high."<sup>16</sup> This was not verdant farmland, as water supplies were limited, but it supplied excellent forage for cattle.

Mormons were using Tooele Valley for grazing by 1848.<sup>17</sup> An early settler, John Rowberry, was sent there in December 1849 to winter Apostle Ezra Taft Benson's herd of cattle.<sup>18</sup> Benson had sent other pioneers to Tooele in October 1848 to build a sawmill. Both activities show that the Mormons did not originally see Tooele Valley as especially suited for farming. However, cattle were important in the Mormon economy from the earliest period of Utah settlement. "The first Mormon settlers brought with them 3,100 head of cattle including 887 cows and 2,213 working oxen," writes historian Allan Kent Powell. "By 1850, the number of cattle in the Utah territory had increased to 12,000 head and by 1860 the number was 34,000 head."<sup>19</sup> Many stock owners sent their cattle to Tooele.

In October 1850, Harrison Severe and James McBride settled the other major town in Tooele, later called Grantsville, in the southwest part of Tooele Valley, about seven miles from the Stansbury Mountains. After these early settlements were founded, Mor-

mons expanded them and established other nearby settlements. Jacob Hamblin and his family were part of that process, reaching Tooele in September 1850 when the town was less than a year old.

### **The Goshute Indians**

The first words describing Tooele in Hamblin's holograph autobiography are a bit surprising, coming as they do from the man renowned for his sympathy for Indians: "Here we were pesterd with the Indians. They ware continually coming out from the mountains which was their lurking plases and steeling Cattle and horses. There was several attempts maid to stop them but to no affect."<sup>20</sup> Hamblin's language—"pestered," "lurked," and later, "depredations"—reflects the typical white view of Indians as dangerous annoyances. Such language fails to recognize that the Mormons were settling permanently in traditional Indian lands, often occupying the best camping sites near reliable springs, hunting in the Indian's hunting grounds, and grazing their stock on meadowlands, often rendering them unfit for sustaining the animals and plants used by the Indians. There is no recognition that the Mormons are "pestering" the Indians. But in fact, the Mormons were encroaching on a complex and delicate ecosystem that supported the Goshutes. It would never be the same again.

Thus, though Jacob Hamblin was more sympathetic to Indians than the average Mormon, or non-Mormon white settler and, throughout his life, strove to deal with them through negotiation rather than violence, he nevertheless had many of the biases of the white settlers throughout the West—especially the bias that the white man, with his "higher civilization," had full rights to settle wherever he wanted. This bias was perhaps even more pronounced among Mormons, who regarded wherever they settled as a Zion center place, a promised land given to them by God. Non-Mormons (be they Missourians or Indians), they insisted, would have to accept Mormon colonization. When they encountered resistance, they naturally viewed themselves as the wronged party.

The Goshutes of Tooele were much less powerful and wealthy than the dominant tribe in Utah, the Utes, who lived in central Utah and Colorado, and had some Plains Indians cultural traits, such as possession of the horse.<sup>21</sup> North of Salt Lake Valley, the

Shoshoni lived in northern Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming,<sup>22</sup> and were also in the Plains Indian category.

In the generations before contact with whites, two groups had apparently been driven away from the main Ute tribes into territory that was less bountiful than central Utah: the Goshutes, in Tooele west of Salt Lake City, and extending west into present-day Nevada; and the southern Paiutes, in southern Utah, again extending southwest into Nevada, Arizona, and California.<sup>23</sup> Both the Goshutes and the Paiutes were known as “Diggers” because they dug for roots, often in desert conditions.<sup>24</sup> Rabbits, lizards, groundhogs, insects, and seeds were also among their food staples. Sometimes, but apparently rarely, the Goshutes would kill an antelope. Neither group used horses as a general rule; some sources state that the Paiutes were in such a state of perpetual hunger that they would eat any horses that fell into their hands. Other sources state that the Goshutes did not keep horses because they would have eaten the grasses that the Goshutes depended upon for their own survival.<sup>25</sup>

Adding to the oppressed states of the Goshutes and Paiutes was the fact that the Utes would raid into their territories, capture women and children, and sell them to the residents of New Mexico; occasionally they would trade for these children. Goshute Indians told one of the early Grantsville settlers, Harrison Severe, that “about twenty years before the white men came, that Indians from the south [Utes] came among them, killing many of the men and stealing their women and children, and that many of the Indians starved and froze to death. After this massacre the [Tooele Goshute] Indians moved to the west of Cedar Mountains,” into the even more inhospitable desert.<sup>26</sup>

The above outline of Utah tribes is roughly correct, but many complexities blur clear lines of demarcation. The Pahvants, a band of the Utes who lived by Sevier Lake in modern Millard County in midwestern Utah, apparently had an alliance with the Goshutes in the north and the Paiutes in the south. Some central Utah Utes intermarried with Goshutes. The fullest description we have of the Ute chief Black Hawk, who later led the Black Hawk War (1865–72), was written in 1859 by James Simpson, another U.S. topographical engineer, who explored the Great Salt Lake Desert of Utah and Nevada and visited the Goshutes there. Black

Hawk, a Ute from Utah Valley south of Salt Lake City, was married to a Goshute woman and was visiting her at the time.<sup>27</sup>

While the Goshutes thus had ties with the Utes, they also were connected with the Shoshoni to the north. For instance, some authors refer to them as speaking the Shoshoni language. One early Indian missionary, George Washington Bean, described their language as a mixture of Shoshoni and Ute.<sup>28</sup> Brigham D. Madsen, a modern authority on the Shoshoni, simply refers to them as the "Goshute Shoshoni."<sup>29</sup> Madsen estimates that there were 900 Goshutes in the 1840s.<sup>30</sup> They had no strong tribal organization; in the 1840s they were living in "small, basically family groups."<sup>31</sup>

Early observers of the Goshutes were struck by their poverty. As early as 1827, Jedediah Smith, a mountain man and explorer, wrote, "When we found water in some of the rocky hills, we most generally found some Indians who appeared the most miserable of the human race, having nothing to subsist on (nor any clothing), except grass seed, grasshoppers, etc."<sup>32</sup> Howard Stansbury described three Goshutes on June 12, 1850:

[One Goshute] was an old man, nearly sixty, quite naked, except an old breech-cloth and a tattered pair of moccasins. His wife was in the same condition precisely, minus the moccasins, with a small buckskin strap over her shoulders in the form of a loop, in which, with its little arms clasped around its mother's neck, sat a female child, four or five years old, without any clothing whatever. She was a fine-looking, intelligent little thing, and as plump as a partridge. . . . I gave them something to eat, and, what I suspect was more welcome, a hearty draught of water. The poor child was almost famished. The old man was armed with a bow and a few arrows, with which he was hunting for ground-squirrels.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly, the Goshutes were struggling to survive in a marginal desert environment.

On May 9, 1859, James Simpson wrote a similar description in his diary: "We have to-day seen a number of Go-shoot Indians. They are most wretched-looking creatures, certainly the most wretched I have ever seen, and I have seen great numbers in various portions of our country."<sup>34</sup> Both men and women wore a cape made of strips of rabbit skins, which extended just below the hips and offered "but a scant protection to the body." They did not wear leggings or moccasins. Young children wore no clothes at all,

although it was so cold that Simpson's company was still wearing overcoats. The Goshutes subsisted on "rats, lizards, snakes, insects, grass-seed, and roots, and their largest game is the rabbit, it being seldom that they kill an antelope." Perhaps their main weapon, the bow and arrow, was not suited for killing antelope. Guns were rare among the Goshutes. When Simpson visited a Goshute village, the primary game brought in by hunters was "rats"—probably prairie dogs or ground hogs. They also made cakes of seeds and roots.<sup>35</sup>

The Goshutes lived in wickiups made from "some cedar branches disposed around in the periphery of a circle, about 10 feet in diameter," which served as a wind break.<sup>36</sup> They made willow baskets in which they carried or stored water, seeds, and roots.<sup>37</sup>

According to Simpson, Mormon Indian-translator George Washington Bean described the Goshutes as a break-off from the Ute tribe, though "they are little esteemed by the parent tribe"; despite this, as we have seen, they occasionally intermarried with them. "Fear of capture"—apparently fear of Utes stealing their children—caused them to avoid living close to water. They were, according to Simpson, "a suspicious, secretive set."<sup>38</sup>

A Mr. Faust, a mail agent, characterized the Goshutes to Simpson as "of a thievish disposition, the mail company having lost by them about 12 head of cattle and as many mules." However, the agent's next statement shows that such thefts might have been a result of the Goshutes' daily struggle for survival: "They steal them for food."<sup>39</sup>

All of these early descriptions of the Goshutes are written from a non-Indian perspective; they certainly missed some of the dignity, cultural depth, and positive values in the Goshute way of life. Nevertheless, they give early first-hand accounts showing that, in comparison to other Indians, the Goshutes were impoverished, lacked guns and horses, and subsisted on a diet of seeds, roots, and small animals.

Goshute historian Dennis Defa describes Mormon colonization in Tooele as "plac[ing] the Goshutes in a desperate situation. The Indians had long been accustomed to placing their camps near streams and canyons to take advantage of the water and food supply there. . . . These white settlers brought with them the idea

of exclusive use of natural resources and robbed the Goshute of many of the things they needed to survive."<sup>40</sup> If it is true that the Goshutes did not keep horses because their grazing would destroy the grass and seeds that were dietary staples, the Mormons' widespread cattle grazing catastrophically impacted the Goshute environment.<sup>41</sup> The culture clash of white and Indian, and the competition for resources of survival, was inevitable, given the underlying assumptions of both Native American and Mormon communities. Although Brigham Young was comparatively moderate in his dealings with Utah's Indians, he was an energetic colonizer who saw the intermountain West as the core of the Mormon homeland and endeavored to plant many permanent Mormon settlements throughout the Southwest, at the most strategic and fertile locations possible. The two most marginal groups of Utah Indians—the Goshutes and the Paiutes—were hardest hit by Mormon incursions into their territory.

Though Brigham Young, especially after 1851, and Hamblin typically exercised more restraint with Indians than many white settlers, other Saints shared more typical American cultural views, seeing Indians as uncivilized, dirty, idle, thieving, and indistinguishably bad. Only harsh reprisals, including summary executions, could control them and make them respect Mormon property.

James Dunn, an early local historian of Tooele, shows this demonization of the Indian: "When the mean rascals had the chance they would rather steal than hunt: and that is the reason they went into the wholesale stealing of cattle, both in this valley and Salt Lake Valley until the settlers in both valleys joined together and killed a few of the red thieves; and that helped in a great measure to stop the killing of men and stealing of stock."<sup>42</sup> However, the early primary sources flatly contradict this stereotype of the Goshutes as making an easy living based on hunting. Territorial Indian Agent Garland Hurt wrote in 1855: "The Indians claim that we have eaten up their grass and thereby deprived them of its rich crop of seed which is their principal subsistence during winter. They say too that the long guns of the white people have scared away the game and now there is nothing left for them to eat but ground squirrels and pis-ants."<sup>43</sup> Modern Tooele historian George Tripp notes that, in the Mormons' defense, they

probably had little idea that their increasing farming and livestock grazing were destroying the Goshute winter food supply.<sup>44</sup>

Dunn implies that the Mormon reprisals were carried out to “stop the killing of men”; but the Goshutes killed very few Mormons (none during Jacob Hamblin’s time in Tooele), while Mormons killed a number of Goshutes. In addition to the motivation of hunger for the Goshutes’ “theft,” it is also possible that their cattle raids were not, in their own cultural terms, stealing. Tripp writes, “The Goshutes regarded the land, water and food resources both vegetable and animal as belonging to everyone, not in the sense of communal ownership, but [as] no ownership at all. . . . Therefore, until the Indians were taught otherwise by their Mormon neighbors, livestock running free on the open range was regarded the same as any game animal available to whoever bagged them.” He concludes, “In good years [for the Goshutes] there was usually not much more than just enough food for survival, and in times of scarcity only the strongest survived.”<sup>45</sup> The early primary sources support this point of view.

### **Indian Conflicts in Early Tooele**

The early “war” with the Goshutes in Tooele, in 1849 and the 1850s, is little known in early Utah history. These Indians were considerably less dangerous and deadly than the well-mounted and more aggressive Utes, although Utes were apparently sometimes involved in the Tooele conflicts. In Tooele, Indians robbed livestock from Mormons, and the Mormons responded with military reprisals. While the loss of livestock was certainly a serious matter to the whites, the reprisals often ended in deaths for the Goshutes.

Mormons were herding cattle in Tooele by 1848, and the first cattle were lost to Indian raids in late February 1849.<sup>46</sup> These raiders herded the cattle south and east to Utah Valley, suggesting that they were Utes, or Utes and Goshutes working together.

A year later, in the spring of 1850, Indians stole three of Apostle Ezra Taft Benson’s cattle.<sup>47</sup> More seriously, on February 11, 1851, Indians made off with half of J. J. Willis’s herd—some fifty cattle and horses. A military company of twenty organized in Salt Lake City to pursue the raiders, but a blizzard kept them in the

city. They did not set out until the 19th and returned, apparently without recovering any of the stock, on February 25 and 27.<sup>48</sup>

A month later, on March 19, Phineas Wright, a Mormon Battalion veteran who served as Tooele's military captain, wrote to the leading military figure in Salt Lake City, General Daniel H. Wells, stating that more cattle had been taken from Willis's herd the night before; he asked for reinforcements.<sup>49</sup> The next day, Indians drove off more cattle belonging to Harrison Severe and James McBride; pursuers found only a few carcasses.<sup>50</sup> Severe and McBride had to temporarily retreat from their six-month-old settlement at Grantsville.

A month later, the next flare-up in Mormon-Indian relations caused deaths. Jacob Hamblin summarizes: "There was several attempts maid to stop them [the Indian raids] but to no affect. There was one expedition under the command of Capt Porter Rockwell. He took [captured] some 20 or 30 Eutaws nere a fresh Lake 7 or 8 miles from our Settlement. While comeing in an affrey took ~~plase~~ took plase in which one Mr Custer was kiled an Emigrant. The Prisoners maid their escape and fled except 5. They were taken out and shot."<sup>51</sup>

Other sources allow us to fill in important details.<sup>52</sup> Some non-Mormons were helping Mormons build a dam for Apostle Benson's mill in Richville (northwest of the town of Tooele), when, on about April 21, 1851, Indians stole their horses. The Tooele residents quickly notified authorities in Salt Lake City; on the same day, General Wells sent out a company of volunteers under the leadership of Porter Rockwell, the legendary Mormon gunman, to recover the horses.<sup>53</sup> On April 22, the posse, consisting of Salt Lake volunteers, Tooele volunteers, and non-Mormons came to Rush Lake, some seventeen miles southwest of Tooele. They "evidently mistook the route the marauders had taken" and came instead upon a "band of Indians with their familes"—Utes, according to Hamblin and other sources.<sup>54</sup> They had apparently not been involved in the horse raid;<sup>55</sup> but Rockwell, in a questionable decision, ordered that thirty should be taken as prisoners to Tooele.<sup>56</sup> They were not disarmed.

As the group approached Tooele at about twilight, some Indians hung back and began to scatter. The best account of what happened next is written by W. R. Dickinson, one of the non-Mor-

mons working at Benson's mill, in a near-contemporary letter: "Custer [a non-Mormon] . . . spured his horse to git Rounde them. He then puild his revolver pointed at the ingine. Shot. A nother ingine got Custer. I shot the ingine that shot Custer."<sup>57</sup> In other words, Custer shot at an Indian thinking he may have been escaping; another Indian returned fire, killing Custer; and Dickinson shot the second Indian. Porter Rockwell, in his report to Brigham Young, neglected to mention that Custer fired first, thus shading the narrative to make Custer seem like the victim of an unexpected and unprovoked attack. In a later retrospective account, the story has been embellished further—a typical dynamic in anti-Indian partisan history—to paint the Indians as even more cowardly. "Mr. Custer being a little behind the others, 2 or 3 Indians dropped behind him and shot him in the back."<sup>58</sup>

Evidently the Indians scattered, and Rockwell was able to keep only four or five prisoners.<sup>59</sup> The next day he and his men took them across the Stansbury Mountains into Skull Valley. They found no horses, and the prisoners stated, apparently with utter truthfulness, that they knew nothing about the theft. Faced with the problem of the captive Indians, Rockwell summarily executed them. Tullidge, in a bit of special pleading that has become notorious, writes, "Rockwell and his men not finding any trace of the stolen horses, deemed it unwise to turn the thieves in their power loose to commit more depredations and perhaps shed the blood of some useful citizens, and they were sacrificed to the natural instincts of self-defense."<sup>60</sup> This brutal execution of innocent Indians was thus scrubbed clean and turned into "self-defense."

Rockwell may not be the only one to blame for this massacre, as apparently, the early Mormon military sometimes had a policy of "taking no prisoners." On February 9, 1850, Daniel H. Wells wrote to George D. Grant, "Take no hostile Indians as prisoners" and "let none escape but do the work up clean."<sup>61</sup> Thus, killing Indians was not just allowed, but was sometimes ordered. Negotiations were often not even attempted; instead, the adversarial military point of view prevailed, which judged success by body count.

Hamblin remembers that "this act"—presumably Custer's death, not the murder of the Utes—"alarmed the Settlers of Toela. They asked for council." In this council, the Toeelans decided to move their homes into a fort arrangement and organize an armed

guard for their livestock and fields.<sup>62</sup> The fort was built about the middle of May 1851.<sup>63</sup> However, as Hamblin writes, even though “we managed in this way for 18 months,” nevertheless the Indians continued “taking our cattle whenever opportunity presented.”<sup>64</sup>

In early summer of 1851, a month or two after the fort was built, Indians rustled about a hundred cattle from Charles White’s herd and drove them through the Stansbury Mountains, past Skull Valley, and into the Cedar Mountains. Fourteen men were sent from Salt Lake City under William McBride on June 13; but driven back by the Indians in Cedar Mountains, they sent for reinforcements and supplies.<sup>65</sup>

On June 21, forty men arrived, supplemented by ten men from Tooele, possibly including Jacob Hamblin.<sup>66</sup> McBride wrote to Daniel Wells on June 24 asking for “a pound of arsenic” to poison the Indians’ “wells” and strychnine to poison their meat.<sup>67</sup> It is hard to assess the tone of this request; it may have been only rough, grotesque humor. There is no record that Wells sent any poison to McBride.<sup>68</sup>

On June 25, after “morning prayer was offered to the God of the armies of Isreal by adjutant James Ferguson,” the Mormon party attacked the Indians, caught them by surprise, and killed eight of them, including a woman with a baby. Richard Warburton mentions the baby: “There was one little girl papoose picked up; its mother had been killed (couldn’t tell the squaws from Indians). It was brought into camp and a soldier appointed for its nurse; he fed it on sopped bread and a little suger we had; it grew up to womanhood in Salt Lake.”<sup>69</sup>

Warburton also gives vivid details showing what it was like to participate in an early Tooele Indian campaign in the summer. After the Indians drove the posse out of the canyon in Cedar Mountains, the Mormons crossed Skull Valley “to the east side where we thought we could find water. You must remember that this was in the latter part of July, the heat was intense.” They eventually camped by a little stream. “On the banks of this little stream two human skulls were found, hence, the name of Skull Valley. This place of our camp was badly infested with scorpions and those big tarantulas; shake them out of our bedding in the morning; not very pleasant bed fellows.” The second attack on the Indians occurred at 2:00 P.M., and “The suffering for want of water was fear-

ful; had no canteens; men would [fall] down as if they were shot and lay helpless; had to leave them where they fell." After the raid, one man was so dehydrated that he could not speak.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, in this campaign about eight Indians were killed, including the woman. At this point, the Indians in Tooele had not killed any whites (with the exception of Custer, who had fired first). But the Mormons had taken a typical white view of "Indian problems": the best solution was a quick, harsh attack. It was extreme by Christian or modern standards. The fact that at least eight Indians died while there were no Mormon casualties raises the question of whether there was an actual "battle."

### **Lieutenant Hamblin**

In the Little autobiography, Hamblin says that he served as "first lieutenant" in Captain Phineas Wright's company and made "several expeditions against the thieves, but without accomplishing much good."<sup>71</sup> He left accounts of numerous contacts with Goshutes in Tooele.

Hamblin's first military expedition against Indians is apparently described both in his holograph autobiography and in Little, who says that it took place about a month before March 13, 1852. In Hamblin's autobiography, Wright sent him with fourteen men "to ascertain Something with regard to them [the Indians] if possible." However, according to Little, the expedition was Hamblin's idea.<sup>72</sup> The group rode to Willow Creek (Grantsville), where they learned that a light, presumably an Indian camp, had been seen in the "west mountains" (the Stansbury Mountains). Jacob investigated with Grantsville resident Harrison Severe. At about midnight, they, too, saw the light, and Hamblin quickly organized a dawn raid on the camp. Hamblin sent his men into two groups up parallel canyons to take the camp by surprise. However, according to his autobiography, they found only two families, who ran up the canyon shrieking, expecting to be shot. "We run in a hed of them and they stopt. Thare was several shots fird at them. None took affect. When I herd the schreems of the chirldin I could not bare the thought of killing one of them."<sup>73</sup> Apparently, the whites had been intent on killing the Goshutes, but Hamblin's tenderness toward children changed his intent.

In Little's account, Hamblin and his men are halted by a mira-

cle. When they come upon the Indians, "the chief among them sprang to his feet, and stepping towards me, said, 'I never hurt you, and I do not want to. If you shoot, I will; if you do not, I will not.'" Hamblin continued (in this version), "I was not familiar with their language, but I knew what he said. Such an influence came over me that I would not have killed one of them for all the cattle in Tooele Valley." In addition to this miracle, Little also portrays a larger group of Indians and details the pain and terror of the flight: "The running of the women and the crying of the children aroused my sympathies, and I felt inspired to do my best to prevent the company from shooting any of them. Some shots were fired, but no one was injured, except that the legs and feet of some of the Indians were bruised by jumping among the rocks."<sup>74</sup>

In both accounts, Hamblin brings some of the Indians back to Tooele. According to the autobiography, "We brought them home with us gave them p[r]ovisions blankets and treated them k[i]ndley."<sup>75</sup> According to Little, Hamblin assured the frightened Indians that that they would be safe. However, in Tooele, "my superior officer"—either John Rowberry or Phineas Wright—"ignored the promise of safety I had given the Indians, and decided to have them shot." Hamblin announced that he "did not care to live" if he saw the Indians whose safety he had guaranteed "murdered, and as it made but little difference with me, if there were any shot I should be the first. At the same time I placed myself in front of the Indians." Rowberry or Wright backed down, and the Indians were freed.<sup>76</sup> Only Little, in Hamblin's later autobiography, reports this specific incident. One argument for accepting it as reliable is that Mormons then had a policy of executing Indian captives, as the Porter Rockwell incident shows.<sup>77</sup>

Hamblin went on to confess that he came to doubt his non-violent attitude toward the Indians. "From the feelings manifested by the Bishop [Rowberry] and the people generally, I thought that I might possibly be mistaken in the whole affair," he wrote. "The people had long suffered from the depredations of these Indians, and they might be readily excused for their exasperated feelings, but, right or wrong, a different feeling actuated me."<sup>78</sup> Rowberry, in addition to his ecclesiastical office, was a major in the territorial militia.<sup>79</sup> Phineas Wright, Hamblin's direct military superior, was Rowberry's first counselor. From Missouri onward, Mormon

militarism was closely tied to ecclesiastical leadership. Hamblin's autobiography adds, "The manner we had tretd the Lamanites that we had taken prisoners had good influence in that trib[e]. In three months from that time the hole tribe came in and wanted to liv with us and be brothers promiceing to s[t]eel nomore."<sup>80</sup>

This incident shows Hamblin beginning to turn away from the psychology of the Indian fighter for whom Indian deaths are seen as military trophies. Hamblin's sensitivity to the terrified Goshute children seems to have forcibly struck him with their shared humanity. All of these incidents, as well as the actual brutal killings of Goshutes that Hamblin may have witnessed, were steps toward the confrontation with a Goshute on March 13, 1852.

### **Encounter in the Mountains**

Four substantive accounts exist of this confrontation. The most contemporary is a military report written by Captain Phineas Wright, Hamblin's immediate military superior, on March 15, 1852, the last day of the three-day expedition.<sup>81</sup> Since Wright was not part of the expedition, he probably obtained the details from Hamblin. Hamblin tells the story in his holograph autobiography, and Little also includes it.<sup>82</sup> The fourth account is the autobiography of Thomas Atkin Jr.,<sup>83</sup> which may be less reliable than the others. Atkin seems to write as an eyewitness, but he is not listed in the military record mentioned above, although his older brother George is. Either Thomas went on the expedition but was not listed by mistake—Wright may have mistakenly listed George instead of Thomas—or Thomas described the expedition as he heard it from George and others, secondhand.

All of these narratives differ somewhat in purpose and sometimes in details. Both Wright's and Atkin's accounts emphasize military aspects of the incident, while Hamblin's autobiography and Little's account have a more religious focus. I will use the contemporary military report as the main framework, referring to the other accounts when appropriate.

Wright's military report begins: "March the 12th we received an express from Grants vill that the Gosutes Indians were in the Tooile vally fresh tracks being seen also being told by the Indian that lives at Grants ville."<sup>84</sup> These Indians were identified as "a portion of the same band [who] came again to steel cattle."<sup>85</sup>

This time, according to Little, Rowberry specifically ordered Hamblin “to take another company of men, go after the Indians, to shoot all we found, and bring no more into the settlement.”<sup>86</sup> The particularity of these orders shows that Rowberry was probably still angered by Hamblin’s taking prisoners and intervening to stop their killing in the previous expedition.

The military report lists the twelve Mormon members of the expedition, not including a friendly Indian, Jack, who accompanied them. Its leader was Jacob Hamblin, “3 Lieut.” Other participants included Jacob’s brother, Oscar; twenty-two-year-old Dudley Leavitt, whose sister, Priscilla, would marry Hamblin in 1857; Ensign Riggs, also twenty-two, who had recently married Jacob’s sister, Adeline, and who later moved to Santa Clara in southern Utah; Cyrus Tolman, one of Tooele’s founders; English convert George Atkin, another Tooele stalwart; and Harrison Severe of Grantsville.

The company set out at midnight.<sup>87</sup> According to Atkin, they came to Grantsville, “refreshed ourselves and horses,” and set out again before daylight.<sup>88</sup> At dawn they found the Indians’ trail and followed it about ten miles.<sup>89</sup> Little reports that the tracks came down to the valley, but then turned back when snow made thievery impossible.<sup>90</sup> Then the Mormon posse found a large cache of roots that the Indians had buried, and Jack told Hamblin that the Indians would be found at the next water hole.<sup>91</sup>

At about 10:00 A.M., the Mormons “came upon the Indians 6 in number camped on the side of the mountain.”<sup>92</sup> Wright places this camp eighteen miles west of Grantsville, on the east side of the Stansbury Mountains. However, Little identifies it as farther north, “near a large mountain between Tooele and Skull Valleys” while Atkin recalls it as near ‘the north point of the stansbury range of mountains.’

Wright continues: “The company [of Mormons] [was] discovered by there [their, that is, the Indians’] sentinel in about half a mile before reaching the camp which gave the Indians a chance to scater on the mountain before our men could git to them or Break off[f] there Retreat.”<sup>93</sup> The autobiography adds that they were drying themselves by a fire when “we came upon them soudently. They left their legins mogisons and fled among the rocks.”<sup>94</sup>

Hamblin apparently divided his company to pursue the scattering Goshutes and keep them from reaching the mountains.<sup>95</sup>

Jack opened fire on one Indian, who “was skulking behind some rocks” but missed, and the hostile Indian “sprung after Jack with a volley of arrows.”<sup>96</sup> Jack ran toward Hamblin, who had hidden “behind a rock in a narrow pass.”<sup>97</sup> Then when the two men were about 25 feet apart, the pursuing Goshute saw Hamblin taking aim at him.<sup>98</sup>

“As I raised my gun to fire the poor fellow begged for mercy,” Hamblin wrote in his autobiography. He was obviously offering to surrender, but Hamblin, under strict orders from Rowberry, “thought it would be a neglect of duty if I let him pass.” Hamblin pulled the trigger—“but my gun mist fire.”<sup>99</sup> Hamblin’s “cap lock” gun could not be reloaded quickly,<sup>100</sup> and the Goshute, convinced his life was in danger, “as quick as thought . . . threw an arrow at me but fortunately it struck the guard of my gun.” Both men sprang for a stone that lay between them. Hamblin, strong and six foot two, wrested it free. The Goshute leaped backward, then shot three more arrows at Hamblin: one pierced his hat, another whizzed by his head, and still another penetrated Hamblin’s coat but missed his body.<sup>101</sup> He hurled the stone at the Indian, hitting him in the chest. As the Goshute reeled backward, Hamblin reloaded and “burnt two more caps at him but my gun would not go, and so he past by.”<sup>102</sup>

Hamblin returned to his company and found that “several of the company had fair shots lost by but their guns mist fire.”<sup>103</sup> The only white casualty was a slight arrow wound to a single man.<sup>104</sup> “We felt vexed at our first of all our ill success as we killed none of them,”<sup>105</sup> wrote Hamblin, reflecting the military perspective. Similarly, Wright’s report summarizes: “However the rest of the company were Blasting away at them the Best they could and some of the Indians was Badly wounded so supposed by the Blood on the rocks as they followed them some 5 miles. In there flight they left there moccasins all but one and took there flight Barefooted.”<sup>106</sup> Either Wright wanted to emphasize a degree of military success (wounding some of the Indians), or if he was following Hamblin’s details, Jacob had not yet taken a religious view of the expedition.

However, according to Hamblin’s autobiography, he and his

men soon saw divine intercession in their lack of military success: "We ~~finly~~ concluded it was all wri<sup>ght</sup> that the Lord had youse [use] for them so we returnd home."<sup>107</sup> In subsequent weeks, months, and years, Hamblin's convictions deepened, causing him to revise his sense of mission with regard to Utah's Indians. In the *Little* autobiography, published in 1881, Hamblin writes:

In my subsequent reflections, it appeared evident to me that a special providence had been over us, in this and the two previous expeditions, to prevent us from shedding the blood of the Indians. The Holy Spirit forcibly impressed me that it was not my calling to shed the blood of the scattered remnant of Israel [Americans Indians], but to be a messenger of peace to them. It was also made manifest to me that if I would not thirst for their blood, I should never fall by their hands. The most of the men who went on this last expedition, also received an impression that it was wrong to kill these Indians.<sup>108</sup>

This miraculous "guarantee" of safety, contingent on his own peaceful intentions, became a significant psychological support for Hamblin in his future relations with all Native Americans.

### Conclusion

How soon after the actual confrontation in the mountains did Hamblin's "conversion" to nonviolence take place? Did he receive the realization that he should not kill Indians quite soon after the incident, or did it take months or years to crystallize? The "conversion" is first explicitly attested in *Little*, the 1881 version of Hamblin's autobiography. But the autobiography, written after 1854, possibly some twenty to thirty years earlier than *Little*, contains a suggestion of the conversion.

However, in *Little*, the next incident recounted suggests that Hamblin was not immediately fully converted. He had one more brush with danger in Tooele, in which he tried to kill, and was nearly killed by, an Indian named "Big Foot." This story is found only in *Little*.<sup>109</sup> Once again, Hamblin was part of an expedition (he calls it the "fourth" expedition) that surprised a camp of Goshutes in the mountains. Once again, he witnessed the Indian women and children fleeing in terror, cutting their feet on rocks and leaving trails of blood. And again, this piteous sight moved

him to work with Indians “in a different way,” not through military reprisal and massacre.

However, when he saw the tracks of the Indian leader “Big Foot,” he felt that this was a very dangerous Indian who perhaps “deserved killing.” As he followed the trail through the snow along high ridges, he came to a cedar with low foliage, but instead of investigating it, “a feeling came over me not to go near it.” After he ascended a steep hill and could look back at the tree, he saw that “no trail had passed on.” He circled around to get the Indian in sight, “but he in some way slipped off unobserved.” Later, Hamblin came to know Big Foot personally, and the Indian told him that if he had walked up to the cedar tree, he would have put an arrow in Hamblin “up to the feather.” Again, Hamblin felt that a divine providence kept him from shedding the blood of an Indian, and from being killed. “I thanked the Lord, as I often felt to do, for the revelations of His Spirit,” wrote Hamblin.<sup>110</sup> Thus, it is probable that Hamblin’s non-violence crystallized in the months or years following the incident in the mountains in which his gun would not shoot, not immediately after it.<sup>111</sup>

While Hamblin’s miraculous safety among Indians cannot be proven historically or scientifically, he himself deeply believed in it. That conviction accounts for his willingness to go on many expeditions, often alone, among hostile natives, far from the safety of white settlements. In his own view, he was not risking his life. Hamblin relied on this “promise” that he would not die at the hands of Indians when visiting infuriated Navajos in 1874.<sup>112</sup> Martha Cragun Cox, a woman who knew him when she was a child, mentioned to him that two brothers who had gone with him on the mission to the Navajos had said that a “braver man never lived, than Jacob Hamblin”; but according to her, Hamblin strongly denied this characterization, saying: “I had the assurance from the Holy Spirit—a promise given direct from the heavens that so long as I did not desire to shed the blood of the Lamanite or did not shed the blood of any, my blood should not be shed by them. It was not so hard for me to be brave when I knew they could not kill me.”<sup>113</sup>

Hamblin’s conversion to nonviolence is all the more remarkable given its setting in a period when Mormons tended to deal harshly with Indians—during the time of Howard Christy’s

“mailed fist,” when some Mormons carried out punitive raids on Indians and executed Indian prisoners. It is worth noting that Hamblin’s nonviolent feelings and reluctance to kill put him in explicit rebellion against his local military and ecclesiastical leaders, John Rowberry and Phineas Wright. The misfiring of Hamblin’s gun, Hamblin’s interpretation of the incident as an explicit promise of protection, and his conversion to pacifism, present a stark contrast to other Mormons’ willingness to employ harsh militaristic solutions while confronting the vast culture gap that yawned between white and Indian in early Utah.

Furthermore, although this confrontation was a conversion experience of sorts for Hamblin, he had demonstrated sympathy for Indians in military expeditions before this one. Thus, the conversion was a culmination rather than a complete about-face. Nevertheless, his feelings of doubt about his own nonviolence, due to criticism from his military-ecclesiastical leaders, show that he was conflicted on the issue before the conversion.

Hamblin’s future interactions with Utah’s Indians would partake of all the tragic ambiguities of the broader story of Mormon dealings with Indians.<sup>114</sup> His chief loyalty was to Brigham Young, the great colonizer, who sought to populate the intermountain West with his Zion-seeking people. Granted, Young developed moderate policies toward Utah’s Indians compared to many other Western leaders. Still, he directed Mormon settling efforts that appropriated Indian homelands and water resources and, as inevitable side effects, disrupted Indian ecosystems. Nevertheless, Hamblin’s efforts to avoid bloodshed and use diplomacy in Mormon-Indian relations probably saved many lives and possibly avoided massacres of Indians in southern Utah and Arizona.

### Notes

1. James Little, ed., *Jacob Hamblin, A Narrative of His Personal Experience, as a Frontiersman, Missionary to the Indians and Explorer* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1881), 28; see also Hamblin, “Autobiography,” holograph, after 1854, MS 1951, fd. 2, Historical Department Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church History Library). For this and other similar documents, I have added terminal punctuation and initial capitals where necessary.

2. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 28.

3. For example, see Parley P. Pratt, quoted in Juanita Brooks, ed., *Journal of the Southern Indian Mission: Diary of Thomas D. Brown*, Western Text Society, No. 4 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1973), 34–35, May 21, 1854: “They [the Indians] have suffered hell enough here and this for generations because of the rebellion of their fathers . . . abuse & suffering has followed their rejection of the Priesthood, and such will ever be the reward of them that follow a similar course & it will be on their children after them.” Mormons sometimes associated Indians with the Gadian-ton robbers, a “secret combination,” in the Book of Mormon—close to the outer limits for wickedness in Book of Mormon terms. See W. Paul Reeve, *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2006), 102–4.

4. Howard A. Christy, “Open Hand and Mailed Fist: Mormon-Indian Relations in Utah, 1847–52,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Summer 1978): 235.

5. For positive views of Brigham Young and the Utah Indians, see Dale Morgan, “The Administration of Indian Affairs in Utah, 1851–1858,” *Pacific Historical Review* 17 (November 1948): 383–409; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 145–60; Juanita Brooks, “Indian Relations on the Mormon Frontier,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 12 (1944): 1–48; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah: 1540–1886* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1889), 471; Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons Co., 1892), 1:425. Young’s maxim is quoted in Brooks, “Indian Relations,” 4, and Whitney, *History of Utah*, 1:425.

6. I am speaking specifically of massacres, such as the Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado in 1864, distinguishing massacres from actual battles or wars, though sometimes it is difficult to draw a clear line between the two. Many women and children were killed in the Sand Creek Massacre, which had virtually no military purpose. Nevertheless, Mormons often were guilty of unduly punitive expeditions against Indians or unwarranted executions of Indians. Mormon military actions against the Utes in Utah County in 1849 and 1850 are a good example. See Christy, “Open Hand and Mailed Fist,” 221–25.

7. John Alton Peterson, *Utah’s Black Hawk War* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 7.

8. Christy, “Open Hand and Mailed Fist,” 217–35. In the same camp are Floyd A. O’Neil and Stanford J. Layton, “Of Pride and Politics: Brigham Young as Indian Superintendent,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Summer 1978): 237–50; and Howard A. Christy, “‘What Virtue There Is in Stone’ and Other Pungent Talk on the Early Utah Frontier,” *Utah His-*

*torical Quarterly* 59 (Summer 1991): 301–19. John Alton Peterson gives Young a mixed review; see *Utah's Black Hawk War*, 7, 12–13, 69–70, 383–86.

9. Ronald W. Walker, "Toward a Reconstruction of Mormon and Indian Relations, 1847–1877," *BYU Studies* 29 (Fall 1989): 21–42.

10. O'Neil and Layton, "Of Pride and Politics," 237.

11. Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, 1839–77 (CR 100 318), January 31, 1850, in Richard E. Turley Jr., ed., *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols., DVD (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 1:18; hereafter cited as *Selected Collections*. See also Church Historian's Office. History of the Church, 1839–ca. 1882 (CR 100 102), January 31, 1850, in *Selected Collections*, Vol. 1, DVD 2, and the discussion in Christy, "Open Hand and Mailed Fist," 224.

12. Brigham Young to Daniel H. Wells, February 14, 1850, Utah State Archives, Territorial Militia Records, 1849–77, Series 2210 (hereafter Territorial Militia Records), No. 1312; see also discussion in Christy, "Open Hand and Mailed Fist," 224 note 30. For the rhetoric of extermination in white-Indian relations, see Clifford E. Trafzer and Joel R. Hyer, eds., *Exterminate Them: Written Accounts of the Murder, Rape, and Slavery of Native Americans during the California Gold Rush, 1848–1868* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999); Peterson, *Utah's Black Hawk War*, 383. Peterson also comments on the tragic irony of "extermination," since the Saints had been driven from Missouri under an extermination order.

13. Howard Stansbury, November 6, 1849, diary entry in his *Exploration and Survey of the Valley of Great Salt Lake of Utah, including a Reconnaissance of a New Route through the Rocky Mountains* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1852), 118.

14. "Memoirs of George A. Smith," July 27, 1847, in George A. Smith Papers, 1834–1875 (MS 1322), Box 1, fd. 2, *Selected Collections*, 1:32.

15. Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (a chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), July 17, 1849. The Journal History is available in *Selected Collections*, volume 2.

16. Quoted in George W. Tripp, "Tooele's First Four Years 1849–1853," in Orrin P. Miller, *History of Tooele County*, 2 vols. (Tooele, Utah: Tooele Transcript Bulletin, 1990), 2:78.

17. Janet Anderson and Ella Brown, "Stansbury Mountain Canyon—Grantsville Division," in Kate Carter, comp., *Treasures of Pioneer*

*History*, 6 vols (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1952–57), 6:479; see also *Journal History*, February 27, 1849.

18. Andrew Jenson, comp., “Tooele Stake History,” 3, LDS Church Library; (no author), “Mormon Colonization in the West,” in Kate Carter, comp., *Heart Throbs of the West*, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1939–51), 3:283.

19. Allan Kent Powell, “Cowboys and the Cattle Industry,” “Utah History to Go,” [http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah\\_chapters/pioneers\\_and\\_cowboys/cowboysandthecattleindustry.html](http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/pioneers_and_cowboys/cowboysandthecattleindustry.html) (accessed on October 9, 2007). See also Donald D. Walker, “The Cattle Industry of Utah, 1850–1900: An Historical Profile,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 32 (Summer 1964): 184; Charles S. Peterson, “Grazing in Utah: A Historical Perspective,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 57 (Fall 1989): 300–319.

20. Hamblin, *Autobiography*, 53–54.

21. For introductions to the Goshutes, see Dennis R. Defa, “Goshute Indians,” in Allan Kent Powell, ed., *Utah History Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 228–29; Dennis R. Defa, “The Goshute Indians of Utah,” in Forrest S. Cuch, ed., *A History of Utah’s American Indians* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Division of Indian Affairs / Utah State Division of History, 2000), 73–122; James B. Allen and Ted J. Warner, “The Gosiute Indians in Pioneer Utah,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 39 (Spring 1971): 162–77. For the Utes, see Robert S. McPherson, “Ute Indians—Southern,” in Powell, *Utah History Encyclopedia*, 609–11; Clifford Duncan, “The Northern Utes of Utah,” in Cuch, *A History of Utah’s American Indians*, 167–224.

22. Mae Parry, “The Northwestern Shoshone,” in Cuch, *A History of Utah’s American Indians*, 25–72.

23. For an introduction to the southern Paiutes, see Martha C. Knack, *Boundaries Between: The Southern Paiutes, 1775–1995* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

24. Peterson, *Utah’s Black Hawk War*, 86.

25. Robert S. MacPherson, “Setting the Stage: Native America Revisited,” in Cuch, *A History of Utah’s American Indians*, 17 note 16; Defa, “Goshute Indians,” 228.

26. Mildred Mercer Allred, ed., *History of Tooele County* (Salt Lake City: Tooele County Daughters of Utah Pioneers), 300: “The Goshiute Indians had no horses at the time the white men arrived.”

27. James H. Simpson, *Report of Explorations across the Great Basin of the Territory of Utah for a Direct Wagon-route from Camp Floyd to Genoa, in Carson Valley* (1876; rpt., Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1983), 51–52, entry of May 8, 1859.

28. *Ibid.*, May 9, 1859, 52.

29. Brigham D. Madsen, "Shoshoni Indians (Northwestern Bands)," in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, 497–98. See also Peterson, *Utah's Black Hawk War*, 84 note 17.

30. Madsen, "Shoshoni Indians," 497.

31. George W. Tripp, "Tooele Indians," in Miller, *History of Tooele County*, 2:82; Simpson, *Report of Explorations*, May 9, 1859, 54.

32. A. M. Woodbury, "Route of Jedediah Smith in 1826 from the Great Salt Lake to the Colorado River," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 4 (1931): 45.

33. Stansbury, *Exploration and Survey*, 202–3.

34. Simpson, *Report of Explorations*, 52; see also Miller, *History of Tooele County*, 2:49. These were Goshutes living near the present Utah-Nevada state line.

35. Simpson, *Report of Explorations*, May 9, 1859, 52.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., 54.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., 53.

40. Defa, "The Goshute Indians of Utah," 97.

41. Jacob Hamblin acknowledged this fact. Jacob Hamblin, Letter to Brigham Young, September 19, 1873, Brigham Young Collection, CR 1234, LDS Church Library; Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 87–88.

42. Article from *Tooele Transcript*, January 30 and February 6, 1903, quoted in Jenson, "Tooele Stake History," 12–14.

43. Garland Hurt, Letter to Brigham Young, August 27, 1855, *Nevada Observer* website, <http://www.nevadaobserver.com/> (accessed October 9, 2007).

44. Tripp, "Tooele Indians," 82.

45. Ibid.

46. Journal History, February 27, 1849; Tripp, "Tooele's First Four Years," 71–72.

47. Jenson, "Tooele Stake History," 9.

48. "Valley Journal," *Deseret News*, February 22, 1851, 6; Journal History, February 11, 19, 25, 27, 1851. See also George D. Grant, Letter [to Daniel H. Wells], February 22, 1851, Territorial Militia Records, No. 1324.

49. Phineas Wright, Letter to Daniel H. Wells, March 19, 1851, Territorial Militia Records, No. 107. For Wright, see Tripp, "Tooele's First Four Years," 71–74; Edward W. Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories, Vol. 2: Containing the History of All the Northern, Eastern, and Western Counties of Utah; also the Counties of Southern Idaho* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor, 1889), 86. Wells had been elected major-general of the Utah Nauvoo

Legion in 1849 and was promoted to lieutenant-general in 1852. His military leadership was criticized as unnecessarily harsh at times, but Mormons viewed him as a hero. In 1857 he became a counselor in Brigham Young's First Presidency. Bryant Hinckley, *Daniel Hanmer Wells and Events of His Time* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1942).

50. "[Auto]Biography of James McBride, 1818-1881," written in 1874, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections).

51. Hamblin, *Autobiography*, 54-55.

52. Rockwell's report to Brigham Young, *Journal History*, mistakenly placed at April 23, 1850 (it should be 1851). See also Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844-1861*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society/University of Utah Press, 1964), 2:398, April 28, 1851; "Indian Depredations," *Deseret News*, May 3, 1851, 4; Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories*, 2:83; Harold Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 193-96.

53. Daniel H. Wells, Letter to Phineas Wright, April 21, 1851, Territorial Militia Records, No. 111; Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell*, 193-96.

54. Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories*, 2:83; Hamblin, *Autobiography*, 54-55; *Journal History*, April 22, 1851 ("some thirty Utah Indians"); and W. R. Dickinson, Letter to "folkes," May 29, 1851, typescript, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City ("Utaw indeans").

55. See Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories*, 2:83: The Mormons "followed them [the horse-thieves], as they supposed, to the west side of Rush Lake, but evidently mistook the route the marauders had taken. However, they there found a band of Indians with their families, took them prisoners and started for Tooele, but without disarming the men." If they "mistook the route" of the marauders, the "band of Indians with their families" would have been the wrong Indians.

56. Orrin Porter Rockwell, report to Brigham Young, April 23, 1851.

57. Dickinson, Letter to "folkes," May 29, 1851; discussed in Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell*, 195. *Journal History*, April 22, 1851, also records that Custer shot first.

58. Mary Ann Weston Maughan, "Autobiography and Journal," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 2:381. Tooele historian John Bevan gives another variant of the death, quoted in Tripp, "Tooele Indians," 83. As he tells it, Custer (misnamed "Orsen Baffet") fell asleep in his saddle, then Indians stole his gun and shot him. Both of these late accounts conflict with the much earlier and more first-hand Dickinson account, and with the *Journal History*.

59. Rockwell, Report to Young, April 23, 1851, and the Journal History report four captives; Hamblin, Tullidge, and Stout report five.

60. Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories*, 2:84; see also Christy, "What Virtue There Is in Stone," 305 note 11. This execution is understandably omitted from some retellings of the story, but the Hamblin autobiography supports it.

61. Special Orders No. 10, February 9, 1850, in Territorial Militia Records, emphasis Wells's; see commentary in Christy, "What Virtue There Is in Stone," 304.

62. Hamblin, Autobiography, 55.

63. Esaias Edwards, Autobiography, 35, written before 1897, holograph, Perry Special Collections.

64. Hamblin, Autobiography, 55–56.

65. Daniel H. Wells, Letter to William McBride, June 13, 1851, Territorial Militia Records, No. 120; William McBride, Letter to Daniel H. Wells, June 19, 1851, Territorial Militia Records, No. 1327; Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories*, 2:84.

66. Daniel H. Wells, Letter to William McBride, June 20, 1851, Territorial Militia Records, No. 126; William McBride, Letter to Daniel H. Wells, June 24, 1851, Territorial Militia Records, No. 1328.

67. William McBride, Letter to Daniel H. Wells, June 24, 1851, Territorial Militia Records, No. 1328.

68. Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 110, argues that the tone is serious and that Mormons did poison some Indians' wells and meat.

69. William McBride, "Minutes of the Campaign against the Hostile Indians in June 1851," 4, Territorial Militia Records, No. 1326. The *Deseret News*, as quoted in Allred, *History of Tooele County*, 217, gives the death count as eleven. Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories*, 2:84, has nine. Esaias Edwards, Autobiography, 35, has "about ten." According to Richard Warburton, "When the body of men came up there was some shooting done and about 8 Indians made good," including the baby's mother. Richard Warburton, *Reminiscences*, 1907, typescript, 3, in "Tooele Histories," MS 8326, LDS Church Library.

70. Warburton, *Reminiscences*, 3.

71. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 26.

72. "The following winter I asked for a company of men to make another effort to hunt up the Indians." Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 27.

73. Hamblin, Autobiography, 56–58.

74. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 27.

75. Hamblin, Autobiography, 58.

76. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 27. Something similar happened to Hamblin's future brother-in-law, Dudley Leavitt. According to Juanita Brooks, *On the Ragged Edge: The Life and Times of Dudley Leavitt* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1973), 46-47, 53, the young man brought an Indian prisoner to Tooele and refused to allow him to be shot. Brigham Young, contacted by letter (or dispatch), "told them to feed the Indian and let him go." This episode shows the moderate side of Brigham Young.

77. See also Christy, "Open Hand and Mailed Fist," 225.

78. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 27-28. John Rowberry was actually the branch president; Tooele Ward had not yet been organized. Myrl H. Porter, "Tooele County," in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 10:45.

79. Daniel H. Wells and James Ferguson, Letter to Officers of the Nauvoo Legion, August 1, 1857, quoted in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 14:361-62.

80. Hamblin, Autobiography, 60-61.

81. Captain Phineas Wright, Military report to James Ferguson, Adjutant General, Salt Lake City, March 15, 1852, Territorial Militia Records, No. 1332. I am indebted to Will Bagley for alerting me to this source. Ferguson was another Mormon Battalion veteran.

82. Hamblin, Autobiography, 58-61; Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 28-29.

83. "[Auto]Biography of Thomas Atkin," 29-30, photocopy of holograph, before 1919, Perry Special Collections.

84. Wright, Military report, March 15, 1852.

85. Hamblin, Autobiography, 58.

86. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 28.

87. Wright, Military report, March 15, 1852.

88. Atkin, Autobiography, 29-30.

89. Hamblin, Autobiography, 58-59.

90. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 28.

91. Hamblin, Autobiography, 58-59.

92. Wright, Military report, March 15, 1852.

93. Ibid.

94. Hamblin, Autobiography, 59.

95. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 28.

96. Wright, Military report, March 15, 1852.

97. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 28.

98. Wright, Military report, March 15, 1852.

99. Hamblin, Autobiography, 59.

100. The cap, which would be set off by the hammer, contained the priming charge that would explode and set off the gunpowder in the

barrel. Charles Edward Chapel, *Guns of the Old West* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1961), 83, 69–71.

101. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 28.

102. Hamblin, Autobiography, 59–60. Wright, Military report, March 15, 1852, describes the confrontation thus: “Jack runing towards Lieut Hamblin who was watching the movements and Leveled at his Brest on the aproch of the Indian which did not see Hamblin untill he got within 25 ft of of him. When Hamblins gun mised fire the Indian then Directed his arrows at him and kept comeing closter at which Hamblin gathered a rock and hit the Indian full drive in the Brest which made him turn on his heels and run. This gave Hamblin time to put on another cap on his gun and fire at him on the run but his cap Busted the second time and the Indian got away.” Atkin attributes the misfires to the damp weather, not to defective caps.

103. Hamblin, Autobiography, 60.

104. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 28.

105. Hamblin, Autobiography, 60.

106. Wright, Military report, March 15, 1852. Atkins, Autobiography, 29–30, also emphasized the military success: “Our short expedition checked their depredations for a while.”

107. Hamblin, Autobiography, 60.

108. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 28.

109. Ibid., 29.

110. Ibid.

111. Hamblin’s later experiences in southern Utah obviously shaped his attitudes toward the Native Americans further, but this article necessarily focuses on Hamblin in Tooele.

112. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 119.

113. “Biographical Sketch of Martha Cox,” 103, finished in 1928, photocopy of holograph, Perry Special Collections.

114. Despite Hamblin’s status as a folk hero among Mormons, he was human and had limitations, as some historians have acknowledged. For example, Charles S. Peterson, “Jacob Hamblin, Apostle to the Lamanites and the Indian Mission,” *Journal of Mormon History* 2 (1975): 21–34, saw the Indian Mission (which Hamblin epitomized) as falling short of its spiritual objectives, the conversion of Indians. To compensate, Mormons emphasized the Indian Mission’s inarguable practical successes.

# “Who’s in Charge Here?”: Utah Expedition Command Ambiguity

*William P. MacKinnon*

*“We want a general to command the Utah Expedition.”*—Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott to Brevet Major General John E. Wool, January 13, 1858.

*“General Scott yields to the prayers of the Administration and has made up his mind to go to California, there to organize a campaign against Utah.”*—George Templeton Strong, Diary, January 25, 1858

*“Has it ever occurred to your Excellency that neither ignorance or imbecility, but a settled plan to defeat and confuse your administration are the motives of such conduct [by General Scott]?”*—Brevet Brigadier General William S. Harney to President James Buchanan, January 30, 1858

Many Utahns may call the Utah War of 1857–58 “Johnston’s Army,” but the U.S. Army and most historians surely do not. It seems to me that this shorthand label for the war trivializes, personalizes, and localizes it, much as the term “Seward’s Folly” was used to deride the secretary of state’s 1867 push to purchase Alaska.<sup>1</sup> By focusing on Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston—or at least on his name—this label’s users have, in effect, taken his Utah

War leadership for granted.<sup>2</sup> They should not, for Johnston was hardly the Buchanan administration's first choice for this role; and once appointed, he almost lost the command—repeatedly. What has been missing for the past 150 years, then, is an awareness that, throughout this unprecedented territorial-federal conflicts there was anything but inevitability or even clarity as to which U.S. Army officer bore overall command responsibility for the Utah Expedition and with what understandings. With the sesquicentennial commemoration of the Utah War completed and that for the related Civil War in the planning stage, the purpose of this article is to probe the character and destructive impact of this poorly understood ambiguity of command. It does so by analyzing a series of heretofore unexploited documents shedding new light on the plans and behavior of the army's most senior leaders.

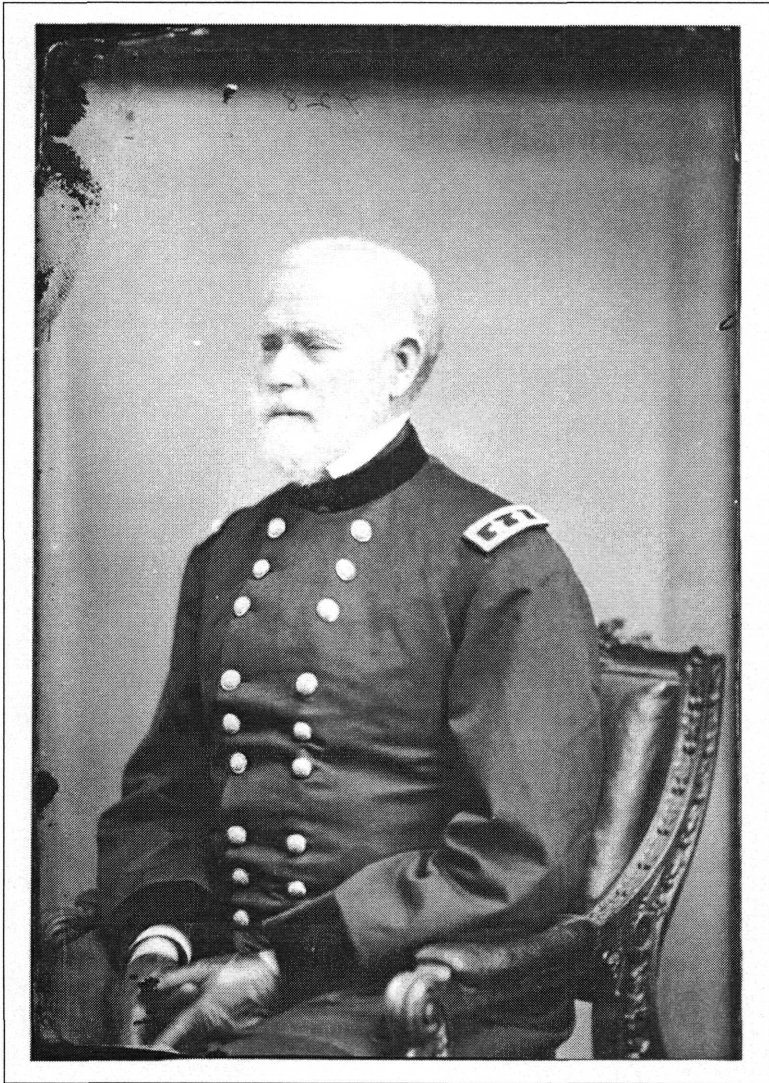
Because this was a murky, shifting command scene far different than the orderly, hierarchical atmosphere atop the army's adversary—the Nauvoo Legion—it is appropriate to start this examination with a few summary comments about the U.S. Army and the atmosphere in which its senior officers functioned. When James Buchanan assumed the presidency on March 4, 1857, he became commander in chief of an army of about 14,000 enlistees led by 1,000 officers. For a variety of reasons including the army's static size and the absence of a retirement system, its officer corps was seriously overage and underpromoted.<sup>3</sup> Compounding these problems of age and lack of advancement were additional negative forces such as sectional tensions, the chivalric code, separation from family, proximity to professional rivals, and intimacy with immigrant soldiers with whom they had little in common—even language. Importantly, many of Buchanan's military officers had severe physical or psychological problems aggravated by years of rugged, isolated frontier campaigning and an over-reliance on alcohol to relieve boredom. This dysfunction spawned what by today's standards are some very strange behaviors, characterized by an endless round of conflicts—some decades long—among hypersensitive officers jealous of their prerogatives and seniority. The result was a series of courts-martial, courts of inquiry, duels, and feuds that escalated from minor incidents and at times threatened to disrupt army operations, including those of the Utah Expedition.<sup>4</sup>



*Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott (1786–1866), the U.S. Army's general in chief. From his self-exile in New York, "Old Fuss and Feathers" resisted pressures to reinforce the Utah Expedition with Pacific Coast volunteers while trying simultaneously to promote and secretly supersede Colonel Johnston. Photograph courtesy U.S. Military Academy Library, West Point.*

Heading this hierarchy were five aged, ailing general officers and a series of secretaries of war who instead of moderating these disruptive behaviors tended to tolerate or even aggravate them by their own contentiousness and self-indulgent lack of emotional control. When Buchanan became commander in chief he inherited a general in chief in the person of a 300-pound, virtually immobile Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, age seventy, who as a twenty-four-year-old captain in 1810, had been court-martialed and suspended from duty for a year for disrespect to his commanding officer. Subsequently promoted repeatedly and self-armed with a law license, Scott became involved in one internal army fight after another that carried through the Mexican War and beyond. In March 1857 General Scott's headquarters were not in Washington, D.C., but in two rented rooms in New York, a distant location where he had moved unilaterally in a fit of pique during the late 1840s following the presidential election of his Mexican War rival, General Zachary Taylor.<sup>5</sup> By the eve of the Utah War, all of the army's general officers—influenced by both Scott's behavior and his success—had been tried by court-martial, relieved of command, or investigated by courts of inquiry at least once, as had most of the twenty line colonels who were regimental commanders.<sup>6</sup>

No better illustration can be found of the pervasiveness of disciplinary problems and the impact of negative leadership by example in the antebellum army than in the case of the Utah Expedition's swaggering Second U.S. Dragoons. For years the regiment's first commander, David E. Twiggs, and his executive officer, William S. Harney, served together—a symbiotic relationship at close quarters that spawned a military record rich with personal valor but also extraordinary legal proceedings. Proximity to this contentious behavior influenced, in turn, the command style of their next most senior subordinate, Philip St. George Cooke, who attempted unsuccessfully to court-martial alcoholic Brevet Major Henry Hopkins Sibley on the eve of the Utah War and succeeded in doing so a year later at Camp Floyd, Utah. Even as Cooke and his dragoons paused at Fort Laramie in the fall of 1857 during what would become the longest cold weather march in American military history, he pelted Secretary of War John B. Floyd with an aggressive, almost insubordinate petition, urging



*Brevet Brigadier General William S. Harney (1800–1889), Scott’s antagonist and the Utah Expedition’s first commander (1857), replaced by Albert Sidney Johnston, and even more briefly superseding him (1858). He appears here in his uniform as a major general, promoted in 1865. Mathew Brady photo, courtesy Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*

reform in the promotional system for officers in the mounted service. This document was subsequently endorsed by Generals Harney and Scott during a pause in their own long-standing vendetta.<sup>7</sup>

Given this quirky, highly uneven talent pool from which to choose, how did Buchanan and Floyd select a commander for the Utah Expedition? The number of officers with the requisite stamina, experience, judgment, rank, and availability was extremely small. The range of choice in the spring of 1857 was essentially the same narrow one available to the administration less than a year later when it contemplated a campaign against Indians in the Pacific Northwest. At that time Floyd told Buchanan, "Harney is really the only general officer—[Albert Sidney] Johnston alone excepted—who has the physical capacity to conduct such a campaign as this."<sup>8</sup> And so the Utah command fell to Harney in late May 1857 when the administration firmed up the decision to intervene in Utah with 2,500 troops drawn from the Fifth and Tenth Infantry, the Fourth Artillery, the Second Dragoons, and the Ordnance Department.<sup>9</sup>

At least four problems were associated with this narrowly based selection decision. First, Harney was temperamentally and behaviorally ill-suited for such an assignment. This volatile, sensitive mission required consummate good judgment if not diplomatic skills, but the administration selected for command a brevet brigadier general who had been court-martialed four times for various behavioral infractions and tried a fifth time in civil court for torturing and then bludgeoning to death a defenseless female slave. Small wonder that, during the plains campaigns, whites had dubbed Harney "Squaw Killer" while one Sioux chief called him "Mad Bear."<sup>10</sup> Compounding this reputational baggage was Harney's propensity to engage in bellicose, loose talk, including his boast that he intended to winter in Salt Lake City after summarily hanging the principal Mormon leaders.<sup>11</sup> Here was the source of corrosive garrison banter that cascaded down into the ranks while at the same time traveling west to stiffen needlessly Brigham Young's resolve that Harney and the Utah Expedition should not cross the Continental Divide into Utah.<sup>12</sup>

The second problem with Harney's selection was that Buchanan had already promised Robert J. Walker, the new governor

of Kansas Territory, that Harney and his Second Dragoons would be available to Walker to maintain order in strife-torn (“bleeding”) Kansas. How Buchanan thought that he could juggle both missions for Harney—1,200 miles apart—is murky. On July 12 Buchanan secretly confided to Governor Walker (but not to General Scott), “General Harney has been selected to command the expedition to Utah, but we must continue to leave him with you, at least until you are out of the woods. Kansas is vastly more important at the present moment than Utah.”<sup>13</sup>

The third complication associated with Harney’s Utah appointment was that, once made, it was not finalized and communicated for another month for political reasons, an extraordinary delay aggravating the fact that the internal army announcement on May 28 of an expeditionary force for Utah was already two months late according to the inexorable timetable of grass, weather, and distance that governed travel and preparations for warfare on the high plains and in the Rockies. Finally, on June 29, 1857, Harney’s role and crucial operational orders were confirmed and released to him.<sup>14</sup>

Permeating all of these machinations was a fourth complexity—a long vendetta between Scott and Harney that stemmed back to their clash during the Mexican War. During the summer of 1857, this Scott-Harney enmity played out in a series of acrimonious interactions in which Harney chose to deal directly with President Buchanan and Secretary Floyd to organize the Utah Expedition while a by-passed General Scott fumed in New York and pelted Harney with disapproving admonitions transmitted through his aides.<sup>15</sup>

Even as the Utah Expedition’s regiments marched west from Fort Leavenworth during the third week of July, it was unclear whether their commander, Harney, would remain in Kansas to do Governor Walker’s bidding or leave Kansas to take the field with his Utah-bound expeditionary force. Presciently, one of Harney’s young officers had informed his father in New Jersey that Walker “is an able man, I have no doubt:—but he has no conception of the task he has undertaken to perform. No Governor, not even the archangel Michael, could give satisfaction to all parties here.”<sup>16</sup> And so as the violence and chaos in Kansas escalated, Walker

clung tighter to Harney while continuing to pressure the administration for his retention.

Snares in this dilemma, for which he shared responsibility, Secretary Floyd ordered Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston to Washington from San Antonio in early August for consultations of an unspecified nature. Sensing a competitor and change in the wind, and anxious that he not miss the action and presumed glory in Utah, Harney again bypassed both Winfield Scott and Governor Walker to lobby Floyd on August 8 for his release from Kansas duty. As a rationale, Harney argued mendaciously that Kansas was under control and accurately that the Utah Expedition's subordinate leaders needed a seasoned commander:

My presence is at this time so necessary to the troops en route [to Utah]—that I am constrained to speak to you [about] . . . my early release from the service in Kansas—everything here is quiet, nor is there any probability that I shall be needed. The commanders here are discreet & well disposed to co-operate with the Government and they are equal to any emergency that can occur here—but with the troops marching on Utah it is not so—the service is new to the commanders as well as the troops, & my knowledge & experience of that country will do much towards smoothing the way upon their arrival, to a correct & proper understanding with the [Mormon] people, among whom they are to serve—I can start the 1st week in September & overtake them, having everything in readiness to do so, at a moment's notice from yourself.<sup>17</sup>

With Johnston traveling to Washington under cryptic, ambiguous orders and Harney pressing for reassignment, indecision racked the administration throughout much of the month. When Johnston arrived in Washington, D.C., around August 26, 1857, he wrote to his brother-in-law in Louisville, "I do not think it is definitely determined whether to send me in command of the Utah army or to Kansas. I am ready and more than willing for either, but prefer the former, it being a separate *command* & more permanent. Genl. Scott arrived [from New York] yesterday & I presume I will know my destination tomorrow."<sup>18</sup> On August 28, General Scott's adjutant informed Johnston that he had been selected for Utah, and the next day a general order issued by the War Department announced: "It being deemed inadvisable to detach Brevet Brigadier General Harney from service in Kansas, Colonel A. S. Johnston, Second Cavalry, is assigned to the com-



*Albert Sidney Johnston (1803–62) became the Utah Expedition's second commander as a colonel in August 1857 and, notwithstanding the ambiguous, precarious nature of his senior leadership role, was promoted retroactively to brevet brigadier general in March 1858 just before being subordinated to Generals P. F. Smith and W. S. Harney. Courtesy, Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Library.*

mand of the Utah expedition, and will proceed to join the same without delay.”<sup>19</sup>

How had Albert Sidney Johnston been selected? Because he was hardly the most senior regimental colonel in the service, Johnston’s out-of-line selection spawned army speculation that he was politically connected to President Buchanan, just as his 1855 appointment to command the new Second U.S. Cavalry had been viewed by rivals as attributable to fellow-southerner Jefferson Davis, then U.S. Secretary of War. There were varying perceptions among army officers about Johnston’s seniority and eligibility for promotion/command because of a fifteen-year gap in his U.S. Army service; he had spent that time serving the Republic of Texas as President Sam Houston’s secretary of war and as a general in the Texas army. By way of rebuttal, and probably with an eye to newspaper publication of his letter, Johnston later wrote to a friend about the Utah command:

If I were much of a favorite it would very naturally be supposed that I was personally known to the party whose patronage I am supposed to enjoy. It so happens that I have never had the opportunity to be introduced to the President, and of course have never spoken to him, and am personally unknown to him. I was called to the command of this department, I understand, at the request of the commander [general]-in-chief. The command was unsolicited by me, and not desirable on account of the inconvenience to my family and the unprotected situation in which I was obliged to leave them. The notice was sudden and unexpected; and moreover, I was sick and in need of surgical aid; the notice, however, was promptly responded to.<sup>20</sup>

By September 11 Johnston—sick or not—had arrived at Fort Leavenworth. There he was briefed by Harney and received for the first time a copy of Harney’s crucial operational orders from Scott of June 29, a document with which his regimental commanders already on the plains were surprisingly unfamiliar. There, too, Johnston first met Alfred Cumming, the newly appointed successor to Brigham Young. When Cumming declined Johnston’s invitation to travel west with him and a small, fast-moving escort of dragoons, Johnston, miffed, relegated the 400-pound Cumming to the expedition’s rear guard. The colonel pushed on urgently from Leavenworth on September 17 in an at-

tempt to catch up with his new command, but did not succeed in reaching all of it until November 3.

It is unlikely that, after the poor start to their relationship, Johnston and Cumming communicated well enough at Fort Leavenworth to recognize the fundamental conflicts in the orders each had received from the Buchanan administration. (These orders had been drafted independently a month apart by overlapping offices; Buchanan was a common member on the drafting committees in both the War and State departments.) In these disconnects lay a nightmarish operational dilemma that would later complicate the role of the Utah Expedition's commander as well as that of the governor he was expected to escort and support.<sup>21</sup>

As a result of this bizarre chain of events, the army expedition established to escort a new governor for Utah had marched out of Fort Leavenworth without him—in fact, unaware of who or where he was. Furthermore, the expedition was under the misimpression that General Harney (who was also not with them) was still its overall commander, functioning under operational orders completely unknown to the troops in the field.

Compounding these miscommunications was the unwillingness of the expedition's senior officer present—Colonel Edmund B. Alexander of the Tenth Infantry—to act as *de facto* commander on the trail. Alexander's reluctance to assume responsibility in effect rendered the expedition leaderless and consequently vulnerable to attack as its units marched west as uncoordinated regiments and batteries. On October 8 at Hams Fork west of South Pass, as his frustrated officers virtually forced him to assume *ad hoc* command, Colonel Alexander plaintively informed his subordinates: "No information of the position or intentions of the commanding officer has reached me, and I am in utter ignorance of the objects of the government in sending troops here, or the instructions for their conduct after reaching here."<sup>22</sup> When Johnston—more than a hundred miles to Alexander's rear—became aware of Alexander's comments ten days later, he testily reported to army headquarters: "Colonel Alexander questions, by the hesitation with which he assumes them, his right to exercise fully all the duties of commander. His authority to exercise them without restriction is clearly granted by the sixty-second article of war.

Moreover, General Orders No. 12, headquarters of the army, specially directs who shall command in the absence of General Harney, or, to be inferred, any other named commander [himself], and sufficiently explains the objects of the expedition.”<sup>23</sup> Three weeks earlier on October 2, Alexander had responded to a cheeky demand from Brigham Young that he leave Utah (the army was just within its northeastern boundary) or lay down his arms with a weak rebuttal and vague allusion to the expedition’s command arrangement: “I am at present the senior and commanding officer of the troops of the United States at this point, and I will submit your letter to the general commanding as soon as he arrives here.”<sup>24</sup>

The sorry spectacle that unfolded while Johnston moved west—including the shocking Lot Smith raid of October 4–5 on the expedition’s supply trains, just two days after Alexander’s feeble response—is well known and need not be rehashed here.<sup>25</sup> With Johnston on the scene at Hams Fork a full month later on November 3, a much-relieved Colonel Alexander returned to his less responsible regimental command. Finally, it was clear to the troops and their officers, if not to Brigham Young, that a mature, experienced, and determined leader was at last present and in charge. In Brigham Young’s case, although Mormon intelligence agents returning from the plains had brought him informal reports in mid-September that a Colonel “Johnson” was replacing Harney, for several more weeks until at least early October Young continued to refer to Harney as the Utah Expedition’s commander, perhaps for shock effect associated with the general’s reputation for brutality. Compounding the confusion over which officer held what command was the fact that, during the summer of 1857, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph E. Johnston, executive officer of the First U.S. Cavalry—Albert Sidney Johnston’s sister regiment—was also in the field (though in Kansas) to protect the party surveying that territory’s southern boundary.

But even as the Utah Expedition struggled up Blacks Fork in blizzards toward Fort Bridger during the first half of November, and then settled into winter quarters at that post, the War Department was initiating plans to reinforce the Utah Expedition from the Pacific Coast. These plans would call into question again the

overall leadership for the campaign—the matter of who was in charge of it.

The notion of reinforcing the Utah Expedition from California and perhaps Oregon Territory had started with Alexander and Johnston in October—before Johnston had caught up with his expedition. After the Lot Smith raid, both officers had independently sent reports east suggesting a pincers strategy featuring a thrust from the Pacific Coast. Emblematic of the U.S. Army's bifurcation at its top was the fact that Alexander sent his report and recommendations to Colonel Samuel Cooper in Washington, D.C., the adjutant general who worked in close concert with Secretary of War Floyd, while Johnston wrote to New York and Major Irvin McDowell, one of General Scott's trusted assistant adjutants.<sup>26</sup> These October reports arrived on the Atlantic Coast in mid-November at about the same time that a national alarm arose over the Utah Expedition's prospects for success. Scott tried to defuse a resulting call to attack Utah from the Pacific Coast by having his aide send Johnston's report to Floyd with the following cautionary note: "As to the expeditions from the Pacific, he [Scott] is confident the Colonel is not aware of the difficulties which would attend them,—and this part of the dispatch is not concurred in, as it is the opinion of the Genl-in-Chief that he can be reinforced earlier and far more effectually from this side."<sup>27</sup>

But Floyd rejected this caution and pushed plans for a thrust from the Pacific. On November 24—the day a Chicago newspaper described him as "worried"—he sought advice on how to prosecute the Utah War from one of Scott's senior subordinates, Brevet Major General Persifor F. Smith, commander of the Department of the West. Smith, then in Washington seeking medical treatment for an undisclosed condition, immediately responded to Floyd's question with a lengthy memo that, stunningly, recommended reinforcements for the Utah Expedition totaling 15,000 men—a force equal to the size of the entire U.S. Army. As Smith saw it, these reinforcements would move on Utah in three columns: one each from Kansas, California, and Oregon. Smith left unaddressed the important, politically volatile matter of the overall command structure for this force and how it would mesh with the already existing Utah Expedition commanded by Johnston, although he did envision the army's need for several more major

generals. That rank was far senior to Johnston's current grade as colonel.<sup>28</sup>

As word of Smith's extraordinary advice leaked into the newspapers, Harney became aware of it at Fort Leavenworth. He entered the fray immediately with a memo of his own—this one sent directly to President Buchanan, who was then attempting to determine what he would say to Congress about Utah when its members returned to Washington a week later in early December.<sup>29</sup> Harney's recommendations of November 29 were slightly more modest in scale than Smith's, but nonetheless involved an enormous force of eight to ten thousand men. Harney assumed that he would receive the overall command and wrote fawningly to Buchanan: "[My adjutant] Captain Pleasonton has told me of the kind feelings you entertain for me, and that you are disposed to entrust the command of this expedition to my judgment.—I can only now thank you for this evidence of your confidence, but I hope the result will show how earnest & sincere are my feelings of admiration, esteem & friendship for you, both personally & as the distinguished head of this great nation."<sup>30</sup>

It is unclear whether Smith and Harney shared their provocative views with Scott, their superior, or even whether the recipients—Floyd and Buchanan—did so. By December 8, when Buchanan sent both his first annual message and Floyd's first annual report to Congress, both leaders were mindful of the financial panic that had disrupted the nation's economy since late summer. Accordingly they modified Smith's and Harney's gargantuan projections to a still-substantial request for four additional regiments for the Utah War—about 4,000 men. They left unstated such crucial issues as whether these new troops for Utah would be regulars or volunteers, who their expeditionary commander would be, and whether they would reinforce the Utah Expedition, now in winter quarters at Fort Bridger, from the east or the west. Reflecting the extent to which General Scott had been subordinated, if not muzzled, by Buchanan and Floyd, his own year-end report of the army's condition and activities for 1857, submitted to Floyd incredibly failed to mention the Utah Expedition in any way, a stunning omission.<sup>31</sup>

Although Scott was opposed to both a Pacific thrust against Utah and the use of volunteer troops from California and Oregon



*Brevet Major General John E. Wool (1784–1869), commander of the Department of the East in Troy, New York, to whom Scott secretly offered command of a reinforced Utah Expedition on January 13, 1858. Courtesy, New York State Library, Albany.*

Territory, he nonetheless took seriously the need to reinforce the Utah Expedition from Kansas. By the New Year—just as Colonel Johnston was learning of Brigham Young’s dramatic plans to reinforce the Nauvoo Legion with a new “Standing Army” of one or two thousand men—Scott was preparing to act. On January 8, he informed the army that, “with the approbation of the War Department . . . the Army of Utah will be reinforced, as soon as practicable [in the spring], by the 1st Regiment of Cavalry, 6th and 7th Regiments of Infantry, and Light Companies A. and M., 2d Artillery.” Directionally, Scott’s order referred to this move as “the march of the reinforcement[s] across the plains.” He appears to have ignored the other proposals afoot: a Pacific-based movement into Utah, use of volunteer troops, and an implied change in command. A week later, the general in chief ordered troops from two more regular units to join the Utah Expedition. They came from the widely separated posts of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (Companies B and K of the Second Dragoons) and West Point, New York (Company A from the U.S. Engineers).<sup>32</sup>

But soon thereafter during the second week of January 1858, Scott’s Utah War planning took a bizarre turn. Understanding what happened, given the labyrinth of rapid changes in direction, requires close attention to the sequence of events that unfolded in Washington, Manhattan, and Troy, New York. On January 13, Scott, then briefly in Washington, sent Brevet Major General John E. Wool the following telegram: “WE WANT A GENERAL TO COMMAND THE UTAH EXPEDITION. WHAT SAY YOU OR WHO DO YOU RECOMMEND.”<sup>33</sup> Whatever prompted Scott to risk sending such a volatile message by public telegraph service must have been terribly urgent since mail, if not courier, service between Washington and Troy (better in 1858 than now) often provided overnight or, at most, two-day delivery. Intriguingly, there is no evidence that Scott’s superiors in the War Department and the White House—let alone Johnston at Camp Scott—were aware that he was making such an overture to Wool, although Scott’s temporary location in Washington and use of “we” in his wire makes it difficult to believe that he was acting unilaterally.

From Troy, General Wool replied promptly by telegram on January 15, the text of which signaled his uncertainty as to who

was behind this unexpected offer: "IF IT IS YOUR DESIRE OR THAT OF THE ADMINISTRATION I WILL WITH PLEASURE TAKE COMMAND OF THE UTAH EXPEDITION. SEE MY LETTER BY MAIL. PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT."<sup>34</sup> He followed up the same day with a letter to Scott which repeated the text of his wire and raised the inescapable matter of Albert Sidney Johnston's sensitivities—and those of even more senior officers—as well as some concerns of his own:

The command may be one of great hardship and difficult of execution. In saying this much I would not be understood to express any desire whatever to supersede the present gallant and very capable officer in command of the expedition, nor would I by any means be understood to say that Bvt. Major General Twiggs or Bvt. Maj. General Smith are not equal and perhaps more capable of executing the important duties which would devolve upon them than myself.

If it should be determined to select me for the command, it may not be improper to say that before the order is issued or before I enter upon the important duties indicated, I would be much pleased to confer with the Lieut. General on the subject. At the same time to ask for the time necessary to settle my [San Francisco] accounts with the Government. . . . These [arrearages] I would have [to arrange for them to be] cancelled before I again enter upon a distant and hazardous command.<sup>35</sup>

Scott's offer of such an assignment to Wool is puzzling. Granted, Wool was among the army's most senior officers and had known Scott since the War of 1812, although Scott's biographer observes that the two were not close friends. Furthermore Wool was seventy-three and had been recently relieved as commander of the Department of the Pacific because of acrimonious clashes with Pacific Coast governors and then-Secretary of War Jefferson Davis over the Indian campaigns of 1855–56 in Washington, Oregon, and California and his reluctance to use volunteer troops. In fact Wool's early 1857 reassignment from San Francisco to command the Department of the East, with headquarters in Troy, had been a political accommodation to save his career.<sup>36</sup> These background factors made the possibility of a Utah War assignment for Wool truly mystifying.

From a twenty-first century perspective, Scott's telegram—implying an arrangement to supersede Albert Sidney Johnston with a controversial and over-age officer—would ordinarily suggest

deep anxieties about Johnston's competence plus serious concerns over some combination of the growing complexity of the Utah Expedition's next organizational phase and/or the lack of other available talent of appropriate rank for such a difficult assignment. In view of Scott's well-known respect for Johnston, it is highly unlikely that his proffer of the Utah command to Wool reflected a negative view of Johnston's capabilities. On the contrary, on January 19, 1858, one of Scott's assistant adjutants general, Major Irvin McDowell, sent Johnston a private note leaking the news that the general in chief would soon seek Johnston's promotion to brevet brigadier general.<sup>37</sup>

On January 23, 1858, a week after the first exchange of messages between Scott and Wool, Wool sent Scott another memorandum dealing with the Utah campaign.<sup>38</sup> Strangely, it lacked any hint that Wool had been offered and tentatively accepted a major role in the Utah War. It was as though both generals had agreed to ignore Scott's invitation and Wool's sympatico answer. Thus, Scott's proposal that Wool should command a Utah campaign, expanded in both size and scope, died a quick and quiet death. The paper trail shedding light on this affair ends with Wool's puzzlingly detached January 23 letter to Scott, and neither leaked documents nor contemporaneous newspaper speculation dealing with the Utah campaign offer further illumination.

With Wool no longer a prospect for higher command and Johnston not yet nominated to be a brigadier, Scott resolved to go west himself. On January 23, 1858—ten days after Scott had broached the Wool gambit and the same day that Wool wrote his second Utah War memorandum—Scott's aide abruptly wrote to Johnston: "The General-in-chief himself, will set sail for the Pacific Coast, in the steamer of the 5th proximo [February], clothed with full powers for an effective diversion or cooperation, in your favor, from that quarter. It is not desired, however, that this information shall modify the instructions heretofore given you, in any degree, or delay your movements."<sup>39</sup> It was a remarkable announcement, given Scott's age, medical problems, and general immobility. As recently as September, Scott had told Wool that he did not anticipate a period of sufficiently robust health in the foreseeable future to permit traveling the mere one hundred

miles up the Hudson River by rail or steamer to visit Wool's department headquarters in Troy, New York.<sup>40</sup>

Almost certainly, Scott was responding to Floyd's prodding. Evidence for this conclusion comes from the January 25 diary entry of Manhattan lawyer George Templeton Strong, one of the town's inveterate gossips whose information came indirectly from the general's daughter and her husband, Scott's aide de camp. To Strong, such a journey was a virtual death sentence for the aging, ailing General Scott: "General Scott yields to the prayers of the Administration and has made up his mind to go to California, there to organize a campaign against Utah. So his daughter . . . reports to Murray Hoffman. The General is a grand old fellow, too old for the fatigue and exposure of such an expedition. It's not likely he will ever return. We must get up a graven image of him on the other side of Union Square to balance Colonel Jem Lee's copper Washington."<sup>41</sup>

No doubt aware of Scott's plans, and plagued by his own ambition, Harney wrote emotionally to Buchanan from Fort Leavenworth, criticizing Scott's leadership and loyalty in terms that were both insubordinate and ruthless. Although Harney never mentioned Albert Sidney Johnston by name, his transparent self-promotion was loaded with negative implications for both Johnston's future command responsibilities and Scott's:

I believe your Excellency has confidence in the sincerity of my friendship, and in this belief, I deem it my duty to state some facts which you should be advised of. This I would have done last summer, but a desire not to annoy, if possible, restrained me from so doing.

An ill-will of long standing towards myself on the part of Gen. Scott, has caused him to attempt, upon every occasion, he could turn to his purpose, to defeat any operation with which I have been charged—at the same time, his orders are studied to mortify and lower me in the estimation of the army and my friends in civil life—Personally, I care nothing for this, but as the interests with which I have been lately charged, are of the utmost importance to the successful administration of the affairs of the country, and as Gen. Scott[']s prejudices have always been too strong for an impartial consideration of any subject in which his prejudices are involved, I most earnestly call your Excellency[']s attention to Gen Scott[']s course of conduct since the commencement of your administration.

...

From the commencement of the Utah Expedition, to the present time, he has opposed or ignored every useful suggestion I have made to him and his own plans are so faulty, I assume very little, in predicting a decided failure, should they be attempted to be carried out.

He is sending Cavalry to act in a mountainous country where the expense of supporting them render their efficiency an impossibility, and places a fine Regt of foot troops in depot on the plains, to be laughed at by mounted Indians.<sup>12</sup>

Has it ever occurred to your Excellency that neither ignorance or imbecility, but a settled plan to defeat and confuse your administration are the motives of such conduct?

Whoever you may be pleased to send to Utah, let him throw his reputation and his life upon the die, but give him the sole responsibility of his actions. The campaign to Utah cannot be planned in Washington or New York— . . .

Your Excellency is very popular in the army and it is due to the feeling that your rectitude of character will not permit injustice to be done to any one—

Persons in exalted positions, seldom hear the unvarnished truth.

I have spoken plainly to your Excellency—my sincere desire is to serve you to the best of my humble abilities, & not the least of this service is to tell you of your true friends, & to point out the disagreeable ones.<sup>13</sup>

Less than a week after Harney wrote this remarkable letter to the president, Scott cancelled his travel plans. On February 4, the literal eve of Scott's earlier announced departure for the West, his aide wrote to Johnston: "I am desired by the General-in-Chief to inform you that it is no longer probable that he will go to the Pacific Coast, or that any expedition against or towards Utah will be despatched from that quarter."<sup>44</sup> There was no further explanation of this change.

John M. Bernhisel, Utah Territory's delegate in Congress, reported in mid-February to Brigham Young but was equally terse and unenlightening about these machinations. After noting that "I have had several interviews with the President and Secretary of War, and have been for sometime laboring [unsuccessfully] to procure an amicable adjustment of the Utah difficulties," Bernhisel commented without elaboration, "The order for General Scott to proceed to California has been rescinded. . . . It is proposed to re-inforce Colonel Johnston as early in the Spring as

possible.” Brigham Young received this report without asking Bernhisel for further explanation, an uncharacteristic lack of curiosity. He responded cryptically, “We have our eyes on the Russian possessions,” a comment that has prompted historians to debate whether Young was seriously considering a mass Mormon exodus to what is now Alaska.<sup>45</sup>

Unaware that a move on Utah from the west had been scrapped and that Scott had cancelled his trip, Captain P.G.T. Beauregard, an army engineer, wrote from New Orleans to fellow-Louisianian U.S. Senator John Slidell in Washington, D.C., to ridicule the notion of a thrust from the Pacific. Although silent on the subject of command and Albert Sidney Johnston’s role, Beauregard lobbied Slidell for appointment to the colonelcy of any new regiment created to execute such a strategy:

I see it stated in the newspapers that Genl Scott is about to repair to California to take command of a Corps d’Armée to move from thence on to Utah! I wonder if this is to be done upon the recommendation of the Genl? If so, it is contrary to all “strategic” principles, if to be executed in conjunction with a similar movement on this side of the mountains—for it is impossible that two operations, from such distant initial points—should be performed with such precision & regularity as to arrive at the Utah Valley within a few days of each other—at any rate such a favorable result would be against all probabilities—It would then follow, if the Mormons are ably commanded, that they would concentrate their forces in succession against each of said columns & crush them before they could unite. . . . How do we know but that the Mormons may have amongst themselves a great Captain *in embryo*! Are not volunteers considered *by many* as equal if not superior to regulars in a Mountainous War?—then how much the more superior would they not be when defending their religion & their own firesides! . . . If I were a Mormon and amply supplied with provisions & ammunitions, I would defy ~~five~~ three times the number of troops you could send against me on the system now adopted—not one of them would ever set foot within the valley of Utah!<sup>46</sup>

One wonders about the reason for all of this enigmatic marching/counter-marching about a move on Utah from the Pacific Coast and the identity of the officer to lead it. In probing the possible explanations for this phenomenon, a case could be made that President Buchanan simply acquiesced to Harney’s persistent, aggressive self-pleading and refused to sanction reinforce-

ments for the Utah campaign other than those to be led by Harney from Fort Leavenworth. After all, notwithstanding the location of Harney's headquarters in Kansas, attendees at White House receptions were accustomed to seeing his towering figure or that of his alter-ego and adjutant, the ubiquitous, dapper Captain Alfred Pleasonton of the Second Dragoons in close proximity to the president. Yet Buchanan was far too seasoned a politician to succumb to lobbying from a single general officer, even one as important and aggressive as Harney. Significantly, an enraged Buchanan relieved Harney of command of the Department of Oregon in 1859 over his ham-handed handling of the "Pig War" border confrontation with Great Britain in the San Juan Islands.<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps part of the explanation was somehow enmeshed in a peculiar resolution about Wool that welled up without explanation in the U.S. House of Representatives on January 26, 1858, during deliberations about "the Mormon problem." Without specific reference to its motivations, the House resolved: "That the President be requested to communicate to this House, if not incompatible with the public service, so much of the correspondence between the late Secretary of War Davis and Major General John E. Wool, late commanding the Pacific department, relative to the affairs of such department as has not heretofore been published under a call of this House."<sup>48</sup> With good reason, some Representatives may have suspected that this correspondence would reveal personal and professional clashes between Wool and Jefferson Davis, like the shockingly acrimonious exchanges between Davis and Winfield Scott throughout the mid-1850s. Davis was now a senator from Mississippi and chair of the Senate Military Affairs Committee; thus, the House of Representatives' curiosity about Wool's correspondence would probably not redound to Wool's benefit in any reorganization and enlargement of the Utah Expedition command.

An alternate explanation for the decision to abandon plans for Scott (or Wool) to attack Utah from the Pacific Coast may be connected to the arrival in Washington, D.C., in early February 1858 of Charles R. Morehead and James Rupe, the principal field agents of the western freighting firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell. The two men had left Johnston's command at Camp Scott on Christmas Day and, notwithstanding an arduous, unes-

corted 1,200-mile mule ride in severe weather, they had reached Fort Leavenworth in late January after slightly more than a month of travel. They immediately pushed on to Washington by train and gave Buchanan and Floyd their initial news first-hand from the Utah Expedition since it had gone into winter quarters during the third week of November 1857. Morehead later argued that their trip demonstrated the feasibility of all-weather travel across the plains, the inspiration for his firm's subsequent establishment of the Pony Express. This dramatic demonstration may also have been the catalyst by which Scott mustered the fortitude to argue successfully for the reinforcement of Johnston and the Utah Expedition during 1858 from Kansas alone.<sup>49</sup>

Without knowing what thoughts might have been crossing Albert Sidney Johnston's mind or what rumors about command matters may have reached his winter quarters at Fort Bridger, the news that General Scott had cancelled his movement to the Pacific Coast probably produced relief in the Utah Expedition. It was not that Johnston and his officers did not want reinforcements; rather, they were anxious about whether they or the leaders of another column marching on Utah from the snow-free Pacific Coast would receive the glory and promotions when the Mormons were brought to heel.<sup>50</sup>

With the Utah command for Wool no longer in the picture and with Scott's decision to remain in New York while Johnston would be reinforced from Kansas alone, Scott turned to his intent to make Albert Sidney Johnston a general. This promotion had long been on the general in chief's mind, perhaps since he had assigned Johnston to the Utah Expedition. On February 11, 1858, Scott wrote a fascinating letter on Johnston's future to William Preston, who was both Johnston's brother-in-law and John B. Floyd's cousin: "Colonel Johnson [sic] is more than a good officer—he is a God send to the country thro' the army. I urged his brevet [promotion], strongly, when he was here [in August], & have repeated my instances [entreaties] to the same end almost daily, since the beginning of January either in conversation with the Secretary or the President, & I told the latter that I did not doubt he would find himself constrained, by admiration, to add a second brevet before the end of this year."<sup>51</sup> It is emblematic of the disconnect between Scott and Floyd—in terms of their rela-

tionship as well as the New York-Washington geography—that, without Scott's knowing it for sure, Floyd had, three days earlier, written to Buchanan nominating Johnston for appointment as a brigadier by brevet “‘for meritorious conduct’ in the ability, zeal, energy, and prudence displayed by him in the command of the Army in Utah to date from November 18, 1857.”<sup>52</sup> On the same day, the president forwarded this nomination to the U.S. Senate for its consideration through a brief special message.

Scott had heard rumors of this nomination and, on February 11, had informed Preston in conspiratorial tones, “I have reason to believe that the Secretary sent a nomination for the brigadier’s brevet, to the President, several days ago. Whether it has gone to the Senate I know not. I have however prepared many [members] of that body to receive it favorably.”<sup>53</sup>

The Congress was then heatedly debating the wisdom of the Utah War, how best to prosecute it, and an appropriate way to reinforce the Utah Expedition within the financial constraints imposed by the nation’s worst economic downturn in twenty years. Among the war’s critics was U.S. Senator Sam Houston, Johnston’s enemy since their Texas days when Houston was the new republic’s president and Johnston was both his secretary of war and a general in the Texas army. Unknown to Johnston at his Camp Scott winter quarters and to Scott in New York, Houston was then being lobbied by Seth M. Blair, a Nauvoo Legion major and comrade in arms during both the Texas Revolution and the Mexican War. Houston had successfully recommended Blair as U.S. attorney for Utah Territory in 1850.<sup>54</sup> There is no evidence that Houston tried to scuttle Johnston’s promotion with his fellow senators, but it is reasonable to assume that their longstanding enmity did little to help Johnston.

For whatever reason, Johnston’s nomination worked through the confirmation process slowly. On March 24, 1858, the Senate finally turned from its debates on “the Mormon problem” and gave its constitutionally required advice and consent to Johnston’s promotion. Floyd wrote on April 3 to inform Johnston of the good news and a week later the oath of office was transmitted from Adjutant General Cooper.<sup>55</sup>

Even before official news of Johnston’s elevation had reached Camp Scott, rumors had leaked about the prospects for such an

appointment as far as the Utah Expedition's winter quarters. Johnston's quartermaster wrote to a civilian friend in Washington, D.C., revealing both his admiration for the brigadier-in-waiting and his concerns about the stability of his command situation: "We were all delighted that Col Johnston had been nominated for the brevet of Brig. General, which indicates that he is not to be superceded [sic] in the command. He is universally popular and deservedly so. He has more good points as a commanding officer than any one I know in the Army."<sup>56</sup>

But the question of Johnston's command was not yet settled, the matter of his responsibilities not closed. In April 1858, with the formalization of plans to reinforce the Utah Expedition from Kansas alone, the administration turned to a new command structure to head up what its leaders projected as an expeditionary force equivalent to nearly one-third of the U.S. Army. Under this arrangement, plans were activated to create a Department of Utah commanded by Brevet Major General Persifor F. Smith. Reporting to him would be Brevet Brigadier Generals Harney and the newly promoted Johnston. The division of responsibility between these two one-star officers operating under Smith's command was unclear, but Johnston would apparently retain command of the original or core Utah Expedition—now dubbed the Army of Utah—and Harney would be responsible for moving west six columns of reinforcements totaling more than three thousand men. How this command structure would function once all of the units involved were in Utah and the new department was fully operational was a major ambiguity to be addressed once the Utah campaign had run its course. Irrespective of whether Floyd or Scott was the principal architect of this command restructuring, it was a remarkable one. The fifty-nine-year-old Smith had been ailing for years and was often on medical leave of absence. Indeed, he died at Fort Leavenworth on May 17, 1858, less than a month after his new appointment as supreme commander of the Department of Utah, on the very day that Johnston learned of his promotion 1,200 miles to the west.

One must wonder what the president, secretary of war, and general in chief had conceptualized as their strategic needs and a failing General Smith's ability to execute them, let alone the impact of such a change on Johnston's morale. Harney, assuming

that he was Persifor Smith's successor, immediately proceeded to act as department commander. Scott, enraged by Harney's presumption, sent Harney yet another letter of reprimand, a document to which Harney responded as he usually did with a pointed, barely respectful, unrepentant defense of his behavior. Notwithstanding Scott's displeasure, Harney did indeed continue to function briefly during the summer of 1858 as commander of the Department of Utah and was, in fact, promoted to the full brigadier's rank vacated upon Smith's death. This arrangement made Johnston temporarily but technically Harney's subordinate. Here was a leadership hierarchy that provoked great consternation, not only for Johnston, who was keenly aware of the deep flaws in Harney's command style, but also among his subordinate officers, most of whom had bonded with Johnston during their shared hardships at Fort Bridger. Johnston asked to be relieved from duty in Utah and reassigned to command of his regiment in Texas, a request that the War Department denied.<sup>57</sup>

With the peaceful resolution of "the Mormon problem" during the summer of 1858 and Harney's sudden reassignment to command the Department of Oregon to deal with an Indian outbreak, much of this angst became moot. As Harney departed from Kansas, Johnston assumed command of the Department of Utah and delegated direct responsibility for its troops to Lieutenant Colonel Charles F. Smith (no relation to the late Persifor F. Smith) of the Tenth Infantry. Notwithstanding this clarification in his command, Johnston continued to press the War Department with requests for furlough and reassignments, which the army repeatedly denied until it finally relented effective March 1, 1860.

On that date, Johnston left Camp Floyd, headed for San Bernardino and ultimately a steamer home, amid rumors that he might become a presidential candidate in the fall elections. His journey across the desert produced one of the eeriest scenes of the Utah War. As Johnston and his sixty-dragon escort rode westward across the rim of the Great Basin near the killing field of Mountain Meadows, his adjutant, Major Fitz John Porter, realized that they were being shadowed by a lone, heavily bearded horseman, with a dog slung across his saddle. This outrider was Orrin Porter Rockwell, Brigham Young's bodyguard, and the dog was his signature. This solitary vigil more than three hundred miles

from the Salt Lake Valley sent an unmistakable message to the departing general about who held the real power in Utah Territory, regardless of who was nominally in command. As the alarmed Major Porter described the scene, "It was a warning. We were at once on our guard and our party, somewhat separated . . . was halted and united."<sup>58</sup>

Given this chain of events, was it really "Johnston's Army"? As I have demonstrated, below the Utah War's surface roiled a far more complex U.S. Army command situation than realized by those who have adopted the traditional Utah-centric label. Perhaps it is more useful to think of this armed confrontation as the "Utah War" rather than "Johnston's Army"—as a conflict in which the federal "Utah Expedition," led by a shifting variety of real or prospective commanders, was pitted against the Mormon "Nauvoo Legion" or Utah territorial militia. The latter force was clearly led by Lieutenant General Daniel H. Wells—whenever Brigham Young stepped back from micromanaging its operations.<sup>59</sup> But then the Young-Wells command relationship is a story deserving a separate study.

### Notes

1. For a review of this Utah-centric label's use and implications, see Gene A. Sessions, "The Legend of 'Johnston's Army': Myth and Reality among the Mormons," Paper presented at the Mormon History Association annual conference, Salt Lake City, May 26, 2007.

2. The Utah War of 1857–58 was the armed confrontation between the administration of President James Buchanan and the civil-religious leadership of Utah Territory led by Governor Brigham Young, second president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At stake were power and authority in Utah, through a conflict that pitted its large, experienced territorial militia (Nauvoo Legion) against a federal force (Utah Expedition) that ultimately involved nearly one-third of the U.S. Army. The most complete and recent narrative and documentary histories of the war are: Norman F. Furniss, *The Mormon Conflict 1850–1859* (1960; rpt., New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966); MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1: A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 2008); and LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen, eds., *The Utah Expedition, 1857–1858: A Documentary Account of the United States Military Movement under Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, and the Resistance by Brigham Young and the Mormon Nauvoo Le-*

gion (1958; rpt., Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1982). The latter study was most recently reprinted as *Mormon Resistance: A Documentary Account of the Utah Expedition, 1857–1858* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005). A useful but limited study of the conflict's immediate aftermath is Donald R. Moorman with Gene A. Sessions, *Camp Floyd and the Mormons: The Utah War* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005). Context for the war is found in David L. Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom: The Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847–1896* (Spokane, Wash.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1998), while valuable information about the war itself is contained in three quite different interpretations of its worst atrocity: Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002); Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), and Bigler and Bagley, *Innocent Blood: Essential Narratives of the Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Norman: Arthur H. Clark Co., 2008).

3. An extreme example was Colonel John DeBarth Walbach, commander of the Fourth U.S. Artillery, who died on the eve of the Utah War in his ninety-third year—an officer beloved but so old that he had served under George Washington. Even the best and the brightest officers languished under this constipated, seniority-driven “system.” Robert E. Lee, one of Winfield Scott’s favorites, was still only a captain of engineers twenty-six years after heading his West Point class of 1829. Lee did not receive his first troop command until his 1855 promotion at age forty-eight as lieutenant colonel of the newly established Second U.S. Cavalry led by fifty-two-year-old Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston.

4. For a discussion of these structural, environmental, and behavioral forces as they impacted the contentious career of the antebellum army’s second most senior officer, see William P. MacKinnon, “David Emanuel Twiggs,” in *Dictionary of American Military Biography*, edited by Roger J. Spiller, 3 vols. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 3:1119–22. A classic description of young Braxton Bragg’s prolonged quarrel with himself in his dual roles as a frontier company commander as well as his own company quartermaster appears in Grady McWhiney, *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 1:33–34. For Winfield Scott’s intervention in Kansas to prevent the court-martial of key officers over minor matters as the Utah Expedition was being organized, see MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point, Part I*, 163–64, 369–70.

5. Allan Peskin, *Winfield Scott and the Profession of Arms* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2003).

6. See Records of the Judge Advocate (RG 154), National Archives,

Washington, D.C., for the most seriously disruptive of these incidents—those that were adjudicated by general court-martial.

7. MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, chap. 7. For a colorful but rueful account of the brutal Twiggs-Harney command style written decades later by one of their still-smarting quartermasters, see Parmenas Taylor Turnley, *Reminiscences . . .* (Chicago, Ill.: Donohue & Henneberry, 1893), 208–9.

8. John B. Floyd, Letter to James Buchanan, August 5, 1858, James Buchanan Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

9. For the timing and drivers of the decision to replace Brigham Young as governor and to escort his as-yet-unidentified successor with a large army expedition, see MacKinnon, “And the War Came: James Buchanan, The Utah Expedition, and the Decision to Intervene,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 76 (Winter 2008): 22–37. Scott’s order launching the expedition was in the form of a May 28, 1857, circular to the chiefs of the army’s staff bureaus. “The Utah Expedition,” U.S. Congress, *House Ex. Doc. 71*, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial 956, 4–5, and LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen, eds., *Mormon Resistance*, 27–29. Notwithstanding the expectation of a 2,500-man force, by the time the expedition was on the plains, transfers and massive desertion had reduced it to fewer than 1,500 troops.

10. For a review of Harney’s command style and disciplinary record, see George Rollie Adams, *General William S. Harney: Prince of Dragoons* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); MacKinnon, “Review Essay [Harney],” *New Mexico Historical Review* 76 (October 2001): 431–37.

11. L. U. Reavis, *The Life and Military Services of General William Selby Harney* (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1878), 277–79.

12. MacKinnon, “‘Lonely Bones’: Leadership and Utah War Violence,” *Journal of Mormon History* 33 (Spring 2007): 121–78.

13. James Buchanan, Letter to Robert J. Walker, July 12, 1857, “Covode Investigation” [Covode was the Congressman who chaired the investigating committee], U.S. Congress, *House Report 648*, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial 1071, 112–13. Buchanan guarded closely the text of this letter until the pressure of a congressional investigation forced its publication. For the clashes and recriminations between Walker and the administration over assigning Harney simultaneously to Kansas and Utah, see Adams, *General William S. Harney*, 159–81, and Pearl T. Ponce, “Pledges and Principles: Buchanan, Walker, and Kansas in 1857,” *Kansas History* 27 (Spring-Summer 2004): 51–91.

14. Through his aide, Scott took pains to explain to Harney that the delay in his orders lay not with Scott but rather with his civilian superiors (Floyd and Buchanan). Lieutenant Colonel George W. Lay, Letter to Wil-

liam S. Harney, June 26, 1857, Headquarters of the Army, Letters Sent (RG 108), National Archives.

15. MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 164–65.

16. Second Lieutenant George Dashiell Bayard, Letter to Samuel J. Bayard, March 3, 1857, quoted in Bayard, *Life of George Dashiell Bayard, Late Captain, U.S.A., and Brigadier-General of Volunteers, Killed in the Battle of Fredricksburg, Dec. 1862* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1874), 115.

17. William S. Harney, Letter to John B. Floyd, August 8, 1857, Records of Adjutant General's Office, Letters Received (RG 94), National Archives. Contrary to the impression Harney conveyed here, he had never been to Utah and had no experience in dealing with Mormon leaders.

18. Albert Sidney Johnston, Letter to William Preston, August 26, 1857, Wickliffe-Preston Papers, 63M349, University of Kentucky Library, Lexington.

19. Major Irvin McDowell, Letter to Albert Sidney Johnston, August 28, 1857, and War Department, General Orders No. 12, August 29, 1857.

20. Albert Sidney Johnston, Letter to Captain N. J. Eaton, October 11, 1858, quoted in William Preston Johnston, *The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston . . .* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1878), 232. The medical condition to which Johnston alludes here is unclear, although it may possibly have been related to a leg wound, sustained in Texas's army during a duel fought with another general. Johnston's August 26, 1857, comment to his brother-in-law that he was then "ready and more than willing" for assignment to either Utah or Kansas raises the questions of his candor in writing to Eaton thirteen months later to portray himself as a reluctant, ailing commander.

21. Furniss, *The Mormon Conflict*, 97–99.

22. Alexander, Letter "to the officers of the United States Army commanding forces en route to Utah," October 8, 1857, in Hafen and Hafen, eds., *Mormon Resistance*, 66–69.

23. Albert Sidney Johnston, Letter to Irvin McDowell, October 18, 1857, "The Utah Expedition," *House Ex. Doc. 71*, 35–38.

24. Edmund B. Alexander, Letter to Brigham Young, October 2, 1857, in *ibid.*, 35. Alexander, writing to Young from within Utah's north-east boundary, did not then know that Johnston had superseded Harney in command.

25. The two freshest accounts of the Lot Smith raid are found in the reminiscences of Smith himself and one of his Nauvoo Legion cavalymen, James Parshall Terry, which are reprinted most recently in Hafen

and Hafen, eds., *Mormon Resistance*, 220–46, and MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 347–49.

26. Edmund B. Alexander, Letter to Samuel Cooper, October 9, 1857, and Albert Sidney Johnston, Letter to Irvin McDowell, October 18, 1857, "The Utah Expedition," *House Ex. Doc. 71*, 32, 37–38.

27. Irvin McDowell, Endorsement to John B. Floyd, December 10, 1857, written on Scott's behalf on the dispatch of Albert Sidney Johnston to McDowell, October 18, 1857. When Johnston's dispatch was copied and published at Congress's request as part of "The Utah Expedition," *House Ex. Doc. 71*, this endorsement was excluded and so remained unpublished until 2008. It may be found with a copy of Johnston's dispatch in folder "Correspondence Regarding Utah Expedition," (HR 35A-D123), House Committee on Military Affairs (RG 233), National Archives, and in MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 425.

28. Persifor Frazer Smith, Memorandum to John B. Floyd, November 24, 1857, Persifor Frazer Smith Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Brevet Lieutenant General Scott was the army's only officer who held the substantive rank of major general. Twiggs, Wool, and Smith were brigadiers who were major generals only by brevet.

29. Remarkably by twenty-first-century standards, James Buchanan had made no public utterance about Utah or Mormon affairs until his written first annual message to Congress on December 8, 1857, the equivalent of today's presidential State of the Union Address.

30. William S. Harney, Letter to James Buchanan, November 29, 1857, James Buchanan Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

31. Buchanan's first annual message to Congress and the related year-end 1857 annual reports of Floyd and Scott may be found in John Bassett Moore, ed., *The Works of James Buchanan, Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*, 12 vols. (New York: Antiquarian Press Ltd., 1960), 10:129–63; John B. Floyd, "Annual Report," December 5, 1857, U.S. Congress, *Senate Ex. Doc. 11*, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial 920, 6–9.

32. Headquarters of the Army, General Orders No. 1 and 4, January 8 and 16, 1858; copy in my files.

33. Winfield Scott, Telegram to John E. Wool, January 13, 1858, Wool Papers, State Library of New York, Albany, and Records of the Headquarters of the Army, Letters Sent (RG 108), National Archives.

34. John E. Wool, Telegram to Winfield Scott, January 15, 1858, Wool Papers, State Library of New York.

35. John E. Wool, Letter to Winfield Scott, January 15, 1858, in *ibid.* Wool's reference to settling his "accounts" relates to his financial worries over the substantial sum still in dispute between him and the govern-

ment as a result of his tumultuous earlier assignment as commander of the Department of the Pacific.

36. Wool lacks a biographer, although a first-rate unpublished study of his life is Harwood P. Hinton, "The Public Career of John Ellis Wool" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1960). Hinton does not discuss the Scott telegram.

37. Irvin McDowell, Letter to Albert Sidney Johnston, January 19, 1858, Johnston Papers, Barrett Collection, Howard-Tilton Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, as discussed in Charles P. Roland, *Albert Sidney Johnston: Soldier of Three Republics* (1964; rpt., Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 203 note 69.

38. John E. Wool, Memorandum to Winfield Scott, January 23, 1858, Wool Papers, State Library of New York.

39. Lieutenant Colonel George W. Lay, Letter to Albert Sidney Johnston, January 23, 1858, "Report of the Secretary of War [1858]," U.S. Congress, *House Ex. Doc. 2*, 35th Cong., 2d Sess., Serial 998, 33. Lay was Scott's aide de camp. This discussion of the Utah War's little-known Pacific Coast dimension—significant, ambitious, but aborted—is adapted from MacKinnon, "Buchanan's Thrust from the Pacific: The Utah War's Ill-Fated Second Front," *Journal of Mormon History* 34 (Fall 2008): 226–60.

40. Winfield Scott, Letter to John E. Wool, September 2, 1857, Wool Papers, State Library of New York.

41. Allan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas, eds., *The Diary of George Templeton Strong: Young Man in New York* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1952), 383, January 25, 1858. Murray Hoffman, Strong's direct source, was a prominent judge on New York's superior court. The massive bronze (not copper) equestrian statue of General George Washington had been installed in Manhattan's Union Square in 1856 and remains there. In an attempt to save face, Scott later told Albert Sidney Johnston's brother-in-law that the notion of a Pacific Coast journey was his with sanctioning by Buchanan and Floyd. Winfield Scott, Letter to William Preston, February 11, 1858, Wickliffe-Preston Papers, University of Kentucky Library.

42. Ironically, the Nauvoo Legion's adjutant general, Brigadier General James Ferguson, came to a similar conclusion in January 1858 and complained in his year-end 1857 report to Brigham Young that disproportionate emphasis and resources were being placed on Mormon cavalry rather than infantry for the coming campaign in the mountains. Ferguson, Report, January 7, 1858, Nauvoo Legion Records, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

43. William S. Harney, Letter to James Buchanan, January 30, 1858, James Buchanan Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

44. George W. Lay, Letter to Albert Sidney Johnston, February 4, 1858, "Report of the Secretary of War [1858]," *House Ex. Doc.* 2, 33.

45. John M. Bernhisel, Letter to Brigham Young, December 17, 1857, LDS Church History Library. The date is incorrect. Based on internal evidence, it was written during the third week of February 1858, probably February 17. The allusion to Alaska appears in Brigham Young, Letter to John M. Bernhisel, March 5, 1858, LDS Church History Library. See differing interpretations of its meaning, MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 439–44.

46. P.G.T. Beauregard, Letter to John Slidell, February 9, 1858, holograph copy in Huntington Library, San Marino, California; typescript in Leonard J. Arrington Papers, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan. Notwithstanding Beauregard's plea for a colonelcy, he never rose above the rank of captain and brevet major in the U.S. Army but soon became a full general in the Confederate service.

47. Adams, *General William S. Harney*, 197–214.

48. "Correspondence between the Late Secretary of War and General Wool," U.S. Congress, *House Ex. Doc.* 88, 35th Cong., 1st Sess.

49. "Personal Recollections of Charles R. Morehead" in William Elsey Connelly, *War with Mexico, 1846–1847: Doniphan's Expedition and the Conquest of New Mexico and California* (Topeka, Kans.: n.p., 1907), 600–622. Without asserting a cause and effect linkage, one Washington reporter noted in the same dispatch plans for Pacific Coast reinforcements and the arrival of Morehead and Rupe: "Advices of the most reliable character have been received here from the Utah expedition." "General Scott to Organize a Force on the Pacific Against the Mormons," Dispatch, *Baltimore Sun*, January 24, 1858, rpt., *New York Times*, January 26, 1858, 1.

50. For officers' apprehensions about threatened glory and promotions, see "General Scott to Organize a Force on the Pacific Against the Mormons," *New York Times*, January 26, 1858, 1.

51. Winfield Scott, Letter to William Preston, February 11, 1858, Wickcliffe-Preston Papers, University of Kentucky Library. The army's brevet system of officer rank was derived from that of the British Royal Army and was a form of honorific recognition for long service, valor, or merit in the absence of medals and decoration, which were not awarded in the American service until the Civil War. For most of their service, officers served in their substantive rank unless temporarily detailed to perform special duties, such as serving on a court-martial, in which case they could be assigned in their higher, brevet rank, be paid according to

that rank, and were addressed accordingly. Under this system, Colonel Harney, commander of the Second U.S. Dragoons, had been assigned to command the Utah Expedition in his brevet brigadier's rank, a grade with which he had been honored earlier by the nomination of the Secretary of War and the U.S. president with the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate in recognition of his valorous Mexican War service. Awarding brevet promotions was a way of extending recognition to deserving officers without doing violence to the extremely limited and rigid table of organization prescribed for the army by Congress. Notwithstanding Scott's apparent prediction to Buchanan that Johnston would be brevetted twice during 1858, he was not nominated to major general. In fact, during the spring of 1858, Scott was unable to secure even a brevet majority for the Utah Expedition's highly deserving Captain Randolph B. Marcy, Fifth U.S. Infantry, presumably because of the controversy over the Utah campaign. Scott's own substantive rank was that of a major general, although he served in the position of general in chief as a brevet lieutenant general, a grade awarded to him after the Mexican War and only after a bitter, partisan political battle in Congress.

52. John B. Floyd, Letter to James Buchanan, February 8, 1858; copy in my files.

53. Winfield Scott, Letter to William Preston, February 11, 1858, Wickliffe-Preston Papers, University of Kentucky Library.

54. Michael Scott Van Wagenen, "Sam Houston and the Utah War," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 76 (Summer 2008): 66-78. For the unpublished centerpiece of this Mormon lobbying effort, see Seth Blair, Letter to Sam Houston, December 1, 1857, "THE MORMON QUESTION, Interesting Letter from Great Salt Lake to Gen. Sam Houston," *New York Herald*, March 2, 1858, p. 1, cols. 4-5. An example of Houston's laudatory comments on Johnston's courage but scathing assessment of his military capabilities, especially during the Civil War, appears in Sam Houston, Letter to Eber Worthing Cave, February 3, 1863, in *The Personal Correspondence of Sam Houston*, edited by Madge Thornall Roberts, 4 vols. (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2001), 4:418-19.

55. Cooper's letter of April 10 enclosed Floyd's of April 3. Archivist Jessica Kratz, National Archives, email to MacKinnon, July 22, 2008; Albert Sidney Johnston, Letter to Samuel Cooper, May 17, 1858 (RG 98), National Archives. Consistent with the usages of substantive and brevet rank, Johnston immediately began to sign his Utah correspondence and orders as "Colonel, 2nd Cavalry, Bvt. Brig. Genl, Commanding" and was addressed by others as "General."

56. Captain John H. Dickerson, Letter to W. A. Gordon, April 16, 1858, MSS 68, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

57. Wilford Hill LeCheminant, "A Crisis Averted? General Harney and the Change in Command of the Utah Expedition," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 51 (Winter 1983): 30-45.

58. Fitz John Porter, "A Characteristic (Mormon) Conspiracy, (From Incidents of the Utah Expedition of 1859 to 1860, under Genl. A. S. Johnston)," holograph, 9-11, Box 53, Microfilm #25, Fitz John Porter Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Upon sensing danger, Rockwell's dog was trained to rise up and silently lick his master's face.

59. For specific examples of Young's frequent and deep involvement in the minutiae of the Nauvoo Legion's operations during the Utah War, see MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 11, 321, 340, 358-61.

# Fighting over “Mormon”: Media Coverage of the FLDS and LDS Churches

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## Introduction

Establishing legitimacy is a fundamental process that is basic to social organization. All organizations intending to grow or continue to exist require widespread acceptance and some degree of congruence with the surrounding culture.<sup>1</sup> In the months following the raid on the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints’ (FLDS) ranch in Texas, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) began an initiative to distinguish itself from the many polygamous groups that have branched out of the Mormon trunk over the years.<sup>2</sup> The formal initiative begun in June of 2008 appears to be a continuation of an earlier, informal effort, begun in April 2008, to distinguish between the different branches of Mormonism in a series of statements released by Church leaders following the raid.<sup>3</sup> Both the formal and informal initiatives to distinguish among the different branches of Mormonism are good examples of an organization attempting to develop and maintain social legitimacy (i.e., widespread social approval), a crucial component of organizational survival and success.<sup>4</sup>

As part of the formal initiative, the LDS Church detailed some of the errors observed by researchers whom it employed to monitor media coverage. For instance, the LDS Church asserted that, “Russian and Mexican media outlets . . . incorrectly referred to the FLDS Church as being the LDS Church” and were also critical of the Agence France-Presse for running a picture of an LDS temple in a story on the Fundamentalist LDS Church.<sup>5</sup> Elder Quentin

L. Cook, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, argued that the media's use of the word "Mormon" was confusing for the general public because it erroneously linked the LDS Church with the FLDS Church.<sup>6</sup> Elder Cook also noted that members of the LDS Church were experiencing "fallout" from the raid on the FLDS; LDS missionaries and members were mistakenly associated with the FLDS and experienced mild persecution as a result.<sup>7</sup> The LDS Church's researchers studying media coverage of the raid reported that, of more than 15,000 articles about the event during the first month and a half of coverage, "approximately 5 percent of articles accurately reported on the distinction between the two faiths."<sup>8</sup>

The perceived confusion resulting from the news coverage led the LDS Church to conduct a nationwide survey to determine just how much confusion existed between the two religious groups. The survey found that 91 percent of the 1,000 respondents had heard about the raid on the FLDS in Texas, and 36 percent believed the FLDS in Texas were part of the LDS Church headquartered in Utah. Twenty-nine percent of the survey respondents said the FLDS and LDS were not connected at all, while 44 percent were unsure to which religion the FLDS group in Texas belonged.<sup>9</sup>

These results, along with the previously reported confusion in the news media, prompted the LDS Church to mail letters to major media outlets encouraging clarification of the LDS/FLDS distinction.<sup>10</sup> The LDS Church-employed researchers saw these combined initiatives as contributing to an improvement in the reporting. According to one news release, "After the Church began to push for more clarity, the media dramatically improved its reporting, with over 60% of articles accurately reporting on the distinction," while a second news release also reported favorable reception of the letter and an improvement in coverage.<sup>11</sup>

The LDS Church's public relations effort to clarify the differences among itself, the FLDS, and other polygamist groups was not received uncritically. The Church had applied in 2005 to trademark "Mormon"; and although its petition was denied, Elder Lance Wickman, who heads the LDS Church's Legal Department, asserted in his letter to the media in June 2008 that the media should use "Mormon" exclusively to refer to the mainstream

LDS Church. He specifically discouraged the use of "fundamentalist Mormon" in reference to groups advocating polygamy.<sup>12</sup> Principle Voices Coalition, an organization representing fundamentalist and polygamist Mormon groups, responded with a denunciation, "We strenuously object to any efforts to deprive us and others of the freedom to name and describe ourselves by terms of our own choosing."<sup>13</sup> Principle Voices argued that they were entitled to call themselves whatever they liked. They also argued that "polygamist sects," the term Wickman's letter encouraged for fundamentalist Mormon groups, is not the term they prefer: "In the recent past, the Church has insisted that we instead be defined as 'polygamous sects,' even though most of us are not (and do not refer to ourselves as) polygamists." They insisted they would call themselves "fundamentalist Mormons," pointing out that the LDS Church itself had first used the term in referring to them.<sup>14</sup>

This article addresses two issues. The first is how the media depicted the state of Texas's raid on the FLDS ranch and how it differentiated FLDS and LDS in those reports. The LDS Church's assertion that there was a great deal of confusion in the reporting on this incident can be tested by posing an empirical question: Did major media outlets inaccurately conflate the FLDS with the LDS in their coverage of the raid in Texas? The first part of this article addresses that question. The second topic is the issue of labels, definitions, and legitimacy, particularly as they involve the use of the word "Mormon." The LDS Church has staked a claim to the label "Mormon" and is now discouraging the use of that identification in the media to refer to any religious group other than itself. Apostle Quentin L. Cook has gone so far as to assert that "Mormons have nothing whatsoever to do with this polygamous sect in Texas."<sup>15</sup> We analyze this debate in the context of the particular concept of legitimacy.<sup>16</sup>

### **Empirical Test**

Before moving into a discussion of whether the media confused the FLDS Church with the LDS Church in its coverage on the raid in Texas, we should explain why we felt a need to test the LDS Church's assertion: "During the first month and a half [of news coverage of the FLDS raid in Texas], approximately 5 per-

cent of articles accurately reported on the distinction between the two faiths [LDS and FLDS].”<sup>17</sup> As we followed the story in the media, both of us noticed that many of the stories were actually written by and propagated through the Associated Press and other aggregated news outlets (e.g., Reuters, Agence France-Press, etc.). We believed that this consolidation of news reporting among major media outlets would result in overlapping coverage, similar stories, and standard policies in distinguishing between the two religious groups. Additionally, previous research from the 1970s found that mainstream media coverage of Mormonism had grown more nuanced over the years, though it was not without its flaws.<sup>18</sup> Hence, we hypothesized that the consolidation of news coverage will result in increasingly accurate distinctions between the LDS and FLDS. The hypothesis is readily falsifiable. If a detailed study of the coverage of the raid on the FLDS ranch in Texas showed substantial confusion between the LDS and FLDS, then our hypothesis would be shown to have been wrong.

To investigate media confusion in distinguishing between the LDS and FLDS churches and to test our hypothesis, we conducted a systematic content analysis of news stories published by five major media outlets in the United States (the *New York Times*, Fox News, Cable News Network [CNN], *Deseret News* [Salt Lake City], and the *Houston Chronicle*) and eleven international media outlets (*China Daily*, the *International Herald Tribune* [France], *New Zealand Herald*, *Mail and Guardian* [South Africa], *El Sol de Mexico* and *La Cronica de Hoy* (Mexico), the *Guardian* [Manchester, United Kingdom], the *Sun* [London, United Kingdom], *Ria* [Russian News and Information Agency] *Novosti* [Moscow], *Moscow Times*, and the *St. Petersburg Times* [Russia]). Except for the two Mexican papers, all of these media outlets are in English.

We included every news article on the raid published by these sixteen news sources on their websites between April 3, the day of the raid, and May 5 in our analysis.<sup>19</sup> Thus, our analysis was of articles published before the LDS Church began its initiative to encourage media outlets to clarify the distinction between the two religious groups.<sup>20</sup> We used two search terms to find articles: “Texas” and/or “polygamy.” We included only articles in which appeared both terms (“Texas” and “polygamy”) and which, therefore, were limited to the raid on the FLDS in Texas. To understand the influ-

**Table 1**  
**Newspaper Circulation and Website Visitors**

<i>News Source</i>	<i>Average Monthly Visitors<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Alexa Reach (3 mos. average)<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Estimated Monthly Visitors<sup>3</sup></i>
<b><i>U. S. News</i></b>			
Fox News	8,100,000	0.2736	3,851,535
CNN	28,400,000	1.4350	20,200,853
<i>Deseret News</i>	752,000	0.0148	208,343
<i>Houston Chronicle</i>	2,520,000	0.0602	847,450
<i>New York Times</i>	13,857,000	0.8788	12,371,087
<b><i>International News</i></b>			
<i>China Daily</i> (China)	379,336	0.0381	536,343
<i>El Sol de Mexico</i> (Mexico)	72,343	0.0251	353,339
<i>International Herald Tribune</i> (France)	4,600,000	0.0906	1,275,399
<i>La Cronica de Hoy</i> (Mexico)	20,279	0.0106	149,360
<i>Mail and Guardian</i> (South Africa)	530,000	0.0154	216,790
<i>New Zealand Herald</i> (New Zealand)	161,487	0.0276	388,532
<i>Ria Novosti</i> (Russia)	65,222	0.0642	903,759
<i>The Guardian</i> (UK)	19,519,923	0.2558	3,600,960
<i>The Moscow Times</i> (Russia)	7,840	0.0013	17,878
<i>The St. Petersburg Times</i> (Russia)	2,000	0.0008	11,543
<i>The Sun</i> (UK, tabloid)	889,439	0.1640	2,308,669
<b>Total</b>	<b>79,876,869</b>	<b>3.3559</b>	<b>47,241,841</b>

<sup>1</sup>Following are the source websites that provided average monthly visitor information for each site: Fox News: [http://www.foxnews.com/mediakit/ad\\_demographics.html](http://www.foxnews.com/mediakit/ad_demographics.html); CNN.com: [http://www.cnn.com/services/advertise/audience\\_profile.html](http://www.cnn.com/services/advertise/audience_profile.html); *International Herald Tribune*: [http://www.ihtinfo.com/pdfs/a\\_a\\_IHTcomProfile.pdf](http://www.ihtinfo.com/pdfs/a_a_IHTcomProfile.pdf); *Mail and Guardian*: <http://www.mg.co.za/page/advertising>; *The Guardian* is: <http://www.adinfo-guradian.co.uk/guardian-unlimited/traffic-users.shtml>; *The Deseret News*, *Houston Chronicle*, and *New York Times*: <http://www.naa.org/docs/Research/Top100NpOct07.pdf>. The source for the average monthly visitors for the remaining websites is quantcast.com, which reports only U.S. visitors.

<sup>2</sup>The Alexa Reach calculation is an estimate of the percentage of total internet users who visit that site monthly, based on a three-month average. For more information, see [http://www.alexa.com/site/help/traffic\\_learn\\_more](http://www.alexa.com/site/help/traffic_learn_more).

<sup>3</sup>The estimated monthly visitors numbers are based on the Alexa Reach calculation and the estimate of the total internet users of 1.4 billion, provided by <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>.

ence of these papers' online divisions, Table 1 presents visitor data for each of these sites. The data for the average monthly unique visitors come from either the websites themselves (usually included in a "media kit" for potential advertisers), from Nielsen Media, or from quantcast.com, a website that tracks such information. We have also included two additional figures. The Alexa "reach" calculation (Col. 3) is the percentage of internet users who visited that particular site monthly out of the estimated 1.4 billion internet users worldwide ([www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm](http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm)) as calculated by alexa.com. Combined, these sixteen news websites reach somewhere between 47 million and 79 million people monthly.

A methodological clarification regarding Fox News and Associated Press (AP) articles provides essential context. The Fox News website does not generally publish original news stories. It was quickly apparent to us that almost every Fox News website article about the FLDS in Texas was an Associated Press article. (Exceptions were transcripts of televised commentaries that had been posted to the website.) Rather than complicate the analysis by including the few transcripts from Fox News shows found on the website that were intermixed with actual news stories, we excluded the few original Fox News articles and analyzed only the Associated Press articles. Consequently, although the articles were published on the Fox News website and we have labeled them as Fox News articles, they are all actually produced by the Associated Press.

The pervasiveness of Associated Press articles is noteworthy. Among the articles we examined in the U.S. media outlets were more than a dozen Associated Press articles that appeared in multiple news sources. Rather than reanalyze duplicates, we excluded them from the analysis. Because of the large number of AP articles on the Fox News site, most of the duplications involved Fox News and another source. In these cases, we discarded the duplicate at the other paper and retained the Fox News article, so that our file of Fox media was as complete as possible. Where duplicates did not involve Fox News, we randomly allotted the duplicates to the respective media outlets. Fourteen of the thirty-five articles that appeared on international media outlets' sites were likewise Associated Press articles. In cases where it was unclear whether an article was an AP article or original, we counted it as

**Table 2**  
**Associated Press and Other Press Group**  
**Representation in the Media**

<i>News Source</i>	<i>Total Articles</i>	<i>AP Articles</i>	<i>AP Articles Published Elsewhere</i>	<i>Other Press Group Articles</i>
<b><i>U. S. News</i></b>				
Fox News	38	38	0	0
CNN	21	6	5	0
<i>Deseret News</i>	38	6	4	0
<i>Houston Chronicle</i>	6	6	2	0
<i>New York Times</i>	15	1	0	0
<b><i>International News</i></b>				
<i>China Daily</i> (China)	7	0	0	7
<i>El Sol de Mexico</i> (Mexico)	2	1	1	0
<i>International Herald Tribune</i> (France)	6	2*	2	0
<i>La Cronica de Hoy</i> (Mexico)	2	0	0	2
<i>Mail and Guardian</i> (South Africa)	3	3	3	0
<i>New Zealand Herald</i> (New Zealand)	4	3	3	0
<i>Ria Novosti</i> (Russia)	1	1	1	0
<i>The Guardian</i> (UK)	5	2	2	0
<i>The Moscow Times</i> (Russia)	1	1	1	0
<i>The St. Petersburg Times</i> (Russia)	1	1	1	0
<i>The Sun</i> (UK, tabloid)	3	0	0	0

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\*All of the remaining articles in the *International Herald Tribune* were also published in the *New York Times*.

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original to that media source. Table 2 lists the total number of articles for each media outlet along with the number of AP articles and those from other press groups.

We read and analyzed a total of 145 articles, paying particular attention to the relationship depicted between the FLDS and the LDS churches. During the analysis, four groups of *explicit* relationships between the LDS and FLDS emerged. The most common

**Table 3**  
**Distinctions between FLDS and LDS in Newspapers**

News Source	Total Articles	Explicit Distinction Between FLDS and LDS					No Explicit Distinction Indicated	Incorrect Distinction
		Split/Splinter/ Offshoot	Renegade/ Rogue	Broke/ Breakaway	LDS Disavow/ LDS Not Polygamists			
U.S. News								
Fox News	38	6	6	11	12	11	0	0
CNN	21	9	3	0	8	6	0	0
Deseret News	38	1	0	2	6	32	0	0
Houston Chronicle	6	0	0	4	1	1	0	0
New York Times	15	7	0	9	10	3	0	0
International News								
China Daily (China)	7	0	0	5	5	2	0	0
El Sol de Mexico (Mexico)	2*	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
International Herald Tribune (France)	6	0	1	4	1	1	0	0
La Cronica de Hoy (Mexico)	2*	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Mail and Guardian (South Africa)	3	1	0	2	2	0	0	0
New Zealand Herald (New Zealand)	4*	0	1	3	2	1	0	0
Ria Novosti (Russia)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Guardian (UK)	5	3	0	2	3	2	0	0
The Moscow Times (Russia)	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
The St. Petersburg Times (Russia)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
The Sun (UK tabloid)	3	1	1	2	1	1	0	0
Total	145	29	12	46	51	63	1	1

\*Includes articles published after May 5, 2008, due to the limited examples published between April 4 and May 5.

characterization of their relationship was simply a note indicating that the LDS Church no longer practices polygamy and/or that it disavowed any relationship with the FLDS Church. We found fifty-one specific disavowals of relationships between the LDS and the FLDS in the articles read. (See Table 3.). Most disavowals of a connection between the two religions were similar to the following examples:

The mainstream Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as the Mormon faith is officially known, *renounced* the practice of polygamy more than a century ago and is at pains to *distance itself from breakaway factions* that bless multiple marriages, often involving adolescent girls.<sup>21</sup>

Both groups look back to Joseph Smith as their founder and first prophet. But the main branch of the faith, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *disavowed* polygamy more than a century ago and excommunicates polygamists today.<sup>22</sup>

The next most common characterization of the relationship between the LDS and FLDS, which occurred forty-six times, was some reference to "breaking away" (e.g., broke, break, breaking, breakaway, etc.), as illustrated in the following two quotations:

... the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a 10,000-member sect that *broke away* from the Mormon Church in the 1930s after it banned polygamy.<sup>23</sup>

The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints *broke away* from the Mormon church after the latter disavowed polygamy more than a century ago.<sup>21</sup>

In twenty-nine cases, some variation of "split" described the relationship between the LDS and FLDS, as the following two examples illustrate:

It is one of several groups that *split* from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, based in Salt Lake City, decades after it renounced polygamy in 1890.<sup>25</sup>

Members of the sect have practiced "plural marriage," as they call it, since they *split* more than a century ago from the mainstream Mormon church, which is based in Salt Lake City.<sup>26</sup>

Two additional terms were used, though infrequently, to describe the LDS and FLDS as separate. A total of twelve times,

“renegade” or “rogue” appeared as differentiating descriptors, “rogue” being particularly popular in CNN articles. For example:

. . . a *renegade* Mormon sect called the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, which is under the sway of Jeffs, a self-proclaimed prophet . . .<sup>27</sup>

The sect is a *rogue* branch of the Mormon church, which forbids nonbelievers from entering its temples.<sup>28</sup>

These 145 articles contained 138 explicit attempts to distinguish the LDS Church from the FLDS Church using the characterizations above. They occurred in eighty-one (56 percent) of the articles; twenty-eight of the articles used two or more of these characterizations. (See Table 3.)

Of the 145 articles analyzed, sixty-three *implicitly* (though not *explicitly*) distinguished LDS from FLDS. All sixty-three in this group referred to the polygamist group in Texas as belonging to the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (or FLDS). Most of the articles that did not make the distinction explicit were original to the LDS-owned *Deseret News*, whose readers were already presumably familiar with the difference.

Of the 145 articles analyzed, only one confused the two religions, an opinion column in *El Sol de Mexico*.<sup>29</sup> It contained a single sentence on the Texas polygamist group buried more than halfway down the page: “*En Texas, Estados Unidos, existe una iglesia donde se practica la poligamia, es decir, un hombre tiene varias mujeres de manera autorizada por esa Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días*” (In Texas, in the United States, there exists a church where they practice polygamy, which is to say, a man has various wives in the manner that is authorized by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). The writer incorrectly identified the polygamous group as LDS rather than FLDS, denounces it as un-Christian, and briefly critiques polygamy. This is the sole example from the 145 articles we read that explicitly misidentified the FLDS as LDS, representing 0.6 percent of our sample.

There are two important limitations to this analysis. One of us speaks Spanish, but we were otherwise confined to English language papers. Media in other languages may have contained egregious errors; but our sample, confined to English and Spanish papers missed those errors. This possibility is heightened by the fact

that "fundamentalist" is not only part of the FLDS Church's name, but also an adjective commonly used to describe conservative religious groups. Such a nuance may be lost in translation by people without sufficient knowledge of the groups involved. However, it is also worth noting that many of the newspapers in non-English speaking countries that were considered for inclusion in this study had no coverage of the raid on the FLDS in Texas at all. This was true of several English-language papers published in Mexico and Russia that we examined. This pattern suggests that, outside the United States, relatively few people read or heard about the Texas raid. More extensive analysis would be necessary to confirm this possibility.

A second limitation is the fact that our analyses involved only internet editions of news media, most of which have readerships numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Of course, such news sources may differ from other newspapers. Our data would not capture differences between internet and print editions or whether print-only newspapers reflect a higher rate of confusion between LDS and FLDS churches.

### **Definitional Issue**

The second topic raised in the LDS Church's effort to differentiate itself from the FLDS Church is the issue of labels, definitions, and legitimacy. The LDS Church has staked a claim to the label "Mormon" and is now discouraging the use of that term in the media to refer to any religious group other than itself.<sup>30</sup> Since the LDS Church has made strenuous attempts to discourage "Mormon Church" as an identifying label in the past,<sup>31</sup> this change represents an intriguing policy switch. The Principle Voices Coalition, an organization committed to educating the general public about and defending "Fundamentalist Mormon culture," argues that the LDS Church's attempts to control the media's use of the term "Mormon" is misguided. The coalition claims the right to use "Mormon" to refer to itself and participants in polygamy, although its preferred term is "Fundamentalist Mormon."<sup>32</sup>

In addition to claiming the label of "Mormon" as an exclusive reference to LDS Church members,<sup>33</sup> the LDS Church has asserted that the media have used "Mormon" in covering the raid on the FLDS ranch in Texas in ways that are potentially confusing to read-

ers. According to *Deseret News* publisher Joseph Cannon, "Much of this confusion comes from misapplying the name Mormon, as in 'fundamentalist Mormon' or 'Mormon polygamist.' The LDS Church has gone to great lengths to protect the name Mormon."<sup>34</sup>

At issue here are really two different definitions of "Mormon." Unless the two religious groups recognize these definitions, they will continue to argue past each other. Cannon is correct in stating that "Mormon" is used in various ways in the media, but a careful reading of our 145 articles reveals two dominant uses of the label.

Its first use is as a specific reference to the LDS Church. This is done by either coupling "Mormon" with "mainstream" or with "Church":

The FLDS is not associated with the *mainstream Mormon church*, which renounced polygamy more than a century ago.<sup>35</sup>

The children were taken from the 1,691-acre Yearning for Zion ranch operated by the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which long ago broke away from the *mainstream Mormon Church*.<sup>36</sup>

In the articles we analyzed, "mainstream Mormon" occurred twenty-six times while "Mormon Church" occurred sixty-two times. Generally speaking, no confusion between the LDS and FLDS churches resulted; clearly, the FLDS were being contrasted with another religion that was not the FLDS.

The second way we found "Mormon" being used was as a reference to any group that has roots in the religion founded by Joseph Smith in the 1830s.<sup>37</sup> Thus, any religion that traces itself back to Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon can call itself a "Mormon" religion.<sup>38</sup> This use of the term is reflected in scholarly writing about the various sects that have followed from Joseph Smith as well as in scholarship about Mormonism and polygamy.<sup>39</sup>

This understanding of the label was quite common in our 145-article sample. It was also generally clear what this label meant, but, admittedly, it requires understanding that there is not a single religious body descended from Joseph Smith but many religious groups that claim to be descendants of Smith's restoration. It is in this sense that "Mormon" is coupled with "fundamentalist," as in "fundamentalist Mormon." For example, the *New York*

*Times* began one article: "For years, the veiled world behind the doors of a *fundamentalist Mormon* polygamist temple tantalized local imaginations in the Hill Country south of here."<sup>40</sup> From this example and others like it, it would be difficult to argue that "Mormon" is ambiguous. It is obviously referring specifically to the FLDS group in Texas. Mormon is also coupled with "group" in several articles in this same sense: "The 10,000-member *Mormon group* is led by Warren Jeffs, who was convicted in Utah last year on two counts of accomplice to rape."<sup>41</sup>

In some instances, however, it is less obvious which definition of "Mormon" is being used. For example, when a CNN story claimed that the FLDS are an "offshoot," it is unclear exactly what is meant: "The Fundamental [sic] Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which owns the ranch, is a *Mormon offshoot* that practices polygamy."<sup>42</sup>

In this phrasing, "Mormon" could refer to the LDS Church, as in: "The FLDS are an offshoot of the LDS Church," which is, technically, true. It could also refer to the larger group of Mormon religions that trace their roots to Joseph Smith, as in: "The FLDS are an offshoot of the Mormon religion founded by Joseph Smith in 1830." This broader use of the term is consistent with scholars' usage of "Mormon."<sup>43</sup> This same ambiguity is also present in references to the FLDS as "a renegade Mormon sect" and "a rogue Mormon sect."<sup>44</sup> In the debate over definitions, it appears that the LDS Church wants "Mormon" to refer exclusively to itself while the FLDS employ a broader definition. The media, however, employ both.

In its style guide, posted on its website as a media reference, the LDS Church requests that news media use either the full name of the religion, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," or one of two alternatives, "The Church," or "The Church of Jesus Christ."<sup>45</sup> The names for the LDS Church used most frequently in the articles we analyzed were "Mormon Church" (sixty-two times) or the full name: "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (thirty-six times). We found no occurrences of "The Church of Jesus Christ" that did not also include "of Latter-day Saints." Two news articles used "the church," but only after specifically naming the "FLDS" and in a context that makes it clear which group it is referring to: "When all other ef-

forts to open the temple failed, about 57 men from *the church* stood in a circle around the building and watched as a SWAT team broke down the doors.”<sup>46</sup>

The LDS Church requests that it not be referred to as “Mormon Church,” “LDS Church,” or “the Church of Latter-day Saints.”<sup>47</sup> As noted above, dozens of articles refer to the LDS as the “Mormon Church.” Additionally, referring to the “LDS Church” is also common but primarily in the *Deseret News*. Twenty-eight of its articles used “LDS Church.” One Associated Press article also used that phrase. None of the other newspapers did, though many used “FLDS” in reference to the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (100 instances). The *Deseret News* also used “LDS” thirty times as an adjective (e.g., “LDS apostle lists differences with FLDS sect” and “Even when early LDS leaders were prosecuted for polygamy in the 1880s, Hales said, ‘they weren’t rounding up the wagons. It was not the same behavior you see among the FLDS.’”).<sup>48</sup> Finally, no articles used the term “Church of Latter-day Saints,” but three articles referred to the “Fundamentalist Church of Latter-day Saints.”

While it can be argued that there is some confusion in several articles over precisely what is meant by the term “Mormon,” in no case that we observed was “Mormon” so ambiguous as to lead an *informed* reader to believe that FLDS members are part of the LDS Church. It is, of course, possible that *uninformed* readers could draw this inference. However, it is also the case that people generally interpret what they read in the media in ways that reinforce their existing biases.<sup>49</sup> In the words of Peter Wason, who devoted much of his career to studying people’s bias toward confirming what they believe, “Ordinary people evade facts, become inconsistent, or systematically defend themselves against the threat of new information relevant to the issue.”<sup>50</sup> Despite explicit attempts to distinguish between the two groups, an uninformed reader, who believes that members of the LDS Church practice polygamy and who sees a news story that mentions “polygamy” or “Mormonism” in the context of the FLDS raid in Texas, is unlikely to devote sufficient cognitive resources to lead to a change in the belief. Such changes will occur most effectively with personal interactions with Mormons who dispel the inaccurate belief. It is easier to ignore or discount media contacts than personal experi-

ences with members of a marginalized group. Positive emotional experiences more effectively dispel such misconceptions and overcome interpersonal bias.<sup>51</sup>

### Legitimacy

We believe that what is really at play in the debate over the use of "Mormon" is legitimacy. Legitimacy is defined in various ways; but in reference to organizations (as opposed to individuals or beliefs), it generally refers to the organization's cultural acceptance or "taken-for-granted" status. To an organization, legitimacy is important because it translates into social acceptance, which, in turn, means a reduction in persecution and unfavorable treatment.<sup>52</sup>

While legitimacy is not widely used in the sociology of religion literature, the application as a framework in this context does have some precedent. Liston Pope, in his early work on social class and religion, described how mainline churches in Gastonia, North Carolina, were advocates of the status quo (thanks to their ties to the town's corporate elite) and therefore served as powerful sources of legitimation in the community.<sup>53</sup> In contrast to the mainline religions in Gastonia, the small and newer Holiness and Pentecostal religions were generally seen as less legitimate and as challengers of the status quo. While this case was later seen more as an exception than the rule,<sup>54</sup> in Gastonia it was the less legitimate, newer religions that fought for workers' rights while the mainline churches sided with their principal benefactors, the heads of corporations, in an economic dispute. Pope's example illustrates the importance of legitimacy, both for economic power struggles and for the institutional success of religions.

Sociologist of religion Mark Chaves also uses a legitimacy framework in interpreting religious change over time. He examines the ordination of women in Protestant and Catholic churches in the United States and argues that legitimacy competes with doctrinal orthodoxy in that debate.<sup>55</sup> A growing socio-cultural acceptance of women as religious leaders has spread throughout U.S. culture, following multiple women's rights movements and general changes in social equality. The increasing acceptance of female ordination has pressured some religions to allow the ordination of women in order to be seen as "legitimate" institutions.

What follows (or what accompanies) such a transformation is a re-interpretation of scripture and doctrine to allow for women's ordinations. Competing with the organizational desire for legitimacy in Chaves's framework is an organizational connection to tradition and doctrinal orthodoxy. Chaves argues that the religions that have not allowed female ordination accept a resulting decrease in socio-cultural legitimacy to maintain ties to their history and doctrinal interpretations of scripture.

It is also possible to view the legitimacy issue as an extension of both the classic church-sect typology<sup>56</sup> and as part of the religious economies model outlined by Stark and Finke.<sup>57</sup> In Stark and Finke's model, religions and societal religiosity cycle over time; large, legitimate churches lose their appeal and motivation, a decline that opens the religious marketplace to smaller, more motivated competitors (sects and cults).<sup>58</sup> The smaller sects and cults, with their higher levels of motivation, eventually become the societal churches, and the cycle repeats. Inherent in this model, though not generally discussed by its advocates, is the process of legitimation: In order to become widely accepted and to grow, the newer sects and cults must legitimize to some degree or remain too esoteric to have broad appeal. Thus, legitimacy is an essential, though underdiscussed, element of the new paradigm in the sociology of religion. Armand Mauss describes the legitimation of these sects and cults as a process of "assimilation" or "accommodation," which he phrases as a "quest for respectability."<sup>59</sup> His model of religious change falls into the new paradigm approach of Stark and Finke mentioned above.

Rather than discuss religious accommodation as an issue of legitimacy, many sociologists of religion have instead chosen a more ambiguous approach, discussing this idea generally as an issue of "tension." In the early 1970s, Dean Kelley noted that conservative Christian religions in the United States were experiencing growth while mainline Protestant religions were not.<sup>60</sup> Kelley's finding was surprising, considering the long-standing supremacy of mainline Protestant religions in the U.S. religious marketplace.<sup>61</sup> To account for this finding, Kelley proposed that religions in "tension" with their surrounding culture were growing while those that maintained the status quo were not.

The idea of "tension" is problematic for several reasons. First,

the concept seems straightforward but is actually ill defined. What is meant by tension? Mauss describes this tension as "conspicuously rejecting the surrounding society and flexing the muscles of militancy," which leads to "disrepute" and "repression."<sup>62</sup> Kelley describes his ideal type "strong" church as having the following characteristics:

In our model religious group, we could expect such firm adherence of members to the group's beliefs that they would be willing to suffer persecution, to sacrifice status, possessions, safety, and life itself for the organization, its convictions, its goals. We would see wholehearted commitment on the part of members, each individual's goals being highly or wholly identified with—or derived from—those of the group, so that a shoulder-to-shoulder solidarity would enable it to withstand all onslaughts from without and avoid betrayal from within. Moreover, members would willingly and fully submit themselves to the discipline of the group, obeying the decisions of the leadership without cavil and accepting punishment for infractions without resentment, considering any sanction preferable to being expelled. Lastly, the model religious organization would be marked by an irrepressible missionary zeal, an eagerness to tell the Good News to others, with warmth and confidence and winsomeness in the telling, refusing to be silenced even by repression or persecution.<sup>63</sup>

These descriptions of "tension" are, in fact, just the opposite of legitimacy. Tension, then, is illegitimacy (or, at least, less legitimacy). Yet, based on the work of Cathryn Johnson and her associates and others on nonprofits and corporations, illegitimacy is not conducive to institutional success.<sup>64</sup> Either religions somehow succeed differently than corporations, or the "tension" argument is different for religions and corporations.

Second, if tension is the key to religious success, then the relativity of tension must be taken into account. Kelley highlighted the sudden rapid growth of conservative Christian religions in the United States, but they are not the only religions in tension with the status quo, since tension has to be measured locally, not nationally. Thus, if tension is the key, in conservative regions of the United States, extremely conservative and relatively liberal religions should grow rapidly. For example, the United Church of Christ and Jehovah's Witnesses should both grow rapidly in rural Georgia; but that is not happening.<sup>65</sup> In short, "tension," as a the-

oretical construct explaining religious growth, is too ambiguous to be compelling.

Third, Kelley and others, including Mauss, assert that religion must maintain an “optimum” level of tension in order to grow. Mauss describes two factors that influence religious accommodation: (1) acceptance and respectability, and (2) unique identity.<sup>66</sup> He argues that religions must find the right balance between these two factors. With too little tension, a religion becomes the status quo; with too much, it becomes an extremist group. Yet just what level of tension is optimal remains unclear.

Having outlined the problems with the “tension” model, which forms the foundation of the religious economies model, we describe our model of religious growth and contrast it to Mauss’s. Figure 1 delineates a general model of corporate growth based primarily on responding to consumer demands.<sup>67</sup> The goal of corporations is to increase profits and/or market share. Increasing profits requires an accurate understanding of consumer demand and the product being sold; thus, both must be evaluated.<sup>68</sup> Corporations regularly engage in consumer research to better understand not only what consumers want but also how consumers view their product. Corporations then lay out a plan that finds a balance between two competing approaches: increasing the product’s legitimacy (by making it more widely accepted) or increasing the product’s niche appeal (by focusing on its differences from competing products). Each plan corresponds to a process or action: Increased legitimacy leads to assimilation and accommodation (Mauss’s terms) while increased niche appeal leads to differentiation. Those processes are implemented and evaluated in light of the primary goal—increased profits. This approach is cyclical, repeated over time.

An example may help illustrate this idea. The Subway restaurant chain competes with other fast food restaurants for profits and market share. Let’s assume that Subway conducts market research and finds two competing interests among potential consumers in the United States: (1) large amounts of food for little money, and (2) healthy, low-calorie food for the health-conscious. As getting a good buy (i.e., more for less) is a widely held American value, offering larger sandwiches at a low price will increase Subway’s legitimacy in the American marketplace. This approach

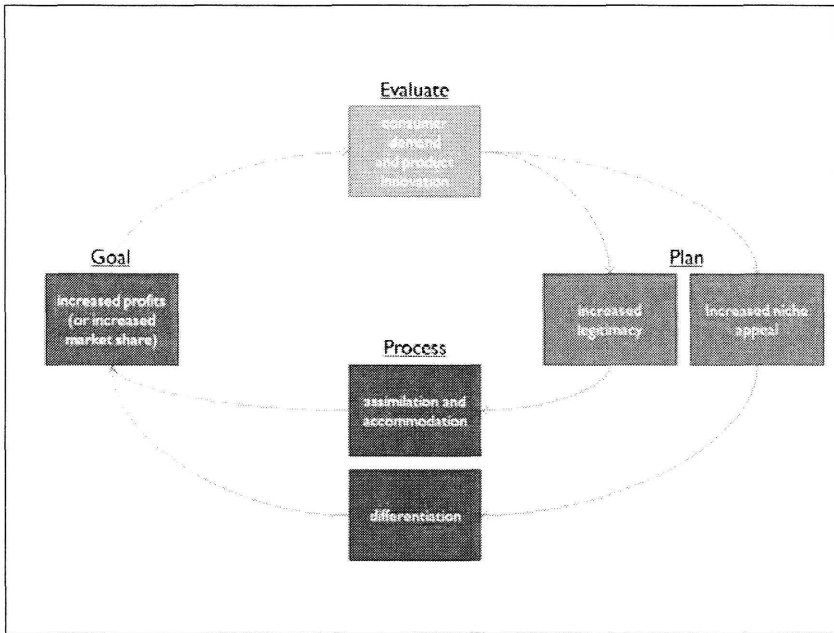


Figure 1. A CORPORATE MODEL OF GROWTH.

represents a process of assimilation and accommodation to the broad cultural norm of getting a good buy. However, a niche market simultaneously exists of consumers who want healthy food options and are willing to pay more to get them. If Subway markets itself as a "healthy" fast food restaurant, and "healthy" is associated in consumers' minds as "more expensive," then Subway risks decreasing its legitimacy generally but increasing its niche appeal. If it chooses the niche appeal approach, it undergoes a process of differentiation, becoming less legitimate in the process. Of course, the smart corporation engages in a simultaneous campaign—pushing both legitimacy and niche appeal by using targeted advertising.

In the business world, Johnson & Johnson faced a legitimacy crisis in the 1980s when seven people died from cyanide-laced Tylenol.<sup>69</sup> Prior to the poisoning, Tylenol had a 30 percent share of the pain reliever market.<sup>70</sup> As a result of the poisoning, Tylenol lost almost all legitimacy in the public eye and most of its market share. However, Johnson & Johnson's well-managed public rela-

tions campaign saved the product from complete disaster. The company quickly recalled all the product at a cost of over \$100 million, researched the incident, and found that the poisoning was deliberate sabotage and not the result of the company's carelessness. It responded with new technology (tamper-proof seals) for its product that immediately became industry standard. Just as importantly, Johnson & Johnson made all of these efforts public and worked closely with the media throughout this period. When the product was reintroduced to the market, Tylenol gained "a leading market position" and today is "one of the most popular analgesics on store shelves and a trusted brand."<sup>71</sup> Its ability to increase its legitimacy was a vital component of its corporate success.

Two religious examples of the importance of balancing legitimacy with niche market appeal come from Roman Catholicism in America. William D'Antonio and his colleagues found that rates of religious giving dropped the most among Roman Catholics who had adopted liberal views on sexual issues after Vatican II. Roman Catholicism's catering to the niche of birth control opponents translated into lower donations from its more liberal members.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, the scandals about child sexual abuse committed by Catholic priests have resulted in lower donations to the Catholic Church.<sup>73</sup> The reduced legitimacy of the religion made it less appealing to "consumers."

Figure 2 illustrates our interpretation of Mauss's model of religious growth, which is the corporate model combined with the religious economies model. Unlike corporations, religions have as their primary goal increased membership (which can also be seen as increased market share). Religions are not driven by increased profits but rather increased memberships. Religions, like corporations, evaluate consumer demand and their product, changing each based upon the goal of increasing membership. For example, allowing blacks the priesthood could be seen as product innovation within Mormonism while modifying temple garments and clarifying questions to be asked in temple recommend interviews could be seen as responding to consumer demand.<sup>74</sup> In Mauss's model, the plan is "optimum tension" with the surrounding society, which offers, as the two primary dynamics, either assimilation or retrenchment. Yet, as noted above, opti-

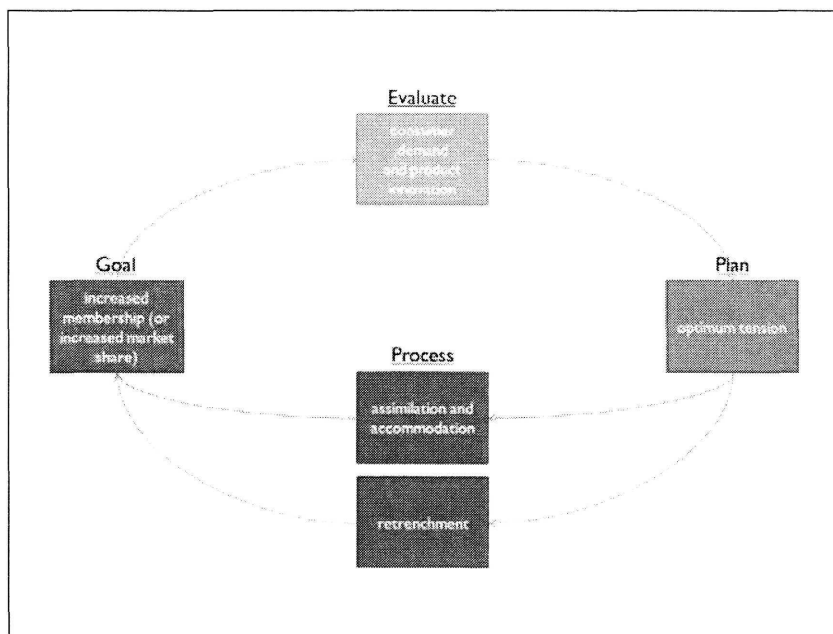


Figure 2. RELIGIOUS GROWTH, MAUSS'S (1994) MODEL.

mum tension is poorly defined and relative; furthermore, the connection between optimum tension and increased membership is unclear.

Figure 3 is our proposed model. The only difference between our proposed model and the corporate model is that religions are interested in increased membership, not profit. Otherwise, the approaches to growth are identical. Our model contrasts with Mauss's in that we replace "optimum tension" with the competing interests that underlie that optimum tension—increased legitimacy and increased niche appeal. We also refer to the process by which niche appeal is increased as "differentiation" rather than "retrenchment." In the economic sense, "retrenchment" means cutting operations and downsizing, which is not our connotation. In the religious sense, "retrenchment" does refer to a reversal of assimilation (delegitimization), but it also includes an inherent conservatism, which may not be the religion's niche appeal. As our model applies to religions generally and not just Mormonism or other conservative religions, we opted for "differentiation,"

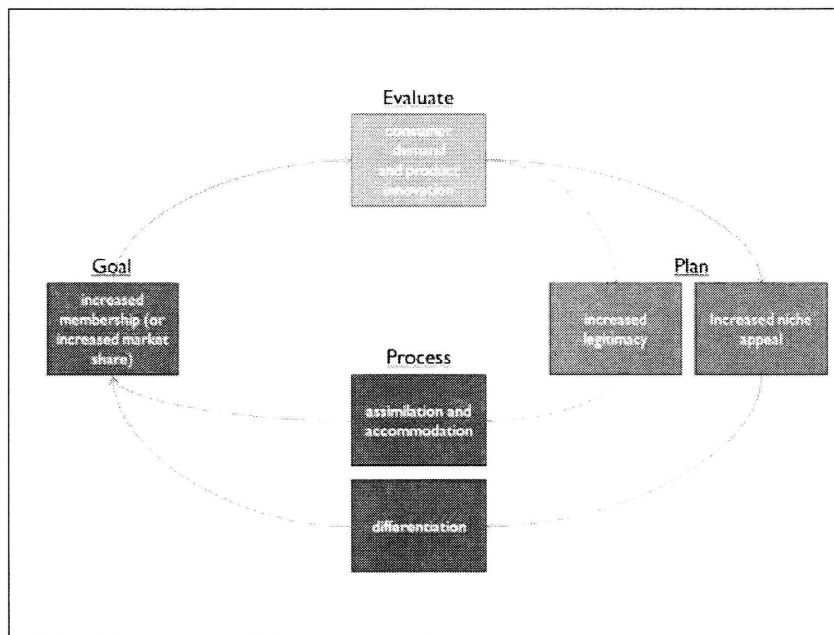


Figure 3. RELIGIOUS GROWTH, LEGITIMACY MODEL.

which implies a process of distinguishing one “product” from another. In our model, then, religions grow by being somewhat legitimate (not illegitimate) but simultaneously by illustrating how their “product” is better than another, particularly for specific consumers. In many respects, our model is very similar to those of Mauss and Chaves. Where we differ is in proposing a clearer explanation of the underlying forces that may cause “tension” between a religion and the surrounding society. But it is not the “tension” that makes a religion attractive, leading in turn to growth; it is the combination of legitimacy and market appeal. Market appeal is contingent upon some tension; but as Mauss notes, that tension is finely tuned. It cannot be either too much or too little.

This model explains the decline of the mainline religions by arguing that they focused too much on legitimacy—they became the status quo—while neglecting niche appeal (they no longer required even formal membership to reap the rewards of participation). Likewise, this model also explains the growth of conserva-

tive Christian religions after 1960. First, consumer demands changed, meaning that both legitimacy and consumer appeal (the niche) changed. The new definition of legitimacy favored conservative religions. Simultaneously, conservative religions had not lost their niche appeal, which made them attractive alternatives to the mainline religions.<sup>75</sup>

Raising the issue of organizational legitimacy for Mormonism, it is worth noting that institutions and organizations go through a four-stage process to become legitimate: (1) innovation to address some need, goal, or desire at the local level; (2) local validation by local actors, meaning that the organization is construed as consonant with the widely accepted cultural framework of beliefs, values, and norms in the local environment where it is originally created; (3) the diffusion throughout the local context of the view that the organization is consonant with the broader culture; and (4) diffusion throughout the broader society of the view that the organization is consonant with it—it is, in fact, becoming part of the culture. Once an organization reaches the fourth stage, it is considered legitimate and part of the society's shared culture.<sup>76</sup>

This article's goal is not to present a detailed historical discussion of the LDS Church's legitimation but rather to discuss its modern struggle for legitimacy in the context of challenges from schismatic groups, like the FLDS Church. The LDS Church is now 179 years old, dated from its founding in 1830—165 years if dated from Joseph Smith's death in 1844. Most observers consider it to be a "legitimate" organization—generally consonant with societal values. In contrast, the Jehovah's Witnesses have accommodated very little to societal values.<sup>77</sup> However, legitimacy is not a destination; it is a never-ending struggle. Once legitimacy is achieved, the struggle for legitimacy often turns into a struggle with competitors.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the LDS Church cannot be complacent about the legitimacy it has achieved. Instead, it must work to maintain its legitimacy, continuing to reinforce its image in the public mind that it is consonant with society's beliefs and values. Ironically, however, organizational success requires that the religion simultaneously points out its differences from other religions to maintain its niche appeal. (See Figure 3.)

One illustration of how Mormonism struggles with the issue

of legitimacy in the context of other religions (and not in the context of American society in general) is the continued debate over whether the LDS Church is Christian. It has *not* been welcomed into the family of “Christian” religions by many other Christian churches.<sup>79</sup> Given the strong influence of Christianity on U.S. and Western culture, this issue is not a minor one. Like the debate over the definition of “Mormon,” legitimacy in this context hinges on definitions. The LDS Church defines as “Christian” anyone who worships Jesus Christ as divine.<sup>80</sup> Evangelical Protestants, however, argue that “true” Christians adhere to traditional Trinitarian concepts (the embodiment of the Father and Jesus Christ), do not accept extra-biblical scriptures (Book of Mormon), and do not view God as progressing over time but rather as eternally perfect (the plan of salvation).<sup>81</sup> This definition excludes the LDS Church on all three counts. The LDS Church, in response, has collaborated with evangelical Protestants and Catholics on political issues,<sup>82</sup> emphasized “Jesus Christ” in its logo,<sup>83</sup> reiterated repeatedly that it is Christian in virtually every general conference and other settings, and worked to redefine the definition of what it means to be Christian.<sup>84</sup> All of these responses are attempts to increase Mormon legitimacy as a Christian religion. However, the LDS Church maintains beliefs that distinguish it from conservative Protestantism, which help it maintain its niche appeal. Thus, the LDS Church is trying to maintain a successful balance between legitimacy and niche appeal, emphasizing the elements shared with more legitimated Christianity, while simultaneously stressing Mormonism’s differences from that Christianity.

The LDS Church’s efforts to be accepted as a legitimate “Christian” religion illustrate the importance of labels in struggles over legitimacy. If the LDS Church gains widespread acceptance as “Christian,” this relabeling will increase its organizational legitimacy, while simultaneously decreasing persecution and criticism. Lythgoe notes the decline in persecution of the LDS Church in the 1950s due to its favorable image in the media: “Mormons have become accustomed to favorable publicity through the comfortable image projected in the fifties; it was a welcome change from an extensive background of persecution.”<sup>85</sup> At the same time, churches that do not consider the LDS

(and other Mormons) "Christian" have a vested interest in keeping Mormonism outside the "Christian" family as they recognize that allowing the LDS Church into that group will: (1) give Latter-day Saints the legitimacy that comes with being Christian in U.S. society, and (2) reduce their own legitimacy as long-standing members of the Christian fold by allowing in a religion that is, from their perspective, clearly different.

Much like the LDS Church's struggle to be considered Christian, its active intervention to differentiate it in the public mind from the FLDS Church and other fundamentalist Mormons can best be understood as a continued effort to maintain its legitimacy. Since the mid-nineteenth century, when the Mormon practice of polygamy and slavery were labeled by the Republican Party as the "twin relics of barbarism,"<sup>86</sup> polygamy has impeded Mormonism's efforts toward legitimacy in the broader culture. A complete recounting of this history is beyond the scope of this paper, but a brief summary is instructive.<sup>87</sup> Polygamy stirred anti-Mormon sentiment in Nauvoo, which eventually contributed to the martyrdom of Joseph Smith and the LDS migration westward. Intensifying federal pressure disincorporated the Church, created administrative chaos by keeping leaders on the underground, inflicted economic and psychological suffering on families by jailing thousands of fathers, threatened to confiscate the temple, and persistently withheld statehood with its promise of greater autonomy. Church president Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto in September 1890, withdrawing the Church's support for new plural marriages and signaling the beginning of a permanent retreat from the practice. After the disbanding of the Mormon People's Party and the dissolution of its cooperative economic system, statehood followed in 1896. Considerable confusion reigned about whether the Manifesto should be interpreted to include the continuation of formerly contracted plural marriages. Perhaps more importantly, new plural marriages authorized by General Authorities and Joseph F. Smith's continued cohabitation with his own plural wives contributed to the confusing state of affairs.

When Apostle Reed Smoot was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1902, the Church came under close scrutiny and accusations of bad faith. President Joseph F. Smith issued a "Second Manifesto"

in 1904, threatening to take action against polygamists. In 1905, the Church dropped from the Twelve and disciplined two apostles who had been advocating and performing plural marriages.<sup>88</sup> A series of such actions and public declarations over the next decade firmly moved the LDS Church away from its polygamist past and away from those who advocated or engaged in polygamy. Before he died in 1918, President Joseph F. Smith had issued nine public statements against polygamy and instructed stake presidents to bring polygamists before Church courts.<sup>89</sup> In 1933 an "official statement" on polygamy (the "Final Manifesto") was printed in the *Deseret News* to remove credibility from some polygamists who claimed that the Church continued to secretly endorse polygamy. Two years later, the Church guided a bill through the state legislature upgrading polygamy from a misdemeanor to a felony.<sup>90</sup> That same year, members of the Zion Park Stake in southern Utah were forced to take a loyalty oath declaring their support for the LDS Church First Presidency and denouncing plural marriage; members who refused were excommunicated. When Utah government officials raided the polygamists of Short Creek, the local stake president offered his assistance in the prosecutions. Anti-polygamy raids followed in 1944 and 1953. Also during this period, J. Reuben Clark, a counselor in the First Presidency, and Apostle Melvin J. Ballard spearheaded efforts to reduce polygamy in Utah and the intermountain West, highlighting the distinction between LDS Mormons and polygamist Mormons. Following the 1944 raid, Elder Mark E. Petersen wrote a letter to the UPI news service distinguishing between the LDS Church and polygamists and stressing LDS cooperation with government efforts to eliminate polygamy.<sup>91</sup> Governor Ernest Pyle of Arizona said of the 1953 raid, "We didn't make a single move that we didn't clear with the Council of the Twelve. They were one thousand percent cooperative, a hundred percent behind it."<sup>92</sup> Excommunication of polygamists has continued; but polygamists with Mormon roots remain committed to living "the principle," which they believe the LDS Church discontinued only for reasons of political expediency.

By 1950 LDS Church leaders largely ignored polygamy publicly, while continuing quietly to excommunicate those who confessed to engaging in polygamy or against whom they had evi-

dence.<sup>93</sup> Except when polygamy captures media attention, this policy seems to have persisted in Utah.<sup>94</sup> Polygamy is downplayed within the Church as well, despite the fact that the earthly practice was "discontinued" rather than "repudiated."<sup>95</sup> For instance, although references to polygamy were omitted from the 1998 manual of Brigham Young's teachings used in Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society classes, "the original spelling and punctuation have been preserved," apparently "to convey a sense of historical accuracy to altered texts."<sup>96</sup>

If the Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints, who are not seen as consonant with the broader culture due to their reclusiveness, polygamy, and other esoteric practices and beliefs,<sup>97</sup> are associated with—or confused with—the Latter-day Saints, this effect would damage the legitimacy the LDS Church has worked so hard to develop. In its effort to differentiate itself from the FLDS, the LDS Church "reiterates that it has nothing whatsoever to do with any groups practicing polygamy."<sup>98</sup> This claim, of course, ignores the groups' shared heritage in favor of focusing on their current views regarding contemporary polygamy. Joe Cannon, publisher of the *Deseret News*, maintains that the LDS and FLDS are "utterly different in . . . beliefs and practices."<sup>99</sup> This assertion is also not entirely accurate, as both groups hold the Book of Mormon and other texts to be scripture and share a number of beliefs that distinguish them from historic Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant beliefs (their niche appeal). But assertions that the LDS and FLDS are distinct, though hyperbolic, are understandable in the context of a search for legitimacy. Both Fundamentalist and non-fundamentalist Mormons seek to enhance their legitimacy. Fundamentalist Mormons do so by emphasizing their "Mormonness" and non-fundamentalist Mormons by emphasizing their "Christianness." Simultaneously, both are trying to retain their niche appeal.

The LDS Church has also tried to show its consonance with the broader culture by releasing videos and news stories about members of its faith in Texas who are well-known public figures and, of course, quite "normal."<sup>100</sup> Another illustration of the LDS Church's striving for consonance with the broader culture can be seen in the Public Affairs' claim that it is unfair for the FLDS to use the LDS Church's legitimacy: "To any average observer, it

doesn't seem fair or reasonable for a comparatively small religious group to adopt the full name of another well-established church after more than a century and a half."<sup>101</sup>

The assertion that this is an issue of legitimacy is not lost on LDS leaders. They apparently believe that the FLDS and other fundamentalist Mormons use the label "Mormon" specifically for its legitimacy, commenting, "This [use] is perfectly understandable from the standpoint of seeking the religious *legitimacy* that the word 'Mormon' grants."<sup>102</sup> The publisher of the *Deseret News* has also framed the issue as the FLDS causing damage to the LDS "brand."<sup>103</sup> The LDS Church also draws on sources outside the boundaries of the organization to illustrate its legitimacy by arguing that the Associated Press's style guide agrees with the LDS Church on the usage of the word "Mormon,"<sup>104</sup> even though it seems likely that the Associated Press consulted the Church on its preference in compiling its guide. The appearance of consensus on the correct application of "Mormon" assumes the status of an objective social reality or social fact, which bolsters the arguments of the LDS Church.

That the LDS Church has obtained legitimacy status also gives it significant advantages in this debate. As a legitimated organization, the broader culture turns to the LDS Church when challengers like the Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints arise. As a result, the LDS Church has the power to mold the media representation of the challenging institutions. If the frequency with which the media used "polygamist sects"—the term the LDS Church prefers in referring to the FLDS and other polygamist groups—is an indication of effectiveness, then the LDS Church has been particularly successful. "Polygamist sect" appeared more than thirty times in the articles we read, and "sect" appears in 121 of the 145 articles, despite the fact that fundamentalist Mormons prefer not to use "polygamist."<sup>105</sup>

Finally, for their part, polygamist Mormons recognize their marginal status and object to the public fascination with sexual aspects of the polygamist lifestyle,<sup>106</sup> which effectively emphasizes their illegitimacy. It also is important to recognize that, although public attention has focused on the FLDS Church, most polygamous Mormons are affiliated with other groups or with no group at all and that they represent a range of perspectives on such mat-

ters as the ease with which women can obtain a divorce and the minimal age at which females may marry.<sup>107</sup>

A final issue is worth mentioning here. In 1998, D. Michael Quinn suggested that the LDS Church would move toward allowing Africans who practice polygamy to be baptized. Quinn based his argument on the idea that Mormonism's overriding goal is growth. If such a policy change were to occur, suggests Quinn, many fundamentalist Mormons in the United States would want to reaffiliate with the LDS Church.<sup>108</sup>

This hypothesis actually provides a test for the model of religious growth we propose. If we are correct that legitimacy plays an important role in religious growth, then it makes sense that the LDS Church would continue to forbid membership to African polygamists to maintain its American legitimacy. Quinn is right in asserting that the admission of African polygamists would cause turmoil, "[confusing] the church's policy toward illegal polygamy in the United States,"<sup>109</sup> but it would also call into question the socio-cultural legitimacy of the institution relative to U.S. culture. Just under half of all Mormons live in the United States and Canada, and North America is the primary source of tithing revenue. Thus, from an organizational perspective, it makes very little sense to introduce changes that would cause a challenge to organizational legitimacy. We argue that the only way the LDS Church will reinstate the practice of polygamy is if polygamist lifestyles become widespread and legitimate family forms in the United States, which is unlikely for the foreseeable future. Until then, we should expect the LDS Church to continue to distance itself from polygamists to maintain its organizational legitimacy.

### Conclusions

The arrest and prosecution of Warren Jeffs and the raid on the FLDS in Texas drew enough media attention that the LDS Church felt it necessary to protect its legitimacy by criticizing the media coverage for not being clear in distinguishing between the LDS and FLDS and to reassert its distinctiveness from fundamentalist Mormons. This paper tested the assertion that the media, in covering the Texas FLDS raid, confused the LDS and FLDS churches by analyzing 145 Spanish- and English-language articles from U.S. and international newspapers. In this sample, eighty-

one explicitly distinguished between the two churches, sixty-three implicitly distinguished between them, and only one confused the two.

The LDS Church has also, as a result of the news coverage of the Texas raid on the FLDS ranch, reasserted its claim to the label of “Mormon” from which it tried to distance itself in the past.<sup>110</sup> The rationale for doing so is best understood as an issue of legitimacy. The LDS Church is engaged in a continuous struggle between legitimization—being consonant with the broader culture—and maintaining its peculiarity or niche appeal to distinguish itself from religious competitors. Any association with polygamous groups or fundamentalist Mormon groups brings that legitimacy into question. Thus, the LDS Church has engaged in a public relations campaign to differentiate itself and its members from the FLDS to maintain its legitimacy.

This paper detailed the two definitions of the label “Mormon” used by the media. Until an alternative label for religions that trace their ancestry back to Joseph Smith is proposed and widely accepted, it is likely that the label “Mormon” will continue to be used to refer to all such groups. While introducing a small amount of confusion for the uninformed reader, the use of that label does reflect the reality of a shared history and many shared beliefs. Despite the efforts of the LDS Church to claim “Mormon” as its own, the fight over “Mormon” will continue for the foreseeable future.

### Notes

1. Mark Chaves, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997); Cathryn Johnson, Timothy J. Dowd, Cecilia L. Ridgeway, Karen S. Cook, and Douglas S. Massey, “Legitimacy as a Social Process,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 32 (2006): 53–78.

2. Brooke Adams, “Fundamentalists: We’re Mormon, Too,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 9, 2008, [http://www.sltrib.com/faith/ci\\_9828897](http://www.sltrib.com/faith/ci_9828897) (accessed July 13, 2008); Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, LDS Newsroom (hereafter LDS Newsroom), “Church Seeks to Address Public Confusion over Texas Polygamy Group,” <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/news-releases-stories/church-seeks-to-address-public-confusion-over-texas-polygamy-group>, and “Protecting the Church’s Identity,” <http://www.newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commen->

tary/protecting-the-church-s-identity (both accessed July 13, 2008); Ben Winslow, "LDS Church Emphasizes 'Mormon' Distinctions," *Deseret News*, July 11, 2008, <http://deseretnews.com/article/1percent2C5143percent2C700242231percent2C00.html> (accessed July 13, 2008). Although the print version of the paper is *Deseret Morning News*, the website, from which we conducted our research, is titled *Deseret News*. For conciseness and parallelism, given the contrasts and comparison of this article, we use "FLDS" and "LDS," as both adjectives and as nouns: Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the FLDS Church, and "the FLDS" (meaning both church and people); and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, LDS Church, and "the LDS" (meaning both church and people). In this use, we are reflecting the pervasive term used in the media and in the research literature. The cumbersome of the Church's full name is an obvious reason for the abbreviated terms.

3. Joseph A. Cannon, "Adoption of FLDS Name Is Akin to Identity Theft," *Deseret News*, May 11, 2008, <http://deseretnews.com/article/0,1249,700224488,00.html> (accessed May 12, 2008); "LDS Apostle Lists Differences with FLDS Sect," *Deseret News*, April 18, 2008, <http://deseretnews.com/article/0,1249,695271743,00.html> (accessed May 13, 2008); and the following *Deseret News* articles by Ben Winslow, all accessed May 12 or 13, 2008: "LDS Church Calls Request 'Erroneous,'" April 23, 2008, <http://deseretnews.com/article/0,1249,695272934,00.html>; "LDS Church Critical of Foreign Press Accounts of Texas Raid," April 11, 2008, <http://deseretnews.com/article/0,1249,695269605,00.html>; "LDS Church Critical of Media Reports on FLDS," April 12, 2008, <http://deseretnews.com/article/0,1249,695269713,00.html>; "LDS Church Responds to Request to Monitor FLDS Prayers," April 22, 2008, <http://deseretnews.com/article/0,1249,695272878,00.html>; "Name Raising Eyebrows," April 7, 2008, <http://deseretnews.com/article/0,1249,695268134,00.html>; "Texas LDS Deal with Confusion," April 21, 2008, <http://deseretnews.com/article/0,1249,695272400,00.html>.

4. Cathryn Johnson et al., "Legitimacy as a Social Process," 53-78.

5. Winslow, "LDS Church Critical of Media Reports on FLDS."

6. Quentin Cook quoted in "LDS Apostle Lists Differences with FLDS Sect."

7. Winslow, "Texas LDS Deal with Confusion."

8. Lance B. Wickman, "Media Letter," June 26, 2008, LDS Newsroom, <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/news-releases-stories/media-letter> (accessed July 13, 2008).

9. LDS Newsroom, "Church Seeks to Address Public Confusion Over Texas Polygamy Group," June 26, 2008, <http://newsroom.lds.org/>

ldsnewsroom/eng/news-releases-stories/church-seeks-to-address-public-confusion-over-texas-polygamy-group (accessed July 13, 2008).

10. Wickman, "Media Letter."

11. LDS Newsroom, "Protecting the Church's Identity"; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, LDS Newsroom, "Clear, Contextual Conversation Begets More of the Same," <http://www.newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/clear-contextual-conversation-begets-more-of-the-same> (accessed July 13, 2008).

12. U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Federal Trademark Service, "Trademark No. 78161091," November 1, 2005, <http://tarr.uspto.gov/servlet/tarr?regser=serial&entry=78161091> (accessed July 22, 2008). The LDS Church filed for a trademark for the word "Mormon" on September 5, 2002. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office rejected the application on the grounds that "Mormon" describes the services of the religion and is a generic label and nickname: "The proposed mark, 'MORMON,' is incapable of serving as a source-identifier for applicant's religious services. Therefore, the refusal of registration under Section 2(e)(1) is continued and made FINAL, notwithstanding applicant's claim of acquired distinctiveness under Section 2(f), 15 U.S.C. §1052(f). . . . Applicant argues earnestly that the term 'MORMON' is a [sic] not a religious service, but the source of religious services, thus performing the classic job of a service mark, which is to indicate the source of the applicant's goods or services. This argument is flat-out contrary to the above axiom, bolstered by case law, that the generic term need not be a noun. There are many varied types of churches, in the sense of a church being a facility erected for the primary purpose of providing a place for assembly and gathering for worship, for providing religious worship services. Mormonism is a specific religion. The Mormon Church, also known as 'The Mormon Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' and the 'Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' is a Church in the sense of 'A specified Christian denomination. It is not the actual name of a product produced by the LDS Church nor is it the name of the company that creates the product'" (Office Action Outgoing, November 1, 2005). Likewise, there is no trademark on "Methodist," "Lutheran," "Catholic," etc. The application for a trademark was rejected in 2005 and made final in 2006. The LDS Church is petitioning to reopen the case. <http://tarr.uspto.gov/servlet/tarr?regser=serial&entry=78161091>. Wickman, "Media Letter," made the Mormon = LDS argument.

13. "The Principle Voices Coalition Statement," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 10, 2008, [http://www.sltrib.com/polygamy/ci\\_9837877](http://www.sltrib.com/polygamy/ci_9837877) (accessed July 13, 2008).

14. Ken Driggs, "This Will Someday Be the Head and Not the Tail

of the Church': A History of the Mormon Fundamentalists at Short Creek," *Journal of Church and State* 43, no. 1 (2001): 49–80; D. Michael Quinn, "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31, no. 2 (1998): 1–68.

15. LDS Newsroom, "Church Seeks to Address Public Confusion over Texas Polygamy Group."

16. Cathryn Johnson et al., "Legitimacy as a Social Process."

17. LDS Newsroom, "Protecting the Church's Identity."

18. Dennis L. Lythgoe, "Mormonism in the Nineteen-Seventies: The Popular Perception," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10, no. 3 (1977): 15–20.

19. *La Cronica de Hoy*, *El Sol de Mexico*, and the *New Zealand Herald* had little or no coverage before May 5, so we included some additional stories after that date.

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21. "Abuse Probe at Polygamist Sect," *Sun*, April 5, 2008, <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/article1005530.ece> (accessed July 11, 2008); emphasis ours.

22. Kirk Johnson, "Texas Polygamy Raid May Pose Risk," *New York Times*, April 12, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/12/us/12raid.html> (accessed May 12, 2008); emphasis ours.

23. Miguel Bustillo, "Investigators Find Bed at Texas Polygamist Temple," *St. Petersburg Times*, April 11, 2008, [http://www.sptimesrussia.com/index.php?action\\_id=2&story\\_id=25660](http://www.sptimesrussia.com/index.php?action_id=2&story_id=25660) (accessed July 13, 2008); emphasis ours.

24. Associated Press, "Conflict Escalates at Polygamist Retreat," Fox News, April 5, 2008, <http://www.foxnews.com/wires/2008Apr05/0,4670,PolygamistRetreat,00.html> (accessed May 13, 2008); emphasis ours.

25. Associated Press, "Child Welfare Officials Remove Girls from Polygamist Sect Leader Warren Jeff's Compound," Fox News, April 5, 2008, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,346390,00.html> (accessed May 13, 2008); emphasis ours.

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CNN.com, April 5, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/CRIME/04/05/texas.ranch/index.html> (accessed May 13, 2008); emphasis ours.

29. Ausencio García, "Opinion: Titeres y Cabezas," *El Sol de Mexico*, June 3, 2008, <http://www.oem.com.mx/diariodelsur/notas/n720944.htm> (accessed July 13, 2008). We included this post-May 5 article in our sample to get a sense of how the FLDS were distinguished from the LDS in various countries around the world.

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32. Anne Wilde, "Fundamentalist Mormonism: Its History, Diversity, and Stereotypes, 1886-Present," in *Scattering of the Saints: Schism within Mormonism*, edited by John C. Hamer and Newell G. Bringhurst, (Independence, Mo.: John Whitmer Books, 2007), 258-89; and her "Fundamentalist Mormons: Who We Are," Principle Voices website, July 11, 2008, <http://principlevoices.org/archives/56> (accessed July 15, 2008).

33. LDS Newsroom, April 24, 2008, "Clarifying Polygamy Confusion," <http://www.newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/clarifying-polygamy-confusion> (accessed July 13, 2008).

34. Cannon, "Adoption of FLDS Name Is Akin to Identity Theft."

35. CNN, "Sect Challenges Legality of Search Warrant, Raid," CNN.com, April 24, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/CRIME/04/24/polygamy.raid/index.html?iref=newssearch> (accessed May 13, 2008); emphasis ours.

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37. Bringhurst and Hamer, *Scattering of the Saints: Schism within Mormonism*.

38. Jan Shipps, "Mormon Metamorphosis: The Neglected Story," *Christian Century*, August 14, 1996, <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/>

mi\_ml058/is\_n24\_v113/ai\_18612641/print?tag=artBody;coll (accessed July 14, 2008).

39. Bringhurst and Hamer, eds., *Scattering of the Saints*; Irwin Altman and Joseph Ginat, *Polygamous Families in Contemporary Society* (Cambridge, England: University of Cambridge Press, 1996), 19-43.

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41. Dan Glaister, "180 Taken from Polygamist Sect Compound in Texas," *Mail & Guardian*, April 7, 2008, <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2008-04-07-180-taken-from-polygamist-sect-compound-in-texas> (accessed July 13, 2008); emphasis ours.

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44. "Abuse Probe at Polygamist Sect"; "Women Return to Texas Polygamist Ranch," CNN.com, April 14, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/CRIME/04/14/polygamy.retreat/index.html> (accessed May 13, 2008).

45. LDS Newsroom, "Style Guide."

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51. David Myers, *Exploring Social Psychology*, 4th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages, 2006); 249-69.

52. Dennis L. Lythgoe, "The Changing Image of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 4 (1968): 45-58.

53. Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1965); cited and discussed in Kevin

J. Christiano, William H. Swatos Jr., and Peter Kivisto, *Sociology of Religion: Contemporary Developments*, 2d ed. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 136.

54. John Milton Yinger, *The Scientific Study of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1970).

55. Chaves, *Ordaining Women*.

56. Benton Johnson, "A Critical Appraisal of the Church-Sect Typology," *American Sociological Review* 22, no. 1 (1957): 88-92; and his "On Church and Sect," *American Sociological Review* 28, no. 4 (1963): 539-49; Ronald Lawson, "Sect-State Relations: Accounting for the Differing Trajectories of Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses," *Sociology of Religion* 56, no. 4 (1995): 351-77.

57. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000). Their model is sometimes referred to as the "new paradigm" in the sociology of religion, though its status as a new paradigm is hotly debated. Frank J. Lechner, "The 'New Paradigm' in the Sociology of Religion: Comment on Warner," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 1 (1997): 182-92.

58. We use "cult" in the technical, sociological sense of "new religious movement" (NRM) and not with the popular connotations of a highly regulated, secretive, oppressive group.

59. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 22. He also argues that society's natural response to a movement is either "domestication" or "destruction" (4). He refers to domestication as "assimilation."

60. Dean M. Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing: A Study in Sociology of Religion* (New York: HarperCollins, 1972).

61. Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney, *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

62. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 5.

63. Kelley "Why Conservative Churches Are Growing," 57-58.

64. Cathryn Johnson et al., "Legitimacy as a Social Process."

65. Barry A. Kosmin, Egon Mayer, and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS)* (New York: Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 2001), [http://www.gc.cuny.edu/faculty/research\\_studies/aris.pdf](http://www.gc.cuny.edu/faculty/research_studies/aris.pdf) (accessed May 15, 2008).

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67. Albert Blankenship, George Breen, and Alan Dutka, *State of the Art Marketing Research*, 2d ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998); R.

Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Fang Lee Cooke, "Competition and Strategy of Chinese Firms," *Competitiveness Review* 18, nos. 1-2 (2008): 29, details a variety of factors associated with firm growth, including "business diversification, development of international markets, strong emphasis on product innovation and quality enhancement, strategic marketing, product and corporate branding, and entrepreneurship of owner manager/CEOs and reform of corporate governance." While the comparison between religions and corporations works at some levels, it does not at other levels. Specifically, religions are less able than corporations to "diversify" their business models, as branching out into a different market undermines their self-proclaimed legitimacy (which is a slightly different type of legitimacy than the socio-cultural legitimacy we are discussing in this paper). Additionally, while religions can innovate their products by changing their doctrinal beliefs and practices, rarely do they emphasize such innovation as a selling point.

68. Blankenship, Breen, and Dutka, *State of the Art Marketing Research*.

69. Alison Stateman, "The Tylenol Tampering Crisis as Examined 25 Years Ago," *Public Relations Tactics* 15, no. 3 (2008): 7.

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71. Ibid.

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73. Stephen Nohlgren, "Catholic Giving Wavers Slightly," *St. Petersburg Times*, December 30, 2002, [http://www.sptimes.com/2002/12/30/TampaBay/Catholic\\_giving\\_waver.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2002/12/30/TampaBay/Catholic_giving_waver.shtml) (accessed September 18, 2008).

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75. Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Why Strict Churches Are Strong," *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 5 (1997): 1180-1211.

76. Johnson et al., "Legitimacy as a Social Process," 60.

77. Ronald Lawson, "Sect-State Relations: Accounting for the Differing Trajectories of Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses," *So-*

*ciology of Religion* 56, no. 4 (1995): 351–77; Lythgoe, “The Changing Image of Mormonism.”

78. Hillary Rhodes, “Polygamist Clothing Has Roots in 19th Century and 1950s,” *Fox News*, April 21, 2008, <http://www.foxnews.com/wires/2008Apr21/0,4670,PolygamyFashion,00.html> (accessed May 13, 2008).

79. John W. Kennedy, “Are Mormons Christian?” *Today’s Christian*, March/April, 1999, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/tc/9r2/9r2068.html> (accessed July 14, 2008); Shipps, “Mormon Metamorphosis”; and her *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2000). As a very helpful reviewer pointed out, legitimacy can have multiple levels. We want to be clear that we are using two levels of legitimacy in this paper. The first is in the context of American society in general, the primary way the concept is used in Cathryn Johnson et al., “Legitimacy as a Social Process.” Here we are using the second level, meaning whether a religion is seen as having divine legitimacy. It depends on historical and theological claims as well as cultural acceptance. We use legitimacy in this way only to illustrate how the LDS Church is engaged in a struggle for legitimacy, not to suggest that it is an illegitimate religion.

80. See two *Ensign* articles by Jeffrey R. Holland: “The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Hath Sent,” November 2007, 40–42, and “My Words . . . Never Cease,” May 2008, 91–94; and Stephen E. Robinson, “Are Mormons Christians?” *New Era*, May 1998, 41.

81. Kennedy, “Are Mormons Christian?”; Robinson, “Are Mormons Christians?” 41.

82. O. Kendall White Jr. “A Review and Commentary on the Prospects of a Mormon New Christian Right Coalition,” *Review of Religious Research* 28, no. 2 (1986): 180–88.

83. Niebuhr, “Adapting ‘Mormon’ to Emphasize Christianity”; Shipps, “Mormon Metamorphosis”; “New Church Logo Announced,” *Ensign*, October 1996, 79.

84. Holland, “The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Hath Sent,” 40–42; Holland, “My Words . . . Never Cease,” 91–94; Robinson, “Are Mormons Christians?” 41.

85. Lythgoe “The Changing Image of Mormonism,” 53.

86. B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

87. For a complete examination of Mormon polygamy, see Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992). For a more focused history of earlier raids on the FLDS, see Martha Sonntag Bradley, *Kidnapped from That Land: The Government*

*Raids on the Short Creek Polygamists* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1993).

88. Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 262–67, 389–425; D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Spring 1985): 9–105; Quinn, "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism."

89. Bradley, *Kidnapped from That Land*, 10.

90. *Ibid.*, 17.

91. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 191.

92. Ernest Pyle, quoted in Bradley, *Kidnapped from That Land*, 125.

93. *Ibid.*, 14, 165.

94. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 198.

95. O. Kendall White and Daryl White, "Polygamy and Mormon Identity," *Journal of American Culture* 28, no. 2 (2005): 165–77.

96. *Ibid.*, 176.

97. Rhodes, "Polygamist Clothing Has Roots in 19th Century and 1950s."

98. LDS Newsroom, "Protecting the Church's Identity."

99. Cannon, "Adoption of FLDS Name Is Akin to Identity Theft."

100. LDS Newsroom, "Church Seeks to Address Public Confusion Over Polygamy Group."

101. *Ibid.*

102. *Ibid.*; emphasis ours.

103. Cannon, "Adoption of FLDS Name Is Akin to Identity Theft."

104. LDS Newsroom, "Use of the Word Mormon in News Reports."

105. Quinn, "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism," 2; Wilde, "Fundamentalist Mormonism." Ironically, the term "sect" actually works against the claim of the LDS Church that there is no connection between the two religions: in the sociology of religion, a "sect" is a religion that branched off another religion. Benton Johnson, "On Church and Sect," 540; Lawson, "Sect-State Relations," 353. By encouraging the labeling of the FLDS as a "polygamous sect," the LDS Church may, at least among sociologists, actually reinforce the connection between itself and the FLDS.

106. Altman and Ginat, *Polygamous Families in Contemporary Society*, 339–65.

107. Janet Bennion, "Mormon Women's Issues in the Twenty-first Century," in *Revisiting Thomas F. O'Dea's The Mormons: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Cardell K. Jacobson, John P. Hoffman, and Tim B. Heaton (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2008), 135–59, esp. 104–42; Wilde, "Fundamentalist Mormonism," 263–87.

108. Quinn, "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism," 61–67.
109. Ibid., 63.
110. Niebuhr, "Adapting 'Mormon' to Emphasize Christianity."

# Roundtable on *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*

*Editor's note:* The publication of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) by Glen M. Leonard, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Ronald W. Walker, a history of Mormonism's darkest hour, is itself a history-making event. A scholarly discussion of their book and its significance in Mormon and Western studies was held at the Salt Lake Public Library on September 5, 2008, sponsored by the Charles Redd Center for Western History at Brigham Young University, the Mormon History Association, the Tanner Humanities Center at the University of Utah, the Tanner Center for Non-Violent Human Rights also at the University of Utah, and the Salt Lake City Public Library.

ROBERT A. GOLDBERG, professor of history and director of the Tanner Humanities Center at the University of Utah, chaired the panel. (See his review of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* in the "Reviews" section, this volume). The three panelists were notable scholars with expertise in Western, Mormon, and Native American history. After their commentary and analysis of the book, one of its authors, Richard E. Turley Jr., responded extemporaneously. All four have edited transcripts of their remarks in that forum for publication here.

JOHN MACK FARAGHER is Arthur Unobskey Professor of American History at Yale University. His books include *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979); *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986); *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer* (Austin, Tex.: Holt, 1992); *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Scott, Foresman, 2000) with Robert V. Hine; *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from their American Homeland* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005); and *Fron-*

tiers: *A Short History of the American West* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008), also with Robert V. Hine. He teaches the history of the American West and directs the Howard R. Lamar Center for the Study of Frontiers and Borders.

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### JOHN MACK FARAGHER

The organizers of this forum have asked me to focus my response to the book on the question of violence, particularly frontier violence. I am by no means an expert in the history of Mormonism, or the history of Utah, or the Mountain Meadows Massacre in particular. Nor am I an expert on the history of frontier violence, although it is a subject in which I am now deeply engaged. I hope this evening to evaluate the book in light of that important context.

For me, the most important question in the book is this: What led “normally decent people” (128) to commit mass murder in a method and a manner and on a scale “so calculated, . . . so im-

probably sinister, . . . so premeditated, evil and cunning”? (199). The men who committed the atrocity at Mountain Meadows, they write, “were neither fanatics nor sociopaths, but normal and in many respects decent people” (128).

I want, first, to comment briefly on the choice of words here. “Sociopath” is not a clinical but a lay term, and I think it is something of a strawman. I don’t know of any historian who claims that the Mormon militia of southern Utah was made up of men who suffered from psychopathic personality disorders, although a number may well have been psychopaths of one form or another. And as far as “fanaticism” goes, this term, too, is somewhat slippery. The authors themselves characterize John D. Lee as a “religious zealot” (144), a man who saw himself as a “modern-day Joseph of Egypt” (158), and an instrument of “God’s purpose” (144). If that does not qualify Lee as a fanatic, I’d like to know what does. Indeed, they also quote Mormon Samuel Knight who referred to perpetrators Isaac Haight and William Dame in precisely those terms: as “fanatics” who were guilty of a “dastardly deed” (213).

So I think a more general and neutral terminology here, to start, would be better. For “normally decent people,” I would substitute the less presumptive, yet significant phrase of German historian Christopher R. Browning—“ordinary men.”

In order to address the problem of why and how ordinary men became mass murderers, the authors draw on several key studies in the sociology of collective violence. I am quite familiar with this literature; and in my opinion, they summarize it succinctly and utilize it fairly. “The conditions for mass killing,” they conclude, “demonizing, authority, obedience, peer pressure, ambiguity, fear, and deprivation—all were present in southern Utah in 1857” (xiv).

The first four of these conditions are, I think, much more important than the others. They are *pre*conditions for collective violence, if you will. The literature clearly suggests that the single most significant factor in incidents of collective violence is the process the authors call “demonizing”—the classification of one people by another as “the other” (xiv). Devaluing, stereotyping, and finally dehumanizing the enemy makes mass murder possible. A great deal of historical work indicates that mass murder is

unlikely, even impossible, without this precondition. The authors provide a good deal of evidence, most of it drawn from LDS sources, that the processes of demonizing Gentiles and enforcing hierarchical authority were both well advanced in 1857 Utah.

The other significant factor is a political structure of unassailable authority, absolute obedience, and significant peer pressure, allowing “errant leaders to trump the moral instincts of their followers” (xiv). The so-called Mormon Reformation of 1856 and 1857 seems to have played a key role in the development of such a structure of authority and obedience, and I think the authors spend too little time exploring this event.

I am not especially interested in the controversy of whether Brigham Young *ordered* the massacre, and I won’t speak directly to that issue; but I do wonder to what extent sermons from Young and other leaders that preached the necessity of blood atonement and the legitimacy of destroying angels created the context for vigilante and mob action. There is a difference between legal responsibility and moral responsibility, but both are legitimate subjects for the historian, and I’d like more of a discussion of moral responsibility. The authors do say that “the tough talk about blood atonement and dissenters must have helped create a climate of violence” (25), but they refer only obliquely to the Reformation-related murders in the community of Springville, despite quoting its militants as proclaiming, “We have declared war against the whole world” (109). During the Reformation at Cedar City where the Mountain Meadows massacre was plotted by local leaders, there was much talk of “blood-sucking gentiles,” of “pruning the ‘bitter branches’” from the LDS community, and the “need to obey strictly ‘those who are over us’” (25). Notably, when some Mormons at Cedar City refused to comply with Brigham Young’s order to send their cattle north to Salt Lake City, local commander John D. Lee threatened them with punishment, writing to Young that he was determined to enforce local discipline “if it need be by the shedding of the Blood, of those cursed, wicked, apostate, fault[-]finding wretches” (63; brackets are authors’). And after the massacre, perpetrator Nephi Johnson wrote about his fellow Mormon perpetrators, “A good many objected, . . . but they didn’t dare to say anything” (191). The authors might have

asked more direct questions about the connections between the leadership and these local developments.

Informed by the historiography and sociology of group violence, my hypothesis would be that the Reformation of 1856–57 was a signal event in creating the conditions necessary for collective violence, first, by enforcing group discipline and ensuring that no one would disobey, and second, by sanctioning legal violence in pursuit of sanctified goals.

This second point—the moral sanction of lethal violence by LDS leaders—might have been emphasized more. The authors rightly note the initial pacific Mormon response to the murderous violence of their opponents in Missouri and Illinois. The Mormons must be “exterminated or driven from the state,” declared Governor Lilburn W. Boggs in 1838 (12); and in 1844, an Illinois newspaper editorialized against the Mormons that “war and extermination is inevitable” (13). That Mormons tired of turning the other cheek is understandable, yet the way LDS leaders chose to partake of the rhetoric of “extermination” is also notable. The authors quote from Sidney Rigdon’s infamous Fourth of July oration of 1838: “We warn all men in the name of Jesus Christ, to come on us no more forever. . . . And that mob that comes on us to disturb us; it shall be between us and them a war of extermination, for we will follow them, till the last drop of their blood is spilled, or else they will have to exterminate us; for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses, and their own families, and one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed” (11).

Such moral sanction for lethal violence continued as an important part of Mormon rhetoric. On Pioneer Day 1857 in Cedar City, men unfurled the banner inscribed “A terror to evil doers” and a group of boys carried another with the title “Zion’s Avengers.” Isaac Haight, one of the leading perpetrators, declared, “I am prepared to feed the enemy the bread he fed to me and mine” (131).

To be sure, Mormons were fearful, rightly, of federal invasions—fearful, rightly, of yet another attempt to destroy them. But nothing justified focusing their fears on that immigrant train from Missouri and Arkansas. “I feel like fighting,” wrote Charles Jameson, who had been wounded at Haun’s Mill, “and if any Mob comes here, I feel like giving them the best I have got in the

locker" (107). The authors quote another Mormon who itched to deliver to the immigrant wagon train "such a drubbing that, if the[y] survived, the[y] would never forget" (93; brackets are authors'). In their narrative of the events leading to the massacre, the authors offer compelling evidence of the mix of self-righteousness and lust for vengeance among Mormons. It was a lethal combination.

The plan of employing the Paiutes to do the dirty work of killing, particularly of killing the women and children, was despicable and shocking. But equally damning is the fact that the final massacre was planned as a *cover-up* of the initial crime. "If we let them go," reasoned one local leader, "... they will raise hell in California, and the result will be that our wives and children will have to be butchered and ourselves too, and they are no better to die than ours" (189; ellipses authors'). In the end, self-interest and moral cowardice led to the logic of extermination. Men killed men, women, and children in cold blood, shooting people point-blank, cutting their throats, "butcher[ing]" people "like hogs," in the words of one perpetrator, because they feared the consequences of what they already had done or condoned (201). Finally, it came down to the most ancient *modus operandi* known to man: the attempt to destroy the evidence.

In conclusion, I'd like to raise two more general critical points. The first is the context of violence. Early on, the authors point to the fact that nineteenth-century America "could be a violent place, particularly for racial, ethnic, and religious minorities" (xiii). This violence is a critical part of the historical context; and if anything, they greatly understate and underestimate that violence. Within the wider realm of American history, and particularly of frontier and Western history, I believe that this theme of violence is not sufficiently elaborated.

The United States did not experience the precipitous drop in homicide rates that took place with the creation of the modern state system in nineteenth-century Western Europe and Canada. Max Weber famously defined the state as the social institution claiming "the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory,"<sup>1</sup> and there is good evidence to suggest that the rise of the modern European state was accompanied by a new code of civility that resulted in damping down the incidence

of everyday lethal violence. But at precisely that time, the United States suffered through an intense crisis of the state, not only with the Civil War but also with the acquisition of vast western territories that were weakly governed for many years. The struggle over the legitimacy of the federal state and the loss or absence of confidence in the power and authority of that state contributed to massive outbreaks of both political and everyday violence. Homicide rates, which are the historian's most reliable marker for generalized lethal violence in society, rose highest in the United States in the South and the Southwest, where the legitimacy of the state was most seriously contested. And indeed, those spatial patterns of the distribution of violence continued through the twentieth century and remain true today.

Frontiers were places of conquest that included the violent destruction of indigenous peoples, which Americans of the time called "extirpative war." "From both necessity and hands-on experience," writes historian John Grenier, "successive generations of Americans, both civilians and soldiers, made the killing of Indian men, women and children a defining element of their military tradition and thereby part of a shared American identity."<sup>2</sup> Frontiers were places that attracted reckless and violent men; the twin phenomena of lawlessness and vigilantism consistently characterized the American frontier.

Another aspect of frontier violence directly relevant to the Mountain Meadows massacre is that frontiers were, by definition, places where no group enjoyed a monopoly on violence. They were beyond the sphere of the routine action of centralized authority. The frontier context of the massacre was the intense and violent competition between two emergent political formations: on the one hand, the federal Territory of Utah, and on the other, the theocratic state of Deseret.

The frontier experience did much to set the United States on a different course from other democracies, retarding the development of central authority and a more civic and pacific populist temperament. No doubt the frontier contributed to a rich culture of liberty, but it also contributed importantly to the legacy of lethal violence. One of the issues is the place of the Mountain Meadows Massacre in this history of frontier violence. The significance of this subject is strengthened by this context.

The final issue I wish to raise is that we need to develop a more sophisticated approach, not only to the *whys* of frontier violence, but also to the *hows*. We need a better understanding of the patterns of socialization that trained Americans in violent behavior and taught them to see violent means as the most appropriate way of resolving conflicts. Even in a society that approves and sanctions lethal violence, there are non-violent men as well as lethally violent men. Legend has it that Abraham Lincoln prevented a group of his fellow militiamen from murdering a captured Sauk soldier during the the Black Hawk War of 1832. But then there were others—the shooters at the final massacre at the Battle of Bad Axe, near present-day Victory, Wisconsin, where the Sauks attempted to escape across the Mississippi, the militiamen who shot down the Indian women and the elderly, the men who slaughtered the little children, declaring as they did so that “nits make lice.” Western and frontier historians need to explain how it was that such men existed.

We tend to take violence for granted. We tend to see it as a straightforward and uncomplicated phenomenon; but in fact, it is nothing of the sort. From the perspective of socialization theory, people are prone to violence when their primary groups—their families, their mentors, and significant others—see violence as acceptable, hold beliefs in support of violence, and are themselves violent. The socialization to violence is a developmental process that usually takes place at home during childhood. It commonly includes violent subjugation by an authority figure, the witness of the violent abuse of a loved one, usually a mother or sibling, and what amounts to the deliberate coaching in violent techniques. You have to learn to be violent. “You have to be carefully taught,” as the children sing in *South Pacific*. The child asks, “What can I do to prevent this kind of abuse except to use violent means to protect myself?” The individual tests that proposition by getting into fights, making threats, and developing a cynical attitude about institutions and authorities. Such individuals, if successful at developing a violent reputation, find themselves treated with fear and respect; they become comfortable with their violent persona. In the end, this process reproduces violent individuals.

Documenting such personal histories requires that we as historians penetrate the curtain that has been drawn across domes-

tic life. This is difficult historical work, but it can be done. The authors tell us, for example, that John D. Lee wrote of being raised by an aunt whom he described as “a regular spit-fire.” He recalled, “I have been knocked down and beaten . . . until I was senseless, many times” (60). Lee learned about violence at home and was later accused of domestic violence by one of his wives. Significantly, the authors tell us that Lee was a participant at the Battle of Bad Axe where those Sauk women and children were deliberately destroyed (60). The Mountain Meadows massacre, it turns out, was not the first time Lee had participated in an act of collective extirpatory violence. I don’t know if the historical evidence exists to detail the violent training of the perpetrators of the Mountain Meadows Massacre; but until we do that kind of historical work, we will never truly understand why they found it so easy to turn to violence.

### Notes

1. Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 78.

2. John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607–1814* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10–11.

### PHILIP L. BARLOW

I congratulate the authors of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, along with their many associates who contributed. I also congratulate Oxford University Press, the LDS History Department, and the sponsoring LDS Church. This is a helpful, formidable piece of scholarship, sensitive to the memories of diverse victims and their heirs.

There will be time in other venues to critique this volume in a formal way. I construe my task here as something else: an opportunity to think about implications, both of the book and of the wretched event that prompted the book. What does the massacre teach us about Mormonism? What does it teach us about religion? What does the book’s appearance mean for Mormon studies? And what does it mean *about* the LDS Church and *for* the LDS Church that the Church opted to approve, facilitate, and fund at

considerable expense this exhaustively researched and candid work?

It is appropriate to honor the achievement of the authors; it is important also to comprehend that their project represents an institutional decision and effort. As such, it is not merely an important work about a crucial episode in history; the book is historiographically historic. Coupled with the influence of Richard Bushman's faithful, honest, and popular *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), the new Oxford book will change the sort of history that fairly mainstream Latter-day Saints will in the future encounter.

It was the authors rather than the Church who initiated the venture. Rumors that the Church helped underwrite the costs of publication at Oxford are untrue. And the authors—creditable men—insist that before launching their effort they reached an agreement with the Church that they would follow evidence where it led. It seems they have done so, despite swimming in a legacy a century and a half in the making of avoidance, obfuscation, and denial.

On the other hand, the book consummates an institutional effort in several senses. Despite the dust-jacket's accurate listing of Ronald W. Walker as an independent historian, he, like Richard E. Turley Jr. and Glen M. Leonard, was in the employ of the Church during most of the research and writing. The project required ecclesiastical approval at the highest echelons. Without the blessing of the judicious and generous Church Historian, Elder Marlin K. Jensen, and the Quorum of the Twelve to whom he reports, the book in anything resembling its present form would have been impossible. Scholars acquired access to materials in the custody of the Church, including some in the vault of the First Presidency, that haven't been made available to previous scholars, at least not for decades. Without the material support of the Church, the book would not have been accomplished with even twenty years' work by these resourceful scholars. A small army of volunteer and professional researchers assisting the authors received necessary time and travel monies to explore countless threads at hundreds of repositories in fully two-thirds of the states in the country. They also had leave to meet—incessantly, year after year—to probe, generate inquiries, weigh evidence, and debate a

galaxy of points and perspectives. This is not the way my books get written.

The resulting research seems exhaustive and honest. Few institutions could or would have done this so well. And yet our three authors had at last to write the book themselves, adjudicate among conflicting views of their research team, accent or diminish various understandings, and withstand lobbying from those who did not want the book produced at all and, conversely, those who insisted it be done before it was done. It was back at the Tucson meeting of the Mormon History Association in 2002 when the authors announced the project and estimated a completed manuscript within a year or two. As co-author with Edwin Scott Gaustad of a comparably large project, the *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (Oxford University Press, 2000), I am reassured to contemplate that I am not the only writer to have missed a contract date by five or so years.

There has of course been resistance from some quarters to the publication of this book. Michael Landon drew my attention to a category of response I ordinarily ignore: an avalanche of hostile commentary posted online by readers of a balanced and thoughtful report by Carrie Moore of the *Deseret News* concerning the forthcoming volume ("Book Confronts LDS Tragedy," July 19, 2008). Since the volume had not yet arrived in bookstores, these strong reactions came from people, often anonymous, who had not read a page but who often were condescendingly or bitterly sure that no book on the massacre authored by Church employees could achieve balance and honesty.

Researchers also encountered the tender nerves of descendants of the perpetrators of the massacre and others concerned for the image of the Church. Some of these lamented the reopening of an issue they want closed. It is long past time to move on, they said. "Let sleeping dogs lie."

But these dogs have never slept soundly, not for serious students of history, not for the descendants of the victims, not for some Native Americans whose ancestors were conveniently blamed for the slaughter, not for thousands across the nation who have stood aghast when they stumbled into awareness of the episode, and, of course, not for those on a relentless campaign to im-

pugn Mormonism. Literally and figuratively, the bones of the victims at Mountain Meadows have had a hard time staying buried.

Because the book is thoughtful, thorough, and frank, and because the painful enterprise of writing it was sponsored by the Church, many Latter-day Saints who read anything of the episode will read only this one book. This turns out to be the proper choice if readers limit themselves to a single treatment amid the torturous dozens that have appeared since 1873. It is just as well, for instance, that modern readers spare themselves the derivative sensationalism of Sally Denton (*American Massacre: The Tragedy at Mountain Meadows, September 1857* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003]), the nicely written pejorative errors of Larry McMurtry in *Oh What a Slaughter: Massacres in the American West: 1846–1890* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), or the flagrant propaganda of the film *September Dawn* (Christopher Cain, 2007). More avid students, however, will want to compare the work of Mssrs. Walker, Turley, and Leonard to Will Bagley's *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), valuable despite the axe it grinds, and with David Bigler's and Bagley's documentary history: *Innocent Blood: Essential Narratives of the Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, Fall 2008), important in making available primary documents relating to the outrage. Readers who want to know not only about the massacre, but about the work of coming to terms with it, will want exposure to Juanita Brooks's standard account, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1950; 2d ed., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), and Levi S. Peterson's exquisite biography, *Juanita Brooks: Mormon Woman Historian*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), and her heroic struggle to write on Mountain Meadows. One should also consider Shannon A. Novak's newly published *House of Mourning: A Biocultural History of the Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008), a flawed but fresh approach by a forensic anthropologist whose primary concern has been the victims, including what she judges we can learn from their bones, inadvertently disinterred and briefly available to her. William P. MacKinnon's recent and superb documentary treatment, *At Sword's Point, Part 1: A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858*

(Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2008), is indispensable to the Utah War, apart from which the massacre at Mountain Meadows remains incomprehensible.

The success—and I am sure it will be a success—of the Walker-Turley-Leonard book will mean a number of things. It will likely encourage the Historical Department of the LDS Church to address other difficult aspects of its history in the future. The Saints and their leaders are apt to see that the Church will not be undermined by an authentic probing of difficult as well as inspiring contours of its own history. We can look for more treatments, perhaps of polygamy, perhaps of the history of blacks in the LDS culture. And because of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* and its reception, we can expect that this future writing of the Mormon past under official sponsorship will be treated less defensively than has frequently been the case and with more concern for balance, truth, thoroughness, and probing inquiry.

Oxford's new volume may have another effect. A good many collateral topics presented themselves to the research team in the course of the work and may result in fruitful future labor. Possibilities include a look at changes in Utah law regarding capital punishment as a consequence of first-hand accounts of John D. Lee's execution, at the evolution of Brigham Young's Indian policy, at additional episodes of whites disguised as Indians committing criminal acts, and at the incidence and effects of cattle disease in Utah and California and on the western trails in 1857 and during the 1850s generally. (Among the explanations proffered for the massacre has been the allegation that emigrants had poisoned Mormon cattle.)

Perhaps the most obvious likely outcome from the book will be a cultural catharsis, a shedding of corporate and local evasions. Our authors have gone beyond words like "unfortunate" or "tragic errors" to describe the event. More accurate and harrowing terms like "sinister plan," "atrocities," "murder," and "desecration" lace these pages.

Catharsis will prove culturally healthy for the LDS community. Many Mormons, especially converts and those in their twenties and younger, have not heard of the Mountain Meadows Massacre; they are unaware of the albatross that has long hung about their collective neck in the eyes of thousands of outsiders. Other

Saints have at least heard of the event but can scarcely grasp how it was possible, how it has anything to do with the Mormon people. More informed Saints know something of Mountain Meadows and absorb a remote, vague guilt, or else declare freedom from guilt: “men will be punished for their own sins”; “I wasn’t there.” Still others—descendants of Lees or Haight, for instance—have carried the stigma of the tragedy over generations. For decades after 1857, a number of parents in southern and central Utah steered their children away from alliances with these families, who in turn resented the scapegoating of the few for an action given aid or assent by many. Finally, sectors of Utah’s Dixie as a whole have sensed that the guilt was more diffuse yet, that those who carried out the crime were not atypical Mormons, that circumstances fated these with the opportunity to enact the hysterical and lacerated sensibilities of an entire abused people (Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 219–20.)

Catharsis for their heirs, then, will be healthy. But catharsis can in some situations be too thorough. It can allow neglect of important truths the authors of *Massacre* embrace. Of particular note is this: We humans, including LDS humans, who ordinarily strive for goodness, are capable of evil. We are, under severe duress, capable of demonizing and even destroying innocent others. Puritans striving for holiness at Salem Village in 1692–93 learned to their later horror that they were capable of murderous evil. So did the German nation, veterans and heirs of the 1930s and ’40s. American soldiers in Vietnam, at the hamlets of My Lai and My Khe, annihilated in 1968 three times as many victims as were murdered at Mountain Meadows. Some of the slain Vietnamese were shown to have been tortured, maimed, or sexually assaulted, some of the corpses mutilated. Not necessarily guilty of these last outrages, several Latter-day Saints were among the troops at My Lai, demonstrating that LDS soldiers have faced dilemmas about atrocities at various times, not only at Mountain Meadows.<sup>1</sup>

Walker, Turley, and Leonard explore the recipe that can lead to the distortion of our ordinary moral sensibilities. The recipe includes conditions of extreme deprivation and an acute fear of rivals. Ambiguous messages from headquarters may add pressure and uncertainty. Minor wrongs transmogrify into what seems intolerable wickedness. Rumors expand. Pressure builds to con-

form to group thought and group action against a perceived and pressing threat. People not of one's own collective become "the Other"—devalued, demonized. The enemies are wicked; time is running out; preemptive action seems essential. An atmosphere of authority and obedience grows exaggerated, trumping the moral instincts of individuals. Voltaire observed long ago that if people can be made to believe absurdities, they can be made to commit atrocities.

There is, then, such a thing as beneficial discomfort. We Latter-day Saints have much for which to be grateful and proud: a culture in pursuit of that which is virtuous, lovely, and of good report; a heritage of sacrifice and resilience, of optimism and constructive efficiency, of meaning and service and faith. But if—in the interest of maintaining a "positive attitude" or "moving on" or burnishing our public image—we wholly suppress unpleasant memory and a healthy unease with national or tribal errors, we put ourselves in a dangerous place. We might find ourselves in a position, for example, of supporting the launch of preemptive war, a policy forbidden in Mormon scripture. If we neglect such lessons as the massacre at Mountain Meadows proffers, who knows what further entanglements, not necessarily entailing blood, await in a world sure to grow sporadically unsettled?

The massacre reminds us that Mormons are humans. This may have occurred to some of you previously. But I mean three things in particular: The first I've mentioned already. Although we are not deeply aware of it, under certain conditions we Latter-day Saints, like all others, are capable not merely of mistakes, not merely of sins, but of evil—of constricting, wounding, or destroying the innocent. This is a notion more amply explored in Protestant and Catholic than in LDS thought.

Second, Brigham Young was human, too. I am persuaded, as Will Bagley is not, that Young did not order the massacre. And I believe he was in diverse ways an admirable leader, whose general policy was to avoid confrontation unless outsiders "come upon us and compel us either to fight or be slain."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, under the duress of survival in an inhospitable land and of tensions between the federal government and a people who had historical reasons to fear violent outsiders, Young issued other orders and sermons that fostered a violent tone in the territory. Beyond

well-known allusions to blood-atonement theology, for instance, and not many days after he dreamt of threatening federal judges W. W. Drummond and George P. Stiles with “oblivion,” and only two weeks before two cases of apparent vigilante assassination in southern Utah, President/Governor Young in February 1857 advised bishops and stake presidents in the South to be on the lookout for two thieves thought to be traveling in their vicinity. If stealing were observed, he instructed local leaders (in a thrust toward summary extra-legal violence) to act expeditiously to eliminate the problem: “We do not expect there would be any prosecutions for false imprisonment or tale bearers left for witnesses.”<sup>3</sup>

Such a policy was consistent with sermons he had preached for years, as with this, of April 8, 1853: “If you will cause all those whom you know to be thieves to be placed in a line before the mouth of one of our largest cannon, well loaded with chain shot, I will prove by my works whether I can mete out justice to such persons, or not. I would consider it just as much my duty to do that, as to baptize a man for the remission of his sins.”

Only a few years before the events at Mountain Meadows, as many as one hundred women, married and unmarried, left Utah on account of liaisons with departing Gentile soldiers who had enjoyed hospitality in Salt Lake City. One soldier, Second Lieutenant Sylvester Mowry, had overtly courted Brigham’s daughter-in-law, Mary Jane Ayers Young, with her encouragement, while her husband, Brigham’s son, was on a mission in Britain. An understandably livid Brigham Young offered blunt warning to any future soldiers coming to the vicinity “to prostitute [our women], to ruin them, and send them to the grave, or to the devil, when they had done with them. . . . I am after [such men] with the barbed arrow of the Almighty. To what extent? Let them intrude upon the chastity of my family, and, so help me God, I will use them up. . . . I would rather follow her to the grave, and send her home pure, than suffer my daughter to be prostituted.”<sup>5</sup> Such rhetoric naturally affected the attitude of Young’s devoted followers.

Brigham Young was a human prophet-leader whose people were caught in a wrenching and precarious circumstance of repeated exile, then war and proto-war; I am in no position to judge him. His are nonetheless strong words in light of later blood spilt in the Territory of Utah. One can imagine Joshua anciently con-

juring such language as Young did. It is harder to imagine Jesus doing so.

Third, the massacre and the new Church-sponsored book about the massacre may present to the Latter-day Saints the option of a different paradigm for construing their faith than that to which they are accustomed. In this alternate paradigm, the Church is not divine, marred only by the imperfections of its human members and leaders. Instead, one might think of the Church as consisting *entirely* of human beings, with all that such status can entail, who are trying to *respond* to the divine with which they have, in faith, been touched. It may seem a subtle distinction; I think it a crucial one.

An implication of this alternate model and of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* is that there are proper limits to authority, obedience, and faith. LDS culture and teaching emphasize obedience; often it is presented as the first law of heaven. Adam obeyed for reasons he knew not, save he was commanded. Faith is cast as an unalloyed virtue; more faith is always good. Beyond most cultures, Mormonism has elevated notions of authority to great heights, and this is surely a part of its extraordinary success. Indeed, I personally work to honor, cooperate with, and exercise priesthood.

But Joseph's revelations also provided for limits: unrighteous dominion dissolves authority (D&C 121:36–38). I can discern nothing virtuous about blind obedience or blind faith. Terrorists, fanatics, and fools of all sorts have plenty of both. Proper obedience, even in response to revelation, requires a thoughtful faith, which Alma 32 characterizes as a reasoned and experienced trust, developing organically by way of feedback and edifying results.

All humans, secular or religious, rely on selective sources of knowledge, although few humans are very deliberate about it. Secularists may imagine that their sources of knowledge are wholly rational and reasoned, but often it is the prestige of some authority figure or group, rather than deeply reasoned inquiry, which persuades them. This phenomenon is readily apparent in the way students sometimes argue about the relative merits of evolutionary theory or “intelligent design” as explanations for the earth's character. Few of these students can articulate persuasively the evidence for their argument; they frequently rely on the

prestige of the Bible or of scientists whose work they do not well understand. Religious understanding, in turn, may rest primarily on reason, scripture, living leaders, councils, tradition, intuition, personal revelation, community, or experience. Usually, even if unconsciously, it is a combination of several of these.

The authors of our book, analyzing disaster, point specifically to the realized danger of a theocracy where all power is concentrated in single or few hands. They seem to suggest that there may be a time to say no.

Twenty-first century Saints are not apt to be called upon under Church authority to participate in killing someone, though the religious principle of “obeying the law of the land” can be tricky business in an international church in a conflicted world. There are, however, other issues encountered in the Church where ecclesiastical policy grows in tension with the private sensibilities of Saints—Saints who are not whiners and self-justifying agitators, but devoted servants, eager where possible to support, take counsel, and act constructively. It was so in the nineteenth century with the injunction to practice polygamy; it was so at the turn of the twentieth century with the ambiguous injunction to give up polygamy; it was so at mid-century with understandings of blacks and their roles in the Church; it has been so concerning women’s place in the home, in the world, and in Church councils; it is so with understandings of homosexuality and the policy of Church-sponsored activism against gay marriage. All these wrenching, complex issues imply questions about the relation of ecclesiastical authority and private conscience.

The publication of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* marks the passage of time. We find ourselves in a new era in which the flowering of Mormon studies and the existence of the internet render it impossible for *any* institution entirely to fence its history while maintaining credibility in the wider society. The subject, honesty, and quality of Oxford’s book also proclaims that Mormon culture is maturing, is more confident, more prepared than at any time since the 1970s to be a genuine partner in the pursuit of historical understanding. The book will legitimize the impulse of many Saints to assert, as Juanita Brooks did more than half a century ago, that “nothing but the truth is good enough for the Church of which I am a member” (*The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, vi). The

Church will not finally be undercut but will gain in credibility for at last coming to terms with an agonizing episode in its past, for demonstrating public regard for the victims and their heirs, and for showing a willingness to point to the culpability of its own people as opposed to the Piutes who, from the time of the tragedy, have labored under an unjust, wildly disproportionate judgment.

Some contemporary writers, such as sensationalist author Jon Krakauer in *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), come near to implying that violence inheres in Mormonism's seeds, with today's clean, cheerful, mainstream Church as a sort of polite and naive dilution of its dangerous original core that could arise again at any moment. Others construe the slaughter at Mountain Meadows entirely as an anomalous distortion, having nothing to do with Mormon principles; they literally cannot believe that the events at Mountain Meadows have anything to do with them. And the massacre is indeed a grotesque smear of Mormonism's real intent, its typical and highest reaches, its contemporary consciousness and ways and aspiration. These comprise Mormonism's dominant gene: the aspiration to be good—to seek, to experience, even to achieve and express the divine.

An authentic and prudent historical consciousness is nonetheless better served not utterly to forget a recessive gene in nineteenth-century Mormonism that partook of its time and inclined toward the violent under severe pressure. Most Saints will not be aware that the scars and wounds from brutal assaults and clashes with outside society during the nineteenth century ran deeply enough that Mormon sacred ritual and hymnody, even into the early decades of the twentieth century, urged heaven to avenge the blood of the martyred Prophet Joseph Smith. President Anthon H. Lund's diary for November 8, 1902, captures both Mormonism's dominant gene of restraint, forgiveness, and charity as well as the contrasting recessive gene, born of ordeal. Lund recounts how President Joseph F. Smith warned against yielding to impulses. Smith had related

how he at one time felt when a man in Iowa told him that he lived near Carthage where his father and the Prophet were murdered. This man said he was present. Joseph said when he heard this everything turned black and, when [the speaker] further stated [that] his

opinion concerning that act had not changed, but was the same today, the President said he could only think of that dastardly crime and that here was one of the perpetrators before him. What a relief to have the man say that he thought it was one of the most wicked crimes ever committed. . . . The President said I woke up as of a trance and found my knife open in my hand. Had he boasted of being one of the murderers I would have killed him. How thankful I was that I was preserved against such a fate. The Lord says "Revenge is mine." Men must not take it themselves.<sup>6</sup>

In light of such tender, deep-seated, and dangerous nerves among the persecution-conscious Saints, it is little wonder that Juanita Brooks ran into obstacles and resentment before and after publication of her 1950 account of the massacre at Mountain Meadows. Unlike Fawn Brodie, who published *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (1945; 2d ed. rev. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971) only five years before her, Brooks remained loyal to the Church. She wrote of Mountain Meadows under difficult circumstances, with roadblocks set before her both by her local Mormon society and by the specific actions of Church officials who looked askance at her enterprise and denied her access to important materials.

In 1979 KSL-TV aired a documentary featuring Juanita. In one scene she declared, haltingly, that upon publication of her book she had been disfellowshipped from the Church. (For years rumors had circulated to that effect.) Actually, she had not been. No Church court was ever convened. Yet as her biographer cast her television appearance, "her tongue at last spoke what her heart had felt." She had been ostracized, shunned as a turncoat by her Mormon community even as she continued to attend services—disfellowshipped de facto if not by official edict.<sup>7</sup>

Her book, welcomed among scholars and other readers, was greeted with near-total silence by Juanita's ward, bishop, stake president, and almost all General Authorities who were asked by others about it. Few were those who would acknowledge that they had read it, and perhaps they did not. Juanita reported: "They evade it with the delicacy and solicitude they might show to a mother who has given birth to a monster child."<sup>8</sup>

We might wish the Church had stepped forward sooner to respect if not to honor her labor, which ultimately would have fos-

tered healing. But it was too soon for an institution still emerging into respectability after generations of alienation from the American nation. And it was too soon for most Saints; close relatives of participants at Mountain Meadows were living and breathing around Juanita. Recoiling in such circumstances is a human and not merely a Mormon impulse. Brooks discovered that even the editors at Stanford University Press, eager to expose a Mormon atrocity, would not countenance her apt comparison to atrocities committed by American soldiers during the stress of World War II. They found the comparison to “our fine spirited soldiers” unpatriotic.<sup>9</sup>

Among Mormons, the cool reception of Brooks, bearer of an unbearable truth, points to the fact that the massacre at Mountain Meadows was not only a tragedy for the slain victims and their families but also a trauma for the Mormon people, followed by fifteen decades of evasion and diffused familial and tribal guilt.

Two generations after Brooks’s heroic work, punctuated by the interval of the 1970s Arrington Spring, we have in hand a pivotal, honest, courageous, sensitive, thoroughly researched, finely crafted, institutionally sponsored book treating the same subject, at untold cost and labor. It is offered in the interest of truth-telling, catharsis, at least oblique self-examination, and rapprochement. The LDS Church History Department does not exist to multiply abstract facts. It exists to foster the purposes of the Church. Hence, the decision to support the historical exploration of this institutionally agonizing affair would not have been made unless the highest officials of the Church deemed it in the Church’s self-interest to do so.

They were right.

### Notes

1. I am indebted to William P. MacKinnon, email, October 13, 2008, for this point; see also MacKinnon, “The Gap in the Buchanan Revival: The Utah Expedition of 1857–58,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 45 (Winter 1977): 36–46.

2. Brigham Young, July 18, 1855, *Journal of Discourses* 26 vols. (Liverpool and London: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855–86), 2:311.

3. Letter published in William P. MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point, Part*

1: *A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2008), 80.

4. Ibid., 81.

5. For these statements and similar imagery, see Young's addresses of June 17 and July 18, 1855, abbreviated versions of which are printed in *Journal of Discourses* 2:311, 322, passim. See also William P. MacKinnon, "Sex, Subalterns, and Steptoe: Army Behavior, Mormon Rage, and Utah War Anxieties," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 76 (Summer 2008): 227–46.

6. Joseph F. Smith, quoted in Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Mormon Apostle Reed Smoot* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 190 note 6. For allusions to a ritualized oath of (or prayer for) vengeance, especially for Joseph Smith's death, see ibid., 82; David John Buerger, *Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 37, 133–36; Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 44.

7. Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 415, 477 note 70.

8. Ibid., 218.

9. Donald Bean, Letter to Charles Allen, October 24, 1949, Operational Files, Stanford University Press, quoted in ibid., 202.

### DONALD L. FIXICO

This work is monumental, a role model for scholarship. It is carefully conceived, carefully approached, carefully written and structured, carefully revised and revised and revised. (Those of us who write books don't really write them—we rewrite and rewrite and rewrite them!) This particular book is the kind of work that scholars want to write, a pivotal book. Pivotal books cause change to happen, cause people to change their way of thinking, and cause us to address new questions. *Tragedy at Mountain Meadows* is such a book.

I want to address four main points: perspectives, questions, treatment of native peoples, and relationships. I was asked to comment, first, on whether this book succeeds in placing the massacre in the broader context of western history and of colonialism in the West, and, second, on the question of "Where are the Indians?" The answer to the question about the book's success is an obvious "yes." Also American Indians are part of the story here, even though they are not the main part.

In this regard, this book does something that a lot of Western

scholarship does not do. When American Indians are involved, nearly always, they are in the past. I could be standing in a museum next to a non-Indian who is telling another person that "They're all gone." Even in our histories, native peoples are relegated to the sidelines, part of mythic history more than scholarly history. They have always been marginalized, relegated to a sidebar, or entirely left out of the story of the development of the American West. That was not right. Although we as scholars are trained to be objective, in our treatment of American Indians' roles in the development of the West, we have failed to be objective and accurate. So it is with considerable appreciation that I see, in this book, evidence that we have finally reached a time in American Indian history in which native people have come to center stage. This book appropriately assigns many roles to the American Indians—victims, victors, losers in war, mercenaries, partners in civilization, pawns of imperialism. The Paiutes were both victims and pawns, used as allies. This book gives native people a part of the larger story of the American West, makes them part of the narrative, and gives them several roles.

In previous histories of Mountain Meadows, it was as if the Paiutes represented the whole population of native peoples at the time. This book does not make this mistake. This book makes native people present in two important ways: as they actually were there at the scene, but also in the way they were present in the collective imagination of the Mormon settlers. The fear and paranoia about Indian attacks on wagon trains, which the Mormons played up during the tense days leading to the massacre, makes Indians present in a way, even before they physically arrive in the action. You get the sense that the Indians were almost ready to attack on their own. From this account, one gets a sense of the presence of native people woven intricately in and out of the whole story. It points to the presence of Indians in the imagination. I applaud the authors for doing that, for paying attention to *all* of the ways Indians are part of the story. To write about American Indians is really difficult. This presence I've talked about is one in which there were presumptions about natives, but Brigham Young and the Mormons knew Indians better than many people did (and do).

Over the years, I have identified thirty-six stereotypes that

people presume about Indians. There are six more that are positive and another six that are neutral; only six of them are positive, and only six are neutral. Even today, if two Indians are standing together on a street corner in Salt Lake City, people will wonder what they're up to. Overcoming stereotypes and making native people seem real and complex is an important facet of this book.

The presence of natives in this book illuminates the nature of the relationship between Mormons and native peoples, the partnership. The groups shared land and shared the experience of uncertainty about the land. At some point, they both became vulnerable to westward expansion. American Indians had felt such vulnerability repeatedly. In 1970 Dee Brown wrote in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* about the feeling that a quarter of a million Indians must have had of facing east and imagining innumerable wagon trains coming toward you during the late nineteenth century. In fact, Dee Brown suggested to readers, "Americans who have always looked westward when reading about this period should read this book facing eastward."<sup>1</sup> Native people felt it constantly all the time, but Mormons were feeling it, too: Immigrants were coming, soldiers were coming. The native people felt that uneasy pressure constantly, so they shared that perspective with the Mormons, who were also watching this threat coming from the East.

Indians faced the real possibility of total destruction. There were at least 1,642 skirmishes waged against Indians between 1790 and 1895.<sup>2</sup> The amount of violence, the number of battles—it's very large. I hope that no other native group has ever suffered or will ever suffer that much. I did a quick count of the battles. There were forty-one massacres between the 1500s and 1890, and that is probably a conservative estimate. Of the 41, Indians were the victims in twenty-two. So this concept of violence continued through the entire history of the settlement of North and South America by Europeans. By 1890, the year of the Wounded Knee massacre, there were only 250,000 Indians left in the United States from an estimated pre-contact total of 5 million; the genocide was nearly total.<sup>3</sup> Brigham Young had felt that fear, the fear that what he had built would be wiped out. Mormons felt the same way—that what they had built would be dissolved.

It is also important to note that it was not only white settlers

who were perceived as threatening by native peoples. There was a great deal of fear and suspicion of other Indians. The authors touched on it, but I wish they'd gone further into how native cultures operated. In Indian country, in the world of intertribal relations, it was tribe versus tribe. There were many longstanding Indian rivalries, not just between Paiutes and Utes, but also between the Chippewa and Dakota in Minnesota, Lakota and Crow on the northern Great Plains, Hopi and Navajo in Arizona, and Osage and Kiowa in Oklahoma, among others. These rivalries had existed for centuries; and by working with and understanding native peoples, Brigham Young had some sense of these intertribal tensions. I do see Brigham Young as understanding native peoples. He made efforts to meet with them and communicate with them. He told his people to go to them, learn their languages, and teach them to farm. In this way, he put himself in a precarious position; by sending Mormon settlers to areas adjacent to natives' land and having them act as mediators in the Walker War of 1854, he put the Mormon community between the Indians and the U.S. government. It was agents of the U.S. government that had attacked native people in all parts of the country, and the Mormons could be seen as allied with native people against the government's incursions in Utah Territory. Brigham Young was smart. He understood that they were allying Mormons with natives and used this relationship to his advantage; but by treating Indians as allies, he was also recognizing the power in them. They had power because they were an ally in the eyes of Brigham Young. In this way, perhaps, the Indians played more than a minor role.

I want to say a little more about Brigham Young and how he entered this understanding of native people and their reality. The authors do not say it because this isn't their topic. But a major purpose in studying Indians should be to understand their reality. Native people believed in spirits and visions and ghosts. I'm suggesting that the native reality was a combination of the metaphysical and physical. Those of you who write and teach know that you get ideas when you're not consciously working; the subconscious, metaphysical world intrudes on the physical one in this way. For native people, such metaphysical messages are a constant feature of their reality. And I think Brigham Young understood that. He not only understood the natives, but he treated them respectfully

as allies, because he recognized their spiritual power as well as their political power. Native people also understood Brigham Young's political position; it was a real partnership in many ways. However, the Indians were not simply trusting of the Mormons; Indians were skeptical and distrustful of relationships with non-Indians—just as they were with native peoples not of their tribe. Although there was a partnership, an alliance, between Mormons and Indians, it was always uneasy.

To conclude, I return to the idea of perspective, which is illustrated by this story. Once there was a man named Smith who could not keep up with his neighbor, Jones. Jones always had the best and the newest of everything. Smith determined to do something about this frustrating situation. In the classified ads of a newspaper, he saw an advertisement for a dog that could walk on water and thought he could finally get something that Jones did not have. So he got the dog and then invited Jones to go for a walk with him. They went toward the lake. Mr. Smith threw a stick out onto the lake and the dog walked across the water to get it. As they drove home, Jones said nothing. Finally, exasperated, Smith asked Jones if he had noticed anything about the dog. Jones said, "Yes, I noticed that he can't swim."

Many stories are altered by the perspective from which they are told; this book invites us to view this history from a new perspective.

### Notes

1. Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1970), xviii.
2. George W. Webb, *Chronological List of Engagements between the Regular Army of the United States and Various Tribes of Hostile Indians Which Occurred during the Years 1790-1895, Inclusive* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 1-97.
3. Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: Population History Since 1492* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

### RICHARD E. TURLEY JR.

I'd like to thank these three notable scholars for their comments about our book. I suppose every author hopes to be read, and there is a certain expectation and hope that people will not only

read but that they will understand. For many authors like myself, there is a great deal of humility in approaching a book when it has been read by three scholars of the caliber of our panelists; so I want to thank them for coming and for participating in a discussion of this horrible event in the history of Utah and of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that we call the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

As Dr. Faragher has reminded us, “The United States could be a violent place,” as we put it. And as he put it, that statement was very understated, very underestimated. That’s a theme he felt we should have developed more. It’s a theme we did develop in initial drafts to a greater extent. One of the constraining factors we had was the page count for our manuscript. There was a temptation to which we gave way over and over again to write at length about some of these topics that engaged us so much, only to realize, as we looked at the larger picture, that we could not continue dealing with everything at that pace. As one of my co-authors is wont to say, for every paragraph in the book, there were three or four left on the cutting-room floor. Ultimately, we concluded that we could only touch the tips of the icebergs as we walked across this ocean, with the hope that others would come later and develop for us many of these important themes. What was especially gratifying to me in listening to the remarks of our panelists was that they were able to identify so many of these themes. I don’t know how many graduate students or academics who might write about these subjects are in the audience; but if you are searching for a thesis or dissertation topic, you’ve heard several this evening!

I particularly like Dr. Faragher’s reference to “ordinary men.” If you’re familiar with the book he references,<sup>1</sup> dealing with ordinary people in Europe eventually engaging in the unthinkable, you will feel a sense of discomfort. It was our intention that our book create discomfort, because, if we look at the Mountain Meadows Massacre from a distance, merely from a pedestal of righteous indignation, we miss much of its meaning. We tend to think of the people who carried out the crime as somehow categorically different from ourselves, as strangers capable of committing acts we ourselves would never do. And yet the history of violence suggests that the distance between ordinary people and those who commit atrocities is a very short distance. Our hope

was that, in reading this book, people would understand the shortness of the distance.

One book I read<sup>2</sup> noted that we Americans particularly like our criminals to be so different from us that we can rest easy, believing that we ourselves would never do what they have done. Hence, we watch television shows in which criminals, having just tussled with police, look a little banged up and disheveled so that we can convince ourselves that people who commit crimes look different from us. They are so different from ourselves that we don't need to worry about our own proclivity toward violence or evil. We hope that readers of our book will shorten that perceived distance immensely and recognize that all human beings, unless they check a natural tendency within themselves, may give way to violence under certain circumstances.

Dr. Faragher also raised the point about Mormon rhetoric and its influence on the Mountain Meadows Massacre. This is an extremely important point, because violence does not happen in a vacuum. The Mountain Meadows Massacre occurred against an environmental backdrop of the Utah War and the Mormon Reformation, and it's very important for us to recognize that context because, in this distance between peacefulness and violence, there is a spectrum that goes from vilifying and demonizing to language that's often used to characterize "the other" in the discourse of war. And it's only a short distance from the discourse to war itself.

I also found it very interesting that Dr. Faragher would talk about the importance of having more information about the place of the Mountain Meadows Massacre in the history of frontier violence. We tried to look at the massacre not as just an anomalous event in Utah history, but rather as a part of the larger history of the West. We need far more work to be done on this aspect. How did violence in Utah compare to violence elsewhere? How was the massacre part of an overall pattern and texture of frontier violence? Dr. Faragher referred to the phrase often used by people who attempted the murder of native peoples or even their genocide: "Nits will make lice." It's the same phrase that one of the men at Haun's Mill used when he justified shooting a young boy at close range.<sup>3</sup> You can see here that it's not a huge distance from the language to the act.

I found Dr. Barlow's remarks about the impact of this book on

Mormon historiography quite interesting. He asked what this book means for Mormon studies. What we hoped, as we set forth, was that this work would give confidence and encouragement to scholars of Mormonism. The Mountain Meadows Massacre is, in our opinion, the most difficult subject in Mormon history. And our feeling was that, if we could confront this topic face to face and in a straightforward manner, with all of its horrors then people who write about Mormon history would feel able to confront virtually any topic. Our hope is that, in fact, this book will not only give way to a number of books and articles on the themes we've touched upon, but will also help to generate good scholarship on other difficult points of Mormon history.

Dr. Barlow reminded us that the book can create pain that leads to catharsis but that we need to beware that such catharsis doesn't become too thorough. Humans *are* capable of evil; and if we, either as authors or as readers, forget that point or think that this book somehow gets it all out of our system, we will have missed one of the main points we hoped to make in the book.

I do think, as he said, that sufficient time has now passed that we can enjoy this flowering of Mormon studies, including the flowering of information about the Mountain Meadows Massacre. There has been a virtual renaissance of work on this subject over the last twenty years, and I think that is healthy.

Dr. Fixico talked about the Mountain Meadows Massacre and our book in terms of native peoples and native perspectives. As he uttered the number of 1,642 wars and skirmishes that have been carried out against native peoples, I thought how many other crimes have been committed against them. In the case of Mountain Meadows, an effort has been made to vilify them, to saddle them with a crime committed principally by white southern Utah men.

I want to make a particular point that the Paiutes, who from the very beginning were intended as scapegoats for what happened at Mountain Meadows, have suffered under a burden that needs to be relieved. I don't mean to get too personal here; and for those who may recognize the circumstances I'm describing, I don't intend to be offensive. I have sat with groups of people in southern Utah who continue to insist that the burden for the massacre should remain on the Paiute people. When I hear such statements, I say, as gently and as clearly as I can, "You need to give that

up. It was *your* ancestors who were the principal aggressors in this event. [applause] You need to lift from the Paiutes the burden under which they have suffered now for a century and a half." Another tragedy of the Mountain Meadows Massacre as it relates to native peoples was that, as Dr. Fixico pointed out, these people in southern Utah had been sent to befriend the Paiutes and to live among them. A relationship of trust was established, and that trust was violated in the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

Now the anthropological literature is full of statements about whether the conversion to Mormonism of some of these Paiute peoples was nominal or whether it meant something more. I'm not here to discuss that topic, but I will say this: Some of those people who became the victims of this scapegoating were at least nominally Mormons. And so what you had here was a case in which some people who had developed a relationship of trust were foisting upon their fellow human beings, who were also their fellow Church members, the blame for something that they had done. That's an abuse of authority that needs to be recognized.

And then I've thought about other events in Utah history that need further attention. Some attention has been given in the last several years to the Bear River Massacre. But for the Paiute people in particular, the Circleville Massacre is a topic that needs greater attention and greater candor in some circles.

Finally, I want to say that a book of this nature could not have been completed without the help of many, many people. We've tried to recognize people in our acknowledgments, but that is inadequate recognition of the truly amazing time and effort that many people put in—our colleagues, our research associates, our editors, our friends from across the country who sent us information, our many readers who gave us their insights from different points of view. I conclude, as I began, with gratitude to these people and to our panelists for being willing to grapple with what I think is the most difficult event in Utah and Mormon history.

### Notes

1. Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).
2. Roy F. Baumeister, *Evil: Inside Human Cruelty and Violence* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997).

3. Beth Shumway Moore, *Bones in the Well: The Haun's Mill Massacre, 1838: A Documentary History* (Norman, Okla.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 2006), 34, 45, 66, 112; Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 167.



Nathan Florence, *Chariot of Fire*  
oil on aluminum panel, 24"x24.5", 2005



Nathan Florence, *One Tree*  
oil on canvas, 30"x40", 2006

# Realíssimo

Ryan McIlvain

At nineteen, a Mormon missionary in Brazil, I felt foreign in every part, *torn* from language.

“Boy, it’s *cold* out,” I’d quip to the natives.

“No, Elder, *hot*,” they’d say. “The word is *hot*.”

At night I wrote letters to my congressman, to old flings. I wrote Mr. Goodman, my senior English teacher, asking how classes were going and could he send me some poems to read?

From my congressman: a form letter. From my ex: an unsigned Christmas card. From Mr. Goodman: not a word. He must have thought I was evangelizing. He must have read between the lines until he saw what wasn’t there.

A year later, as if to prove I’d shed my greenness, I saw my first dead body. It wasn’t twenty feet away. It was lying in the middle of a narrow careless street in Betim, an hour south of Belo Horizonte. My companion and I were on our way to knock the doors of poor people (we called them *humble*), to give them our saving pitch, do whatever it was we did.

The body—black, limbs splayed like a doll’s—couldn’t have been much more than my age (twenty), couldn’t have been much more than ten minutes dead. *Where was God ten minutes ago?* I thought nothing so grandiloquent. I thought, *He could be sleeping. He could be passed out drunk. He could be lazing in the shade of silent stacked favelas.*

In the center of his heavenward forehead was a dot—red, centrifugal, like a Hindu girl’s *bindi*.

We kept walking, two twentysomething *americanos*: white, upper-middle class, et cetera. What was the etiquette for passing a freshly dead body? Where in the missionary handbook was *this*?

We kept walking and, oddly, I wasn’t scared. Or, rather, I wasn’t scared until after. In retellings I collapse this distinction for

brevity's sake, for immediacy's. Here was the apparent victim of a drive-by. He couldn't have been much more than ten feet away. He couldn't have been much more than ten minutes dead. *If we'd passed by only a few minutes earlier . . . But we were protected, we were on the Lord's errand, et cetera.*

We kept walking and, gradually, we quickened our pace, passing over the doors of strangers and going straight to Cristiano's, a recent convert. Had he heard shots? A commotion? His face was a question mark. Did he know about the dead guy at the top of his street?

Cristiano jumped to, called the neighbors, got the story. Another bad apple. Into drugs, into dealing. Cristiano didn't know him personally, but he knew the type. Lost without the guiding light of the Lord, et cetera.

Whereupon Marilena, Cristiano's sister, called out from the kitchen. She wanted to know what the fuss was about. "*Um cara foi pagado lá em cima,*" Cristiano shouted. A kid up the street got offed.

But listen. The scene does not end here, as it should. In memory, floating free of chronology, I pass the body for the first time, my companion and I. We keep walking, keep quickening our steps stepping away from the unquick, as suddenly a girl—overweight, underdressed—crests the hill, running toward the body. She falls at its side (was he a boyfriend? a brother?), throws her head back in a biblical wail. *A dead ringer for Mary at the foot of the cross.* I didn't think that either, but I certainly might have. The dying Lord wasn't winning popularity contests. Neither, apparently, was this corpse.

Why hast thou forsaken me again? the girl might have cried. Why me? Why us? Oh why not him? Then the girl might have thrust a trembling finger at my back, at the back of my white dress shirt, my dark slacks, my polished shoes disappearing down the hill.

By the end of my mission, and out of respect for the dead, I'd killed off the boyfriend, the brother, completely. I'm talking about in my letters home. The guy had been dead all along, of course. But in the first letter home I'd resurrected him, mostly for my mother's sake. "The other day we saw a guy lying flat on the

sidewalk. He was on his back, sleeping in the shade of stacked favelas.” Months later I felt to revise the history: “You remember that sidewalk sleeper I told you about? I think he might have been dead. Anyway, I didn’t want to worry you . . .” Later still, a survivor’s braggadocio set in. “He was definitely dead. We saw the bullet hole in his brow. We didn’t run. We didn’t need to. We were protected. We were on the Lord’s errand . . .”

In those last letters I disclosed a number of other redacted details: how we lived off fruit trees as the monthly stipend waned; how kids coated their kite lines (illegally) with ground-up glass, a downed line spanning two branches nearly invisible, and razor sharp; how we kept a low profile during the month of the World Cup when the bars belched out shirtless men drunk on *cerveja* and nationalism. . . All of which had been real, *realíssimo*, if a little less so now. By now it was so much fodder for a homecoming talk. It was retrofitted with import, with significance. The hand of the Lord made a cameo now, but the first cut was always just what it was: a body, and a spreading dot, and an unthinking urge to get past.

In my last area I rehearsed these stories bi-lingually, as I did everything. I spoke English with Americans, trying to get my feet back under me, and with Brazilians I spoke an improved if still distinctly outsider Portuguese. I imagined what I must have sounded like to natives, what with my spit-shined vocabulary, my formal diction, what with the grammar kind ladies congratulated me on, *Muito bom, muito bom*. I imagine it still: “Hello, how do you do? My name is Elder McIlvain. ‘Elder’ is a title given to missionaries. For example, you will notice that my companion, Elder Black, uses the very same title. I explain this because I have found that many people are curious about such things . . .”

I was going on twenty-two months in the field. I was desperately trunky, what with two months left. “I will explain to you what ‘trunk’ means because I have found that many people are curious about such things. Every four to six months, missionaries move to new cities and receive new companions with whom to work. Toward the end of a missionary’s two-year term of service, often he will move to a new city and not even bother to unpack his clothing and other belongings into a dresser. He will live out of his suitcase

or, in old times, his trunk. Moreover, he will exhibit certain laziness and will think about home very often . . .”

So I was trunky, dreaming of tow-headed girls, but I was also nostalgic for the place I'd yet to leave. I missed cheese bread already, I missed stray dogs, watered sidewalks. I missed bent trees whose blossoms smelled vaguely of semen. I missed Jesus, ecstatic, portentous, alive.

I missed native companions (Elder Black was from Georgia), how they spoke, how they cooked, how they sat on their haunches. Elder Black was all right, I suppose. We laughed a good bit. We quoted movies to each other. But there was a distance there. He actually insulted my handwriting. He talked endlessly of baseball. I once made the mistake of reading him a poem of mine. He laughed out loud. “I can tell you're trying to be deep and all, but I'm sorry.”

On Wednesdays we rested, or tried to anyway. We bought our groceries, wrote letters, did laundry, cleaned the apartment. The afternoons were usually given over to lazing, but on occasion Elder Black got gregarious: he set up soccer games with other missionaries, organized hiking trips, barbecues. One Wednesday afternoon we all made kites out of plastic bags. (We used legal string.) We took the kites to a field on the outskirts of town. The sun shone. The wind blew. The kites shrank to the size of postage stamps in a scrubbed blue sky. Toward evening the other missionaries drifted off, two by two. I sat cross-legged in the grass with my journal, a hopeless case. On my day off, I read through the previous week's entries: remembered scenes, bits of dialogue, favorite verses from the Bible. “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

I looked over at Elder Black. He was reeling in his kite, ostentatiously chewing gum, and laughing to himself, which made me laugh. I was a month from going home. I felt the air sitting lightly like a song in my throat.

“Hey, Black,” I called.

“Hey, McIlvain,” he called back.

“You got anything pressing to do back at the apartment?”

“*Nada, amigo. Nadinha.* I'm getting back to nature.”

“Me too,” I said. “Okay then. We'll wait for the fireflies.”

I read for a minute more, then I just sat there. Then I stood up. Wordlessly I moved to a stand of mango trees near the edge of the field. I picked up a windfallen mango, hefted it, and then threw it into the deeper woods beyond, the fruit felling leaves and oak branches on its way, producing a burst of satisfying cracking sounds.

I heard footsteps behind me and turned around. Elder Black gripped a green, spotted mango in his right hand. "I'll do you one better," he said. "Two-seam fastball." He cocked back his arm, hopped once, then twice on his back leg, then whirled around and fired in the opposite direction. The mango described a shallow arc toward another stand of trees—too knotty to be apple, too squat to be oak—and then thunked against a low bough, dropping what sounded like large pinecones and loosing a shiver of white fuzz. The fuzz—snowy scrim—updrafted and eddied on the breeze. It finally settled on the ground around the tree, coating its prodigious roots.

"What was that?" I asked.

"A kapok tree," he said.

"A kay-what?"

Elder Black smiled. "They don't have them in the States. My last companion taught me. Here. I'll show you how to make a Brazilian snowstorm."

We walked to the nearest tree. Against the trunk, its bark gray and papery, my companion put out his hand to steady himself. He reached down and retrieved from between two roots a small green pod. Cleanly burst down the middle, its white fibrous insides showed. "It's like cotton but it's not," Elder Black said, prying at the seam. "These sides peel back until it's just the fluffy seeds hanging on the branches. Well, anyway." He chucked the pod straight up into the canopy of green. A few leaves wafted down before another cloud of white, like an annunciation. He bent down for more pods and I followed his lead, collecting a handful and unloading it into the tree. The white stuff shook down in successive waves. It fell on my hair, my neck. It faintly tickled. I was chuckling with the sensation. And then suddenly I was laughing. And then suddenly—boyishly—I was putting my arms out, spinning and spinning, letting the white stuff coat me, letting it swirl all around me, letting it all fall down stark and mute

against the darkening air. Over the steady whoosh of my spinning, I heard Black laughing, too. We laughed in chorus, he and I, and hardly knew why we laughed. Of course the pitch of such a moment could not sustain itself much longer, of course the feel of such a moment could not survive retellings, but still we spun around, laughing, and still my writer's heart took courage, beating *remember this, remember this, remember this, remember this.*

## Nehushtan

*Matthew Wynn Hemmert*

Impossible to tally,  
 The time that a stethoscope  
 Has draped about my father's neck.  
     Years, I am sure.  
 Just as impossible, to count  
 The cadence of rhyming ventricles  
 Or the number of times he entertained  
     The sounds of Korotkoff,  
 Indicating systole and diastole.

There is a Kodachrome photograph  
 Of my father, younger, in 1974 India,  
 Stethoscope replaced by a large constrictor.

*Make thee a fiery serpent,  
 And set it upon a pole:  
 . . . that every one that is bitten  
 When he looketh upon it  
 Shall live.*

My father, a living rod of Asclepius.

Triaging and treating this human condition,  
 And understanding our Isaiah,

*. . . all flesh is grass . . . ,*

My father is certain that we know,

*As many as should look upon  
 That serpent should live,  
 Even so, as many as should  
 Look upon the Son of God. . .  
 . . . might live . . .*

## Sober Child

*Mark D. Bennion*

How many times had he dashed past me?  
He'd run and run, climb onto the thick  
stone walls, stretch his arms into the ribs  
of morning light, shake his head,  
then jump down into a steady stride,  
spinning his feet until exhaustion  
or the layered light near the end  
of day. He coughed some, as if  
he didn't know what to say, but got after  
the mules so they would harrow the earth,  
his eyebrows raised in the slight vault  
of wonder. For his father, he first tossed  
jasper, then hauled buckets of dross,  
the dregs of metal dusting his arms  
and embedding in his fingertips. For his mother,  
he'd slit and hang a young ram, seethe  
its caul and kidneys, prepare the hocks  
just for himself. He must have been close  
to his tenth year when I caught him carrying  
unleavened bread across a field. He sensed

somehow that burdens would hunt him down.  
And he knew I'd watched him hearken  
in the synagogue, its hard seats and elegant trim,  
cherubic gilt, how it had always been,  
how it shall be, edged in his voice down  
to his knuckles, in his hands and back up  
out of his mouth after he passes through the shaft  
of night's inevitable plea, after he  
understands the scorn for plain words and shadows  
when he will soldier between heaps of the dead  
for one more hoist of flag and sword  
and will keep advancing in the open road  
while the armies shriek at his calves and heels  
like a pack of dogs, jousting and feral,  
jaws, snouts, and teeth slitting skin; how I  
believed him when he said he could bank  
a fire during the coldest night in winter,  
then he pointed to the stars and affirmed  
the zeal in gold plates, agreed to the record-  
keeping charge, and ran on.

## What Rocks Know

*Clifton Holt Jolley*

Before Joseph Smith saw God, he had this pretty thought that you can know the world by putting your face in a hat to look at a rock. Which makes sense if you think about it, since a rock is able to know what rocks know; especially a good rock, and even inferior stone: enough to keep a rock rock, to keep any pebble what is most likely for it to be.

That's probably what Joseph Smith meant: we are tossing, we are coming to one kind of trouble or another, always squinting at the sun, always trying to become. Which is not a trick tried by granite or flint or slate, which may have been Joseph's point: what you see in a hat is dark, still: the band, the felt, the mineral.

What you hear in a hat is least of all the voice of God, but the beginning of His voice: the silence before the sound, as the dark before His face. And ultimately: the captain's treasure which young Joe Smith eventually found: gold. A golden book, and an angel to deliver language above ground. Which is what comes from looking blind into your hat sufficient to unwinding from the dark

a sight of God. I'm not saying so, except to think: what a pretty story

to believe the game of Joseph Smith, the boy-not-yet-a-prophet finding water, treasure, and a decent living in upstate off-road New York.

I'm not saying what he saw or did not. Except: there was water there,

which no one argues. And eventually treasure, as several witnesses said.

And it doesn't take a Mormon to know the price of gold, the weight

of so many angels and two Gods dancing in a farmer's hat.  
I'm not claiming either way, except to remember: Brigham  
told every man to discover such *matériel*. He himself had found  
as many as he had wives, and probably with less trouble.

What I am saying is: there are worse ways to discover God.  
When the leper put a crust into the Buddha's begging bowl,

and the cripple's finger severed beside the bread, the Buddha  
ate

without removing what was not food. I no longer beg; but if I  
did,

I would discover a rock, since everyone who disagrees with such  
has not seen God, nor heard the voice of God, nor wondered  
how

so small an issue as the intelligence of stones can teach us the  
world

and how to find water and gold and other treasure in the quiet  
dark.

## Flying Out

*Dixie Partridge*

This morning makes no shadow, compresses  
with its grayness and that knot  
I learned to grow against winter  
long ago in Wyoming.

A few sweeps of green  
lap at the white altitudes of the Rockies.  
Mountain ranges flow like ice streams.  
Nothing beneath me looks random,  
though I am told all seeming stillness  
and order are chaos, the silence below  
filled with sound we don't hear.

I wake from a doze—  
having dreamt something  
about cellos and white birds  
which leaves me on the verge of tune,  
humming . . . the mind lightnings to places  
immense and secluded, but specific  
as electrons of our cells  
once inside a star.

Last week my daughter, the mathematician,  
told me each breath we take  
contains some particle from that first one  
we took. Exotic bodies of animals  
drew close, what we need to breathe  
hooked to common respirations.

Someone waits for me now, miles  
yet just minutes ahead.  
We'll meet at the gate after landing  
and everything for those moments  
will turn significant—a hint of music  
in a collision of particles. . . .

And I remember one afternoon alone  
when breathing came suddenly painful:  
a strange torment in the need  
to inhale. Senses dilated  
to a higher power. . . .  
Then it was gone—and like so much  
of living, never explained in the body memory,  
the bellows-hymn of the lungs.

## White Rain (forty years since our meeting)

*Dixie Partridge*

*"Even death may prove unreal at the last,  
and stoics [be] astounded into Heaven."*

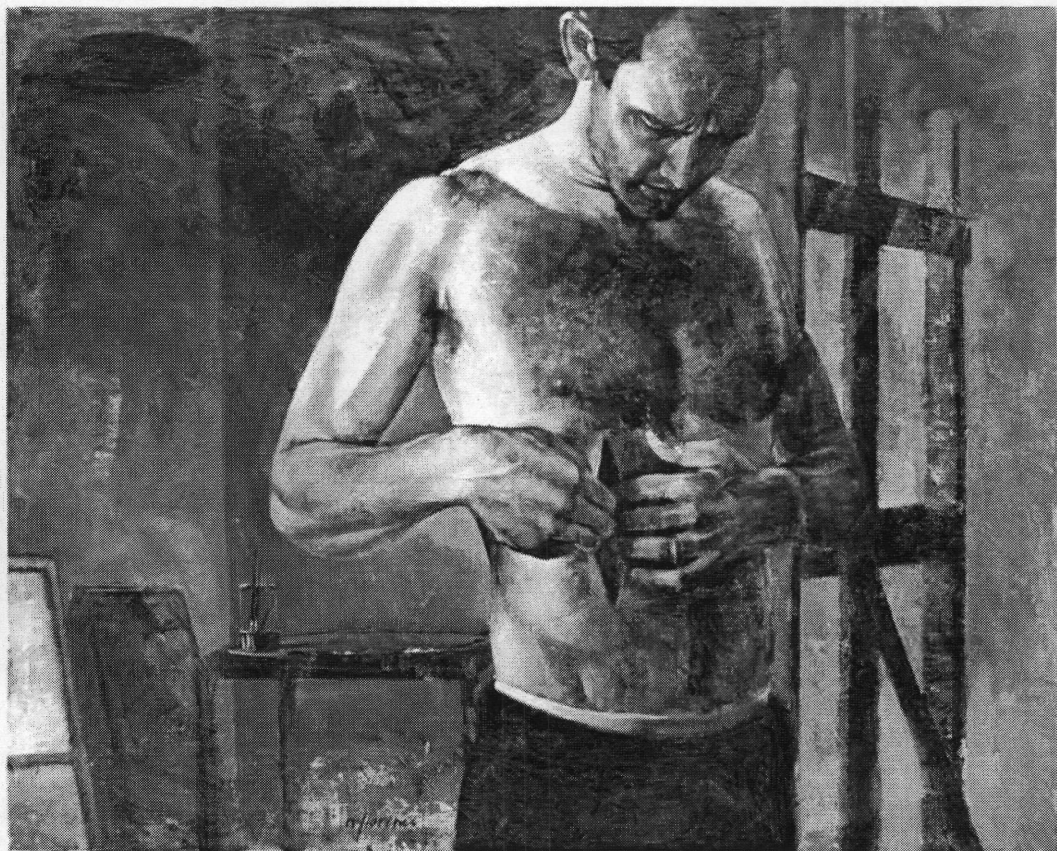
*—Herman Melville*

We wake to cold, though it's mid-spring,  
so silent at sunrise  
we both raise the pleated blinds  
and look out: everything a shock  
of ice . . . each draped petal and twig  
from weeping cherry, wire on the chain link  
fence—evenly glazed and still.

Yesterday there were birds  
and paper-winged moths.  
The new nest in a birch sits too high  
to see inside. But with the image of blue eggs  
coated with ice, I see how some pain holds  
a requiting kind of beauty: the newborn  
named for my father—gone four years.

In a spring so like any other (showers  
and a little wind), the chores of pruning and tilling  
are taking us longer, but suddenly  
with the melt of freezing rain  
a repeated wonder of grass  
comes back, and brittle branches  
go supple with green.

An hour of sun spurs sensation  
toward the unspeakable languages of spirit—  
like a touch of pollen when you discard Sunday's vase  
of dead flowers. Or the way by afternoon  
in the young wheat of Horse Heaven Hills,  
though we hardly feel a breeze,  
a whole field sways.



Nathan Florence, *Self Doubt*  
oil on canvas, 24"x30", 2006

# In a Better Country

*Michael Fillerup*

*But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly home . . .*

(Heb. 11:16)

"You don't have to go," she whispered, the morning grogginess in her voice betraying an urgency that was futile but necessary.

"I know that," he mumbled.

"Bishop Tolman said—"

"I know. I know what Bishop Tolman said."

She twisted onto her side, freeing an arm from the sheets. "You're going alone then."

He shoved another T-shirt into the duffel bag and zipped it shut.

"Okay, fine," she muttered. She would crawl out of bed now, throw on her terrycloth bathrobe and slippers, and hope that no one recognized her driving down the freeway at first light.

He had faithfully dispatched his morning duties: lugging the trash can out to the curb for Friday pick-up, unloading the dishwasher, walking Cleo to the end of the cul de sac and back. But instead of his perfunctory routine of feed and flee, he had lowered himself to one knee, running a hand gently along the spine of their black lab.

"We'll see you later, girl," he whispered, and she had stopped chomping on the dry nuggets to gaze up at him with doleful eyes, as if divining his future. Framing her face with his hands, he leaned in close, inhaling her doggy breath. "Man, you stink!" he said and rubbed her head briskly before turning away.

During the fifteen-minute drive to the airport, Margie stared straight ahead, her profile a flashback to the various other times he had failed her—blue eyes iced over, chin tilted high, Geena Davis lips puckered, not for a farewell kiss but to blow him off. As the

Camry idled outside the entry, Mark maneuvered out of the front seat and grabbed the duffel bag and day pack from the trunk. When he leaned in to kiss her, she turned her head and gave him the back side of her unadorned hair. He inhaled the smell of a restless sleep, of dried sweat, fear, and anger.

*Okay, he thought. You're just making it easier.*

"Thanks for the ride," he said and, in one quick motion, shut the door and waved good-bye—more like a sarcastic salute. He didn't look back but heard her drive away long before the sliding glass doors rolled open to welcome him.

There were four legs to his journey, the first three by plane: to Phoenix, to El Paso, to a polysyllabic south-of-the-border city he could barely pronounce. A bus or train or burro would take him the final leg.

Or so he hoped. He had no directions, no itinerary, no game plan—nothing except the duffel bag, the day pack, a billfold with \$200 cash, and a map torn from a State Farm Road Atlas of North America. His destination was a tiny drop of blood on the loins of northern Mexico.

Rinsed clean by last night's thunderstorm, the small mountain town he called home positively glistened: the pine trees and the little homes positioned neatly around them, the rolling greens of the golf course, the brick buildings downtown. As the plane gained altitude and curved south, he caught a final glimpse of the mountains, the sun washing across their snow-packed peaks, turning them gold.

Flying had never bothered him, not even in these puddle jumpers where you sat shoulder to shoulder and rode the wind like a cowboy on a bronco that couldn't decide if it was going to buck or break. But the roar of the engines was certain to amplify the siren in his head that had started after the phone call and hadn't left since. He pressed his palms to his cheeks and let his middle fingers slide down over his ears, trying to head it off, but it was too late.

He gazed down at the forests of ponderosa pine, chagrined at their resemblance to his own thinning scalp—spikes of hair surrounded by patches of sunburned skin. But the pines shortly gave

way to sagebrush and chaparral as the desert rolled out like a rumpled old carpet crowded with legions of saguaro cacti.

Within the hour they were descending into Phoenix—to his eye, an intestinal mosaic of asphalt, concrete, and terra cotta inlaid with turquoise swimming pools. As he looked down on the rush hour traffic stuttering along the gray arteries of the city, he wondered: How many other icy farewells this morning? How many happy returns tonight? How many broken hearts and good or bad surprises? Did God really keep an inventory of each and every one, meticulously monitoring the comings and goings of the human race? Not just in this world but worlds without number? Every fallen follicle accounted for? Or was the monitoring more like wearing spiritual ankle bracelets? Then was He a glorified hall monitor or the Grand Chess Wizard maneuvering the pieces one bewildering step ahead of the devil? And did the devil ever catch up? Did he ever checkmate God? Was it a never-ending winner-take-all, or a best of seven series? A best of dispensations? Was it possible for Satan to outfox the fox? Win some battles but not the war? Was Sean maybe a casualty of battle or a victim of friendly fire? Or did some guardian angel fall asleep at the switch, take a doughnut break when he was supposed to be watching Sean's backside?

Stop it. Just freaking the hell stop it. He snapped the rubber band on his wrist three times, hard.

He had a one-hour layover, which would have given him time to check his duffel bag if he had wanted to, but it was small and he had packed light: a change of garments, two clean T-shirts, a pair of jeans, a shaving kit, and a light jacket. In his day pack, he carried a pen and notepad, a John Grisham paperback, several granola bars, a pocket-sized Spanish/English dictionary, and a driver's license for I.D. No debit or credit cards. He had heard enough horror stories about gringos getting thrown in jail and being forced to max out their plastic.

He took a seat in the waiting area where the weather man on the TV monitor was bracing the Phoenicians for their tenth consecutive day of 100-plus heat. Mark tried not to think about home, but his thoughts fled north to earlier that morning when he had soft-stepped upstairs to say good-bye to Stacie, sleeping soundly under the open window on the last day of school. Nothing out of

the ordinary except that he had lingered in the doorway a few moments longer than usual, taking in the details of her life: a poster directly above her bed of a leggy, pony-tailed Mia Hamm executing a goal kick; the wind chimes in the shape of leaping dolphins tinkling in the breeze; a collage of every certificate, note, Valentine, letter, or postcard she had ever received covering the wall behind her bed. Her chubby little arm was wrapped around a soccer ball as if it were her best friend.

This morning he had noticed a particular sweetness in the malformations of her face: the thick, pouty lips, the bulbous forehead, the eyes from an alien continent. He had knelt down by the bed, put a hand almost imperceptibly on her brow, and smoothed back her bangs. "I fixed your flat," he whispered.

She had mumbled something—slurred, semi-intelligible.

"There might be a slow leak, but it should be okay until I . . ." *Come home?* The last two words had stumbled out like an accident. Part plea, part question, a two-headed hitchhiker who can't decide which direction to go.

Eyes shut, still dreaming, she had lifted a hanging hand. "Thanks, Daddy."

A full-sized jet carried him across the southern desert and into a yellow haze from a massive forest fire trying to devour the upper half of Mexico. Squeezed into a coach seat, reading the details, Mark snapped the front page of the *Arizona Republic*, smiling meanly. Retribution, he thought.

He had figured that El Paso would be a sneak preview of the Third World to come, and the airport didn't disappoint. The effect was partly due to the paint-stained, concrete floors and the plastic sheets draping the corridors, half-snagging the industrial dust, but mostly it was the echo of Spanish everywhere, from the garbled announcements over the intercom to the mounted TV monitors where men in suits and ties reported the latest breaking news.

Mark followed the bilingual signs (*Puerta/Gate. Salidas/Departures*) past the concessions—Burger King, souvenir shops, sports bars—down a long corridor opening into an enormous hall that was empty save for a small chair beside an open doorway in the far corner. He passed through it, followed a carpeted corridor

around two corners, and dead-ended at a deserted counter with a large number 22 posted above it. Mark double-checked his boarding pass—22, 1:22—, then checked his watch: 11:10. Two hours to kill.

He sat down on a vinyl chair and opened the Grisham paperback—a random grab off his bookshelf. He tried to read but after four pages realized that absolutely nothing had registered. He started over; but failing again to focus, he put the book aside. It was 11:15. Stacie would be lining up for lunch now. Hopefully her reading circle hadn't been quite as catastrophic as the day before. Margie would have returned from her morning walk, had finished tidying up around the house, and was probably out making home visits. Her calling as Relief Society president had been a godsend. All of that free time she'd had to think and mope and heap blame and second-guess had now been replaced by good works: lifting up the feeble hands, changing bedpans, delivering hope on a cookie sheet. Mark wondered if her anger had simmered down. Was she thinking about him, or had she mentally dispatched him for the weekend? Or longer? His return ticket was open, although he had estimated three or four nights. You'd have thought he was leaving for a year. Or checking out for good. What she didn't know she would always deduce. Crazy idiotic foolhardy stupid head-up-the-ass idea, she had called it—throwing propriety and position to the wind (Mother of the Ward, the shining example). She rarely cursed, but when she did, you knew she meant business. She was pissed.

At 12:50 a man in a gray suit and a woman in a scarlet dress and black hose entered the waiting area and quick-stepped to the counter. Mark sprang to his feet a little too quickly, startling the woman, who arched a brow. Mark fell into line behind them and tried to eavesdrop on their three-way, but the matronly Latina behind the counter was speaking in a very rapid dialect that bore no resemblance to any grammar or vocabulary he had retained from two very distant and inattentive years of high school Spanish. They may as well have been speaking Cantonese.

His three brothers and his sister had all served Spanish-speaking missions for the Church—this trip would have been duck soup to them—but inspiration had called him to work state-side, in scenic Minnesota. Best mission in the church, they used to say as part

of the conditioning. Best state-side mission in the Church, he and his companion would mutter on the sly.

He wondered now if his Negative Nellie attitude back then had greased the wheels of Fate against him and his house. . . wait: we don't believe in Fate. Justice, yes, punishment, natural and unnatural consequences, guilt, payback . . . all of that we've got in abundance, a six-thousand-year supply—but Fate?

Best mission in Minnesota.

The plane looked more like a rocket, small, sleek, silver. Squeezing through the doorway, he found himself sharing the eighteen-seater with a group of Mexican professionals, all middle-aged men except for the woman in the red dress, and a tall, leathery gringo who was wearing a disappointed but deadly look, as if he had just failed a James Bond screen test. They sat in single seats divided by a two-foot-wide aisle.

The Aeromexico pilot and co-pilot looked official enough in their white shirts and ties and bronze badges, but they kept fiddling with the control panel like teenagers playing video games. The plane labored off the runway, fighting the oppressive pull of gravity. When it finally broke free, it seemed to climb the stairway to the clouds like an obese dog, lunging and grasping at each step. Mark looked through the tiny portal and noticed the wing straining up and down in the turbulence. The ABROCHE SU CINTURON sign began blinking in panic-stricken red; and a moment later, the plane lurched and dipped dangerously downward. Pilot and co-pilot were frantically working the switches as the plane bucked and rattled through the swirling white air. Mark focused on the rivets along the wing, wondering if at any moment they might pop off like buttons on a too-tight dress. James Bond was reaching for his barf bag. The pilot and co-pilot were no longer laughing.

Mark felt unusually calm, as if imminent death would be a form of honorable release. He started to say a silent prayer, but a blast of wind—something—smacked his side of the plane, summoning up Margie's words and Bishop Tolman's warning: *If you go, you go solo*. . . He had done his praying *a priori*.

As the turbulence simmered and the plane leveled out, the ABROCHE SU CINTURON light died. The pilot said something over the intercom in Spanish that made everyone else chuckle.

Peering grimly through the portal, Mark could see nothing but a gray infinity beyond the wing. Recalling old axioms: *Sometimes you have to leave to come home again.* Or the motto framed on his son's wall: *Return with honor.* How about just plain Return? Return in one piece? Return period?

An hour later the plane began its descent. As the clouds thinned, he saw a vast, flat land of beige-on-brown parchment stained with scattered clumps of trees and a river winding across its length like a long, lazy signature. The yellow haze, compliments of the southern inferno, cast a surreal, coastal fog over the city, although they were two hundred miles from the sea. Little wind-up planes cluttered the sides of the narrow runway.

The plane set down gently. The co-pilot said something to Mark that he didn't understand, but he nodded back: *Gracias.* As he stepped onto the portable stairwell, his hand shot to his forehead, blocking the sudden glare. He fumbled for his sunglasses. They slipped through his fingers, and as he lunged for them, he lost his footing. Behind him the woman in red gasped as he grabbed the metal railing, sparing himself a long rough-and-tumble ride to the blacktop, but not before his side slammed hard against the railing, his left leg scraping along the steps. He swore softly as pilot, co-pilot, the woman in red, and all of the other passengers swarmed around him—or so it seemed. There wasn't possibly enough room for all of them to converge on the stairwell, yet it seemed as if they were collectively helping him up, speaking to him in urgent Spanish, dusting him off, genuinely concerned about his welfare. Too embarrassed to feel any pain in the moment, he politely waved them off: *"Está bien, gracias, está bien."*

He continued down the stairs, ignoring the ache in his ankle yet knowing that, by tomorrow morning, it would swell up like a toad. One of the young professionals handed him the remains of his sunglasses, and Mark thanked him curtly: *Gracias.* His word for the day. He really just wanted to get on his way and forget about the incident. Talk about a greenhorn! He may as well have worn a sign on his back: *Kick me, I'm stupid. Rob me, I'm a tourist.*

He hobbled across the blacktop as the sun clawed at his face. The runway looked like boiling water. By the time he reached the sliding glass doors of the single-story building, his shirt was soaked and sticking to his back. He had dressed for warm

weather—short-sleeved, button-up shirt, beige cotton pants, Nike sneakers—but this heat was downright savage.

The airport was small but clean and carpeted, with large glass doors and windows creating an aquarium effect that far out-classed the concrete tomb in El Paso. Mark retrieved his duffel bag from the carousel, passed through customs, and with gestures and very broken Spanish bought a ticket on a shuttle bus. The shuttle belched and bellowed three or four miles down a desert highway before pulling into a large parking area full of old cars and their rusted ancestors. He shuffled across the yard and into what looked like a gigantic warehouse with little glass-enclosed shops along one end offering snacks, novelties, bottled water, soda pop, ice cream. There was a game room for the children with pinball machines, plastic cars and mini-rockets to mount, and video games with annoyingly loud sirens and flashing lights. A long series of counter-tops stretched across the opposite end of the building below large marquees advertising the various bus lines: ESTRELLA BLANCA, CABALLERO DE AZTECA, PAL-OMA BLANCA. In the center of the building, Mexican families sat in rows of vinyl chairs bolted to the cracked linoleum floor.

He had no idea which line to take. He gravitated toward the counter with the biggest, brightest, cleanest-looking sign, PAL-OMA BLANCA, although the second “A” was hanging like a key on a hook. *Don't judge a book by its cover*, he reminded himself, but in this case it was all he had to go by.

Mark changed \$150 to pesos and kept the other \$50 in American dollars for the trip home. At the counter, a young woman greeted him with a big smile tainted by a distracting gold rim around each of her two front teeth. Mark handed her two 100 peso bills. She gave him back a ticket and two twenties, spewed out a blur of words, and pointed to the schedule on the marquee. He was disheartened to see that the bus didn't depart until 16:40—4:20 his time—and would not arrive at his destination until almost midnight.

“Sí,” he said, fumbling with his wallet, the ticket, his change, adding as an awkward after-thought: “*Gracias*.”

The big clock on the south wall read 1:35, and his watch showed 1:32. That he was traveling in the same time zone gave

him a strange sense of comfort. Whether by his watch or theirs, he had three hours to burn.

He browsed around the glass-enclosed shops and bought a liter of water which he promptly guzzled down, then strolled over to the restroom, a little annoyed that he had to feed the turnstile five pesos. The interior was surprisingly cool, although that creature comfort was mitigated by a septic stench and a steady, trickling sound as if someone were at the urinal trying to break a World Record. In fact, there was only one other patron, a middle-aged man rinsing his hands in a stand-up porcelain washbasin minus one corner. The man shook the excess water from his fingers and sauntered outside, leaving Mark alone.

It was a little spooky—the dim lighting, the perspiring concrete walls, the stale smell of neglect. But he savored the moment of solitude. From the moment he had landed in El Paso, he had felt like a stranger in a strange land, surrounded by people who did not understand his language or his intentions or his grief. He could only imagine what the locals were thinking of this blue-eyed giant moving through their midst.

He turned sideways and checked his profile in the water-spotted mirror. Unlike Margie, who had maintained her maidenly figure over time, he had taken on the fat and freckled look of Auric Goldfinger. He wondered if it was the cumulative baggage of fifty-two years on the planet or the stress of the past year that had doomed him to droop prematurely. He was an easy target, like Stacie—heavy for her age and slower on the draw and clumsy, too. (The school kids teased her mercilessly: “Spacey Stacie has no brain . . . won’t come in out of the rain . . .”) He may as well have been parading around in a clown outfit. The locals weren’t ogling him—they were too polite for that—but he could feel their eyes trying to read him as if he were a story in an unknown tongue. He lifted his chin, squared his shoulders, put a bit of iron in his eyes and lips. Better, he thought, giving the hem of his shirt a tug and tightening it over his bulging belly. No, there was no subtlety here, no blending with the crowd, but he had not come to blend.

He couldn’t make much urine—a bad sign in this heat—so he quickly finished his business, bought two more bottles of water, and took a seat in the waiting area. Several big ceiling fans were waging a relentless but futile war against the suffocating heat. The

locals seemed to take it in stride, a few older women casually fanning themselves, indifferent to the inertness of the clock, but Mark was genuinely suffering. Reminding himself to stay hydrated, he broke the seal on another water bottle. He leaned back and tried to relax amid the mustachioed young men in T-shirts and blue jeans and their wives, dutifully holding babies and diaper bags. Across the way, an Indian woman half Mark's height was selling tamales from a metal bucket with a towel over the top.

He gave the Grisham novel another try, but his mind kept detouring to a passage in the Book of Mormon in which the prophet Nephi is commanded by the Spirit to cut off Laban's head so he can secure the brass plates—the sacred record and genealogy of his people: "It is better that one man should perish than a nation dwindle in unbelief . . ."

Nations wouldn't perish in this instance, but he might—if not from the heat of the sun, then in the fires of hell. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. I will forgive who I forgive, but for you it is required to forgive seventy times seven." Bishop Tolman had quoted those scriptures ad nauseum during their many private meetings.

Tolman was a mild-looking man whose Ben Franklin bifocals and innocuous comb-over screamed white-collar accountant, although actually he earned his bread repairing diesel engines. But he spoke candidly, a tack Mark had found refreshing after the barrage of clichés, casseroles, and sympathy cards. And he could speak with some authority about loss, his wife Sherry having survived several rounds of hair-and-energy-thieving treatments before finally succumbing to cervical cancer. She had been thirty-five.

"Your son's in paradise. You don't need to worry about him—you need to worry about you. He passed his test, but you're still taking the exam. And how you react is a large part of that. The real question is: will you be worthy to stand in Sean's presence on the other side?"

Mark knew the party line on trials, tribulation, adversity. He used to dish it out himself when he was a bishop: There must be opposition in all things—no good without evil, no pleasure without pain, no spiritual growth without suffering, endure it well, for all of this will give you experience, and I the Lord God have de-

scended below all things . . . Job crawling on all fours through the refiner's fire . . . God gives His toughest trials to His toughest Saints.

"You still have your son," Bishop Tolman had said. "And you always will."

At some point during the conversation, Mark's head would drop as his voice wrestled with itself, his fingers dragging down the length of his face as if it were putty. Margie's arm would slide across his shoulder, drawing him in close as he wept a bitter mix into his hands. They would kneel together as the bishop offered a prayer—for faith, hope, courage, perseverance, enlightenment, understanding. Mark would pray for forgiveness and the ability to forgive, the sweet miracle of letting go. Margie would continue to rub his back, comforting him as a mother comforts a young child, assuming that this was the turning point, that they were really, finally, at last, heading home again. She would be right about the first part but not the second.

A week later, they would be back in the bishop's office, Margie squeezing Mark's hand as he stared glumly at the crystal candy jar beside the box of Kleenex already plucked clean. Sitting behind his cherry-wood desk, Bishop Tolman would listen patiently once again, offering similar counsel and a similar prayer, and the next week the same, and the next week and the next until one evening he cut Mark off in mid-sentence: "Mark, Mark, Mark . . . Listen to me. Listen carefully to what I'm going to say." The bishop sighed deeply, slowly, exhausted. "Mark, it's not easy for me to tell you this, but you are guilty of the greater sin here."

Mark tilted his head to one side, as if trying to clear water out of his ear. "Excuse me?"

"Pride," Bishop Tolman clarified. "You're stewing in it. I understand your hurt. I understand your anger. But this is destroying you and your family. You need to humble yourself and ask God for forgiveness and just let this thing go. You've got to move on."

Mark's eyes closed slowly, as if he were dozing off. This *thing*? Move on? Like it was a football game and the home team just got whipped? This *thing*?

And then his eyes opened, glaring. "Ask God to forgive *me*? And what about this—this—this—" He couldn't even finish the sentence, couldn't finish the curse. Could only spit and stutter: "That

is so like you—so to hell like you people to sit on your h-h-h-igh horse and j-j-j-judge! Ask God to forgive me? And who's going to f-f-f-forgive God . . . for not protecting His s-s-s-servant? Isn't that what you tell these kids? Called to serve and all? They're just kids, you know. Kids!"

Mark was standing, throwing his hands haphazardly around the office, waving accusingly at the framed picture of the Savior who was observing quietly on the wall: "Ask Him maybe!"

The bishop listened calmly, his fingers laced together, elbows forming an isosceles triangle on his desk. "I think He knows a little something about suffering," he said. "And I think His Father knows a little something about losing a son."

"That was with purpose! That was by design! Don't you think I know that? Everybody knows that! He gave up His, but He got Him back—almost immediately back. He's God. He's big picture. I'm little picture!"

The bishop didn't flinch. "How do you know Sean's death wasn't by design? Or didn't have purpose? Isn't that the truest trial of faith? To believe even when we don't see or understand?"

Mark was jabbing his finger at the little bald man behind the desk. "Don't patronize me! You don't—you haven't—all of your—your boys. . . ."

Margie pressed her palms to her ears, screaming above his scream: "Stop it! Stop it right now!" And then, in the silence that followed, "Please?" Then it was her turn to sob. That was the end of the conversation and of their visits with Bishop Tolman.

That was a year ago. In the months that followed, Mark had crawled deeper and deeper backwards. Each night, after a mostly silent dinner, while Margie self-medicated on Turner Classic Movies, he retreated to the dark privacy of his study where he explored the vagaries of the internet. Sometimes he filled out nonsense questionnaires or entered bogus sweepstakes; other times he read the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* or obscure publications from small farm towns hiding in the breadbasket of America. He checked the bizarre junk being auctioned on e-Bay and sometimes bid a few dollars, no more. He avoided porn sites but became a cynical reader of gossip and entertainment columns and the ASU Sun Devils sports webpage.

He went to bed late, got up late, and dragged himself to work

late. He was curt with his staff and even worse to his customers. No one dared say anything—not even his typically blunt-as-a-hammer secretary or Ray, his co-owner and best friend since high school. He tried to pick fights, but no one took the bait. He was grieving, and they gave him wide berth. Ray told him to take some time off, take Margie on a vacation—to Europe, New Zealand, somewhere fun and far the hell away from all of this.

His daughter became a veritable stranger and genuinely suffered from the void.

“Dad, come on up!” she would call into the hall at bedtime.

Every night he used to read her a story. Now her mother came instead.

“He’s busy tonight.”

“Again?”

“Yes. Again.”

He used to leave her little notes every morning: *Dear Stacie, Have a dolphin day!*

Now, when she announced brightly, “Dad! I had a dolphin day!” he would mumble in his milk. Her disappointment was palpable.

He missed her first two soccer games of the season; and when she burst into his gloomy office, proclaiming, “Daddy! I scored a goal!” he muttered perfunctorily, “Good for you,” and continued fondling the mouse, scrolling down and entering another mindless bid. After that she quit reporting.

One night after Stacie had gone to bed, Margie slipped into his study and softly shut the door. The lights were off, his face half-lit only by the glow from the computer monitor, a ghost-like facade. His right hand was cupped over the mouse, and she put hers over it. He continued staring at the e-Bay offering on the screen, an old football allegedly used by Joe Montana in high school.

“I want you to know,” she whispered, “that I’ve loved you since the first time we met. Our first date. That night when I got into bed I thought to myself, That’s all I want in life—Mark and a couple of children, and I’ll be happy forever. And that’s never changed. I want you to know that. But this has got to stop. All of that love, you’re killing it. It’s killing us—our family.”

He continued staring blankly at the monitor.

She lifted her hand. "You need to do something," she whispered. "I want my husband back. I don't want this morbid stranger living in my house any more."

She leaned over and kissed the back of his neck. Then she slipped out into the hall and quietly shut the door.

3:30. Margie and Stacie were at the Harkins Theatres now for the rush-hour show—a family tradition for the last day of school. They would throw the usual prohibitions to the wind and junk out on buttered popcorn and Pepsi. Super size? Bring it on! This one day of the year. School's out! Let's party! Afterward they would barbeque hamburgers and loiter on the deck, watching TV outside as the sun dipped below the pines.

Mark gazed around at the sea of alien faces, reminding himself he was the alien here, a dollop of winter in this land of smoke and sunlight. A little Indian girl was dozing off beside her mother, who was already asleep in the next chair. The girl's head tilted slowly to the right until it suddenly struck the mother's shoulder, startling them both awake. They traded looks, briefly confused, then erupted in laughter. Mark started to smile, then sat up stiffly, wrenching his head away from mother and daughter. Focus! Focus! Reverie, nostalgia, sentimentality—they were the enemy today.

At 5:20 he stepped out into the boarding area where a small crowd had gathered near a sleek, silver bus that looked newly minted. Idling beside it was a big, brown monstrosity that looked like an old school bus made over by a street thief's hasty paint job. Mark's heart sank when he noticed the words *Paloma Blanca* hand-lettered in white paint across the dented and dust-crust-ed flank. Noxious black fumes poured out of the rust-eaten exhaust pipe. Through the chalky haze, the late afternoon sun burned a blood-orange.

Weaving his way past the luxury liner, Mark scolded himself: *Next time shop around, stupid! Grow a brain, idiot-stick!* Then he quickly repented. It was better this way. This is why he had come: to travel as Sean had traveled, second class, with the goats and chickens, not to fat-cat around like a gringo tourist. He wanted to eat what Sean had eaten, sleep where he had slept, smell what he had smelled. He wanted to suffer as Sean had suffered. That same culture shock and initial ineptitude with the language. Sean's first

companion was a native from Mexico City, Elder Ortega. A nice enough young man, but Sean couldn't understand a word those first few months. When Ortega met up with the other Mexican missionaries, they would jabber away while Sean stood there grinning stupidly, pretending to get the punch-line when he may have been the joke.

Mark showed his ticket to the uniformed little man who motioned for him to leave his duffel bag by the collection of banded suitcases and cardboard boxes that had accumulated outside the open belly of the bus. Mark boarded and headed to the back, averting his eyes from the other passengers. His body had always seemed a burden that moved at odds with his spirit, but never before had he felt so big and clumsy and out of place, like Gulliver among the Lilliputians. Still, he recognized his size as an intimidating asset; and settling into the bench seat in the very back, he stretched his oak trunk legs and assumed a look of cool detachment: arms folded across his soft but bulging chest, shoulders square, jaw clamped tight. *Don't mess with me*, his body language said, although if someone did he would be pretty helpless. He had no training in the art of self defense. All of his life he had been a gentle giant, playing the fun-loving peacemaker. Playground bullies had kicked sand in his face and pantsed him outside the girls' locker room; they had pissed and pooped in his mess kit—and all of that, okay. Turn the other cheek, walk away, take the high road. For him, okay. He could take all of that. But this other. . . No. No Mr. Nice Guy. No gentle bear. No water off a duck. No forgive and forget. No turn the other cheek. No kiss and make up. There would be no peeing in his son's mess kit.

As the last few passengers boarded, Mark silently noted the incursions on the world he had left behind. There were no goats or chickens on board, but the outside was soft-sale camouflage compared to the ravaged interior. Peanut shells, candy wrappers, and clots of dried mud spotted the floor; the vinyl seats were split and frayed; the cracks in the windows were angry asterisks. These he had almost expected. Harder to process was the little shrine near the driver's seat where a large picture of a brown-skinned Virgin Mary cloaked in a green gown gazed gently back at the passengers. Red and gold tassels dangled from the rear-view mirror, and

the face of a young girl smiled inside a frame of pink macramé. Etched above it, in bold, medieval letters: *DIOS ES AMOR*.

At 5:40 the bus bellowed as it backed out of the shady overhang, allowing the sun to resume its grueling work. Within minutes the interior felt like an oven that someone had switched from low to broil. The locals remained statues, stoic and indifferent even as sweat rolled down their earth-colored faces. Mark unscrewed the cap on his last water bottle and began sipping methodically. He stood up and wrestled with the nearest window until it finally gave, but the air gusted in like dragon's breath, so he sat back down and resigned himself to a long, hot ride. He could feel the globs of sweat colonizing in the soft folds of his belly.

He observed quietly as the bus lumbered through a maze of convoluted streets, intermittently stopping to pick up more passengers: a young Indian couple, the father carrying an infant in one arm and a toddler in the other, the willowy mother on crutches, her left ankle swaddled in an ace bandage. They took a seat near Mark in the back, the woman staring straight ahead, her almond eyes big and glossy, beautifully so, but expressionless, as if her head were mounted on a wall, telling silent tales. Or maybe she was simply thinking about her next meal, the next little behind to wipe, mouth to feed?

Mark turned his attention outside where colonial domes and arches rose majestically above onerous billboards and row upon row of simple shops and hodge-podge homes of mud, plywood, cardboard, concrete, and corrugated metal. Every city had its unsightly neighborhoods, he knew that, but the bus had been rumbling along for over an hour now, and the scenery was growing progressively worse. Where were the elegant stone plazas and fountains? Why were they traveling the eyesore route? Welcome to second class . . .

He was beginning to feel sick now, a little nauseated. Was it the fumes from the bus, the smoke from the south, the city smog, or the early summer heat? Or maybe the to-and-fro tottering of the bus as it rounded each curve and corner like a boat about to capsize? The other passengers were opening their carry-on sodas and bags of chips or removing warm tortillas from plastic bags. He should have brought more water. Food, too. Chips, crackers, something besides his stash of granola bars. Dramamine, *por favor*?

He pictured Sean riding the bus here for the first time, his first solo trip away from home. *Bienvenido, Elder!* Was it a grand adventure in his eyes? Or did he, too, look at the small and broken homes and the hand-me-down laundry drying on the line and long for a safer, cleaner, more familiar place? Pine trees and snowboards. Their little big boy all grown up. In his letters he had tried to sound upbeat and positive, but the subtext was painful; he was hurting badly. In their return letters, they had quoted platitudes: "Forget about yourself and go to work . . . put your shoulder to the wheel . . . lose yourself to find yourself . . . return with honor."

His son had never voiced a direct plea to let that cup pass. Mark had pretty much put the kibosh on that at the airport. So he had written about dogs falling off rooftops and his linguistic mis-cues—telling people he was *embarazado* (pregnant) when he meant *embarazoso* (embarrassed). Stand-up comedy mingled with scriptures. In this way, he had survived his first six months in this city that looked as if half of it needed to be power-washed and the other half delicately feather-dusted. Humor had been his true savior, at least in the beginning. And then they had transferred him to the village in the mountains where it was pure and clean and safe.

Within a month, the tone of his letters had changed. The humor was still there, but now he spoke of his "great love for the people." He must have repeated that a hundred times: "wonderful . . . humble . . . salt of the earth . . . spiritual . . . a believing people. You tell them about Joseph Smith's vision in the Sacred Grove, and they have no problem with that, not like the ever-skeptical white people. 'Yes,' they'll say. 'My uncle, he had a vision too!'" Always ending his letters with the obligatory guilt trip: "We Americans have been blessed with so much—not just material wealth, not just cars and toys and stuff, but power too, the power to do good or evil in the world, or to sit on our hands and do nothing. The Ultimate Spectators. Those of us who hold the Priesthood especially have a solemn obligation to . . ." Fill in the blank. Yes, yes, we're all under condemnation. Mark shook his head, half-smiling, half-cringing at the heavy-handed General Authority jargon so typical of young missionaries who had finally lost themselves in the work. Which was exactly what he and Margie had been fasting and praying for. . . .

No. Don't say it. Be careful what you wish for . . . pray for. See

the Grand Design. Leave it in God's hands . . . Get over it . . . Move on . . .

Shut the hell up.

They were rolling deeper into the innards of the city: store windows fogged over with dust, newsprint patching up corroded walls, more signs: CARTA BLANCA CERVEZA . . . TECATE . . . DIOS TE LLEVE . . . FLORERIA CLAUDIA . . . FRUTERIA OLIVAS . . . VIDRIOMEX. A man with no legs was sitting a few feet from the corner holding out a styrofoam cup. More like that—an entire street of them, men and women without legs, arms, eyes, mouths. A street of missing parts and pieces. As the bus roared into a busy intersection, the city became a giant pinball game of mad taxis, swerving cars, screaming sirens.

This was not Puerto Peñasco or some other little tourist town where you could lounge on the beach and barter for cheap souvenirs and sip your virgin margaritas on a veranda overlooking a tranquil blue bay. This was real Mexico, raw Mexico, and it had lost its luster. He found himself arguing internally but angrily with God: *Why so many born in these circumstances, with their future sealed in a time bomb? Why are these dealt a pair of deuces while others get four aces?* He winced at the banality of his argument. He sounded like Sean in his combative high school days, raging against God's ways to man. His voice would erupt, his rosy cheeks burning, especially when Mark dismissed his harangue with a patronizing smirk, the rolling eyes: "Don't worry, Marge! Old Sean's just trying to save the world again!" Sean would shove his plate aside, shake an accusing finger at his father: "All you people care about is your stupid house, your stupid cars, your stupid boob jobs!"

In those explosions of passion, Mark, a child of the down-with-everything-but-me-do-your-own-thing-sixties, always felt his own past rearing up and biting him in the ass: *touché*. Sean disdained the fact that his father had devoted his entire life to selling top-of-the-line bed mattresses. Smiling condescendingly: "Relax, son. Your mother and I have been around the block."

Sean had sworn that he would never, ever, under any circumstances, serve a full-time mission for the Church.

It was dusk before they reached the outskirts of the city; and as the bus turned southward, Mark took one last look at its ragged silhouette on the horizon. A gigantic Mexican flag was undulating

defiantly and ironically above the ruins—something odd and strangely triumphant about it, like a besieged city stubbornly refusing to surrender.

As the bus steamed through the countryside, he saw automobile graveyards, gardens of old tires, sway-backed horses roaming barren fields, rock walls three feet high sectioning off rolling hill-sides where a lifetime of litter was masquerading as snow. More billboards: **DINO A DROGAS PARA QUE TU VIVAS MEJOR . . . GABRINANDO POR GOBERNADOR . . . CARTA BLANCA.** And a parting image just before nightfall—two men lying side by side in an empty boxcar, the heartbreak that was Mexico.

But at almost the same moment, Mark zeroed in on a mud-domed house with a big orange fire dancing licentiously in the front yard. Barefoot children in T-shirts were kicking a soccer ball as a matronly woman tended the fire and a young mother sat on a stump of concrete nursing her baby. Hands on hips, the father was peering at the bus through dust-fogged eyes. Mark's heart spasmed momentarily, like a fist grasping desperately for the last rung on the ladder. He couldn't pinpoint the feeling until that last frame was replaced by another: envy.

He leaned back and tried to sleep, but his thoughts kept escaping north to the mountains. They would be returning from the movies now, Stacie chattering non-stop about the last day of school, the tearful good-bye to her teacher. In his absence, Margie would man the barbecue tonight, and Stacie would ask if they could make microwave popcorn and too bad Dad isn't here to make his world-famous home-made shakes and fries, they're the very best, right, Mom? Margie would smile and say—hopefully?—yes, too bad.

Something was intruding—a thumb pressing on his head, right at the tender temple, trying to divert him home. He reminded himself that he was an emissary carrying God's mail. Everything else was the devil's diversion—Lucifer in a top-hat and coat-tails, mixing shit with sunshine to play the upper hand.

Leave it in God's hands, Bishop Tolman had said. And so, in a manner of speaking, he had. There were asterisks to every commandment.

Margie's parting words forced their way back into his head: "Don't call me. Don't call and tell me you're in some Mexican jail."

He wondered if that missed-kiss outside the airport would be their last. He started mentally writing her a letter but two lines into it shredded the thing angrily in his head. He was aching inside and out, but that was okay. It was good to feel it deep and hard and stinging, like acid in his veins. That's how Sean had felt it. It was good that he was traveling second class. Hell, maybe it was third class. Not quite without purse or scrip but with a few pesos in his pocket. Good that he was thirsty, dry, itchy, sweaty, hungry, homesick—that word! Sean had never painted it that way. Kids. Nineteen year olds. To them it was an adventure. A two-year camping trip. Living off tortillas and beans.

The bus stopped briefly at each little outpost to let more people on or off, and for every burro crossing the road, but never long enough to get out and stretch or take a leak or buy a Coke or candy bar. It lumbered relentlessly through the barren flats until it was consumed in desert darkness, the only break an occasional pair of headlights speeding toward them like twin comets that thank goodness always managed to stay on their own side of the road. He had heard stories. There was no bathroom or reading light on board, just the smell of sweat and exhaust and the fried desert air, and wondering where they were, where they were going, and when they were going to get there. He may as well have been sloshing around in the belly of a whale.

At some point, the air outside grew cool enough to warrant moving closer to an open window. Shortly after, he could sense the extra pull of gravity as the bus began laboring uphill; and within the hour, he could see campfires burning at the edge of the world. The bus began slowing down but never quite stopping as the other passengers stood up and shuffled to the front. Pine tree silhouettes were keeping watch over a small village of log cabins. Indians in headbands and shawls were moving slowly in and out of lantern shadows. A long-haired mutt was lying on a porch beside a man with a face like driftwood. His hawk eyes seemed to be staring directly at him, Mark, condemning him personally for a long, sad history of dead ends or maybe coolly reminding him that he was on alien turf now.

At last the bus came to a complete stop, and the other passengers began shuffling out into the night. Mark wondered if this was

his stop, but when he stood up, the driver glanced up in his rear-view mirror and shook his head.

It was another hour of torturously slow climbing and winding, but eventually Mark saw a nest of lights glowing up ahead. This time the driver switched on his little dome light, nodding, but Mark was already in front of the door, thanking him profusely. Before his Nike sneakers had even touched the broken pavement, a pack of local boys was swarming around him as if he were a star-crossed celebrity. When the driver opened the side panel to remove Mark's duffel bag, a flurry of arms reached out for it, like a fish-feeding frenzy.

It took maybe a second to identify the leader—a tall, slender boy with black bangs drooping to furry eyebrows that made a straight and unbroken line across his lower forehead. The exact countenance of the boy he had seen at least three times in his dreams. The tell-tale giveaway? The gold Rolex watch—Sean's high school graduation gift from Margie's parents—on his left wrist.

"Carlos?" he whispered aloud, but his voice was swallowed up in the commotion.

On second glance, he looked even younger than Mark had imagined, thirteen, maybe fourteen, a street-smart smirk on his lips as he oozed to the front of the pack, deftly released a younger boy's hand from the strap of the duffel bag, and made it his own. Slinging the bag over his shoulder as naturally and expertly as a sailor heading off to sea, he smiled at Mark and asked: "Where you go?"

In plain pants, huarache sandals, and a baggy blue-on-green print shirt, he was not dressed much differently than the others. It was the way he wore the shirt, with the tails loose and reckless and the top four buttons undone, showing off his glabrous chest.

"A place to sleep—*dormir*?" Mark clasped his hands together against the side of his face and tilted his head.

The boy nodded vigorously. "*Sí, sí!*"

His lanky legs seemed to flutter in the darkness as Mark hobbled along trying to keep pace, his ankle throbbing anew as blood flooded back into it. He followed the boy down a narrow street lit by a solitary lamp, the cone of light marking the point where the cracked pavement gave way to cobblestone. They turned left down another narrow street and right down another, and just

when Mark thought they were going to disappear into the darkness of a third, the boy stopped abruptly outside an eight-foot adobe wall. A wrought-iron lantern cast as much shadow as light on a small wooden sign with letters in cursive and a painted picture of a turquoise butterfly: *La Mariposa*.

"*Aquí está!*" the boy announced.

As Mark pressed two twenty peso notes into his hand, the boy's eyes widened in such a way that Mark couldn't tell if he had tipped way too much or way too little until he said, "I need you tomorrow. *Mañana*."

"*Mañana?*"

"Yes, *mañana*. Twelve o'clock. *A las doce. Aquí*." Mark pointed to the ground.

"*A las doce?*"

"Yes—I mean, *sí. A las doce*." He felt as if he were back in high school Spanish, performing Mrs. Velasco's tedious pattern practice drills.

"*Sí, sí, sí.*"

He interpreted the rapid succession of *sí*'s to mean he had paid the boy generously. Mark thanked him again; and if it hadn't seemed so contrary, if not outright sacrilegious, he would have thanked God as well.

"Carlos, right?"

For the first time since their encounter, the bravura drained from the boy's mahogany face. "How you know. . ." and he took a gulp of air—for inspiration or composure—"name?"

Mark shrugged: "Lucky guess. *Suerte*. Tomorrow, *a las doce*, okay?" He held up a handful of bills. "*Mañana*. Don't be late."

As Mark watched the boy's elusive frame blend into the shadows, one thought kept going through his head: *The Lord hath delivered him into your hands . . .*

The motel was nothing fancy but decent enough for twenty dollars a night. There were two levels arranged around a small courtyard of dirt and gravel where you could sit in plastic lawn chairs and contemplate the red flowers spilling out of fat ceramic pots. The sound of Mexican trumpets and accordions was blasting through the open doors of a small bar.

The night attendant was so short his chin barely cleared the

counter where Mark carefully placed 200 pesos. His stubby fingers curled up, swallowing the bills, as he handed Mark a room key fastened to a strap of leather imprinted with a turquoise butterfly. In broken English he said that breakfast was served until nine.

Mark said *gracias* and trudged up the wooden stairwell, passing thickly lacquered doors of knotty pine until he located the ceramic tile with number 12. He entered, hoping for cooler air and was marginally rewarded: no refrigeration but a ceiling fan created an artificial breeze that took some of the sting out of the heat. He dropped his back pack and duffel bag on the bed, drew the blinds, and popped the window, allowing in some fresh air along with the distant strands of Mexican music.

The room was small but clean and comfortable—maybe too comfortable for his purposes: tile floors wonderfully cool to the touch, wooden beams ribbing the ceiling, the bedcovers, turned down for the night, sporting an exotic native design. Hanging on the wall directly behind the wooden headstand was a framed oil painting of a white woman in her early twenties—long, straight hair covering one shoulder and half-hiding behind the other. Mark wondered what mixed message was lurking behind this posed portrait of a strawberry blonde in a Mexican peasant dress. There was an innocence about her—the rosebud lips that had not kissed many lips, the optimistic eyes that had yet to see the dark side of the moon. On second look and even more so on the third, she seemed hauntingly similar to Margie as a young college student. He hadn't known her back then, had only seen photos, but she would have been quite a catch. How she had evaded the hordes of horny suitors until her late twenties bewildered him almost as much as why she had fallen for the likes of him. "Desperation," she had cooed into his ear in their early years, back when life was simple, plausible, sexual.

She would be in bed now, reading the latest title chosen by her book club. Stacie would be in bed as well—or maybe not: the last day of school, curfews were typically lengthened. Maybe she had been invited to a friend's house for a sleepover, and they were up late watching TV or something. He hoped so; she needed more of that.

He smiled, recalling her very first soccer game. She had been

nine, a newcomer who had stumbled and bumbled through the initial practices. To appease the league rules, the coach had sent her in to patrol mid-field during the waning minutes of the game. Instead she had bolted after the ball as if her little heart were trapped inside it and she was trying to get it back. He would never forget the image of her sprinting downfield, legs and arms churning, chest thrust forward, head angling back, like a cartoon character in super-acceleration—mouth and eyes wide open, tongue hanging out, expressing nothing but unmitigated joy.

She angled across to the goal, braking, spinning, chasing the ball back to mid-field, and so on, up and down and back and forth, completely oblivious to her coach screaming frantically from the sidelines. He finally ran onto the field and took her by the arm: “Stacie, Stacie, sweetheart, play your position! You’ll kill yourself running all over like that!” And she nodded, nodded, tongue wagging, but he may as well have told a thoroughbred to walk or a malamute not to pull. She spun around and streaked across the field, while the poor coach turned to the crowd with a histrionic shrug.

She was not big or fast or particularly skilled, but jeez, she loved the game. Loved the ritual of strapping on her shin guards, her matching headband, her purple jersey with the number 10; loved to stuff her Adidas bag with her little sports drink, her cleats, her purple and gold sweats and sling it over her shoulder. Tough as nails too. On defense she confronted every opponent as if it were a personal vendetta. No one got by her without a slide tackle or a foot in the shins. Not dirty, just tough. Scrappy. All of her inner hurt and anger were converted to energy on the field.

It seemed strange—even unjust—that he was down here in this cheap but clean motel, while they were up there, a thousand miles away, under the same moon, the same stars, the same sky, yet he felt galaxies removed from them.

He meandered into the bathroom, trying to remember what he had come here to forget, and almost bumped into a small wooden table with a water bottle beside a ceramic bowl. The thirst that had dogged him throughout the long bus ride suddenly returned. He grabbed the bottle, broke the plastic seal, threw back his head, and swallowed. The water was as warm as pee, but he didn’t care. He emptied the bottle in seconds. He turned on the

tap, started to refill it, then dropped it in the sink, scolding himself: *This was Mexico, idiot-stick!* The last thing he needed now was an attack of the Revenge.

But his throat felt like a desert, and his efforts to lick the dryness from his lips resulted in tiny threads of flesh sticking to his tongue. He tried to urinate, but only a few pathetic drops squeezed out, the yellow-green color of anti-freeze. The tell-tale sign of dehydration. What now? Walk down to the bar and buy some water? They'd probably charge him triple. He was too tired. Tomorrow. He could wait until tomorrow. They probably only had *tecate* anyway.

He stripped down and spread his body across the bed which was firm and solid but about six inches too short. He closed his eyes and listened to the soft but steady revolutions of the ceiling fan as more Mexican music intruded through the open window. The female lead was crawling to the high notes, the men yip-yip-yipping in the background. In the relative silence of the room, the ringing in his ears suddenly became loud, shrill, obnoxious. Mark turned onto his side and tried his very best to not dwell on anything even remotely related to home.

At first he thought it was the morning call of desert birds, but then he remembered that he was in the mountains now. Rolling onto his back, he peered up at the ribbed ceiling through blurry underwater eyes and realized it was the monotonous chit-chit-chitting of the fan. He tried to sit up, but everything ached, as if he had been clubbed from head to toe with a baseball bat. Sunlight was slanting full-force through the window, catching the corner of the bed. The sweat had dried on his garments, leaving them stiff and salty. He had brought only one other pair and was saving those for the trip home, so he would just have to make do for now. Crawling out of bed, grumbling—*stupid, moronic bus ride; I'm too stinking old for this*—he caught himself again: good. Let it hurt. Deeper. Harder.

He showered under a stingy trickle of water, the showerhead so low he didn't even attempt to wash his hair, and besides he wasn't going to risk a truant drop sneaking between his lips, raising havoc with his bowels, and sabotaging his mission. Okay, so maybe he was being overly cautious, maybe even downright paranoid,

but he felt like a marked man here, a six-foot-six blob of gringo, and he sensed the subtle elements of the country conspiring against him, trying to get an illicit edge because it was their turf and he had come to take one of their own.

Two wooden tables had been squeezed into the entry, converting it into a small dining area. One table was empty and the other was occupied by two coeds and a gangly young man in a tank top. Although Mark felt somewhat relieved to see other white faces and to hear his native tongue, he noted the abrupt if brief break in their conversation as he took a seat at the adjacent table, and he suddenly felt terribly and incredibly old.

They were roughly Sean's age, college kids doing what college kids do best. Mark only half-heard their casual chatter but couldn't block out the morning-after bravura of the young man. Mark tried to bite back the urge to ask God, once again, why He had carelessly looked the other way when Sean, His anointed servant, was standing naked in the cross-hairs, yet He allowed these kids—wanderers, adventurers, good-timers—to roll merrily along through life, unfazed and unscathed. Okay, so they hadn't made the same covenants as Sean, weren't born under the oppressive yoke of Ephraim, but still . . .

A slim-hipped girl in a flounced skirt floated up to his table and, before he could decline, poured coffee into his mug, then set a bowl of cereal in front of him. Moments later she returned with a plate of steaming refried beans, scrambled eggs and chorizos, salsa, and warm tortillas. He tore a tortilla in half, munching on it slowly, as if it were medicine, then picked haphazardly at the beans, reminding himself that he needed fuel in his tank, although he really wasn't all that hungry. Thirsty, yes, and when the server placed a shot glass of orange juice on the table he gulped it down instantly, hoping she would return with a refill. She didn't.

He tried to ignore the college kids, but now they were talking about a canyon with waterfalls.

"Oh, it was soooo awesome!" the brunette kept saying. "Soooo awesome!"

Mark turned slightly, his wooden chair scraping the tile floor. "Excuse me."

The brunette did a double-take, as if a statue had suddenly come to life. An unsightly silver ring pierced her left nostril, and

bits of blue glitter sparkled on her eyelids, yet Mark marveled at the simple beauty of her face: no lines, no wrinkles, just rosy, sun-blushed cheeks. The legacy of the young.

"I'm sorry. I couldn't help overhearing—you said something about a canyon?"

The brunette's eyes darted guiltily between her two friends, as if she had just revealed a sorority secret, but her expression quickly relaxed. "There's a really cool canyon a couple miles out of town," she said.

The blonde was wearing a turquoise halter top that made a token effort to rein in her copious breasts; the brunette looked athletic in a sleeveless T-shirt and sports bra. The brunette wore her hair long and straight; the blonde's was in a ponytail.

Mark asked if it was within walking distance.

The young man's goateed face scrunched up. "It depends. How long is long?"

"It's maybe four or five miles, I guess," the brunette said. "But there's lots of locals who can take you. Just go to the plaza. They're all over the place."

Mark nodded. The brunette thrust her hand into her macramé purse, searching briefly before pulling it back out like a magician who had reached for the rabbit but came up empty-handed. "Damn!" She continued ferreting for something. "You didn't come here to see the canyon?" she asked, maybe a little suspiciously. Why else would anyone come to this dead-end in the middle-of-nowhere town?

Mark shrugged. "Nope. Just passing through."

The blonde crossed her nut-brown legs. They were lean and sinewy, like a marathoner's. "Wherever the wind blows?"

"Yep. Blowing in the wind."

"Must be nice," she said.

"Sometimes," he said, cringing at the irony. In a teenage fit, Sean had once told him that he lived his life with the passion and daring of a Benedictine monk.

His meal barely touched, Mark left a few coins on the table for the serving girl, slipped out the wooden entry gate, and followed the dirt road leading to the heart of town.

In daylight it was much easier to get his bearings. Two high ridges studded with scrub pine and giant boulders flanked the vil-

lage like protective walls to the east and west, with railroad tracks and a narrow highway running north and south, dividing the town in half. A white-washed shrine bulged conspicuously out of the top of the western ridge, and although the sun had long since muscled its way above the eastern edge, its brightness was dampered by the sulphuric haze from the south: Mexico was still burning. Mark reminded himself to check out train departures for the return trip. Anything beat the *Paloma Blanca*.

His ankle felt painfully stiff, as if it had been nailed to his lower leg, but he tried not to limp as he passed a school where young children in uniforms—burgundy pullovers and black slacks for the boys, white blouses and burgundy skirts for the girls—were jumping rope, kicking soccer balls, and playing tag on a large slab of cracked concrete inside a chain-link fence.

The town itself was maybe the length of two football fields; and within a few minutes, Mark found himself standing in the plaza, empty save for a small gazebo in the center, a few iron benches around the perimeter, and a handful of small trees shrouded in the morning shadows of the Catholic church. By far the most commanding presence in sight, it was a towering structure of immense stone blocks stacked six or seven stories high with turrets at the four corners and a huge wooden door, bolted and girded with wrought iron, protecting the entry. A large stone cross protruded from the Alamo hump at the top center; and a large bell half-hiding in the upper recesses clanged at regular intervals, summoning the faithful to mass. Everything else in the village looked tiny by contrast and insignificant.

A few Indian women in flamboyant skirts and puffy pastel blouses meandered in and out of the nearby shops. Otherwise, there was not much human traffic.

Still thirsty, he ducked inside a shop with a sign that read *Farmacia* and took four bottles of water from the glass-encased refrigerator. The shop was poorly lit by two bald bulbs, and the windows appeared foggy although there was no moisture in the air. The lack of light made everything—the bottles of medicine, the candy bars under the glass counter top, the cans of soda pop on the shelves, the racks of postcards and cheap souvenirs—appear old and obsolete.

A little hump-backed woman drifted up beside him so stealth-

ily that he didn't notice her until he almost knocked her over when he turned to go.

"I'm sorry," he said over and over. "*Lo siento*. I didn't see you—I'm so sorry. *Lo siento*. *Muy*. . . *muy lo siento*."

The woman was wearing a tri-colored shawl in spite of the early morning heat. She asked him in a tiny voice, as if reciting from a Berlitz script, "May-I-halp-you?"

"*No, gracias*," he said. "Just looking. *Solamente*. . ." and he aimed a finger at his eye.

She smiled, her teeth like a pair of split bowling pins. She was so incredibly short that Mark felt as if she were staring directly at his navel. He noticed a postcard of a waterfall, so he picked it from the rack and paid for it along with the four water bottles.

His appetite recharged, he strolled across the street to the bakery, bought two cinnamon rolls, and then sat in the shade eating and drinking until both rolls and half the water were gone, and now he felt like a fat Roman. It was only 10:30, but his shoulders were collapsing and his eyelids closing, and he didn't fight it. The sun had found a break in the shade and was gently working the back of his neck like a slow hypnosis.

He and Margie were standing in the bleachers under the field lights, the aroma of popcorn, hot dogs, and cigarettes overpowered by the smell of the rain-soaked grass. Spectators in plastic ponchos or hiding under umbrellas were screaming as the mud-died, bloodied players lined up on the three-yard line, water to their ankles, the lights on the scoreboard showing HOME 14 VISITORS 10. Then an instant of almost silence as the quarterback pitched back to a big black kid who looked twenty-five and massive, but who became a blur streaking through a split-second chasm, the collective hometown groan turning to ecstasy at the nasty clash of helmets, the muddied flash stopped cold for a moment before dropping back flat, a yard shy of the milky stripe, and number 55 already on his feet again, staring down like a victorious gladiator. The defeated opponents dragged themselves to the locker room while the home team swarmed around number 55, confetti flying, horns blowing, the soaked cheerleaders shaking their pom-poms and their booty in a rainy, foggy, surreal moment. The boy hero, amid the commotion, stopped and aimed his index finger across the swampy field directly at Mark. His smile

alone could have stanchd the November deluge. At that instant, Mark thought that he could never feel any happier. And two years later, he thought he would never feel sadder, lonelier, angrier, or more vulnerable.

He had held up fine at first, fielding the call from the mission president, his hands and voice finding Margie and easing her into a chair, onto the bed, back into the fold, while she stumbled around, drugged on denial and sleeping pills. And later, holding her steady at graveside as the wind tugged at the hem of her sky-blue dress, adding insult to injury by throwing it up around her thighs a full three seconds for observers to catch an embarrassing eye-full. Guiding her back to the hearse and then steering her through the Relief Society luncheon, the smorgasbord of crock-pot delights and Jello desserts, helping her, eventually, to find a fragment of her smile as the well-intentioned guests offered hackneyed condolences: "He's in the celestial kingdom with Heavenly Father . . . He must have an even greater mission to perform on the other side . . ."

But afterward . . . a week, a month, six weeks, and then one day, they finally dragged themselves upstairs—two words, if that, passing between them: "Mark?" and then a nod, folding up the morning paper and nothing, not one good rotten thing else to do. Together they climbed the staircase, pushing open the door of Sean's room for the first time since the phone call, and it was like diving into the rabbit hole, the role reversal so instant and obvious. Her pioneer stock took charge as she became her old pragmatic self again, stripping the bed sheets as coolly and indifferently as a maid tidying up a motel room. She cleaned out the drawers, then the closet, and then she started boxing up the assorted verifications of his life: trophies, certificates, baseball cards, CDs, the spiked dog collar he had worn one Halloween, the puka shell necklace some admiring coed had sent him for graduation. All of it. There would be no morbid shrines here.

Mark had watched, dumbfounded. Each item tossed into the box was like a mini burial. Finally she had snapped at him: "Hey, are you going to help, or are you going to just stand there with your hands in your pockets?"

He knelt down, reached randomly under the bed, and pulled out a sheet of plywood with miniature tanks, artillery, and plastic

soldiers glued to the surface—Sean’s re-creation of the D-Day invasion. He and Sean had stayed up all night with matches and red nail polish authenticating the display by meticulously burning and bloodying the limbs and faces of selected soldiers. The project had won first prize for Hobbies and Collections at the county fair. Mark fingered one of the soldiers, snapped it free, held its match-blackened face up to the light, and broke down weeping.

11:15. He stood up, tossed the empty bottles into a trash receptacle, and headed back to the motel to meet the boy named Carlos, still uncertain what he was going to do and how he was going to do it.

When the boy arrived, he looked a bit surprised, probably because there was no luggage for him to carry. Mark smiled, summoning up some dictionary Spanish. “*Quiero ver la cascada,*” he said, showing the boy the color postcard of the waterfall. When the boy hesitated, he flashed a 200 peso bill, which elicited an enthusiastic response. The boy himself looked like a picture postcard with his lazy black bangs, baggy beige tunic and matching pants, and tire-tread sandals. Mark did not overlook the gold Rolex that appeared even brighter and brasher at midday.

He followed a few steps behind as the boy led him down a dirt road that wound through the south side of town. Within a quarter of a mile, it was just the two of them, traversing scrub pine that soon gave way to sketchy forests of ponderosa pine. The boy moved like an antelope, stretching his lean legs so swiftly and effortlessly that he probably could have sprinted up the mountain. Mark had read somewhere that the Tarahumara Indians had a ritual where they ran for over a hundred miles. A marathon was child’s play, a morning warm-up. Mark had no idea if Carlos were Tarahumara or if he were even Indian, but he obviously had been nursed on endurance from the cradle. The kid had the lungs of a lion.

Feeling every ounce of the sixty extra pounds in his gut and butt, Mark was sucking air as the incline steepened. He tried to minimize his pathetic wheezing; but it was hopeless, so instead he lagged several yards behind, out of Carlos’s hearing. He did not want to appear weak or handicapped or anything but large, powerful, formidable, scary. A colossus who could crush and destroy at will. Instead he felt like a giant stick of butter melting in the Mexican sun. The boy was probably sneering to himself: another

fat American who any second is going to whip out his cell phone and call the rescue squad. He'll phone in for a golf cart or helicopter to drag him up the hill.

Mark wouldn't give him the satisfaction. The intermittent flashes of gold on the boy's wrist were sufficient motivation. Panting, gasping, the smoky haze adding rust to his lungs, he kept his trunk-like legs moving, slowly but deliberately, ignoring the pain in his bum ankle, grimly determined not to stop unless the boy did, which was not until he had gained the top of a false summit that flattened into a grassy meadow stretching maybe a hundred yards—the calm before the storm—before melding into a gruesome staircase of broken rock and stone that zig-zagged up the bare and rugged flank of the mountain.

The boy paused, hands on hips, barely winded as he waited for Mark to catch up. He said something in Spanish, and Mark (sucking air, trying not to) nodded. "*Está bien, está bien,*" he said, assuming the boy had inquired about his condition. Maybe he had called him a dumb gringo. Maybe he had told him to get the lead out of his fat ass so this silly hike wouldn't take all day. Maybe he had said, "Give me every peso in your pocket!" Or maybe he had said, "Are you tired? Do you want to rest for awhile? Am I going too quickly?"

Mark removed the two water bottles from his day pack and offered one to the boy who said *gracias*, took a long swig, and wiped his forearm across his mouth.

"Is it far?" Mark asked. "*Es lejos?*"

The boy shook his head. "*No, no. Está cerquita.*"

He wanted to ask the boy a thousand questions. Why aren't you in school today? Do you do this every day? Your parents—what do they do for a living? What do you want to do when you grow up? Have you thought about leaving the village—moving to the city maybe and going to school? Are you Catholic? What does that mean to you? Do you believe in God? The ten commandments? Punishment? Justice? Do you know what justice means? Where did you get that nice-looking watch? Was it given to you? Why are you wearing it if it wasn't given to you and it is not yours? Do you know the owner of that watch? Do you know where he is now? Do you know what happened to him? Do you know he has a mother and father, like you? How do you think your parents would feel if

you didn't come home tonight—if you suddenly disappeared and no one ever saw you again? Are you prepared for what comes next? What were you thinking when you did whatever you did to the owner of that watch? Do you ever think about him now? Does he visit you in his sleep like he visits me? Is there anything whatsoever in that pea brain adolescent head of yours? Do you know what God is going to do now? Do you understand that I'm just the messenger here? Don't worry. It will be quick and completely unexpected. Just like Sean. You caught him off-guard, bending over to tie his shoes or maybe tying yours for you? Caught him red-handed in an act of stupid kindness when you thought no one else was looking. But someone's always looking. God is always looking through His all-seeing eyes. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. For it is better that one man die than a nation dwindle in unbelief. For it is better that one boy die . . .

So many questions but none that he could articulate in a foreign tongue that to his ear was a blur of vowels and congested consonants.

The boy pointed toward the cliff and marched on with Mark following a few steps behind: not so passive now, not so locked into survival mode, his eyes scouring the ragged wall of yellow rock for opportunities.

They labored up the switchbacks for an hour before reaching another summit, then followed the trail through a section of forest spotted with blue and gold flowers. They squeezed between two giant boulders constricted so tightly that, for Mark at least, coming out the other end felt like a birthing. Next the boy led him through a tunnel of leafy trees and overgrowth. Heads lowered, they moved rapidly toward the circle of light at the other end until they found themselves standing on the lip of a sheer cliff that presented a sudden and spectacular view of the brunette's canyon. On their side, the barren walls plunged a thousand feet straight down to a slow-flowing highway of dark green water. The other side, equally steep, was lusciously layered with pines, shrubs, vines, flowers. Mark did not understand the magic or climatology (or the theism) that decreed one side of the canyon Desolation and the other Eden, but the divide between the two was maybe three hundred yards.

The boy pointed across the divide: "*Las cascadas!*" he an-

nounced, and Mark followed his finger to a point midway up the cliff where water blasted out of the woolly pelt of flora. The daredevil fall looked like one of those preternaturally gifted Superheroes that can stretch itself from heaven to hell, crashing on the boisterous bottom and instantaneously reconstituting itself into a satin smooth flow except where the protruding rocks made rippling white tears in the fabric.

Even for this boy who must have witnessed the scene hundreds of times, the sheer majesty of it transcended the commonplace.

“*Nos vamos!*” he shouted and waved Mark forward.

Moving with the alacrity of a ballet dancer, the boy pranced along the edge where one false step would have sent him plunging to oblivion, and Mark could see firsthand the easy accident. He, too, was quick-stepping now, against his better judgment and abilities, yet he somehow managed to dog the boy’s heels, knowing he had to act soon, that if he waited too long the trail would widen and reduce the margin for error. He tried not to look down. There was a dizzying sense of vertigo, and he had to keep the advantage of surprise. *I have delivered him into your hands . . .* There would be no debate, no second guessing. It would be swift, instantaneous, clean.

And it was: the boy pausing for a moment to gaze down into the canyon as if for the first time, hypnotized, it seemed, by the steady, silver shimmer of the falls; Mark sneaking up from behind, clamping one arm around the boy’s throat, the other wrenching his arm down and around, pinning it roughly behind his back; the boy screaming in Spanish as he tried to break free but his arm trapped so the best he could do was arch his back, pleading in pathetic grunts and squeals.

Mark tightened his stranglehold, surprised by the surge of power in his arms. “You little shit!” he growled. “That was my boy! That was my son! What did you think—that you could just kill my boy and just walk away, did you?”

He was cheek to cheek, spitting into the boy’s ear: “Did you think you could just do that? Do that and wipe your hands and just walk away?”

The boy tried to twist his neck free, but Mark reined him in roughly and shoved a knee into the boy’s spine, hard, seething like

a jilted lover. "Now you'll see. Now you'll feel like he felt . . . see what he saw going down."

And then he was dragging him to the edge, the boy kicking and thrashing, but the adrenal rush had turned Mark into Superman. He could have plucked the boy up with one hand and hurled him into the river. He released his stranglehold and grabbed the boy by his hair, jerking his head back, stretching the fragile neck until the Adam's apple seemed to be straining like a rat trapped under the skin. Mark thought he could easily snap it—yes, snap his head right off and throw it into the river. Good riddance! One quick, hard yank—but better, less obvious, a little push, a little nudge over the edge. Just another dumb hiking accident.

The boy was crying now, whimpering, resisting a little but not much. Did Mark maybe feel a little sorry for him? Maybe just a little? Hell, no. Hells bells, no. Whimpering little shit. Then finish it. Finish! No, let him stew and suffer a little longer, pre-play in his head that sky-dive without a parachute until the fear and panic killed him. Till the mini macho peed his pants. . .

But in that instant of hesitation on the edge, even as he reminded himself to not lose courage—not a voice exactly but a thought, sentiment—yes, all of that, surely, but this boy, too, has parents, a mother and father who will wonder about his whereabouts, suffer and weep and grieve, wondering over and over what pathetic piece of human sewage has done this terrible, horrible thing.

Only what he had done to others. Maybe many others. Well deserved. Well earned. Only what he was willing to do and more. They would go to the church and pray over the lanky, broken body; burn incense and wave palm fronds and flowers, do whatever it is they did. A kid. A stupid, thoughtless, reckless little kid trashing his life for a silly gold watch. He felt like Abraham of old, the knife raised, teeth clenched, poised to finish the job . . . Then do it! Do it! Do it now! But Sean's voice, a soft hand on the shoulder, rushed to the rescue: maybe the details of the dream had been confused, maybe the watch had not been stolen but given willingly, a gift maybe in one of Sean's big-hearted save-the-world missionary moments maybe . . .

In that instant of hesitation, something—a fist, a hammer, a spike—slammed into his upper thigh, high and tight, near the

groin. He bellowed, he howled, but it was the shock more than the pain that made him relax his hold just enough for the boy to duck, twist, and wrench himself free.

He tight-roped briefly along the edge, and then he was gone, his black mop flip-flopping as he bounded down the trail, left, right, left, as if he were paralleling to the bottom. In the mix of sun and shade, his angular body flickered like an old silent movie.

Mark hollered after him: "Come back, you little sonuvabitch!" but it was a half-hearted cry that chased the boy only part way down the mountain and then quit because by then he was not sure of anything anymore.

Except the knife in his upper thigh which had suddenly become very real. He used both hands to remove the blade which the boy had buried to the hilt. He didn't know if that part of the knife was even called the hilt, maybe that was just for swords but it was buried up to that part. He withdrew the blade slowly and in a weird moment imagined young Arthur removing Excalibur from the stone. He felt nothing at first because the adrenaline was speeding so maniacally through his body. But the blood was real, and there was plenty of it oozing and spreading quickly across the upper half of his pants. Removing the knife was like unplugging the dike, and he was tempted to stick the blade back in to stop the bleeding. He didn't know much about these things—he sold beds and mattresses, for crying out loud, and had barely passed his First Aid merit badge and that was forty freaking years ago—but there was an artery down there, he knew that, a great big one, and if the boy had gotten lucky and nicked it, he was a dead man, he knew that too. The femoral artery. That was it. Blood gushing out like water from a broken faucet. Just the thought of it chased the blood from his head to his groin and he thought, *That's it. I'm done.*

But not yet. He managed to half-sit, half-fall on a rock shelf where he reminded himself to keep cool, stay calm, keep cool, stay calm. He'd buried it deep, maybe had hit the bone. Didn't want to look but knew he had to. So he peeled off his T-shirt and tried to tear it into strips but it was much harder than it appeared in the movies, so he finally bit into it, chewed a small hole and ripped the thing in two, more or less, then tore one of the halves into ragged quarters and the other into long strips.

He unzipped his pants and pulled them down for a better look

at the mess that was his leg and now his life and pressed a piece of his shirt against the oozing blood until it was thoroughly soaked, then applied another piece and held it firm until the bleeding had stopped. He took one of the strips and wrapped it around the semi-soaked bandage and knotted it tight but not tourniquet tight. But the blood soaked through again, and when he removed the bandage he inserted his thumbs into the wound, gently pulling the lips apart until they opened up like a dumb dark mouth with hell itself bubbling inside. His eyes clamped shut against his will and he fought and fought but couldn't force them open.

When he finally did, he was lying on the ground with his pants halfway down and his shirt off but his garment top on and his face in the dirt, but he was still alive which meant he had been luckier than the boy who had missed the fatal artery. His pants were an awful ugly mess, but the bleeding had stopped, thank God. And then he remembered to really thank God because he was going to really need Him to get out of this mess alive. The bleeding had stopped but the boy was probably back at the village by now saying who knows what to who knows whom? He had sprinted down the trail as if he were on fire, but these rat-pack kids always had an escape hatch, always had a way back home. Had probably told his parents, the police. The whole village probably knew by now and before long they'd be coming after him with machetes and bullwhips. Besides, he didn't have a leg to stand on, literally or figuratively. Well, there was the boy's knife which happened to be inserted into his leg. Try explaining that to a judge. *No hablo español*. Or his sudden change of heart that kept him from hurling the urchin to a speedy and accidentally on purpose death. *Quid pro quo*. That was a change of heart, wasn't it? Father? There, at the last instant, second guessing? Playing Hamlet. Or was that strike three and I'm out? Judging our actions and the workings of the heart. To even look upon a woman to lust after her . . . Intent is everything. But didn't I balk on the intent? My second and third stuttering that allowed him to weasel out of this?

His thoughts were scatter-gunning everywhere. Stop. Think. Focus. Deal with the moment, save the metaphysical crime and punishment, sin and suffering, eternal judgment stuff for later. He had to get back to town, get this thing cleaned up, sewn up, be-

fore the Mexican microbes infiltrated and took his leg if not his life.

He picked up the knife—small, maybe a four-inch blade although at the moment it looked as monstrous as a Bowie knife and for sure it was infested with germs having been employed to gut chickens or goats or who knows what? The serrated edge had made an ugly wound even uglier. He thought he recalled hearing a clink on impact, something even nastier than the raw puncturing of his skin. Striking the bone maybe and if so was that bad but of course it was bad but how bad was it doesn't matter—doesn't doesn't doesn't. It is what it is and now keep your head on screwed on straight and deal with it.

He tossed the blade aside and, reconsidering, picked it up and heaved it deep into the canyon, then wondered if some goat herder or federal agent might see it glistening in the sun. Idiot. You could have buried the dumb thing. Could have done a million other things besides throw it out there for anyone to find. And with your prints all over it.

He needed to act quickly. There was no one in sight and that was good. He couldn't go back to town, not like this all covered with blood. The boy probably had an uncle or a brother or father who probably was the police chief or the sheriff or whoever doled out justice here, and wouldn't they just love to throw his sorry gringo butt in jail? Wait. Calm. Stay calm now. Stop. Breathe . . .

Okay. Okay. Okay, so now he would hike back toward the village, find a place to hide, wait there until dark. A shady spot out of the sun, close to some water, maybe, to clean out the wound. He would sneak back to the motel at dark—if he could just get back to the motel room and clean himself up. . .

He thought it wasn't right to wear his garment top like a T-shirt in the open with nothing over it, but was it any better to carry it in his pocket like a giant handkerchief? *What would Jesus do?* If he removed the top, the sun would fry him like an egg, so he left it in place and started the long walk back, limping on the left leg now instead of the injured right ankle which he didn't even notice anymore.

Halfway down the mountain, he saw through the pines a fortress of rocks about fifty yards off the trail so he veered toward it and thought, *This will do*. It was a ten-foot wall of boulders that

formed a kind of horseshoe with an oval hole at the bottom wide enough for him to crawl through. On the other side, he found a shady grotto in a stand of trees with thin strips of bark peeling off like badly sunburned flesh—the way his skin would look tomorrow. He lowered himself to the bed of dirt and leaves and tried to relax beneath the crib-work canopy of branches and pine needles. He thought he was protected but fragments of sunlight still sneaked through the overgrowth burning slowly but deeply into his arms and face and neck. His lips and mouth were parched, and he wanted water in the worst way. *Should've brought more, should've shared less, shouldn't have guzzled it all at once.* But he tried to ignore all of that and the little army howling for food in his belly. But what surprised and amazed him the most was the wound. Even though he knew it was there and it bothered him some, there was relatively little pain, and he didn't know if that was good or bad.

He tried to rest—not sleep, because if he dozed off he might not wake up again. He started counting down from one hundred and then he tried to recite the Articles of Faith and then began singing old Beatle songs and hymns and anything else to keep his brain working. But jeez, he was thirsty and the sound of falling water made it even worse although it was probably just the wind in the trees or the ringing in his ears and besides water would draw a crowd on a day like this and he couldn't afford any witnesses.

And so he began praying—a non-stop monologue directed partly to himself, partly to God, partly to Margie—not so much prayer as a blitz of uncensored emotion mixed with bits of contrition, despair, and personal pep talk: we can get through this thing, can't we? Of course. All things possible in Thy book. All things, right?

Thus, he waited, trying to rest without falling asleep as the sun dragged its gassy, liquored body across the Mexican sky; and when it finally touched down on the rocky horizon, he pulled himself to his feet and began a crippled but hasty descent toward the preliminary lights of the village.

The mixture of dusk and the ubiquitous haze made a convenient camouflage; and by the time he reached the outskirts, night had fallen and he could hear music playing in the plaza. He followed the darker streets, ducking behind a tree here, an old barrel there, detouring to avoid a small but persnickety dog guarding

the entrance to a house of mud and sticks. Eventually he found the walled exterior of the motel where he slipped through the wooden gate and staggered across the patio and upstairs to his room, hoping no one had seen him.

Water. He needed water fast. He bolted into the bathroom and lowered his head into the sink, determined to guzzle straight from the tap and suffer the consequences, but he pulled out at the last moment. *This close*, he scolded himself, licking his brutally chapped lips. *This close on so many levels.*

He showered, scrubbed the wound as best he could, tore a bathroom towel into strips, and made a temporary bandage. He put on his other garments, clean jeans and shirt, and then stepped out into the warm evening and headed toward the pillar of light hovering over the village, silently praying that the pharmacy would still be open and the crowd too busy partying to notice an over-sized gringo in a maroon ASU Sun Devils T-shirt and blue jeans gimping along their cobbled streets.

He was in luck because it was Saturday and every man, woman, and child from every two-bit town in northern Mexico seemed to have descended on the plaza where a five-piece band was playing in the gazebo—brassy, sassy trumpets punctuated by the intermittent booming of a bass drum. The crowd was circling around it like a slow-motion whirlpool that kept changing its mind and reversing direction: an old couple dancing a slow but smooth two-step, the mustachioed husband in shiny black shoes, his wife with her silver hair in a bun, while younger couples swiveled their Latin hips center-stage or cuddled on the cast-iron benches. Mature women and their teenaged daughters sauntered into the arena with shawls over their shoulders, the ends trailing behind, like graceful butterflies. A young man in a white dress shirt and tie was sitting imperiously on a stainless steel throne while an oldtimer spit-shined his shoes. Sidewalk vendors sold their wares, and Indian women with bulging bundles on their heads wove adroitly through the crowd as the human traffic flowed in and out of the shops, the bakery, the open-air food stands. For Mark, the smells of fresh-baked delights and meats sizzling over flaming grills were tantalizing reminders that he hadn't eaten since mid-morning. Through all of this, the little band played on with astounding volume and energy.

Watching from the shadows, Mark was startled by this other slice of Mexico. He wondered how this abundance of simple joy had escaped him earlier. In almost every face, he observed laughter; and even in the silent countenances of the Indians, he sensed a quiet contentment. A pack of children seemed deliriously happy kicking a plastic bottle back and forth across the bricks. He couldn't remember the last time he and Margie had danced like the silver-haired couple circling in front of him, couldn't remember the last time they had danced. The energy was so addictive that for a moment even he was tempted to step out and join the swirling, whirling mass. Then he saw through a momentary gash in the crowd two images that reined him back in. The first was a young mother in rags huddled up with three small, barefoot children on the street corner, her open hand, dark and withered, extended to passersby. She could not have been a day over eighteen. The second was the sloping shoulders and mop-haired head of Carlos.

He was coming in Mark's direction, maybe not intentionally but this was no time for even a chance reunion. Mark dipped his head and hobbled down a side street until he found, to his relief, the pharmacy still open. An old Indian man and his wife were at the counter buying tubes of something. They smelled like a campfire.

Through the glass counter he could see tiny boxes and plastic bottles with warped wrappers and faded lettering that betrayed their natural shelf-life. One bald bulb was burning behind the cash register and the other on the wall near the entry. Otherwise the store was cast in evening shadow.

Mark consulted the list he had made in the hotel room, carefully trying to pronounce each item: *alcohol*; *aguja*, needle; *hilo*, thread; *vendaje*, bandage. The hunch-backed woman behind the counter scrunched her face on his first try but smiled on the second, nodding, pronouncing the word correctly: *a-goo-haa*.

As she bagged the items, he grabbed as many bottles of water as he could carry, a can of soda, and two candy bars. Turning to go, he felt his eyes shutting down again, and he grabbed for the counter, trying to steady himself. The woman looked at him curiously—no, gently; it was a gentle look of concern—and asked him something he couldn't decipher. He smiled, nodding, trying without words to reassure her he was fine, just fine, *está bien*, he said,

later thinking it should have been *estoy bien*, but for now he just wanted to get out of there (*gracias, muchas gracias, está bien, estoy bien*) before the wound started bleeding through his pants and he caused a panic in the house.

He gathered up his things and stepped outside and felt marginally better, well enough to stop and buy half a dozen tamales from a street-side vendor because Sean had said that anything hot was safe to eat.

In the hotel room, he ate and drank ravenously, tearing the husks off the tamales and wolfing them down, guzzling bottle after bottle of water. It was lukewarm, but he didn't really care right now. He ate and drank way too much, way too fast, and stopped way too late, but he didn't care. When he was so stuffed he thought his belly would burst, he rolled over sideways on the bed and lay there for several moments, trying to psych himself up for the nasty task of dressing his wound.

For this he placed the remains of his bathroom towel on the bed and removed his pants, wincing as he pried apart the gash, an ugly, jagged ravine. He poured the rubbing alcohol directly into it, then flung himself back onto the bed, snorting and swearing and chewing his upper lip so he wouldn't howl the roof off because the pain was so deep and sharp and savage, like the knife going in and out all over again. He could have gotten something milder, hydrogen peroxide, maybe, which he wouldn't have felt at all, but he couldn't pronounce the words in Spanish, although that was only part of it. More to the point, he wanted the bite, the sting, the torture of hot lava pouring into his groin. He wanted the punishment. So he administered a second round, biting on a washcloth, chewing it almost joyfully as the clear liquid burned hot and deep, whispering his son's name: "Sean . . . Sean . . . Seany boy . . ." And then he flopped back on the bed again, staring at the ceiling fan monotonously chopping up the air, reminding himself that this was the easy part.

It took him six tries to finally thread the needle; and when he did, he almost messed it up on purpose, but finally he forced the tip into the tough, fat flesh of his upper thigh, and yes, the first one was awful—the worst by far, and jeez, it hurt, it hurt, it hurt so damn much, and you had to really muscle it through the stubborn skin and across the great divide, but you had to sew it up, didn't

you? Of course you did, but the second was a little easier than the first, a little less bite and the third pass was a little easier still, not that any of it was easy, but by the time he had looped the thread through from one end of the gash to the other he had come to almost enjoy it. It was his punishment for stupidity, clumsiness, carelessness, shortsightedness. It was his final tribute to his son who had died nobly in service to his God. Each poke and plunge felt like a hot, angry stripe. Like penance. At the end of the gash he pulled the thread around tight, tying it three times for good measure. Tears streaming down his face, he raised the remains of the last tamale to his lips, took a triumphant bite, and then collapsed face down on the mattress.

When he woke up it was still dark outside and the blood-red digits on the alarm clock read 12:17 which seemed impossible because he wasn't tired or even drowsy and it had been well past 10:00 when he had returned from the plaza. Was he so strung out and depleted that he'd slept through the night and the day and into the next night? Or maybe three nights and two days? He had no idea, none. Outside it was perfectly still, perfectly quiet, the only sound the inexorable ringing in his ears. He thought that maybe he was still sleeping except the room was too familiar, too tactile, and had none of the eccentric distortions of a dream. And the pain in his upper thigh was all too real. It felt as if someone were bludgeoning it with a hammer. He unwrapped the wound and cursed at the sight of a red-hot ring around his artless ladder of sutures. He poured more alcohol over the wound, savoring the sting, knowing better but still hoping that the harsher the bite, the more potent the potion. But there was no stopping the throbbing or the sweat lacquering his body or the fire in his flesh. He thought maybe the room was just really hot or maybe he had a fever, but either way there wasn't much he could do about it until morning, so he opened his Grisham paperback and tried his best to focus as night crawled leglessly toward dawn, tried not to watch the laggard progress of the clock or clutter his mind with calculations but did anyway: the train left at 4:00. Eleven and a half hours plus four hours makes fifteen and a half hours. Seven hours to the city, arrive at 11:00. Twenty-two-and-a-half, round it off to twenty-three. Figure an hour to get from the bus station to the airport, get a ticket, et cetera, et cetera. The plane left around 9:00

A.M. Add eleven to midnight, one hour, plus another nine makes ten equals thirty-four. An hour flight to El Paso, kill two makes three, an hour to Phoenix makes four. Thirty-eight total. Puts you in Phoenix about 1:00 maybe 2:00 o'clock. Wait another hour for the next puddle jumper, 3:00 o'clock plus an hour in the air and you're landing about 4:00. Add an hour for glitches, screw-ups, Mexican time. Five o'clock. Flying in over the peaks at 5:00 P.M. . . .

He worked the numbers over and over again, mixed with flights of guilt, regret, anger (*stupid, stupid, stupid . . .*), prayer, and escalating pain; and at some point during the mental mish-mash, he managed to doze off again.

The sun had been up for a few hours, but he stuffed his bloodied pants next to the wall on the other side of the bed so the maid wouldn't see them if she started to clean up. Then he made the final call for breakfast. He didn't want to risk going into town and seeing the boy or the police, so he returned to his room until check-out time at noon. He was not too surprised to see an extra night tacked on to the bill, which he promptly paid, smiling at the young woman with the long braid. Then he limped toward town on the less-traveled south side, marveling at the orgy of colors: shawls of bougainvillea coating adobe walls, flowered vines dripping out of clay pots, young mothers in multi-toned fabric sweeping the walkways of simple homes painted outlandishly loud colors: scarlet, orange, turquoise, pink, chartreuse. They were so bright and bold and in your face that Mark found himself limping along with a little more bounce in his step and a little less gravity in his countenance.

The midday sun had cleared the streets except for a few mangy dogs stretched out on slabs of shade and a young woman slipping into the open doorway of the church. Mark considered following suit, but first he had to attend to his leg. He entered the pharmacy and bought *una cosa para matar el dolor*. Something to kill the pain. Butchered, but the best he could do on the fly. The old woman smiled at him as if he were a regular customer now and handed him a small bottle with faded lettering.

"*Es fuerte?*" It is strong?

The old woman nodded vigorously: "*Sí! Es muy fuerte.*"

"Good," he mumbled, "because I need *muy, muy fuerte.*"

The old woman held up three fingers. "*Tres pastillas.*"

Mark repeated the gesture. "*Tres?*"

More nods, more vigor. "*¡Sí! Tres.*"

Mark bought four water bottles and found a patch of shade where he swallowed three pills and hoped for the best. Even in the shadows, it was scorching; but he toughed it out, watching from afar as a few brave hearts ventured out into the sun—old women lugging plastic bags swollen with the day's groceries; a middle-aged man and his young sidekick pushing and pulling a giant desk across the cobbled streets on a comically undersized hand-truck. No sign of Carlos.

The pills made him drowsy but did nothing to reduce the pain. It was tolerable when he was at rest; but if he put any weight on his leg, it was like smashing it with a hammer. But he was melting in the heat. Gritting his teeth, he limped across the plaza and disappeared inside the church where he was jolted first by the sudden plunge in temperature—the place felt refrigerated—and then by other sensations: the exquisite silence, the vastness of the space, the darkness pricked by a few strategically placed lights and little rows of votive candles burning up front and along the sides, the flames wriggling like goldfish in tiny bowls—all of that—but most unsettling to his Mormon mind was the giant statue of the Virgin Mary in a flowing robe of royal blue, posing dead-center in the front on a pedestal in a three-dimensional frame of tendriled gold. She was staring down at the almost vacant rows of dark wood pews, not with eyes of long suffering but with a cool detachment, arms extended, hands open, awaiting an embrace. The wall behind her was a giant mural of long-faced martyrs and suffering saints divided by four golden columns that urged the eye upward to a domed ceiling populated by chubby cherubim. At the foot of the statue, in a small glass box, the Virgin's immaculate Son gazed down from his cross with bowed head and despondent eyes, a golden crown on his head, the prints in his hands and feet barely visible, like little after-thoughts.

At first the ubiquitous look and smell of gold was appalling to him, especially in a town so small and obviously poverty stricken, lacking in things of the world, but Mark reminded himself of the Kirtland Temple and how the Saints had willingly and joyfully crushed their heirloom china to a fine powder that would sparkle

from top to bottom whenever the sun touched the temple walls. Duty. Sacrifice. Love was smeared somewhere in the mix. And what force had moved these massive blocks of stone, bent double under the cracking whips of friars and conquistadors? Wasn't that how it had come down here? Every nation had its dark underbelly.

To the right, near the front, the young woman with a thick braid of black hair was kneeling between the pews, head bent, eyes closed, lips moving softly and swiftly. A balding old man entered clutching a straw hat in both hands. He dipped his hand into a stone container bulging out of the wall, crossed himself, limped up to the altar in front, genuflected, then crossed himself again before kneeling behind the front pew.

Mark watched for several minutes, but neither the man nor the woman moved. He closed his eyes and tried to feel the Spirit, but the pain in his groin shouted his prayer. There was certainly reverence here, he couldn't deny that, and respect—a willing submission to God. More than he could claim. His antsy prayers were even shorter than his lovemaking. In and out, man. To call them simple hearts was condescending. Believing hearts. Yearning hearts, trusting and devoted hearts. And he had come all this way, for what? His eyes slowly climbed the giant stone blocks that had been hoisted five centuries ago without power-driven motors or machines. The sweat, blood, and tears of a nation. And what nation? Whose people? The chosen children of a lesser God? Lehi's accident? He looked up at the face of the Virgin, who was not smiling but not frowning either. The ambiguous countenance of an ambiguous people.

It was the face of a porcelain doll—smooth, shiny, aloof, and so very white. Yet the longer he looked, the more it seemed to warm and soften. Here was a woman who could understand the agony of loss without divine scaffolding and eternal vision. So maybe the frigid pallor and unblinking eyes were more self defense than apathy and indifference. She had been there, steeled and softened not by vicarious hypothetical loss but daily finite mortal belabored pain and suffering. She knew the score in simple human terms.

He tried to imagine Sean among these people, walking down this aisle with his companion on a preparation day maybe, checking out the local sights. His bristly blond hair and All-American

smile could have lit up the night, couldn't it? Or more likely the sheer spirit vibrating between the two, a gringo and a native carrying their leather-bound scriptures, the twin sticks of Joseph and Judah. Sean would have been respectful in this place, wouldn't he? Not a snotty ugly American rocking and rolling and cowboying up and down the aisles as if he owned the place.

The smell of incense was strong here, and flowers too, although he couldn't see them in the darkness. The smell of stone, cool and damp, the smell of history. Mark closed his eyes, listening: The silence was deep and prolonged, patiently waiting for an answer. It was the sound of deafness, the sound of a god who is not angry or amused but simply indifferent. And yet . . . and yet . . . and yet . . . It was comforting here; not exactly the same God he worshipped but close enough for the moment. He felt safe—alien but safe. Here he could hide from the boy and the sun and the heat of the day and the tentacles of his own history. Like Jonah. Like Job.

He took a seat in the very back pew and began whispering to the God that he had grown up with and had loved and trusted and to the best of his abilities had obeyed. Except this time it was not a prayer of demands and entitlements or of anger and accusations. Nor was it a prayer of defeat, but of resignation.

He leaned forward, head bowed, eyes closed, elbows braced on his knees, waiting for an answer. The silence was immaculate, the only noticeable sound the sirens ringing perniciously in his ears. He thought he heard voices—the angels overhead murmuring among themselves? And then he sensed another presence take the cavernous chill out of the air. He was certain it was Sean who had settled down beside him, but he was afraid to look, afraid that he would break whatever cosmic spell had allowed his son to momentarily sneak back across the veil. He had waited over a year for this, had fasted and prayed and pleaded for this. He kept his head down, eyes closed. He felt many words, heard none, but he would remember four: *Poppa, I forgive you . . .*

He looked up: no Sean, no anyone. The old man with the straw hat and the young woman were gone. He was alone now.

He limped down the center aisle toward the rows of votive candles, knelt down in spite of the pain, and confessed before the

cool-eyed Virgin and her ever-suffering Son the real reason he had journeyed to this faraway place.

The day they had said good-bye to Sean at Salt Lake International, it was snowing miserably—a frenetic explosion of white inwards soiling the sky. Sean looked twenty pounds thinner than when he had entered the Missionary Training Center eight weeks before. He wasn't a pencil neck, but he had dropped the lethal linebacker's mass in his chest and shoulders. His summer tan was gone as well, and his pasty cheeks made his blue eyes look radiant but spooky. He had seemed disoriented; he was smiling but his smile seemed forced. The other missionaries in his group—all in the unmistakable white shirts and the plain ties, clipped bangs and sheared side-hair—seemed to be reveling in the gala of the send off: back-slapping fathers and grandfathers, doting mothers and sisters, girlfriends momentarily breaking the “arm's distance” rule to indulge their missionaries with a departing hug. Laughing, joking, teasing, well-wishing. Some tears, too, but no histrionics, no floodgates opening, just moms dabbing their eyes as they bravely sent their boys off to serve the Lord.

When Mark reached out to offer a farewell embrace, Sean had startled him, wrapping both arms around his father as if he had just returned from the dead, then pulling him in close and tight—tight as he hadn't since he was a frightened little boy in Dr. Lewis's office holding a homemade bandage to his bleeding forearm.

Except that in the airport he didn't cry, although in retrospect (always the damned retrospect!) the force of his embrace had been a louder, more desperate plea. And Mark had felt sick inside, a criss-crossing nausea as he reassured himself, *No, no, no, this is normal, this feeling of loss at departure. He's on the Lord's errand. This is right. This is good. He can't back out now. He'll regret it for the rest of his life and forever after. This is what Mormon men do; it is their work, their glory, their Father's business.* And then his boy had whimpered, called him something he hadn't since grade school: “Poppa . . . oh, Poppa, please . . .” Looking beyond his shoulder and into the goggle eyes of Elder Simmons from Pocatello, Idaho, Sean's gawky, geeky, computer nerd of a companion waiting calmly and patiently (and bravely!) in the wings—in that instant he had been ashamed of his son. And in the next instant, the ugliest thought: *What would we tell people? What would people say?*

Mark gently extricated himself from his son's bear hug, looked into his watery eyes which seemed to be pleading for an honorable out. In his mind he answered flatly: *No*. To the boy, he replied with a smile, a manly pat on the back: "You'll be fine. You be good now." His boy nodded, sniffing as he turned and, head bowed, trudged toward his companion who greeted him with a comforting hand on the shoulder. But later Mark would second-guess that decision, that double-pumping, double-crossing nausea, the ambivalent voice of the Spirit waving him on and off, and it was he—not the boy—who had played the coward, too damn chicken to listen. Later he would be ashamed of being ashamed.

At 3:30 he stepped back out into the sunlight and limped over to the train depot to buy the ticket that would start his journey home. The window was closed, and the small crowd appeared nonplussed by the fact, so he played along. A stocky middle-aged woman was standing guard over a cardboard box the size of a coffin lashed together with twine and duct tape. Behind her stood a young mother with a baby sucking vigorously on her breast, while a little boy with a blue headband clutched the hand of a lanky old man.

Mark checked his watch and tried to tap it faster. No train in sight. A Mexican train running on Mexican time. He eased through the crowd to the far side of the depot, in the shade, but it didn't help. The flesh was dripping from his face. He closed his eyes, reminding himself to hang on, hang tough, he would be home soon, but each minute crawled by as if it too were wounded.

When he looked again, the boy was standing maybe twenty feet away—a defiant little angel in his pale slacks and tunic, one hand on a jutting hip, the other dangling at his side, the gold watchband pimping in the afternoon sun. Mark returned the glare in kind, refusing to let go. For what seemed like minutes but were probably only seconds, the two remained like that—a pair of gunslingers each waiting for the other to make the first move. Finally, Mark tapped his wrist where his boy's watch should have been, then crossed both arms over his chest. With a shrug and a smirk, the boy pivoted on the heels of his tire-tread sandals and disappeared into the growing commotion of the crowd.

A minute passed, maybe two, and suddenly a surge of families

descended on the depot dragging more bandaged boxes and suitcases. Mark couldn't afford to lose his seat, so he joined the human flow edging toward the tracks.

Moments later the silver train rounded the bend—not the newest or shiniest model but a beauty in his eyes. Even the deafening bellow of the horn and the shrill protest of the brakes sounded melodious. He noticed that the sulphurous haze had disappeared. For the first time since he had crossed the border—how many days ago?—the sky was clear, blue, chaste, clean. Had it changed from foggy-smoggy yellow to pure blue during his brief retreat inside the church? Or had he simply been too preoccupied—too self-involved, as Margie would say—to notice the change earlier?

A uniformed officer had entered the area, and Mark hoped it was a routine patrol, not some Mexican dragnet to seek out and strip-search the gringo. Mark stepped forward, grabbing the handrail with one hand, his duffel bag with the other. He was trying hard not to grimace but failed miserably as he pulled himself up the first step, dragging his bum leg behind. One down, three to go—do they have to make the steps so high here? When the truncated porter with the toothbrush mustache reached down to help, Mark looked up, smiled, shook his head: *No, gracias* . . . Sweat was oozing from every pore, it seemed, gluing his garments and shirt to his chest and back, his legs so damp he had to check for blood leaks. His life had become a permanent hot flash. He tried to pay for his ticket, but the porter shook his head and motioned him on.

Easy now. To the back. He scanned the coach—a few families packed into the bench seats, a man in a white business shirt and tie reading the Mexican daily, a young Indian woman in a dress as colorful as a fruit salad sitting all alone staring out the window. Mark sidled down the aisle and eased himself onto the cushioned bench seat. A fist of foam was protruding from a gash in the seat cover next to a sticky splash of spilled soda, but otherwise it looked clean, adequate. No, not adequate—beautiful. It looked absolutely beautiful!

He leaned back and propped his leg sideways on the seat, hoping to take the sting out, but it felt as if some demon monster were gnawing on it. Watch check: 4:35. The coach was almost full and no one else was boarding, but the train continued to idle. "Come

on," he muttered. "Get this crate moving! One down, three to go. We can do this!"

Peering out the window, Mark noticed the young man in uniform huddled with a half dozen of his sidekicks, talking animatedly. Lots of arms slicing and dicing the air, fingers pointing here, there, the train. One of them motioned toward Mark's window, and he looked abruptly down and away, instantly regretting it—Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!—like some cheesy spy movie. He began casting a desperate and disjointed petition to God: *Father, please, I know what I have done rather tried to do attempted but didn't didn't I stopped my heart was on the verge yes absolutely yes but I stopped or You prevented in Your grace wisdom love cutting me slack again I didn't deserve but still stopped and did not please now I'm so sorry of for everything that but the rest too my way I've been acting those thoughts contrary lack of faith and not trusting Your grander bigger better vision didn't couldn't see for that blinded by You know who how that is You know all things of course You do please if You could of course You omnipotent omniscient ombudsman can once again look with fondness where did that come from have I ever said anything cast a fond eye on Your servant Mark doesn't have quite the same ring as David or Solomon or Joseph the one-syllable ordinariness but please if You could see feel it in Your heart to carry me lead me guide me walk beside me safely please one last look touch taste they're coming aren't they coming and there's no escape now no way out now nowhere to go now but. . .*

And then he felt the very slightest tug in his lower back, and for the first time since his little journey had begun—for the first time in over a year, really—he smiled. Honestly, sincerely, truly. They were moving. He sat back and let the adrenaline drain from his body. His shirt was soaked, his heart was thumping, but he closed his eyes and braced his fists against his forehead, whispering aloud: "Thank You, Father, thank You thank You, thank You. I don't know what else to say right now except thank You."

When he opened his eyes, it was pitch black and he realized they were passing through a long tunnel. He felt strangely at peace in the darkness. Safe. He could feel the train laboring—this was the brief uphill part; once they reached the summit they would fly all the way to the city.

The pain in his groin tightened and burned. Should have gotten something stronger. None of this *tres pastillas* stuff. Something

to knock it out for the count, at least until he got home. Got to catch it early, though. The ugly red around the sutures was normal, wasn't it? A little redness? But jeez, it felt hot. His whole body was on fire. He could check again, but what's the point? He just wanted to get home in one piece. Two pieces, Father. A dozen pieces is okay. Just get me home.

He imagined the puddle jumper angling into the final descent, the magnificent view of the peaks, still striped with snow, Margie waiting for him, the look of relief and hopefully joy on her face as he passed through the sliding glass door into the terminal. The long embrace, kissing her as if he really meant it and her kissing him likewise. They would go to the Red Lobster for dinner. Grilled salmon. A big baked potato smothered in butter and sour cream. Screw cholesterol, screw calories for the night. He would tell her all about it—the trip, yes, but all of the stuff going on internally, too. In his head, his heart. Not too much though. Omit the dark and gory details. Keep it upbeat. Keep it positive. She had been through enough already, and he'd put her through even more. Apologizing. He would apologize. Tell her how sorry he was and—yes, how much he loved her. He loved her. He didn't realize how much. Not like this. Not like this hurts your heart to even think about it. He would say that to her. What? What was he going to say? He had fourteen hours to figure that out. Give or take. Grilled salmon crusted with macadamia nuts. That was her favorite. They could rent a movie afterwards. One of those romantic comedies she liked. Meg Ryan. Something light. Something fun. Sit on the sofa with a blanket and just sit. Watch. Enjoy. Enjoy the moment. He prayed for that moment.

They were passing a small village of log homes where late afternoon fires were burning. Mark gazed out the window, sleepy but ecstatic—or was it really ecstasy? He was overwhelmed by a simple but immutable sense of joy. The pain in his groin was growing colder; he'd have to get it checked out when he got home. Doc Flanders would fix him up. The crotchety graybeard would scold him for being a stupid idiot—who do you think you are, some kind of Superhero? You could have lost your leg, or a whole lot more! Margie would chastise him, too. A little bit, not too badly. He hoped to see her nice face—the one with the smile she tried to hide but couldn't suppress. Cleo would be all over him—tail wagging,

high-stepping, turning circles. And the little one—no holding back. She would drop everything—dolls, chocolate milk, book, telephone. She would drop it all and come running, and this time he would fall to his knees and thrust open his arms, big and wide, and he would receive her—close, tight, permanent. Have a dolphin day, kiddo! Have a freakin' double-dolphin day!

The train rolled past craggy cliffs with pine trees leaning out across the tracks like acrobats—a tough land of harsh valleys and odd alliances, where cacti grew alongside evergreens. Through the forest mesh, he saw a small homestead—a simple box of logs caulked with mud, a column of smoke, laundry hanging on the line like a row of colorful pennants. An old woman with a blue scarf over her head was sitting out front, her hands working industriously on something. She looked up and watched a moment as the train passed. Mark lifted his hand and waved to her. Of course, she couldn't see him; he was a dark blot on the window, if that, but he lifted his hand and waved anyway. He wanted to reach out, hand her something, touch, speak. This is where his boy Sean had served, his little corner of God's vineyard. Had he spoken to this old woman? If not her, then surely dozens like her. Mark smiled. He pictured his son and his companion, two young giants in white shirts and black pants, backpacks slung over their shoulders, plodding across this rocky field to speak to this old woman. Do they realize we are sending our hearts? Our souls? Our best? Our very very best?

Mark was smiling but shaking too. Had they turned on the air-conditioning? He didn't know they even had A/C. Suddenly he felt cold. He crossed his arms and clasped his triceps, rubbing them briskly. Maybe he was coming down with something, a sneaky Mexican bug. Or was it simply the excitement, the anticipation: four legs on this journey, one down, three to go.

He looked out at the forest—pine trees spaced randomly, with lots of daylight in between. A man in a white tunic was leading his oxen toward the homestead. Farther off, a young Indian boy with a red headband and baggy white pants was chasing a soccer ball across a barren dirt field surrounded by pines, like a private little stadium. He was all alone but may as well have been playing before a crowd of thousands the way he charged up and down the field, his shirt tails trailing behind like banners, booting the ball, chasing

it down, zigging and zagging with such speed and energy and glee. Like Stacie—sweet little Stacie. Chasing the future into a corner, slide-tackling it on its ass. Feet barely touching the ground.

He was flying, wasn't he? Inside the amphitheater of pines. Ponderosa pines? Yes. Yes, he was almost certain of it. Those tall, asymmetrical, goofy-looking maverick evergreens. Yes, he was sure of it. Just like back home. His little mountain town. He leaned back, sleepily ecstatic. A lovely chill had crept into his feet and was climbing up the inside of his leg, into his groin. Cool. Nice.

And now he noticed something else: he listened for it very carefully, but the ringing in his head was gone. Gone. For the first time since the phone call, he listened to the beautiful symphony of silence. He was feeling warm again. Warm and cold together, the pain passing through him now like novocaine. He closed his eyes, smiling. Home. He was going home.

## A Missive on Mountain Meadows

Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard. *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. 430 pp. Notes, maps, illustrations, appendices, index. Hardback: \$29.95; ISBN: 0-195-160-347

*Reviewed by Bradley H. Kramer and Jonathan A. Stapley*

In some ways, this volume is just the latest in a long line of books written on the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857. Historians, journalists, and others have told this story and furnished analyses from a variety of angles and perspectives, suggesting this devastating tragedy's multiplicity of explanations and implications. Nonetheless, this book is *sui generis*, in that it was supported by the LDS Church with astonishing commitments of financial and human resources. All three authors are practicing Latter-day Saints, and are employed by or are retired from the LDS Church and the LDS Church History Department (xv; back jacket flap). The participation of Richard Turley, now assistant Church historian, signals an unprecedented degree of official cooperation.

According to the many statements and presentations at professional meetings the authors have made over the past few years, as well as the preface to this volume, the Church has supported this project by providing what they call "full and open disclosure." Because "thoroughness and candor" were governing priorities, the Church granted the authors unfettered access to all relevant documents in its history library and archives, including the archives of the First Presidency (xi). This access to relevant historical materials, as well as the resources to conduct unusually thorough research, is important not only for the production of this work, but perhaps also as an indication of possible directions for future Mormon scholarship. This volume answers several perennial questions about Mormon historiography: Just how free and open is the Church prepared to be when it comes to granting access to sensitive materials to professional, scholarly historians? How candid will a Church-condoned history of Mormonism's most disturbing historical moments actually be? Have we finally arrived at the point where histories offer more than transparent

apologia for the perpetrators of this unthinkable vicious crime or sweeping, knee-jerk indictments of any and all involved and of Mormonism (and, perhaps, of religion) itself?

The introduction indicates that the researchers found or gained access to some crucial and previously untapped sources: "Among the most significant discoveries in the church's collections were the field notes of assistant church historian Andrew Jenson, who collected several reminiscent accounts of the massacre in 1892. This discovery, in turn, led to the full collection of Jenson materials in the First Presidency's archive" (xi). This access marks a fundamental shift in the historiographical terrain. Ronald Walker and Richard Turley are currently preparing the Jenson papers for publication.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the authors revisited all of the minutes from the John D. Lee trials, employing an expert in nineteenth-century shorthands to generate new transcripts, which included previously untranscribed material. These records figure prominently in the notes attached to the sections describing the days leading up to the attack on the Fancher party and the massacre itself. Significantly, the authors have affirmed at academic conferences that all these "new" sources will be made public for other historians and scholars to scrutinize.

The authors' reliance on these sources also points to the complicated methodological and analytical problems associated with historical reconstruction of this nature. Observe the following paragraph of narrative:

Stewart and White backtracked toward Cedar City and eventually found their quarry. The two immigrants were on horseback returning to camp and had paused to let their mounts drink from Little Pinto Creek near Leach's Spring. Stewart and White approached the unsuspecting men and struck up a conversation. The Mormons learned that one of the immigrants was William Aden, the other the much-talked-of "Dutchman." Seeing a tin cup attached to Aden's saddle, Stewart asked to borrow it to get himself a drink. When Aden turned to reach for it, Stewart "shot him through the head, killing him instantly." The Dutchman "put spurs to his horse and fled," dodging the bullets fired after him, one of which apparently wounded him. The men at Hamblin's ranch saw him speed past. So did the besieging Indians, who tried unsuccessfully to bring him down before he entered the corral. (159-60)

There is one note at the end of the paragraph. The corre-

sponding endnote mentions the following sources: An entry entitled "Elliott Willden" in the Jenson papers from the First Presidency vault (AJ2); "Lee's Confession" from an 1877 issue of the *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*; "Lee's Last Confession" from an issue of the *San Francisco Daily Bulletin Supplement*, also 1877; a second Willden entry in the First Presidency vault portion of the Jenson papers; an "Elliott Willden" entry in Jenson's papers in the LDS Church Archives (AJ1); the Phillip Klingensmith testimony from the newly reconstructed transcript of Lee's first trial; and an 1872 interview with John D. Lee by *Salt Lake Tribune* reporter J. H. Beadle. Elsewhere, the authors cite their sources more directly, with citations scattered throughout a narrated paragraph.

However, the citation style raises questions about the nature of the sources themselves. What, for example, is the difference between the two sets of Jenson papers? Turley clarified in an email: "Jenson sometimes expanded from memory on his sometimes cryptic notes in the subsequent transcripts. He also rearranged information to make it more understandable or omitted details that may have seemed unimportant. Thus to give a complete picture, it is sometimes necessary to cite both the notes [AJ1] and the transcripts [AJ2]."<sup>2</sup> Despite the lack of bibliographic clarity, the insight furnished by the new materials should not be underestimated. In addition to providing the details of the Cedar City plan of attack, the new sources shed light on the later decision of the "tan bark council" between Isaac Haight and William Dame, which authorized the ultimate slaughter and provides significant evidence for Brigham Young's contemporary ignorance of the massacre. As a research aid, the publishers have created a website that includes errata, a full bibliography (something the book lacks) and the volume's appendices, which catalogue massacre victims, their property, and the perpetrators {<http://mountainmeadowsmassacre.org>}.

Another notable contribution is the authors' deployment of key theoretical strands from the sociological literature on group violence to ask new questions about the massacre. Their most important sources are Roy Baumeister, Ervin Staub, and Stanley Tambiah; and they draw additional analytical perspectives from the work of Yale psychologist Stanley Milgram.<sup>3</sup> Although the authors' engagement with this literature is sometimes disappoint-

ingly superficial, the primary focus of their analysis is, understandably, not sociological or anthropological.

The theoretical heuristics suggested by this literature do, however, provide a useful approach to one of the driving questions of their analysis: How did basically good men end up committing such a horrific atrocity? According to this model, three distinct social factors set the stage for atrocities of this kind. (1) Actors allow “the dictates of ‘authorities’ to trump their own moral instincts” (127); (2) They experience the pressure to conform, meaning that they are unwilling to act differently from their peers; and (3) They dehumanize potential (and actual) victims. Interrogating the evidence with this model in mind allows the authors to avoid some of the problems of earlier works, which either apportioned blame among the conspirators and actors without adequately explaining why (Juanita Brooks), or fixed inordinate attention on the role of Brigham Young (Will Bagley), treating Young’s complicity as having the greatest explanatory power for the massacre and, implicitly, relegating the actual murderers and local leaders to the role of mindless automatons, driven only by their obsession for vengeance-taking and their uncritical obedience to Young’s directives. And while this volume does address the question of whether Young was directly complicit, it also frames the question differently, presuming that Young’s orders would not be enough, by themselves, to ensure the bloody outcome and that a deeper, more localized, and immediate context is required to account for Mormon participation in the slaughter.

At times, the application of this theoretical paradigm seems uneven. For example, fairly early in the narrative the authors claim that “for the most part, the men who committed the atrocity at Mountain Meadows were neither fanatics nor sociopaths, but normal and in many respects decent people” (128). At the same time, John D. Lee, who appears to sustain the brunt of the narrative’s causal weight, is portrayed as a fanatic. Lee was a “religious zealot” who viewed the events as “God’s purpose” (144). He viewed himself as a “modern-day Joseph of Egypt,” an interpreter of dreams—a persona that Lee invoked to affirm the Piute shock troops’ resolution for battle (157–58). Further, the authors quote Samuel Knight of Mountain Meadows who had intimate knowledge of the massacre, as recorded by Apostle Abraham H. Can-

non that both Haight and Dame were “fanatics” (213). Did complex social-psychological factors coalesce into the mass killing, or was it the work of a handful of lunatics?

The authors argue that, while Brigham Young must shoulder a fair share of the responsibility for creating the tinderbox conditions within which the violence erupted, there is no hard historical evidence that he, in fact, struck the spark by ordering, either directly or cryptically, the massacre of the Fancher party. Will Bagley, who has most persuasively argued for Young’s ordering the massacre, lays down a case based primarily on two pieces of documentary evidence. First, John D. Lee, the only massacre participant to be convicted (and executed) for his crimes, penned a series of “confessions” which his defense attorney, William Bishop, compiled and edited into a book, *Mormonism Unveiled*, after Lee’s death. Lee pins responsibility on Brigham Young who, he claims, sent George A. Smith to southern Utah in advance of the Fancher party to order their destruction at the hands of Mormon settlers in cooperation with local Paiutes. The second piece of textual evidence Bagley cites is an excerpt from Dimick Huntington’s diary in which he describes a September 1 meeting of Young with Dimick Huntington, Jacob Hamblin, and several Indian leaders from throughout the territory. Young tells the southern Utah Indian leaders that they can have all the cattle belonging to California-bound emigrant parties along the southern road.<sup>4</sup>

The new material in this volume complicates much of Bagley’s argument for Young’s culpability.<sup>5</sup> For example, Walker, Turley, and Leonard argue that Bishop posthumously expanded *Mormonism Unveiled* to implicate Young, a credible assertion considering the attorney’s pecuniary interest in the volume and Lee’s consistent claims to the contrary up to the end of his life. Still, as this volume demonstrates, the lingering question of Young’s involvement is not fully resolved by his September 10 letter to Cedar City leaders: “In regard to emigration trains passing through our settlements we must not interfere with them until they are first notified to keep away” (184). This sentence absolves Young only of the presupposition that he knew nothing of the Mormon involvement in the first Fancher attack. Otherwise, it is simply a tactical instruction presenting no moral or strategic prohibition on violence against the emigrants and even providing for its deployment after

“notification.” The evidence presented by the authors, however, most of which is previously unpublished, indicates that Young was unaware of Mormon involvement with the immigrants.

In examining the role of Young and other prominent LDS leaders, the authors sparsely treat the evidence related to the “blood atonement” rhetoric of the Mormon Reformation (24–26). The subject is broached in only a single paragraph, with no effort to contextualize or clarify the ramifications of the sermonizing. This lacuna is perhaps shaded by the authors’ quotation of Heber C. Kimball’s words at the July 24 canyon celebration where he defied and humorously mocked the U.S. Army but they omit his words immediately preceding the quotation, cursing the U.S. president and his staff in the name of Jesus and by the Mormon priesthood (44). The authors’ failure to deal productively with this body of evidence is a missed opportunity. Bagley and others seem to correctly assess the overall significance of this teaching but misjudge the way it actually figured into the social context for the massacre. Researchers, amateur filmmakers, and historians encounter the sermons in question and envision Mormons wildly eager to enact blood-letting vengeance on anyone remotely suspected of having been involved with Mormon persecutions or the murders of other prophets (e.g., Joseph and Hyrum Smith and Parley P. Pratt). However blood atonement was more about Mormon apostates than Mormon enemies. It was a rhetorical threat that loomed over those who would disregard the injunctions of Mormon priesthood and the imperatives of Mormon colonizing, a theological dressing-up of religious authority on the frontier, buttressed and enforced by violence—particularly during the Reformation of 1856–57. This radical and disturbing doctrine—preached up and down the Utah Territory by Young and other key Mormon leaders—contributed to the massacre, not by inculcating a murderous obsession for vengeance against imagined enemies in the Fancher party, but by ensuring an unwillingness on the part of the perpetrators to disobey their leaders.

The centrality of intensified authoritarianism in war-ready Utah territory is difficult to overstate. The book provides an illuminating example from the Walker War of 1853–54. The strategy that Young had implemented to put the Mormon kingdom on a war footing dictated that cattle be sent to Salt Lake for safekeep-

ing. A group of Mormon settlers in Cedar City refused to send their livestock north and brandished guns against their own militia. Local military leaders threatened to execute them for sedition in "a time of war" (63). Significantly, the men who carried out the attack at Mountain Meadows, in addition to being Mormons, were members of the militia; and the conspiring architects of the massacre, in addition to being their ecclesiastical leaders, were also their military commanders.

Significantly, the new sources make clear that, at precisely the time when Brigham Young was ostensibly sealing the fate of the Fancher party (to paraphrase Bagley) by telling Indian leaders they could have the emigrants' cattle, Haight and Lee were already conspiring with Paiute leaders in and around Cedar City to attack the Fancher party and promising to share the spoils with them. Of course, the fact that no evidence has been discovered directly implicating Young in the conspiracy does not in itself constitute evidence of his noninvolvement. Yet one should apply such logic in strict moderation. Part of the appeal of the conspiratorial view of history—in addition to furnishing simple, often satisfying explanations for otherwise complicated and difficult-to-comprehend phenomena—is that it is governed by a self-fulfilling circular logic. In the search for mustache-twirling puppet masters pulling history's levers, the absence of evidence can be taken as evidence of the hypothesized conspiracy. The logic is not just circular; it entails a reversal of evidentiary standards. The fact that verifiable evidence cannot be discovered, rather than leading to a revised theory of what happened, actually reinforces the theory for which evidence is elusive.

Part of the problem with focusing narrowly on the technical, legalistic aspects of Young's complicity—whether he issued a direct order, intended the massacre, or was aware of the conflict with the Fancher party—is that it sidesteps far more interesting and important questions. Young can bear a portion of moral culpability even if he did none of the above actions; but even an approximate apportionment of blame in that case requires a more nuanced sociological analysis of the crime and the events leading up to it and devoting less focus to a putatively omnipotent, omniscient prophet. To what extent, for example, does Young bear responsibility for what happened even if he did not order the attack

on the Fancher party or the massacre to cover it up? How do intensely hierarchical social structures become self-reinforcing, and to what extent can the effects of panopticism account for what happened? If the massacre was perpetrated by good Mormons, many (if not most) of whom retained their good standing in the Church and their communities despite widespread knowledge of what happened, what does that mean for those of us who claim that religious and historical heritage? By emphasizing the on-the-ground run-up to the massacre, the tensions that built between Fancher party members and local leaders, the authors offer a compelling (if not totalizing or comprehensively explanatory) narrative in which violent, escalating frontier conflict mixed with undeviating obedience, religious conviction, in-group/out-group dynamics, and war hysteria leading to a horrible crime that took on an insurmountable inertia and resulted eventually in a cover-up of staggering proportions and unimaginable wickedness—all of it carried out by believably human, conflicted actors.

A major weakness of the book is the failure to apply this more nuanced analytical logic consistently to all of the historical actors. The authors go to great lengths to portray the Mormons involved in the massacre as complex human beings and historical agents, whose actions have explanations that, while defying rational or moral justification, do not defy basic understanding. This is a far more sophisticated reading of history than one in which the murderers figure only as the mindless tools of their insane, blood-thirsty prophet. The problem is that such sophistication is not really extended to the non- or nominally Mormon participants—the Paiutes whom Lee (among others) convinced to attack the Fancher party to begin with and, after the extended siege, to help clean up the mess by slaughtering them in the most cowardly manner. The Paiutes in this account feel a little like Mormons in the Blood-Atoning-Brigham readings. That they would agree to what the Mormon leaders proposed is taken almost as a given. No effort is made to understand how these basically good men participated in this atrocity. They are pawns in the hands of the insidiously manipulative Cedar City leaders. Subsequent scholarly treatments of the massacre must do for the Indians what this volume has done for Mormon settlers: flesh out their motives and their

behavior in ways that acknowledge their agency, their humanity, and the inhumanity of their actions.

Never again will such a staggering sum of resources be devoted to the massacre at Mountain Meadows. This book is a life's work compressed and the result is a clear, exhaustive, and riveting narrative. With a collection of sources spiked by previously unavailable material, the reader follows new paths in a story that has been walked by historians, antagonists, and apologists with vivid and sometimes misplaced zeal. Juanita Brooks would have little to quibble over in this book; but that the LDS Church feels it can now stand with her and allow its historians to tell the story as fully and as accurately as they can, even facilitating the process, indicates a new trajectory of Mormon historiography, one more in keeping with the sentiments of Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith of the LDS First Presidency in 1892: "We are anxious to learn all that we can upon [the Massacre], not necessarily for publication, but that the Church may have the details in its possession for the vindication of innocent parties, and that the world may know, when the time comes, the true facts connected with it" (xi).

With all future work on the massacre, historians will be required to consult *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* as the starting point. The volume reads mostly as if it were written in a narrative vacuum. However, their work does still engage some of what is now part of the bibliographic terrain. Bagley, Sally Denton, Jon Krakauer, and those who will follow may very well persist in their interpretations; but they must carefully consider the evidence and analysis of Walker, Turley, and Leonard.

### Notes

1. Another significant source brought to light by this volume includes extracts from Jacob Hamblin's journal. Jacob Hamblin, Letter to Brigham Young, November 13, 1871, Brigham Young Office Files, as well as Jacob Hamblin, Statement, November 28, 1871, Young Office Files. Hamblin's journal is available at the Utah State Archives, but two sections of pages are ripped out. Presumably this communication includes at least some of those missing entries. Donald R. Moorman with Gene A. Sessions, *Camp Floyd and the Mormons: The Utah War* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992), 137–38 quotes from the Hamblin letter which, according to Moorman's preface, he probably accessed in

the 1960s. The documents were transferred to the Young Office Files in the late 1970s or early 1980s, being made available to the public in 2000. Our thanks to Brian Reeves at the Historical Department Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (LDS Church History Library), for bringing this use and history of the document to our attention.

2. Richard E. Turley Jr., email to Jonathan Stapley, June 12, 2008, printout in our possession.

3. Roy F. Baumeister, *Evil: Inside Human Cruelty and Violence* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997); Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Stanley J. Tambiah, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). The authors also referenced Regina Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983); and Rosa Brooks, "Killings in Iraq by 'Bad Apples'? Probably Not," *Deseret News*, June 18, 2006, which included analytical perspectives drawn from the work of Yale psychologist Stanley Milgram.

4. For Bagley's treatment of the Huntington journal and Young's meeting with Paiute leaders, see his *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 112–14, 379; for his treatment of "blood atonement," see pp. 50–52, 379, and 397 note 63; on Lee's implicating of Young and the authorship controversy surrounding *Mormonism Unveiled*, see pp. 271, 318–19, and 430 note 17. Bagley deploys the relevant evidence in a consolidated, analytical argument for Young's complicity on pp. 376–82.

5. Walker, Turley, and Leonard rarely rebut specific claims, preferring to narrate the story without reference to previous work; however, W. Paul Reeve and Ardis E. Parshall demonstrate that Bagley misread a crucial word in the Huntington diary. See their review of *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* in *Mormon Historical Studies* 4 (Spring 2003): 152.

## Mountain Meadows: Not Yet Gone

Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard. *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy*. New York:

Oxford University Press, 2008. 430 pp. Notes, illustrations, appendices, index. Hardback: \$29.95; ISBN: 0-195-160-347

*Reviewed by Robert Goldberg*

After more than thirty years as a historian and after writing dozens of book reviews, I confess that this one has been the most difficult response that I have ever had to write. Perhaps it is because of the horrific event that the book describes. I am troubled also because my friends and colleagues divide vehemently in continuing and acrimonious historical debate. Nor is the struggle over this distant event confined to academic circles. The Mountain Meadows Massacre, after almost a century and a half, remains hotly contested ground in a state still bloodied by religious warfare.

The facts are well known. The crime occurred on September 11, 1857, in southwestern Utah not far from Cedar City. Mormon militia units and their Paiute Indian allies had besieged an emigrant train destined for California and composed of men, women, and children primarily from Arkansas. With John D. Lee in the lead, the settlers were lured from their improvised wagon-fortifications under a flag of truce and a promise of safe conduct. Unarmed and vulnerable, more than 120 emigrants were then brutally slaughtered at close quarters and their property dispersed to the murderers. Only children too young to expose the guilty were spared. What is not, and may never be, fully understood is why this happened and who was responsible.

The massacre drew extensive contemporary newspaper coverage and much attention from historians. Juanita Brooks published her landmark work *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press) in 1950, and Will Bagley's *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press) appeared in 2002. Scores of journal articles focused on the massacre or the larger context in which it occurred. If this research has added much to our understanding, there has long been the sense that the collections of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints contain materials that would shed light on the event and its perpetrators. Much may have been lost or destroyed. Missing data are the lot of historians. But the perception and the reality of restric-

tions on the use of such documents have fostered conspiracy theories not only about historical actors, but modern authorities. The massacre at Mountain Meadows bequeaths a bitter legacy, not only because of the horrific nature of the event, but also because the crime remains unpunished.

Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley, and Glen M. Leonard, associated with Brigham Young University and the History Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, offer *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, an interpretation that benefits greatly from unrestricted access to a large body of materials owned by the Mormon Church. The authors found ward and militia records valuable sources for reconstructing events. Also important, they discovered in the Mormon Church's First Presidency's archives the full body of work collected by assistant Church historian Andrew Jenson who, with official approval, interviewed in 1892 the massacre's surviving persons of interest.

The book weaves a complex plot. It argues that "both victims and perpetrators were decent but imperfect people whose paths crossed in a moment of history that resulted in a terrible tragedy" (xiii). The year 1857 in Utah was a moment rife with fear and portending conflict. Building up the kingdom of God had proven a frustrating and difficult task. Bad weather, insect plagues, and poor crops brought near-famine and tested settlers' faith. Dissenters and apostates weakened the ranks and brought "sermons like peals of thunder" (26) demanding reformation and a cleansing of sin. Gangs of zealots enforced such preaching and intimidated the wavering to firm up commitment. Meanwhile, the persecution that recently dogged Mormons in Missouri and Illinois darkly colored their perceptions of outsiders and made them intolerant of any slight.

Into this setting of tension and uncertainty came news that President James Buchanan had sent a U.S. Army expedition to bring the Saints to heel, arrest their leaders, and impose martial law on Utah. With visions of the last days ever present in their minds, Mormons and their leaders prepared for war, spinning scenarios of armed resistance and scorched earth to resist the forces of Babylon. Not only would the Saints stockpile weapons, ammunition, and food, but they would also encourage their Na-

tive American allies to fulfill prophecy and join in holy war against their common enemy.

As the U.S. Army approached and Mormons prepared for the end of time, the Arkansas emigrant train traveled south through Utah on its way to California. Out of supplies and pressing their cattle onto nearby grasslands, they repeatedly generated friction with Mormon settlers. The seeming wealth of the travelers also chafed Mormon sensibilities and brought a covetousness that exacerbated the tensions.

These Saints had already been primed for confrontation firsthand by Brigham Young's emissary George A. Smith, an apostle. As a latter-day Paul Revere, Smith went circuit-riding through the small towns of southern Utah and delivered "war sermons" (53) calling the rank and file to arms against the coming army invasion. In the rush to war, who could distinguish between the American emigrants and the forces marching on the Mormon kingdom? The makings of tragedy were now assembled: The "other" had been demonized and dehumanized, authorities had trumpeted the causes of war and conspiracy, local leaders pressed for obedience and were not denied, peers demanded conformity, and small sparks of personal conflict had found ready tinder in isolated and economically deprived southern Utah. Once action commenced, the human and unforeseen dictated events. The tragedy had been spun, write the authors, in a "complex web of fear, misunderstanding, and retribution" (128).

*Massacre at Mountain Meadows* is an important addition to the literature on one of the most significant events in Utah history. The authors' research has brought to light key sources that *persuasively* answer questions about the how, who, what, and when of the massacre. John D. Lee may have been the only person executed for his role in the tragedy, but the authors do not hesitate to name his co-conspirators. President Young and George Smith were guilty of warmongering and setting a policy of wartime alliance with the Paiutes, but they were not accomplices before the fact.

The authors have also done an excellent job in recreating the religious, military, political, and economic context of the events of September 11, 1857, and placing Utah at that period in a broad national frame. The book, in addition, offers a detailed timeline

and scenario of events both at the site of the tragedy, in local councils, and in the office of Brigham Young. With a sturdy and clear prose style, the authors have made this history accessible to a large audience. The book's short chapters act to accelerate the momentum of a gripping narrative.

If excellent in its detail work, however, the book does suffer from conceptual weaknesses. The authors maintain that they presented their information "by narrating it, largely foregoing topical or critical analysis" (xii). They also insist on the notion of "letting the events speak for themselves" (xv). But, of course, historians are not passive in telling their tales. They make judgments and offer interpretations based upon evidence and logic. Even textbooks, which appear to be mere compendiums of facts, are value-laden in regard to the information that their authors deem valuable and necessary to include and exclude. The prior commitments of the authors of this volume are, inevitably, apparent in some places: The first chapters of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* read like a defense brief for the Saints, their church, and their leader. The authors present character witnesses for everyone except, tellingly, John D. Lee. George A. Smith is unaware of the consequences of his acts. Local leaders Isaac Haight and William Dame are portrayed as honorable men caught in circumstances beyond their control. Later chapters prove far more balanced in assigning responsibility and offering realistic appraisals of perpetrators. Occasionally, some interpretive comments are jarring. Federal officials in Utah territory are likened to "carpetbaggers" and "scalawags," (23) with the authors seemingly unaware that such terms deny the complexity of the northern migration to the South after the Civil War and denigrate southerners who supported black rights and the Union while opposing secession and treason. Nor can federal authority be derided as simply "colonial rule" (28). When interpretation is offered, it is neither fully explained nor nuanced. Thus the authors rely on Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram's research on obedience to authority, but handle the interpretation in just two short paragraphs and cite as references two newspaper articles and none of his studies.

While the authors have considered the literature on violence, group psychology, and conspiracy thinking, it was surpris-

ing that they missed a book that relates directly to the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Christopher Brown's work, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York, Harper, 1992), tells of the German militiamen who formed killing squads in Poland in Adolf Hitler's "final solution" against European Jews during World War II. In age and marital status they resembled the Mormon militiamen at Mountain Meadows. After forcing Jewish men, women, and children from their homes, the Germans marched them to killing pits. The killing was at close quarters and personal with each soldier assigned a Jew to walk the final yards. The commander gave his militiamen a choice; they could participate and kill, or refuse and step out of the ranks. One in five Germans refused to kill. They were not subject to disciplinary action. This raises critical questions about authority, obedience, personal values, and conscience. While Walker, Turley, and Leonard note individuals who opposed the planning and execution of Mountain Meadows, they do not slow the narrative to consider the meaning of such resistance. Why did these Mormon individuals oppose their leaders and peers? And why did not one in five of the murderers of Mountain Meadows step out of the ranks?

*Massacre at Mountain Meadows* takes the reader to September 13, 1857, with a brief epilogue that covers the execution of John D. Lee twenty years later. As the authors note, their book considers the crime and is but the "first half of the story" (xii). A second installment, concerning the punishment, will be necessary to extend our understanding of the Mountain Meadows Massacre and its continuing resonance. Even such an unthinkable crime might have, with time, lost its emotional power. What has ensured that Mountain Meadows remains bloody ground is the perception that punishment was not swift and that some got away with murder.

## Dixie Heart of Darkness

Shannon A. Novak. *House of Mourning: A Biocultural History of the*

*Mountain Meadows Massacre.* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008. 226 pp. Cloth: \$29.95; ISBN: 978-0-87480-919-0

*Reviewed by Patricia Gunter Karamesines*

The debate over the Mountain Meadows Massacre could be said to have two narrative as well as physical poles, one positioned in Arkansas and the other located in Utah. The Arkansan pole is a sixteen-foot-high cross standing in a graveyard near the Carrollton Lodge in Carrollton, Arkansas. The cross faces west—toward Utah. Its inscription reads: “VENGEANCE IS MINE: I WILL REPAY, / SAITH THE LORD[.]” Strangely, the bones this cross memorializes are not buried in this graveyard. Associated with the cross is a cairn made of granite exported from Utah and a cedar sign engraved with words declaring (among many other things): “Presently, the LDS Church owns the grave at Mountain Meadows in Utah. They [sic] control the interpretation of the massacre. This replica of the original grave marker allows Arkansas relatives to memorialize the victims and interpret the massacre in their home state” (3–4).

Over a thousand miles away from the Arkansas memorial, the second pole is positioned over remains buried in a desert clearing outside St. George, Utah. This pyramid-shaped memorial (8–9) explains its intent: “Built and maintained by / The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints / Out of respect for those who died and were buried here / and in the surrounding area / following the massacre of 1857. / Dedicated 11 September 1999[.]” A second plaque on this memorial explains further: “1999. Under the direction of President Gordon B. Hinckley and with the cooperation of the Mountain Meadows Association and others, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints replaced the 1932 wall and installed the present Grave Site Memorial. President Hinckley dedicated the memorial on 11 September 1999” (9).

From between these two poles erupts a turbulent field of narrative energy, rife with competing stories laying claim to the truth of what happened at Mountain Meadows in September of 1857. Such narratives, forensic anthropologist Shannon Novak says, often commit two fallacies: (1) Many pose as “morality tales” to bolster some moral judgment that “vilifies or glorifies a present-day

person or institution" (4–5); and (2) Many restrict their settings to the West, "as if the Arkansas emigrants first came into being when they entered the Utah Territory and took up their assigned role in Mormon History" (5). To correct this imbalance, she injects into the discussion yet another competing narrative strain: the victims' own stories, rendered through an experimental form of anthropological inquiry based on analysis of historical records, memorials, and antebellum American socio-political contexts, intertwined with forensic analysis of victims' remains from the 1999 excavation of a mass grave at the massacre site. As a result, *House of Mourning* is a compelling, sometimes grisly, often heart-breaking, partly analytical and partly intuitive, always-bold act of narrative retrieval from some of the most confusing and, at times, worst language wielded in the history of the Mormon settlement of Utah Territory.

Part of the point of murdering people is to kill any rival tales they might tell that threaten the viability of one's own narrative or that obstruct progress toward achieving a "happily ever after" ending. In some cases, murder strives to silence competing narratives by sending a strong message to other bearers of contradictory tales: "This could happen to you." Novak's uniquely integrated approach—a "biocultural history" of the Mountain Meadows Massacre—combines evidential analysis of a sample (twenty-eight of a possible one hundred and twenty persons) of the victims' physical remains with her investigation into the historical records that victims and perpetrators of the massacre left behind. She thus explores which stories reveal some truth about the Arkanosan travelers murdered at Mountain Meadows and which stories obscure it.

For example, in the course of her biocultural analysis, Novak confronts some of the most scurrilous rhetoric the massacre's perpetrators heaped upon their victims. Such language includes John D. Lee's assertion that members of the Fancher/Baker wagon train were "rotten with the pox" [syphilis] (88) and William Dame's purported insistence that "all the women were prostitutes" (109). People familiar with rhetoric justifying bad acts will mark these statements right away as being suspect. To her great credit, Novak does more than simply display these remarks as evidence of the killers' callousness. She gives Lee, Dame, and others

wielding damaging words fair critical treatment as she discloses the wider social context for making such pronouncements. She demonstrates how, during Victorian-era America, judgments upon others' physical constitutions implied judgments upon their moral constitutions. This was a widespread practice, not one limited to any particular religious or American cultural environment: "Regardless of the mechanism, 'social reformers and social scientists of the early nineteenth century did not draw a qualitative distinction between physical and moral causes of diseases.' Chronic illness, in particular, became entangled with an individual's identity" (89).

After placing such language in context, Novak compares Lee's and Dame's reports against the 1850 mortality and accidental death census, other medical and historical information, and analyses of the victims' bones. The victims' bones show that members of the wagon trains suffered from dental health diseases and also bore evidence of anemia, which would have been common for a group of Southerners who had been "on the road" for as many months as the wagon train had been. But contrary to Lee's report, the analyzed bone showed no evidence of syphilis or any remarkable pathology suggesting that the wagon train members were especially diseased or morally profligate. In fact, Novak asserts, the overlanders seem to have bucked common trends in disease, accidental deaths, and infant mortality and appeared, in their individual bones, to be unusually vigorous members of the population.

Lee's and Dame's reported accounts of the emigrants' decadence contributed to the atrocities committed against them and, by extension, against their offspring, since, as Novak says, "to insinuate that parents were afflicted with disease—especially one such as syphilis—was to comment on the character, or future character, of their offspring" (109). Thus, Novak performs the important act of shattering the control such character-assassinating language seeks to exert not only over the meaning of the "bad outcome" (108) the travelers suffered but also over the murderers' own outcomes where their consciences, reputations, and prospects were concerned.

As she sifts through the biocultural bones—rhetorical and physical—associated with the Mountain Meadows Massacre, Novak makes an especially provocative comparison between the

American colonists' donning of Indian costume to carry out the Boston Tea Party and the Mormons' purported donning of Indian paint and attire to commit the massacre. Citing other scholars, she notes that, as an overt act to separate themselves from England, the Boston colonists donned Indian dress, not because they thought such costumery provided good disguises but rather to draw the "boundaries between 'us' and 'them'—to set the colonists off as *Americans* rather than Englishmen or Europeans" (175). Again citing relevant scholarship, Novak notes that the Mormons' reputed application of Indian paint and dress at Mountain Meadows was a form of "playing Indian" that may have gone beyond a simple attempt by criminals to mask their identities. It endowed the wearers of "misleading dress" not only with solidarity but also with "a surprising degree of power, conferring upon its wearer a doubled consciousness, the physical equivalent of metaphorical language" (176). In other words, she suggests, the costumery freed Mormons that she believes participated in the attack to commit the slaughter.

Novak builds on her assertion that local Mormon militia dressed in Indian attire to make a salient point. She notes that the killers made no real effort to bury the bodies, exposing the remains to predation and weathering. She remarks, "If the American revolutionaries had made a point—both economic and political—by dumping tea into Boston Harbor, the Mormons at Mountain Meadows sent their own message by leaving bodies in the wilderness" (177). Since Novak's assertion that Mormons actively participated in the massacre is controversial, and since she provides no specific historical or forensic evidence that fixes with certainty the killers' reasoning for supplying their victims with "not much of a burial" (179), some might find her narratization of this element of the massacre too intuitive to prove meaningful. Such intuitive moments in *House of Mourning* mix liberally with the analytical ones. One of the challenges that readers of this book face is determining whether the analytical moments bolster the strength of the intuitive moments, whether the intuitive moments weaken the strength of the analytical ones, or whether both work together convincingly. Usually, Novak builds her circumstantial cases to a point that renders them at least worthy of consideration.

Applying her techniques of biocultural analysis to these and to many other narrative, historical, and physical artifacts, Shannon Novak shoulders her way through the crowd clamoring around the Mountain Meadows Massacre. She states early in the book that her purpose is to shift “attention from the question of motive to the question of loss” (6) and to focus readers’ awareness on the victims of the massacre; but by telling us more about the victims, she most assuredly tells us more about their murderers. In dispersing popular “morality tales” through her analytical narrative prowess, she creates in their stead another kind of morality tale, one with a non-Mormon-specific theme running along the “civilization is fragile” lines of the “going native” stories of William Golding’s *The Lord of the Flies* and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. She does not do this to excuse the slaughter but rather to call it what it is: another villainous massacre in a long human history of villainous massacres, “as complex, compelling, and potentially divisive as any battlefield atrocity or act of ethnic cleansing” (xiii). In fact, one of the quotations she uses as the epigraph for her introduction comes from Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “Metzengerstein,” a gothic tale about a feud between two Hungarian families: “Horror and fatality have been stalking abroad in all ages. Why then give a date to this story I have to tell?” (1).

But to my thinking, the most important office that Novak performs specifically for the Arkansan dead in *House of Mourning* is to dispel some of the narrative pall hanging over Mountain Meadows. She revives in engaging fashion the emigrants’ tales—those competing narratives that the men carrying out the massacre sought to silence. In bringing those stories to life, she gains a measure of justice for the victims, restores to them their good names, and provides some balance to the polemics.

Novak takes the title of her book, *House of Mourning*, from Ecclesiastes 7:2: “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.” Historians, anthropologists, descendants of the massacre victims, and Mormons harboring a more than passing interest in the Mountain Meadow Massacre will find this book a sobering and provocative read.

## The Remembering and Forgetting of Utah County's Landmarks

Jared Farmer. *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008. 455 pp. Cloth: \$29.95; ISBN: 13: 978-0-674-02767-1; 10: 0-674-02767-1

*Reviewed by Ethan Yorgason*

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, critics regularly bemoaned what they regarded as the New Mormon History's exceptionalist viewpoint. Jared Farmer's *On Zion's Mount* may finally shatter that perception. Or, alternatively, it may finally convince observers that a paradigm superseding the New Mormon History now exists.

In my opinion, exceptionalism has not been as profound a flaw of the New Mormon History as some commentators would suggest. It may be true that a majority of authors have, and still do, provide little sense of how events within Mormonism's past compare to events outside of Mormonism. But this situation is probably unavoidable when, as for Mormonism, historical claims remain so emotionally controversial. In any case, I believe, important works have always existed within the New Mormon History that looked beyond Mormonism as a singular and unique object of study. Authors from the social sciences are especially notable in this regard, although they have produced relatively few books.

Still, since perhaps 1990, a non-exceptionalist trend marks a new phase within New Mormon History, or perhaps something different altogether. A growing preponderance of (especially scholarly) books shows how topics relating to Mormonism give insight into historiographical and theoretical questions far beyond Mormonism itself. Philip L. Barlow, Terryl L. Givens, Sarah Barringer Gordon, Kathleen Flake, W. Paul Reeve, and others look beyond the questions that have long preoccupied Mormonism's historians. The best of the New Mormon History has, to be sure, always tied itself to questions and methods important to scholars outside of Mormon history. But now these authors more fully formulate their projects from their inception in relation to

those broader scholarly questions. As a result, we are learning that Mormonism is important to the American (and broader) experience in ways we had never imagined. Its significance goes beyond its supposed embodiment of quintessential American religion. It can interest scholars for reasons beyond its prophetic origins, troubled relationship with neighbors, frontier settlement, polygamous and theocratic society, or rapid growth.

*On Zion's Mount* may be a decisive work within this trend. It has the potential to be so, in part, precisely because its central theme appears so parochial. What could be of less interest outside Utah Mormonism than the story of Mount Timpanogos's progression to the status of a local landmark, especially since non-Indian, non-Mormon Utahns played a relatively small role in either the story or the change itself. The narrative is indeed, as the subtitle suggests, most centrally about Mormons, Indians, and the landscape. Yet despite surface appearances, *On Zion's Mount* is anything but parochial. As a work in cultural history, it shows, better than almost any book I have read, Mormon culture's participation in broader trends. Mormon culture has its own interesting inflections, of course. But Farmer's book demonstrates why any attempt to understand (especially Utah) Mormon culture must also center American culture. American culture cannot be taken for granted as it is in so many books; it needs to be "made strange" through analysis as much as Mormon culture must be. So, while Farmer tells stories of Utah County and the Wasatch Front, he constantly points out how these relate to similar experiences elsewhere.

*On Zion's Mount* may also prove to be a decisive contribution because of its quality. I do not recall any Harvard University Press books on Mormonism since Arrington's *Great Basin Kingdom* half a century ago and Leone's *Roots of Modern Mormonism* nearly thirty years ago. *On Zion's Mount* is a worthy addition. It may not transform the intellectual landscape as *Great Basin Kingdom* did; too much recent high quality scholarship on Mormonism prevents it from being wholly pathbreaking. Nor does *On Zion's Mount* have the topical centrality that makes *Roots of Modern Mormonism* so important. Yet as a surprisingly illuminating history, *On Zion's Mount* has few peers. One almost has to go outside Mormon history altogether—to books like Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's *A*

*Midwife's Tale*—to see other examples of how important and fascinating a seemingly small and insignificant topic can be.

Farmer's book has three parts. He calls the first "Bioregional History," the second "Local History," and the third "Extralocal History." Those are broad and misleading categories at best, since each of these types of history, and many others besides, inhabits each part. Part 1 shows how Mormons came to disregard Utah Lake and the Indians who depended on it. Prior to the Latter-day Saints' arrival, the peoples we now generically call Utes divided themselves by subsistence habits. Those in Utah Valley were the Fish-Eaters. Relying on and participating in the ecosystem of the Wasatch Front's only significant freshwater lake, they remained largely pedestrian even when many of their neighbors took up equestrian nomadism following trade with the Spanish.

Once Mormons arrived, tension, goodwill, warfare, friendship, and eventual Indian removal quickly followed. An 1850 Church-leader-supported Valentine's Day massacre of many Indians turned the tide for Mormon settlement. Yet popular local and LDS history has almost completely erased the episode. Brigham Young's philosophy to feed rather than fight the Indians, which developed in the aftermath of the massacre, promoted forgetfulness. So, too, did the Mormon myth that the Wasatch Front was an empty desert when the Saints arrived. Though Mormons fished Utah Lake productively for some years, overfishing, changing cultural tastes (for river fish rather than lake fish), and eventual pollution destroyed the lake's productivity. Thus, Mormons largely forgot the Utah Lake natives and the larger ecosystem upon which those Indians depended.

Mount Timpanogos replaced Utah Lake as Utah County's premier landmark. In Part 2, we learn that the early Utah Saints hardly regarded the peak as a feature separate from the rest of the Wasatch range. But in the early twentieth century, the mountain benefitted from being mistakenly known as the highest along the Wasatch Front. LDS religious symbolism associated with mountains and the secular ideals of mountain climbing, hiking, and recreation also combined at Brigham Young University during the early-to-mid-twentieth century to produce one of the nation's strongest hiking traditions. By the time environmental degradation ended the mass hikes, new secular and religio-suburban ideals

(such as those reflected in Robert Redford's Sundance and the Mount Timpanogos [American Fork] Temple) directed new forms of reverence toward the mountain.

Part 3 explores how larger American trends of Indianist names and invented legends about Native Americans produced additional meaning for Timpanogos. Mormons adapted Lover's Leap, a common narrative form about Native Americans, to Timpanogos. This legend accomplished such cultural functions as wrestling with changing American gender norms by projecting them onto natives and justifying/obscuring the violent takeover of native lands. Mormons strongly wanted to tie their landscape into Native American history—to have a usable Indian past. These historical memories made sure to preserve, by obscuring much real history, the Saints' sense of occupying a moral high ground. But this story is not simply a victimization tale. Farmer ends the book on a note of ambiguity. Native Americans in various instances have refused or agreed for a variety of complex reasons to participate in remembering/performing this highly fashioned past (in plays, operas, commemorations, etc.).

*On Zion's Mount* is a historian's history in almost all the best ways. Highly detailed and thoroughly researched, the book lays out bold and coherently stated large themes. The narrative teems with insights on smaller issues as well, such as the current relationship between the international Church and the Wasatch Front core, and the lack of an effective environmental ethic to accompany the strong LDS sense of place. Farmer is a wonderful writer. He generates richly complex and nuanced arguments, as well as superb narrative flow, through simple, straightforward sentences. He uses concepts insightfully but without jargon. Metaphors (particularly environmental/geologic) appear sparingly, but always to great effect.

The book has a few flaws. A couple of interpretations relating to the Book of Mormon were stated perhaps too strongly—post-Jesus Nephites as fair skinned (p. 56), and “Deseret” as a Reformed Egyptian term (p. 259), for example. But even there, Farmer is on solid ground to the extent that some Mormons have used these interpretations. My biggest complaint is with the occasional paragraphs in which many facts (obscure enough to need reference) are stated without clear citations. In all, however, I greatly admire

this book. It will profoundly reward any reader interested Mormon culture's subtleties.

## Not Your Parents' Mormonism

Claudia L. Bushman. *Contemporary Mormonism: Latter-day Saints in Modern America*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2006. 256 pp. Cloth: \$44.95; ISBN 0-275-98933-X

*Reviewed by David X. Banack*

Writing a one-volume treatment of modern Mormonism that avoids being overshadowed by the movement's gripping nineteenth-century history and focuses instead on what Mormonism is *today* is a challenge for any author. Bushman, a scholar who also writes from the perspective of a practicing Latter-day Saint, has produced the best attempt so far at painting the complex portrait of contemporary Mormonism.

First, I must acknowledge the difficulty of such a project. A one-volume survey lacks the clear narrative thread that guides a one-volume history. Moreover, Mormon readers likely take it for granted that they themselves know most of what there is to know about the modern LDS Church. Yet most who read this book will find that their own experience of Mormonism reflects only part of a larger picture. As Bushman herself notes, the LDS Church "encompasses large numbers of people with complex histories who join for many different reasons and have chosen to relate to Mormonism in many different ways" (xii). Spirited public discussion in the media, in symposia, and in rapidly multiplying online forums of every facet of LDS doctrine and practice makes this new diversity increasingly evident. The memorable events of 2008—the glare of publicity resulting from the Romney candidacy and the busy role that Mormons were asked to play in the fight over Proposition 8 in California—likewise signal that this is plainly not your parents' Mormonism.

While LDS readers will find familiar some material in the book, each chapter offers new information and commentary. In Chapter 3, "Families," Bushman spends five pages discussing the

oft-quoted but rarely analyzed *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*, which may now be contemporary Mormonism's defining document. "Speaking against family disintegration, same-sex marriage, and abortion, declaring gender to be an eternal characteristic, the policy is more conservative than anything found in the Scriptures" (38–39). Conservative, yes, but strangely progressive at the same time, at least by Mormon standards. Bushman notes that the document carefully avoids mention of birth control and early marriage, two staples of yesteryear's counsel, and describes the ideal mother and father as "equal partners," not a term often heard from LDS leaders of prior generations. I have seen no other commentator discuss the progressive implications of the proclamation.

Chapter 7, "Gender and Sexual Orientation," surveys the tensions that cut across the evolving position of the modern LDS woman. Some see greater recognition and more opportunities to serve and lead. A convert and self-described feminist is quoted as saying, "I've never seen such active, liberated women as in the church. I've never been to any other church where women spoke equally with the men" (111). At the same time, some are dissatisfied with the roles assigned to women. Opinion spans the spectrum, really, and no simple statement can adequately describe what LDS women think. This is clear from Bushman's review of the results of a study sampling the reaction of LDS women in Utah to President Ezra Taft Benson's 1987 talk, "To the Mothers in Zion," in which he stated "a mother's calling is in the home, not in the marketplace." While almost half accepted the counsel as binding, some expressed anger and resentment, others read into the counsel exceptions such as financial need, and a few simply rejected the counsel as unrealistic (117).

Other topics covered in the book—the international Church, tensions with scholars and intellectuals, and Salt Lake City as the center of Mormonism and its City of Zion, for example—offer similarly enlightening discussions of current issues, developments, and challenges.

One feature I found rather forced at first but came to enjoy as the book progressed was the abundance of quotations and comments from rank-and-file Mormons. "It isn't easy being 26 and single in Happy Valley," wrote one young woman in Utah Valley

(37). A Chilean Mormon praising the 2002 Christmas Devotional in Spanish said, "I felt proud. . . . And it was wonderful to hear the Apostles speak Spanish" (105). The dozens of mini-profiles and quotations sketch a mosaic rather than a portrait, offering a truer reflection of the diversity increasingly present in the modern Church.

An unfortunate omission is the complete lack of photographs, charts, or maps. Certainly a map showing the distribution and density of Mormons across the United States or showing increasing numbers of Mormons outside the Intermountain West over time would be relevant and instructive. And surely the many photogenic Mormons who have achieved a measure of fame in sports, politics, and entertainment represent a relevant aspect of contemporary Mormonism. Could the beaming face of Ken Jennings, now known to millions, have been anything but LDS?

A natural comparison is to Richard N. Ostling and Joan K. Ostling's *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise*, first published in 1999 (rev. ed., New York: HarperCollins, 2007). It is written by veteran journalists relying on interviews and publicly available sources, whereas Bushman writes as a scholar and employs statistical data when they are available. *Mormon America's* first hundred pages recount LDS history and several chapters treat LDS doctrine and theology, whereas Bushman focuses more narrowly on the culture and practices of the modern LDS Church. Both books are informative, with *Mormon America* being an easier read and *Contemporary Mormonism* grappling more directly with issues confronting the Church and bringing better data to bear on those issues. The cover banner added to the 2007 edition of *Mormon America*—"The True Story Behind Their Beliefs, Rituals, Business Practices, and Well-Guarded Secrets"—signals an exposé rather than a serious treatment, which is unfortunate and largely undeserved.

Every reader, whether Mormon or not, will learn new facts about the life of modern Mormons and the expanding culture of Mormonism by reading *Contemporary Mormonism*. Would you have guessed, for example, that 40 percent of the recipients of the Perpetual Education Fund's low-interest loans are women? (109). In the preface, Bushman wrote, "My aim has been to describe the evolving Church as it is experienced by members in a narrative

that others can also understand” (p. x). In this aim she has succeeded admirably.

# The Beings I Love Are Creatures

*Kate Holbrook*

*Note:* This address was delivered in May 2006 as a farewell to the Cambridge Massachusetts First Ward shortly before the speaker moved to Salt Lake City.

Lately, I have been thinking a lot about mortality—meetings and partings and human frailty. The poet Geoffrey Hill is retiring from teaching at Boston University this year, and a few weeks ago I heard that he had said life gets easier when you accept the fact that you live in a fallen world. Wilbur Jackson of our bishopric furthered the development of my thought on this topic during that wonderful fifth-Sunday April meeting when he reminded us that we've left Paradise. We're not in Paradise; it's gone, so we're going to suffer, get sick, sin, and die. The important thing, Jackson reminded us, is to be on the right path so we can return to Paradise.

In light of our fallen condition, I wonder what to do about perfectionism. To what extent should I pursue excellence with the exacting standards that will make my contributions genuinely useful and beautiful, and when does my perfectionism fill me with an anxiety that stops me from contributing at all? What if reconciling myself to imperfection means that I won't work hard enough and that I will not do what God wants me to do?

In spiritual terms, my questions reflect the tension between grace and works. When does the pursuit of our spiritual obligations—when do our efforts for the salvation of ourselves and others—begin to impede the work of salvation, because the focus on our own efforts leads us to neglect the key doctrine of salvation, which is the atonement of Jesus Christ?

Rather than contriving easy and false resolutions to these struggles, I believe we are meant to live with them and the many

other paradoxes that plague us in mortality. King Benjamin acknowledges the paradoxes, and I think that they are at the heart of his great oration. He illustrates at length the extent to which we are indebted to God. He calls us sinful—less than the dust of the earth. He urges us to obey the commandments, teach them to our children, and repent. Then he warns that, if we don't,

if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine justice do awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever.

And now I say unto you, that mercy hath no claim on that man; therefore his final doom is to endure a never-ending torment. (Mosiah 2:38–39)

But following all this hopelessness and damnation, he prophecies of Jesus and explains the atonement—that through faith and repentance we can be saved. He teaches us to know God's goodness, to taste His love, and receive a remission of our sins. He tells us to love each other, to serve each other, and to help the poor without judging them. He tells us that, if we wish to be saved, "ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants." And then he acknowledges the difficulty between receiving atonement and still doing our part. He says: "And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength. And again, it is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order" (Mosiah 4:26–27).

I am particularly fascinated by a New Testament scene that takes place before the Last Supper, but not long before Christ's betrayal. A woman—some say Mary, some say a notorious sinner—anoints Jesus with expensive ointment, spikenard. Jesus's apostle—some say it was Simon, some say Judas—responds, "To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor" (Matt 26:8–9). This sounds to me like an appropriate Christian, leftist, liberal response. (It

takes one to know one). Jesus spent his life healing the outcast, succoring the poor, and rebuking those whose belief in their own worthiness perpetuates the institutional structures that keep the poor poor. Yet in a truer, broader Christian leftist, liberal response, Jesus says,

Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me.

For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her. (Matt. 26:10–13)

We know that Jesus's motives do not include economic gain, but this episode reveals that He does not even work according to economic principles—His primary concern is not to determine laws of maximum efficiency. Throughout the Gospels and in the Book of Mormon, Jesus honors the sanctity of the individual soul, and He honors the power of the moment.

I would like to consider now the power of the moment. For in addition to battling with the imperfections of ourselves and our not-selves, a key aspect of the mortal condition is temporality. I grieve the condition of our temporality as I see my precious babies change and know that, regardless of good things to come, the magical ways we have been together in the past have gone and will not recur. My daughter will never again thrill with the power of pronouncing her first word. *Shoe*. I suffered on account of temporality when my grandmother died and the condition was forced upon me that the woman I loved would be kept from me for a long time.

Temporality also pains me in nature. Sam and I were resident tutors at one of the Harvard dorms for five years, and springtime in the courtyard of our building was so exquisite that it pained me. A landscape architect had choreographed the planting of flowering trees so that a new one would blossom just as the old passed its prime. Their beauty thrilled me, it so transcended the things of this world, and yet those flowers were of this world, and as soon as I began to celebrate them, I began to mourn the inevi-

table brevity of their display. Most of them only flourished for a few days.

I wish to share with you the wisdom of a French mystic and philosopher named Simone Weil. Weil succeeded in the nearly impossible task of articulating spiritual truths with integrity. When I teach writing courses, I recite Weil's warning about hasty thinking: "Above all, our thought should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything but ready to receive in its naked truth the object which is to penetrate it. All wrong translations, all absurdities in geometry problems, all clumsiness of style and all faulty connection of ideas . . . all such things are due to the fact that thought has seized upon some idea too hastily and being thus prematurely blocked, is not open to truth."<sup>1</sup>

This warning is particularly necessary when approaching Weil's writing, which can be difficult. I've tried to honor her sentiments in preparing my remarks. My ideas are extrapolations that start with her but then find their own way. There are points on which she and I disagree, but in a sense my entire talk is a kind of exegesis of the passage I am about to read. Weil wrote:

The beings I love are creatures. They were born to chance. My meeting with them was also by chance. They will die. What they think, do and say is limited and is a mixture of good and evil. I have to know this with all my soul and not love them the less. I have to imitate God who infinitely loves finite things in that they are finite things. We want everything which has a value to be eternal. Now everything which has a value is the product of a meeting, lasts throughout this meeting and ceases when those things which met are separated. . . . Stars and blossoming fruit trees: utter permanence and extreme fragility give an equal sense of eternity. . . . The vulnerability of precious things is beautiful because vulnerability is a mark of existence. The destruction of Troy. The fall of the petals from fruit trees in blossom. To know that what is most precious is not rooted in existence—that is beautiful. Why? It projects the soul beyond time. The woman who wishes for a child white as snow and red as blood gets it, but she dies and the child is given over to a step-mother.<sup>2</sup>

I want to emphasize the idea that fragility and temporality are beautiful because, as Weil says, they "project the soul beyond time." Our fragility is not a reason for us to despise each other, but it is the reason we must love each other, forgive each other,

cling to each other. In this world of injustice, inadequacy and impermanence, I testify that Jesus lives, that He heals us, that He visits us in His grace. His atonement is enough to compensate for our struggle and our pain.

While He lived, Jesus established a pattern of moment-making. He commanded His disciples to write the story of the woman who anointed Him with spikenard. There was only one last supper, but we remember it every week when we take the sacrament; our attention to this one evening when Jesus broke bread for and drank with His disciples brings Him to us weekly in a real and tangible way. I rely on the sacrament for weekly spiritual rejuvenation and orientation. In February, and March, and April, I rely on the memory of impossible springtime blossoms; and in Utah, I will depend on memories of the moments I have shared with you. The fact of them, that you and I took the trouble to create them, brings me pleasure and meaning. The memory of them will strengthen me and bring you to me. I believe that Christ's love, which binds us to Him and helps us to discern goodness from pollution, is that same love that binds us to each other. I am grateful for what that love has created in my life.

### Notes

1. Siân Miles, ed., *Simone Weil, An Anthology* (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 5-6.
2. *Ibid.*, 277-28.



Nathan Florence

*Let us go to and build us a tower*  
oil on canvas, 72"x96", 2006

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her ongoing encouragement and support. For sharing documents, he also thanks Professors Charles P. Roland, Allan Peskin, and W. Paul Reeve, as well as independent historians Curtis E. Allen and Will Bagley.

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## About the Artist

Nathan Florence

Nathan Florence is a Utah native who studied art at Swarthmore College in Philadelphia and at the International School of Art in Todi, Italy. He lives in Salt Lake City with his wife, Marian, and two children and chairs the art department at the Waterford School in Sandy. David Dee, director of the Utah Museum of Art, describes Florence's paintings as "both intellectually and visually captivating. His paintings combine extraordinary skill and old-master quality painting with a contemporary consciousness."

The texture and color preparation of the surfaces he paints on play an important role in his paintings. For many years, he prepared the surfaces of his canvases by doing richly colored abstract paintings with obvious texture from brushwork, palette knife, or other tools. Onto this surface, he would then paint his composition in various degrees of opacity.

Recently this surface preparation has expanded to include prepared printed cotton. The patterns of the cloth come through the paint in the same way as the abstract surfaces. Often areas of the prepared surface are left unpainted and thus become elements of the composition. Examples are the red tree in *One Tree* or the pattern in *Bring Me My Spear: O Clouds Unfold*. (See color reproductions at [www.nflorencefineart.com](http://www.nflorencefineart.com) and [www.dialoguejournal.com](http://www.dialoguejournal.com).)

The subjects of Florence's paintings vary widely from his small landscape paintings, which are painted on location, to his large figurative compositions, which are painted in his studio. Florence's paintings express his own faith and deal with contemporary social issues—for example, *Let Us Go To and Build Us a Tower* alludes to the tower of Babel (Gen. 11) and traditions of portraying this story, including Pieter Breughel the Elder's *The Tower of Babel*. It addresses contemporary issues of consumption and greed by constructing the tower completely out of luxury SUVs. In the middle background, a man stands on a Hummer, which serves as his personal Rameumptom, his hands stretched upward in his prayer to thank God for making him better than his fellow men, his car proving his status. Florence feels that the underlying colors and patterns inform the paintings in a sometimes unconscious way, much like the way our faith and beliefs inform our lives.

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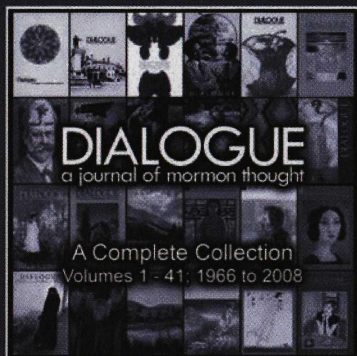
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