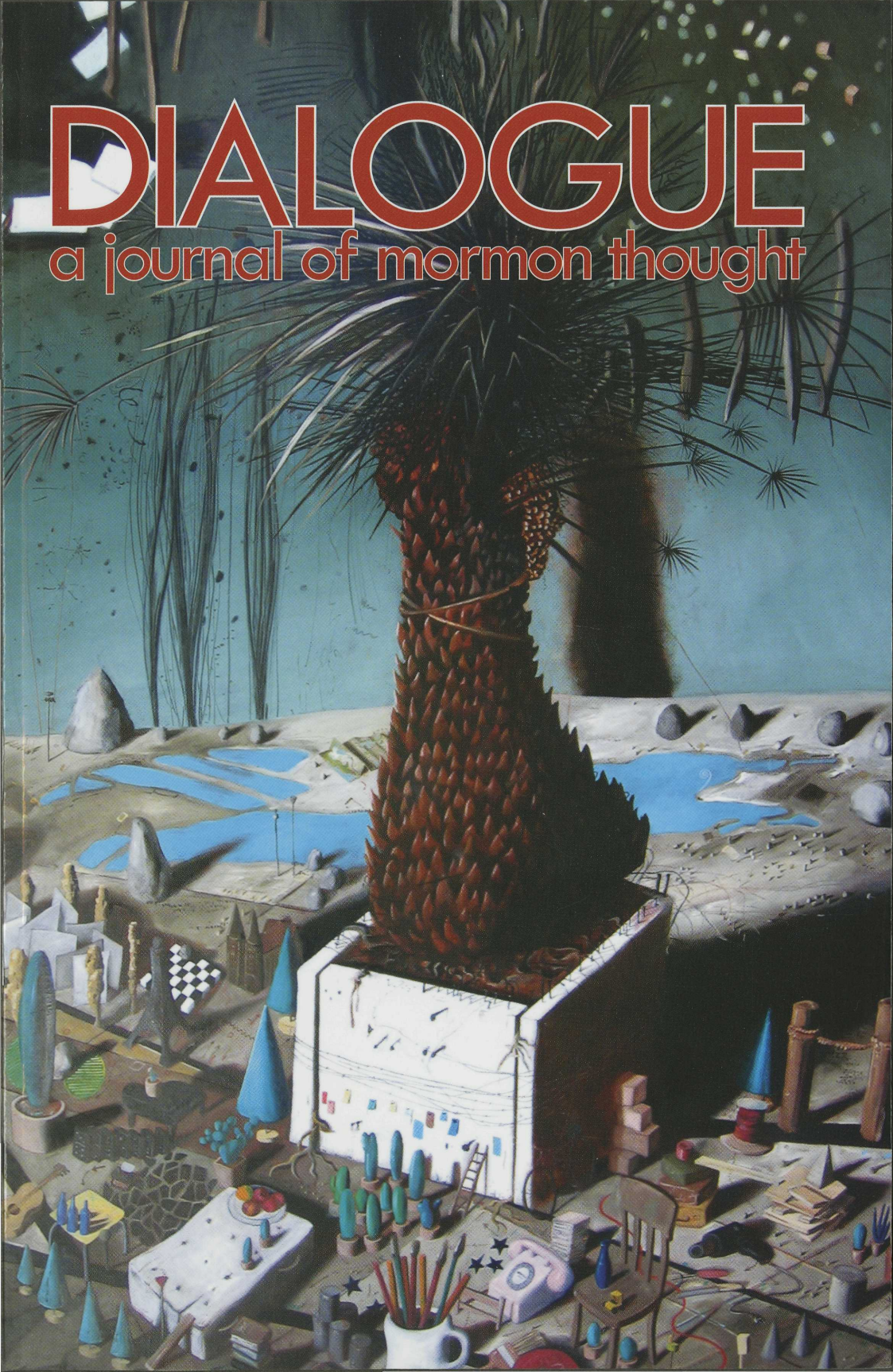
DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought



On the Front: Mark England, *Tree of Life*,
oil on canvas, 70" x 40", 2007

On the Back: Mark England, *Tierra del Fuego*,
oil on canvas, 48" x 48", 2007

DIALOGUE
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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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Letter

Wonderful Personal Voice

Sheldon Greaves's article "The Education of a Bible Scholar" (42, no. 2 [Summer 2009]: 55–77) was moving and impressive in many ways. It is a choice example of combining academic insights with personal experience, including both doubts and satisfactions covering the life of an educated LDS man.

His discussion about the Book of Mormon being pseudepigraphic, or not, and other informed inquiries about the Bible, and Mormon doctrine, studies, and practices reminded me of a classic story that circulated widely when I was an undergraduate at Columbia University. One of the most famous professors was Mark Van Doren. An ambitious graduate student reportedly asked for a private audience with Professor Van Doren to talk about questions of authorship of works attributed to Shakespeare and/or Marlowe. "Young man," replied Van Doren, "you don't know enough even to discuss that matter with me."

That's the way I feel about many of the scholarly inquiries into the origins and meanings of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and a whole range of theological issues. My liberal arts and legal educational experiences, and analytical skills gained as a studious and thinking person, allow absorption of some of the academic concepts discussed by scholars such as Greaves. I enjoy reading their works even with the need to probe doubts and questions quite naturally arising. However, my training in ancient scripture scholarship is limited enough that I can make no claim of expertise sufficient to enter a debate.

Yet my humanity, with reason and faith, resonates with reality while reading such an article. I am warmed by knowing of personal experiences of others that combine intellect and faith, including the inherent challenges. Heart, mind, and spirit are uplifted by Greaves's story of Professor Jacob Milgrom's blessings, in Hebrew and English, for the benefit of a student departing from the class by reason of illness. Intellectual debates are set aside when "his voice ached with tender concern, with unvarnished charity for a fellow human being, but most of all, it radiated compassion" (76).

Finally, Greaves's closing comments were very choice as he described the Bible as a living and moving account of people who wrestled with questions of God, morals, ethics, and law. So fully I agree that in Bible readings "we must allow for alternate and even dissenting voices, for the Bible incorporates them into its very fabric." And "modern biblical criticism is . . . the process of the refiner who strips away the dross and tries, however imperfectly, to see the Bible for what it is: a wonder of the human spiritual quest—warts, scars, and all" (77).

Those insights offer comfort and meaning to your readers. Thank you, *Dialogue*, for publishing that wonderful personal voice.

Don B. Allen
Salt Lake City

Who Was Second Nephi?

Keith J. Allred

Introduction

The story of Nephi occupies a prominent place in the hearts of the Latter-day Saint people. As a young man, he was singularly affected by his father's teachings and, despite his relative youth, became the de facto leader of the extended families of Lehi and Ishmael even before his father's death. Later, as a prophet in his own right, he led a people who called themselves "Nephites" in his honor; and nine centuries after his death, hundreds of thousands of Nephites still honored his name and legacy. He belongs to the ages as the namesake of an ancient nation.

Nephi demonstrated his spiritual strength by his willingness to listen to and obey his father's words, by leading his brothers in their mission to obtain the plates of brass, by returning to invite Ishmael's family to join them in the wilderness, and in his desire to see Lehi's vision for himself. He was sufficiently in tune with spiritual things that he received commandments to make records and maintain a history of his family's experiences. He saw remarkable visions of his people's future. As Lehi's family distanced itself from Jerusalem and throughout the long journey to the promised land, Nephi also became a practical leader. He rescued the family from the threat of starvation in the wilderness and then made both the tools and the ship in which they crossed the waters.

From the beginning, Nephi's older brothers Laman and Lemuel resented his ascendancy. They considered it their right to lead the combined families of Lehi and Ishmael and suspected Nephi of aspiring to make himself their king (1 Ne. 16:38). After Lehi's death, the leadership issue came to a head. Nephi feared that Laman and Lemuel would kill him; they feared that his leadership ambitions would displace them (2 Ne. 5:3). Nephi avoided the conflict by escaping into the wilderness with those who wanted

him as their leader. Eventually, those followers came to look upon him as "a king or a protector" by about 559 B.C. (2 Ne. 6:2).[1]

Beyond this, the Book of Mormon tells us almost nothing about Nephi's twenty-five-year reign.[2] The text never refers to him by any title suggesting kingship, although the book of First Nephi is subtitled "his reign and ministry." When Nephi "saw that he must soon die," he chose a successor. Jacob describes the event in these words:

> Wherefore, he anointed a man to be a king and a ruler over his people now, according to the reigns of the kings.
>
> The people having loved Nephi exceedingly, he having been a great protector for them, having wielded the sword of Laban in their defense, and having labored in all his days for their welfare—
>
> Wherefore, the people were desirous to retain in remembrance his name. And whoso should reign in his stead were called by the people second Nephi, third Nephi, and so forth, according to the reigns of the kings; and thus were they called by the people, let them be of whatever name they would.
>
> And it came to pass that Nephi died.
>
> Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites and Ishmaelites. (Jacob 1:9-13)

Perplexingly, in these five simple verses Jacob listed the names of all the Nephite and Lamanite tribes except Sam's, but does not name Nephi's successor, whom he refers to only as "second Nephi." These omissions are strange for a people who kept not one, but two sets of records, a primary purpose of which was to keep their genealogy.[3] Furthermore, this family was so small that its principal members could be counted on one hand. Jacob's curious failure to identify Nephi's successor leaves "second Nephi's" identity ripe for examination. Based on some reasonable deductions from other evidence in the text, I suggest that Sam, or perhaps Sam's son,[4] was the most likely candidate. If so, then successive kings may well have also been Sam's descendants, leading the entire Nephite nation from Nephi's death until the beginning of the reign of the judges. Though not conclusive, the case for Sam as second Nephi is at least reasonable, and seems more likely to me than any other possibility.

Who Are the Candidates?

The field of likely candidates begins with Nephi's own list of the men who accompanied him when he escaped into the wilderness: "I, Nephi, did take my family, and also Zoram and his family, and Sam, mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph, my younger brethren, and also my sisters, and all those who would go with me" (2 Ne. 5:6).[5] From this list, Zoram, Sam, Jacob, and Joseph are the most likely candidates, as they are the only adults mentioned. A son of Nephi may also be in the mix. However, some of these candidates seem more likely than others.

Nephi's son: Nephi married one of the daughters of Ishmael (1 Ne. 16:7), and took his "family" with him when they parted from the Lamanites (2 Ne. 5:6). He mentions his "children" once (1 Ne. 18:19), and Lehi refers to his "seed" (2 Ne. 4:11), but there is no explicit mention of a son. One is left to wonder whether Nephi had a son. It is interesting that Nephi gave the small plates to Jacob, with instructions to pass them down to his own posterity (Jacob 1:1–8). Nephi is not likely to have given his records to a brother if he had a worthy son who could have taken custody of them. Taken together, these references suggest that Nephi either lacked a worthy son or lacked a male heir altogether.

Zoram: Formerly Laban's servant, Zoram unwittingly helped Nephi obtain the plates of Laban, then joined Lehi's family and followed them into the wilderness. Lehi considered him a "true friend unto . . . Nephi, forever," who had "been faithful" up through the time of Lehi's death (2 Ne. 1:30–31). John W. Welch argues that Zoram may have been adopted into Lehi's family and thus had the same rights as Lehi's other sons.[6] Zoram married Ishmael's eldest daughter (1 Ne. 16:7), suggesting that he may have been older than all of Lehi's sons. Even assuming that Zoram was worthy and had been adopted into Lehi's family, the possibility that he was older suggests that he may have predeceased Nephi.

Sam: From the beginning of Nephi's history, he recorded both his own belief in Lehi's words and Sam's belief in his words (1 Ne. 2:17). Nephi wrote that Laman and Lemuel rebelled "against me, Nephi, and Sam" (1 Ne. 7:6). When Lehi related his vision of the tree of life, he had "reason to rejoice in the Lord because of Nephi and Sam" (1 Ne. 8:3). All of the textual evidence places Sam con-

sistently and faithfully at Nephi's side. Sam was older than Nephi and may have had the same leadership right that Laman and Lemuel claimed by virtue of their age. He may also have predeceased Nephi,[7] but still seems like a good candidate otherwise.

Jacob and Joseph: Nephi's younger brothers held the priestly office during his life (2 Ne. 5:26) and continued as spiritual leaders after his death (Jacob 1:18). Jacob inherited Nephi's small plates pertaining to spiritual things, continued making the record, and handed them on to his son, according to Nephi's direction (Jacob 1:1–2).[8] Jacob's (and presumably Joseph's) service in the priesthood began about 559 B.C. (2 Ne. 5:26), at least fifteen years before Nephi's death (2 Ne 5:34; Jacob 1:1). Both continued their ministry after Nephi's death, and Jacob's record shows that he preached with confidence and authority. Jacob's report that the people became wicked "under the reign of the second king" also suggests that "second Nephi' was someone other than himself (Jacob 1:15).

Joseph, also a priest and teacher, was the youngest of Lehi's sons. He appears in the textual record primarily as Jacob's associate in the ministry. His youth and his apparent continuing service in the ministry suggest that his succession claim was the weakest.

Based on this brief overview, it is possible to reach some preliminary conclusions about the relative merits of these candidates. Jacob and Joseph seem the least likely because of their youth (older brothers would likely have had a superior claim) and their well-documented and continuing service as priests and teachers. Jacob had the small plates but does not mention the large plates, which were held by the kings. He also fails to identify himself as the second king in the records he kept, although he could easily have done so.

Nephi's son would be a logical candidate in a patriarchal society, but also seems unlikely. The text does not mention a son, and Nephi delivers the small plates to his brother Jacob. It appears that either Nephi had no son or, for unknown reasons, his son was not the successor.

Zoram, a faithful and supportive friend, also seems unlikely. He was not a literal member of the family, although he may have been adopted; and he may have been enough older that he predeceased Nephi.

This preliminary evaluation of the candidates suggests that

Sam was the most likely choice. Although he was slightly older than Nephi, he was clearly a spiritual companion, perhaps a peer. Each of the other candidates simply seems less likely than Sam.

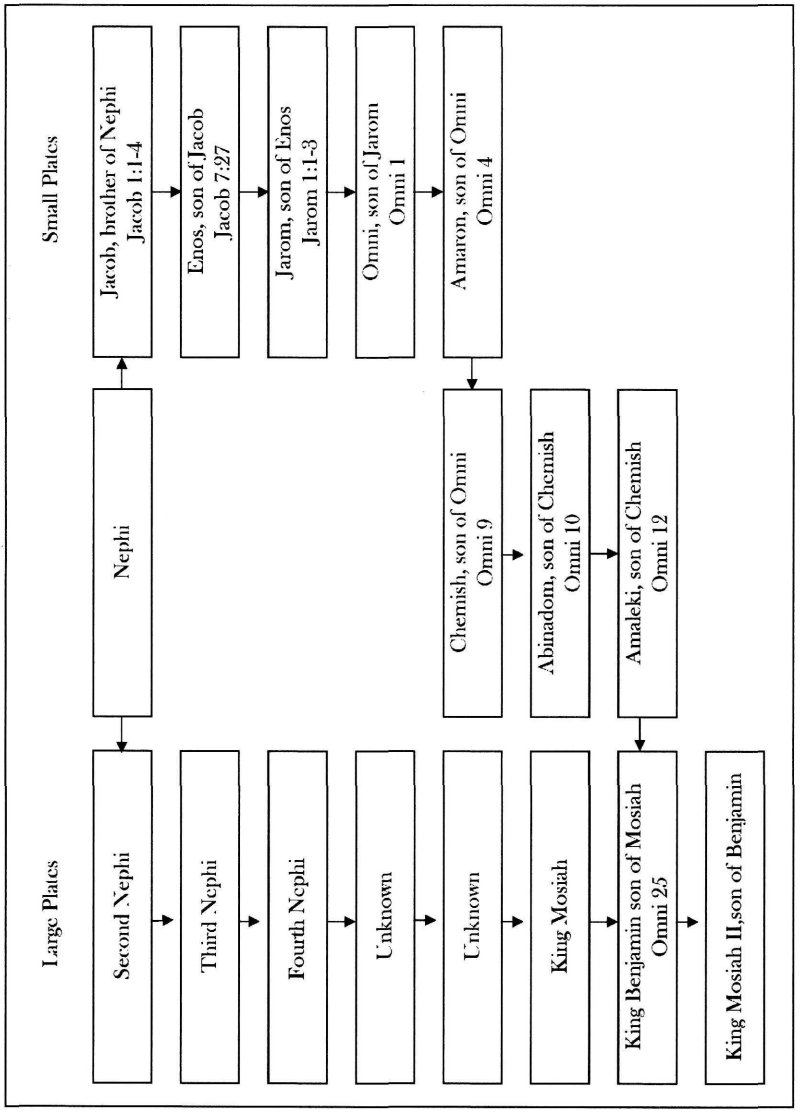
Rules for Succession

The mystery of Nephi's successor results from Jacob's curious failure to identify the second king when he could easily have done so. In this small and close-knit family, Jacob surely knew the successor's name, yet he wrote only that Nephi anointed "a man" to succeed him. His brief description of the exchange of power, however, suggests what may have been a rule of succession. By mentioning that the anointing occurred "according to the reigns of the kings" (Jacob 1:9), Jacob seems to suggest that the succession followed a well-established and familiar pattern. Since he was recording the first Nephite succession, a likely source for a familiar pattern would have been the succession of Israelite kings, recorded on the brass plates, even though Jacob was born after the family left Jerusalem.[9] For at least the previous century, the Israelite kings had usually passed their crowns to their sons.[10]

Other Book of Mormon personalities also allude to the rules under which they expected successions to occur. Laman and Lemuel complained that "it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren, to rule over this people" (2 Ne 5:3; see also 1 Ne. 16:37, Mosiah 10:15). Interestingly, both older sons considered their right superior to Nephi's. Five hundred years later, Ammoron argued that the first Nephites "did rob their brethren of their right to the government, when it rightly belonged to them" (Alma 54:17). Mosiah acknowledged that the throne "rightly belong[ed]" to one of his sons, apparently the eldest (Mosiah 29:1–6).[11] After Pahoran's death, "there began to be a serious contention concerning who should have the judgment seat among . . . the sons of Pahoran" (Hel. 1:2). When the contention resulted in the deaths of all Pahoran's sons, there was "no one to fill the judgment seat"[12] (Hel 2:1–2). These statements are consistent with Jacob's comment and seem to reflect a common expectation of father-to-oldest-son succession.

In addition to these expressions of expectations, the Book of Mormon contains descriptions of three Nephite patterns of succession that offer insights into how the Nephites actually chose successors for leadership offices.

TABLE 1
CUSTODIANS OF THE LARGE AND SMALL PLATES OF NEPHI



The first part of the pattern is the list of custodians of the small plates of Nephi. Though not a pattern of succession to the "throne," it records names and relationships. Nephi established this pattern by giving the small plates to Jacob, with instructions to pass them "down unto Jacob's seed, from generation to generation" (Jacob 1:5). This pattern held for seven generations, each record-keeper inscribing his name and the fact that he was transmitting the plates to his son. (See Table 1).

From Jacob onward, the plates were passed from father to son until Amaleki gave them to King Benjamin because he "had no seed" and no brother (Omni 1:25, 30). "From generation to generation" apparently meant "from father to son" to Jacob and his descendants, as that was the practice they followed. Amaleki deviated from the pattern for the same reason that Nephi gave the plates to Jacob: no successor of his own.

The Book of Mormon does not record the name of the recipient of Nephi's large plates upon his death, but we may surmise something about his identity. After receiving the small plates from Amaleki, King Benjamin placed them with "the other" plates of Nephi, which were "had among the kings, from generation to generation, until the days of king Benjamin" (W of M 1:10–11; see also Jarom 1:14, Omni 1:11). Assuming that "from generation to generation" had the same father-to-son meaning for the large plates as for the small, then Benjamin's ancestors were arguably the custodians of the large plates and can be traced backwards, son-to-father, to Nephi II, the second Nephite king.[13] Therefore, one of King Mosiah's ancestors was arguably Nephi II, who received the large plates from Nephi at the time of his death.

The second part of the pattern belongs to the three named Nephite kings: Mosiah I, Benjamin, and Mosiah II, a chain of fathers and sons.[14] Benjamin, who received the small plates from the childless Amaleki, also received the kingdom, the large plates, the plates of brass, the sword of Laban, and the Liahona from his father, Mosiah I, and delivered both to his own son, Mosiah II (Mosiah 1:15–16). These three kings also followed the expected pattern until Mosiah II found himself without a successor: he had four worthy sons who all refused to be king. I hypothesize that Ammon is the eldest and that Aaron is the second eldest (Mosiah

TABLE 2
THE TWELVE NEPHITE CHIEF JUDGES

Name	*Relationship to Predecessor*	*Reason for Deviation*	*Reference*
Alma	Unknown but a descendant of Nephi	Sons of King Mosiah refused the throne.	Mosiah 28:10, 29:42
Nephihah	Unknown but an "elder of the church."	Predecessor Alma resigns to preach gospel exclusively.	Alma 4:16–18, 50:37
Pahoran I	Son		Alma 50:37–40
Pahoran II	Son		Hel. 1:1–5, 9
Pacumeni	Brother of Pahoran II, son of Pahoran I		Hel. 1:13, 21
Helaman, son of Helaman	None	Helaman appointed when there was no one to fill judgment seat.	Hel. 2:1–2
Nephi	Son		Hel. 3:37
Cezoram	Unknown	Predecessor Nephi resigns to preach gospel exclusively.	Hel. 5:1–5
Cezoram's son	Son		Hel. 6:15
Seezoram	Unknown	Cezoram's son was murdered on judgment seat.	Hel. 8:27, 9:23–26
Lachoneus	Unknown	Seezoram murdered on judgment seat by his brother Seantum.	3 Ne. 1:1

27:34; Alma 17:18). When Ammon refused and the voice of the people chose Aaron, Mosiah became concerned about possible resentment from the son "to whom the kingdom doth rightly belong" (Mosiah 29:6), apparently Ammon, who might later reclaim his rightful place and create a conflict among the people (Mosiah 29:26–27).

Mosiah sidestepped the succession problem by instituting the system of judges (Mosiah 29:25). Although the chief judges were not "kings," they occupied the position of supreme political leadership as the kings had done.[15] Thus, their pattern of succession should further inform our understanding of Nephite expectations of succession. (See Table 2.)

As summarized in Table 2, each chief judge followed the familiar pattern: delivering the judgment seat to his son, unless some circumstance intervened. Whenever the succession was from father to son, the record says so; whenever there was a deviation, the record explains why. The most common reasons for chief judge deviations include the lack of a son, a son's desire to devote himself to preaching, and the chief judge's murder.[16]

In short, these three patterns suggest that Nephite successions occurred under the following "rules," which, I suggest can also be applied to Nephi and his successor:

1. There is a strong preference, often characterized as a "right," for father-to-son succession.

2. When Rule 1 is followed, Book of Mormon record-keepers consistently state that the successor is the son.

3. Whenever there is a deviation from Rule 1, the record-keepers consistently explain why.[17]

4. The eldest son seems to have had first claim, followed by other sons in order of birth.[18]

The Succession of Second Nephi

Applying these rules to the succession between Nephi and "Second Nephi" suggests that Nephi should have passed the kingdom to his son. However, the record fails to mention that Nephi II was Nephi's son, thus violating Rule 2. Jacob's failure to record his nephew's name suggests a deviation that required an explanation (Rule 3). Might Jacob's long but ambiguous report be such an explanation?:

> Now Nephi began to be old, and he saw that he must soon die; therefore he anointed a man to be a king and a ruler over his people now, according to the reigns of the kings.
>
> The people having loved Nephi exceedingly, he having been a great protector for them, having wielded the sword of Laban in their defense and having labored in all his days for their welfare—

> Wherefore, the people were desirous to retain in remembrance his name. And whoso should reign in his name were called by the name of second Nephi, third Nephi and so forth, according to the reigns of the kings; and thus they were called by the people, let them be of whatever name they would.
>
> And it came to pass that Nephi died.
>
> Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites and Ishmaelites. (Jacob 1:9–13)

Later record-keepers straightforwardly explained deviations as flowing from the lack of a son or a clear abdication. Yet for unspecified reasons, Jacob layered two facts onto this succession. First, Nephi's successors would be called "second Nephi," "third Nephi," etc.[19] Second, Jacob here listed the Nephite "tribes," which, also for unspecified reasons, did not include "Samites" (Jacob 1:13). I hypothesize that either or both of these might explain the deviation from Rule 1.

Interestingly, Jacob's phrase, "anointed a man to be a king and a ruler over his people," resembles the descriptions of three other known deviations from the father-to-son pattern. When Alma the younger left the judgment seat to preach the gospel, he "selected a wise man" to succeed him, without mentioning his relationship to Alma (Alma 4:16). Helaman "was appointed" to fill the judgment seat when "there was no one to fill" it after Pacumeni's death (Hel. 2:1–2). And when Helaman's son Nephi (number 7 on Table 2) decided to devote himself to preaching, he "delivered up the judgment seat to a man," later identified as Cezoram, again with no indication of any kinship (Hel 5:1–5). Thus, Jacob's choice of the phrase "anointed a man to be a king and a ruler" may actually be a subtle indication that the second king was not Nephi's son. In light of Nephi's delivery of the small plates and spiritual leadership to one brother, the most likely choice for the large plates and the kingdom might well have been another brother. Since Jacob and Joseph are considered unlikely candidates, what about Sam?

Lehi's Blessing

As Lehi approached death, he gathered his extended family to receive his final words of instruction and blessing.[20] Beginning with Laman and Lemuel, Lehi chastised them for a long list of

shortcomings, urging them to repent and to "rebel no more against your brother" (2 Ne 1:1-29). To all of his sons and to Ishmael's sons, he promises his first blessing if they will follow Nephi (2 Ne.1:28). Lehi next blesses Zoram (2 Ne. 1:30-31), Jacob (2 Ne. 2), Joseph (2 Ne. 3), Laman's children (2 Ne. 4:3-8), Lemuel's children (2 Ne. 4:9), and Ishmael's sons and household (2 Ne. 4:10). Despite Sam's apparently exemplary record of obedience, his blessing comes last—even after Lehi's blessings on the children of the rebellious Laman, Lemuel, and sons of Ishmael.[21]

> And after he had made an end of speaking to them, he spake unto Sam, saying: Blessed art thou, and thy seed; for thou shalt inherit the land like unto thy brother Nephi. And *thy seed shall be numbered with his seed; and thou shalt be even like unto thy brother, and thy seed shall be like unto his seed*; and thou shalt be blessed in all thy days.
>
> And it came to pass that after my father, Lehi, had spoken unto all his household, according to the feelings of his heart and the Spirit of the Lord which was in him, he waxed old. And it came to pass that he died, and was buried. (2 Ne. 4:11,12; emphasis mine)

Lehi's choice of Sam as the recipient of his last recorded words in life endowed them with momentous significance. Not only would Sam's seed be "like unto" and "numbered with" Nephi's posterity, but Sam would be "like unto" Nephi. This language suggests both the inclusion of Sam and his posterity among Nephi's descendants[22] and also a personal status or work for Sam that is comparable to Nephi's. I argue that this blessing may even include Nephite leadership. In other words, on the basis of Lehi's blessing, Sam may no longer be Nephi's brother, but his adopted son. As such, Sam and his heirs would thus satisfy the description in Mosiah 25:13, that "the kingdom had been conferred upon none but those who were descendants of Nephi."

Did Sam Succeed Nephi?

To summarize the discussion to this point, the Book of Mormon text, though not naming Nephi's successor, suggests four rules for succession, contains a list of likely candidates, some of whom are more likely than others, and reports a blessing on Sam. That blessing apparently adopts Sam and his posterity into Nephi's family and confers upon him a status like Nephi's—a status compatible with kingship.

In addition, Jacob's description of the succession contains parallels with Lehi's blessing. Lehi's last recorded words were spoken to Sam. Nephi's last recorded words were spoken to his successor. They were words of anointing and perhaps blessing, and were arguably also spoken to Sam. Jacob immediately thereafter reports that future kings will be called "Nephi" and lists Nephite tribes, a list that omits Sam. Thus, in three conveniently juxtaposed verses describing the succession of the Nephite king, Jacob reports that some unnamed "man," important and worthy enough to succeed Nephi as king has done so, taken the name "second Nephi," and omits Sam and his posterity from future Nephite history, despite Sam's faithful support of Nephi from the outset.[23]

From these clues, I argue that Sam has succeeded Nephi as king, and will hereafter be known as "second Nephi." The "Samites" are therefore not missing at all. They have simply become Nephites. While this argument for Sam as second Nephi is not conclusive, it is persuasive and reasonable. If Sam was the second Nephite king, then successive kings were Sam's descendants, keeping the large plates that the kings passed down "from generation to generation." Just as the small plates included the genealogy of Jacob's line, the large plates likely recorded the names of the Nephite kings from Nephi II to Mosiah I.[24] Sam and his sons would also have possessed the Liahona, the sword of Laban, and the brass plates from Nephi's death until the reign of the judges (Mosiah 1:16). When Amaleki conferred the small plates on king Benjamin (Omni 1:25), Sam's distant descendant became the first of Lehi's descendants since Nephi to unite both spiritual and secular functions. He possessed all of their treasures and all of their records, and "like unto Nephi" was their prophet, priest, and king.

Jacob's grandson wrote: "Our kings and our leaders were mighty men in the faith of the Lord" (Jarom 1:7). This characterization is demonstrably true of Nephi, Jacob, Mosiah I, Benjamin, and Mosiah II.[25] I argue that it can appropriately be applied to Sam. Hundreds of years later with all of the Nephite records before him, Mormon characterized Sam as a "just and holy" man along with Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph (Alma 3:6). In our day, President Howard W. Hunter declared that Sam "ultimately received the same blessings promised to Nephi and his posterity. *Nothing*

promised to Nephi was withheld from the faithful Sam, yet we know very little of the details of Sam's service and contribution. He was an almost unknown person in life; but he is obviously a triumphant leader and victor in the annals of eternity."[26] If Sam was in fact Nephi II, it may be that he was both a triumphant leader in the annals of eternity *and* the leader of the Nephites in life.

Summary

The case for Sam as second king of the Nephites is not beyond challenge. Because the Book of Mormon does not name Nephi's successor, the second king's identity will always remain somewhat speculative. However, after excluding Jacob and Joseph because of their ongoing religious roles, Zoram and Sam are the only other adult males in the company worthy of being mentioned in the narrative. Sam seems to be the more likely candidate for the following reasons: (1) Lehi's powerful blessing predicts a significant role for him; (2) That role is consistent with the otherwise unexplained absence of "Samites" from the record; (3) Sam's apparent adoption into Nephi's household as his son fits the long-standing practice of passing high offices from father to son. Although other Book of Mormon scholars have argued for such an adoption, they have not suggested a reason for it; (4) Such an adoption would provide Nephi with an heir—a possibility since the text does not mention Nephi's son; (5) Sam's native goodness and virtue are consistent with what is known of other Nephite kings; and (6) The symmetry of the arrangement is appealing: Nephi gave the spiritual leadership and the small plates to Jacob, the kingdom and the large plates to Sam. Jacob would succeed him as priest, and Sam as king.

Jacob's reason for omitting Nephi II's identity remains a mystery. Even so, there is enough evidence in the Book of Mormon from which to hypothesize that Sam (or perhaps Sam's son) was that successor. Lehi's promised blessing, that Sam would be "like unto Nephi" and "blessed in all his days," would be amply fulfilled in this way.

Notes

1. Dennis L. Largey, ed., "Kings," *Book of Mormon Reference Companion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 482, 483.

2. I count from 569 B.C., when the people came to look upon him as a king, until 544 B.C., when Jacob reports the choice of a successor. See Todd R. Kerr, "Ancient Aspects of Nephite Kingship in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (1992): 85–118.

3. See, e.g. Jarom 1:1: "Now behold, I, Jarom, write a few words according to the commandments of my father, Enos, that our genealogy may be kept"; and Omni 1:1: "Behold it came to pass that I, Omni, being commanded that I should write somewhat upon these plates, to preserve our genealogy. . . . "

4. I make this concession because Sam was Nephi's older brother and may have predeceased him by virtue of his age. Given the other arguments for Sam as successor, it seems likely that one of Sam's sons would be the natural heir if Sam died first.

5. Sidney B. Sperry, "Did Father Lehi Have Daughters Who Married the Sons of Ishmael?" *A Book of Mormon Treasury: Selections from the Pages of the* ***Improvement Era*** (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1959), 156, comments: "What is remarkable is that these daughters of Lehi were willing to leave their husbands, the sons of Ishmael, if they were still living, and follow Nephi after having rebelled against him during the trip from Jerusalem into the wilderness (1 Ne. 7:6)." If Sperry is correct, the husbands of Nephi's sisters are also eliminated as candidates.

6. John W. Welch, "Lehi's Last Will and Testament: Has Lehi Adopted Zoram and the Sons of Ishmael?" *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, Papers from the Third Annual Book of Mormon Symposium (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 73, argues for Zoram's adoption on the grounds that Zoram's blessing comes before those given to Jacob and Joseph, suggests his formal inclusion in the family, and speculates that Lehi may have been bound to treat Zoram as a son as a result of Nephi's solemn promise 'thou shalt have place with us' (1 Ne. 4: 32–34). Thus, Lehi may have adopted Zoram and the sons of Ishmael to strengthen their inheritance rights and status within the family." Welch fails to point out that, notwithstanding any adoption, Laman and Lemuel did not recognize Zoram's right to leadership as superior to theirs (2 Ne. 5:3).

7. Ken Haubrock, "Sam: A Just and Holy Man," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 2 (1996): 164, estimates the difference in age at three to seven years, but with no evidence other than educated speculation.

8. Jacob's family held the small plates from Nephi's death (about 544 B.C.) until Jacob's distant grandson Amaleki delivered them to King Benjamin (between 279 and 130 B.C.) (Omni 1:25).

9. Many authors have compared Nephite kings with those of ancient Israel. See, e.g., Hugh Nibley, "An Approach to the Book of Mormon" (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [FARMS], 1988), 295–99; Todd R. Kerr, "Ancient Aspects of Nephite Kingship in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (1992): 85–118.

10. Zedekiah was the brother of Jehoiachin (1 Chr. 3:15); both were the sons of Jehoiackim (1 Chr. 3:15), the brother of Jehoahaz. Both Jehoiackim and Jehoahaz were sons of Josiah (2 Kgs. 33:34; 1 Chr. 3:14); the son of Amon (1 Chr. 3:14), the son of Manasseh (1 Chr. 3:14; 2 Kgs. 21:18), the son of Hezekiah (1 Chr 3:13; 2 Kgs. 20:21), the son of Ahaz (1 Chr. 3:13), the son of Jotham (1 Chr. 3:12), etc.

11. The Book of Mormon does not identify the oldest son. Mosiah 27:34 lists them in this order: Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni. Since all four departed on missions and all had expressly rejected the kingdom (Mosiah 28:10, 29:3), "he to whom the kingdom rightly belonged" may have referred to any one of them or to each of them in the order of birth.

12. Pahoran had "many" other sons at that point (Hel. 1:4).

13. The account of Mosiah's escape from the land of Nephi with as many as would follow him leaves open the possibility that he escaped with records of which he had not previously been the custodian (Omni 1:12–13). This possibility would, however, mean that he took them from the legitimate king, and the record suggests no impropriety in his escape. Therefore, it seems fair to accept Mormon at his word, i.e., that Mosiah was one of the Nephite kings who had custody of the large plates.

14. Mosiah 1:2, which lists Benjamin's sons, lists Mosiah first, and Benjamin chose Mosiah to succeed him (Mosiah 6:3), suggesting that he was the eldest and therefore had the strongest right to succeed. The Nephites who left Zarahemla to search for the land of Nephi-Lehi also followed the father-to-son pattern (Zeniff, Noah, and Limhi), although there is no record of other eligible sons (Mosiah 9:14, 11:1, 19, 26).

15. Three chief judges are also referred to as "governor": Nephihah (Alma 50:39), Pacumeni (Hel. 1:5, 13), and Lachoneus (3 Ne.1:1).

16. In addition to sons who refused the office (Mosiah 29:1-6), other situations involved the complete absence of a son (Omni 25) and sons who were too young or unworthy (Hel. 2:1, 2). Murdered chief judges were sometimes succeeded by a son—e.g., Cezoram (Hel. 6:15)—and sometimes by another successor.

17. Toward the end of the reign of the judges when murders of the chief executive became more common and Nephite society degenerated

into violence, adherence to the rules and practice understandably faltered.

18. Laman and Lemuel claimed their rights with respect to the plates and family leadership, and Mosiah assumes it in relation to the kingdom. When Pahoran and Paanchi are both killed, the third son Pacumeni is appointed chief judge "according to his right" (Hel. 1:3, 7, 13.)

19. The new name may have been a throne name or name-title. Todd R. Kerr, "Ancient Aspects of Nephite Kingship in the Book of Mormon," 22, asserts that "Mosiah$_2$ was named Mosiah, but, like his ruling forefathers, he was also called a 'Nephi' (Jacob 1:11)." Jacob himself later refers to Nephi's successor not as "second Nephi" but as "the second king" (Jacob 1:15). There is no other reference to a Nephite king in these terms.

20. Sidney B. Sperry, "Types of Literature in the Book of Mormon: Patriarchal Blessings, Symbolic Prophecy, Prophetic Narrative, Prophetic Dialogue," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 95.

21. "The seven groups blessed here by Lehi became the seven major families that endured throughout the rest of the Book of Mormon: Lamanites, Lemuelites, Ishmaelites, Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, and Zoramites. It is apparent that, in organizing his posterity by groups, Lehi was conferring legal and property rights intended to endure." John W. Welch, "Lehi's Last Will and Testament: A Legal Approach," in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, Papers from the Third Annual Book of Mormon Symposium, edited by Monte Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 73.

22. Speaking of this blessing's effect, Welch observes: "First, he combined Sam's inheritance *and seed* with Nephi's. As Jacob in the patriarchal period had effectively doubled the blessing of Joseph by granting equal blessings to Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:22), so Lehi effectively doubled Nephi's position by granting a share of the land to Sam and then merging it with Nephi's." Ibid., 78; emphasis in original. "Sam . . . ultimately received the same blessings promised to Nephi and his posterity." Howard W. Hunter, "No Less Serviceable," *Ensign*, April 1992, 65. Nephi also alluded to Lehi's blessing to establish his own legitimacy as a ruler over his brethren (2 Ne. 1:25, 5:19).

23. 4 Ne. 36–37, Mormon 1:8, and D&C 3:16–18 have similar lists that exclude Samites.

24. Likewise, the brass plates of Laban contained the genealogy of Lehi's family (1 Ne. 5:14).

25. Indeed, Amaleki's first reference to King Mosiah reports that he, like Lehi and Nephi before him, was warned to flee out of the land "with

as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord" (Omni 1:12), just as Lehi had fled from Jerusalem, and Nephi had fled from his brothers.

26. Hunter, "No Less Serviceable," 65; emphasis mine.

What Is Mormon Cinema? Defining the Genre

Randy Astle

Latter-day Saints made their first known cinematic appearance in 1898 in *Salt Lake City Company of Rocky Mountain Riders*, part of a series of very short motion pictures depicting American troops in the Spanish-American War. Since then thousands of films and television programs have dealt with Mormonism; at present the Mormon Literature and Creative Arts database lists 4,591 such items.[1] This vast corpus includes a broad array of styles and subject matter, with motion pictures by non-Mormons, by Church members, and by the institutional Church. The diversity of content is evident in titles such as the independent missionary feature *God's Army* (2000), the inspirational drama *Windows of Heaven* (1963), the anti-Mormon video *The Godmakers* (1983), the cult favorite *Johnny Lingo* (1969), the prosaic instructional film *Teaching with Chalk* (1956), and even the temple endowment, which was first presented on film in 1955. Fiction films, documentaries, instructional pieces, experimental works, filmed sermons and presentations, and even home movies all hold an important place in the historical corpus of Mormon film.[2]

Since the 1910s, various terms have been applied to Mormonism's cinematic tradition and its various components: "Mormon cinema," "LDS cinema," "BYU films," "Church films," "seminary videos," "Sunday School films," and so on. These terms have been historically mutable. A "Mormon film" in the 1910s was a vastly different object than a Mormon film in each of the subsequent decades.

In 1912, for instance, the trade journal *Moving Picture World* ran the headline "Mormon Pictures in Demand," yet the pictures in question were the sensational 1911 Danish film *A Victim of the Mormons* and six similar anti-Mormon productions that followed quickly in 1912, illustrating what the general public thought constituted a Mormon picture at the time.[3] But by 1928 the *Cleveland Ohio News*

christened the film *All Faces West*, produced primarily by non-Mormons under official guidance from Church leaders, "the first Mormon picture,"[4] demonstrating a changing public perception. New manifestations of Mormon cinema could be seen in 1940 when Twentieth Century-Fox released its large-scale production of *Brigham Young*, in 1953 when the Church established a Motion Picture Department at Brigham Young University, and at other times until 2000 when Richard Dutcher released *God's Army*. At that point his website called *God's Army* "the first . . . Mormon film,"[5] and commentators quickly agreed. As one example among many, in 2003 BYU's student newspaper the *Daily Universe* called Dutcher "the creator of the first LDS film 'God's Army.'"[6]

If both *A Victim of the Mormons* and *God's Army* could be hailed by the press as preeminent examples of Mormon cinema in their day, then it seems profitable to examine just what the term means, both historically and now. Before doing so, however, two important questions must be addressed. First, what can we gain by approaching Mormon film from a taxonomical perspective? Second, given the wide diversity of individual films (doctrinal, comedic, nonfiction, dramatic, anti-Mormon, etc.) and the plethora of generic labels (Church films, Mormon films, LDS films, etc.), each with its own connotation concerning production, content, and audience, is it possible to speak of one monolithic Mormon cinema, or is it a blanket term covering several distinct traditions?

To answer the first question, there are many potential benefits to filmmakers and critics in identifying the center and the periphery of Mormon film. Many of these are endemic to the films themselves; for example, understanding Neil LaBute's relationship to Mormonism provides greater insight into his work. But other benefits move beyond the films to deal with the Church's place in the contemporary world. Mormon cinema, in fact, can often be seen as a synecdoche for all of Mormon society; along with music and temple architecture, it is the most prominent Mormon art form, continually invoked by the Church in its public relations and proselytizing efforts. Church leaders and members obviously believe that motion pictures can be an effective means of shaping public opinion.[7] Hence, understanding the films that the Mormon community holds up as representative of itself, as well as those it rejects, increases our compre-

hension of Mormons' self-perception and self-presentation to the world. Likewise, understanding what films outsiders have used to approach Mormonism helps us situate the Church in its broader social context. Thus, understanding Mormon film as a genre helps us comprehend the entire Mormon movement and its social milieu, again both historically and at present.

Answering the second question—what is Mormon cinema?—is more difficult. As mentioned, the term has constantly shifted, avoiding any single definition. However, Mormon film does have components in common with film genres, certain ethnic cinemas, and even national cinemas, among other precedents. It can therefore be useful and not inaccurate to describe Mormon film as a genre, or at least approach it from that perspective. To be more accurate, however, we must define Mormon cinema as a religiously based ethnic cinema that is continually developing characteristics of an actual genre or even multiple genres. Thus, positioned in the interstices between genre and ethnic cinema, Mormon film exhibits characteristics of both but complete adherence to neither.

To examine Mormon cinema as genre, a helpful entry point is an essay by Mormon film enthusiast Preston Hunter, co-founder of the popular website Ldsfilm.com, followed by two case studies that probe his arguments. I will then turn to two non-Mormon academics: first, film and social theorist Hamid Naficy, to investigate the characteristics that Mormon cinema shares with certain types of ethnic cinemas, and, second, Rick Altman, one of the most influential contemporary film genre theorists today, to examine how Mormon cinema does and does not constitute a genre.[8]

What Is Genre?

The French word *genre* (pronounced zhan´-ra) entered English around 1770. It comes from the Latin *genus* (which itself has a Greek root), meaning a kind, sort, style, or class of items; in biology, *genus* indicates a distinct subgroup, generally containing multiple related species, within a broader family. *Genus* and its related prefix *gener-* are the roots for such English words as *generate* and *genesis* (the creation or origination of something uniquely new and distinct); *generation* (a group of individuals born of the same parent or at the same time); *gender* (a group of individuals sharing the same sex characteristics); and of course *genes* and *genetics* (literally, "pertaining to ori-

gins," which geneticist William Bateson popularized in the early twentieth century to indicate the biological units that endow individuals with their distinctive characteristics). All of these words indicate groups of items that share certain characteristics with each other but differ from items outside the group. This is perhaps the best way to approach *genre* as well.

In everyday English, *genre* is used less frequently than its adjectival form *generic*. Often this word has connotations of low quality, including B-films, store-brand groceries, or cheap medication, but this is not the thrust of its literal meaning, which is simply to pertain to a certain genre, genus, class, group, or kind of related items. Today brands, trademarks, and advertising try to distinguish items from a competitor's similar products—a point we will return to in discussing Rick Altman—but they nevertheless all belong to the same genre.

With films, even if viewers do not use the term *genre,* they easily distinguish between westerns, science fiction, comedy, horror, and other categories. The concept is as familiar as the layout of a video store. Grouping films by genre makes them more accessible and also tells consumers what to expect: no bloodbaths at the end of a romantic comedy, for instance. Film scholar Dudley Andrew has pointed out that genre criticism is the blood brother of auteur theory: the first looks at similarities in films of similar content regardless of the director, and the second looks at similarities in films by one director regardless of the content. "Both these methods . . . follow an organized approach and some invariable principles which can be applied to a series of films, one after another," Andrew says. "But even this is not theory in its pure sense, for its goal is an appreciation of the value of individual works of cinema, not a comprehension of the cinematic capability. We might call [genre and auteur] criticism 'applied film theory,' just as we call engineering 'applied physical science.'"[9]

Thus, even though a generic study does not deal with film theory proper—in other words, it remains strictly on the taxonomic level—we can still apply a generic analysis to Mormon films in order, as Andrew says, to appreciate their value, both individually and collectively. In turn, I believe this will provide a framework from which to reach increased insight into how cinema—and in particular Mormon cinema—functions.

Preston Hunter and www.ldsfilm.com

Though many Latter-day Saints may not know of Preston Hunter and Thomas Baggaley, since 2000 they have been two of the most influential people in Mormon cinema. As co-webmasters of www.ldsfilm.com, launched not long after the release of *God's Army*, they created an online repository for everything related to Mormon film: news articles, information on upcoming productions, box office statistics, biographical material, and other information. As a result, the site is an excellent research aid and a resource in the creation of a Mormon film community.[10] While considering all films relating to Mormonism, Hunter and Baggaley placed special emphasis on theatrical releases made since *God's Army*. To cohere and identify these films, Hunter posted a brief essay, "What Is LDS Cinema?," on April 30, 2001. Slightly amended in February 2005, it has appeared on the site ever since.[11]

It is important to situate this article historically. Hunter was writing immediately after the release of Dutcher's second theatrical film, *Brigham City* (2001), and thus was literally the only one writing on Mormon cinema at the time. Since he was attempting the difficult task of writing on the cusp of a new movement, he exhibited wonderful foresight but also an inevitable lack of knowledge about Mormon film's history, parameters, and future. This fact increases the essay's historical importance, capturing how one thoughtful observer perceived a new movement at its very beginning. More importantly, Hunter established the vocabulary used on ldsfilm.com; thus far, its definition of Mormon cinema has been generally if implicitly accepted by the larger community without much critical assessment. Without denying the essay's importance, the time now seems right for such an evaluation.

Hunter begins by praising Dutcher as the first Latter-day Saint to create a feature film about Latter-day Saints. In promoting *God's Army,* Dutcher essentially established the parameters of "LDS Cinema" (the term consistently used on the website, often with a capitalized "C"), which Hunter spends the body of the essay investigating. Taking an exclusionary stance, he states that calling it "cinema" immediately excludes anything not released in commercial movie theaters, such as videos, televised films, and official Church productions. Films must also be "made for a wide aspect ratio ('wide-

screen'), not a television set." He acknowledges the importance of excluded productions–specifically the documentaries of Lee Groberg–but says they "clearly belong in a different category. And it is useful to be able to talk specifically about 'cinema' without frequent reference to often incompatible audiovisual media of other types."

The "LDS" modifier, on the one hand, excludes films made by Mormons but without Mormon content, like *Casablanca* (1942) and *The Land Before Time* (1988), and, on the other, films about Mormonism directed by non-Mormons, such as *Brigham Young* (1940) and *Orgazmo* (1997). Hunter realizes that a hypothetical film about Mormon scripture would disrupt his unstated definition, however, so he allows that what can be *included* are, in his quotation marks, "films with overtly Latter-day Saint characters or themes."[12]

Returning to an exclusionary stance, he appraises the intended audience and rules out anything not marketed primarily or exclusively to Latter-day Saints, such as the irreverent sci-fi spoof *Plan 10 from Outer Space* (1994). He continues this train of thought into his conclusion, where he implies that LDS cinema must be orthodox: no Mormon villains, for instance. Comparing Mormon films with African American films, he points out that the filmmaker's orthodoxy is a problem unique to religious cinema, for while either a director is black or not, an ethnic Mormon may not be active in the Church. ". . . A film which was highly offensive to most Latter-day Saints would [not] be recognized as 'LDS cinema'"–and would not make much money anyhow. Then, to his credit, he wisely leaves the entire essay open to interpretation, commenting that future films "will force re- evaluation of the term. It will be interesting to see what develops."

Although Hunter never states his definition outright, it may be thus inferred: An LDS film is a feature-length (of at least roughly ninety minutes) fictional film released after *God's Army* in mainstream commercial cinemas which is marketed specifically and exclusively to Latter-day Saints, is directed by a faithful Latter-day Saint, and favorably depicts faithful Latter-day Saints or characters based in ancient LDS scripture.

Such a definition may describe the heart of Mormon cinema as enthusiasts envision it in the early twenty-first century, but it fails to completely map the terrain. It does not help, for instance, to demar-

cate a place where Mormon cinema ends. All of Hunter's criteria are exclusionary except for the single positive characteristic that a film should depict "LDS characters or themes." This methodology, to define the platonic center of a genre by excluding everything it is not, is very common in genre studies; in fact, it is possibly the preferred methodology for most critics. So this approach is not to Hunter's discredit, but it does omit a great many films that thoughtful critics—and the writers at *Moving Picture World* and the *Cleveland Ohio News*—may want to include.

His first exclusion, of non-theatrical releases, is somewhat troubling for a movement that has produced so much material for video, television, subsidized film distribution (in meetinghouses), and other outlets. His concession to Lee Groberg suggests that Hunter recognizes the problem, but including even one such production would open a Pandora's box for his definition. Defining "cinema" as referring only to commercial theaters discounts many historical precedents in various national film industries that have had to rely on distribution outlets like agitprop trains, special screenings in civic venues, government subsidies, and video. The vast majority of Mormon-related films—well over 90 percent, by my guess—was designed for similar distribution models, and excluding them would remove the context for the remaining 10 percent.

Hunter has good reason to exclude secular films created by Latter-day Saints, but the cases of *Casablanca* and *The Land Before Time* are interesting for their disparity. The former is presumably mentioned because the screenplay passed through the hands of Casey Robinson, a Church member and one of Warner Bros.' top screenwriters at the time. After two other screenwriters had already done a great deal of work in adapting the original play *Everybody Comes to Rick's*, Robinson began working on the Ingrid Bergman character and the love story. Simultaneously, two other writers, the Epstein brothers, hashed out the male characters and the war material; a few months later, staff writer Howard Koch was also brought onboard, staying throughout production for rewrites that included changing the entire climax and ending. Robinson, by then well into a successful career, refused to share screen credit, a decision that cost him an Oscar.[13] Also, his limited involvement produced no Mormon characters or themes. In contrast, director Don Bluth's extensive involvement with *The Land Before Time* (discussed below) yielded a picture

that demonstrates how an ostensibly secular film can indeed contain "overtly Latter-day Saint themes" and be revelatory of the Mormon experience. The wisdom of excluding such films from the corpus is therefore debatable.

Hunter's next point is that LDS cinema cannot include anything "made," presumably meaning directed, by non-Mormons. Ironically, his example of director Henry Hathaway's *Brigham Young* provides the perfect argument against his point, as Church members–including Heber J. Grant and John A. Widstoe–were extensively involved in its creation. From sympathetic portrayals of lightning-rod issues like polygamy to the use of Mormon hymnody in its score, the film is thoroughly infused with Mormonism. Hunter's second example is the completely thematically unrelated *Orgazmo*, an NC-17 picture in which a returned missionary acts in pornographic films to pay for his temple wedding. In analyzing these two productions Hunter says: "But neither Hathaway nor [*Orgazmo* director Trey] Parker are Latter-day Saints, which seems to be the deciding factor, because both films (and many others made by non-Latter-day Saint filmmakers) predated *God's Army*." This sentence requires a small leap of logic, as it is difficult to make the connection between *God's Army*'s release date and Henry Hathaway's religion. There is obviously no causality between the two, and hence Hathaway's faith is not "the deciding factor." This slip does, however, tacitly reveal Hunter's most important criterion: that all LDS films must be released after *God's Army*.

Finally there is the issue of the intended audience, a troubling point for all genre studies. As Rick Altman amply demonstrates, most films are marketed as different genres to different potential customers, with broadsides reading, "Action! Comedy! Romance!" Hollywood studios do this because they seek the largest audience possible, and Mormon filmmakers are no different, even if it means marketing to two different groups. *Brigham City*, for instance, reportedly was packaged in two different cases for its initial DVD release. One, designed for sale in Mormon-oriented outlets, featured headshots of the actors and the tagline, "Nothing attracts a serpent like paradise," while the other, designed for general retailers, featured blood and much more implied violence. Are half of the *Brigham City* DVDs Mormon cinema and half not? Similarly, *New York Doll*'s (2005) video release came in two edits, a family-friendly version and

a "mainstream" (i.e., uncut) version with slightly more profanity. *Pride and Prejudice* (2003) had most of the already scarce Mormon references from its theatrical version excised for DVD.

Not only can marketing and content vary for individual titles, but the entire concept that a genre or ethnic cinema must be marketed exclusively to one group seems invalid. *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971), a favorite prototype for many Mormon filmmakers, would no longer be considered Jewish cinema by this definition because it was popular with a general audience. The same is true of *Schindler's List* (1993), Woody Allen's films, or any ethnic movie that seeks success beyond the filmmaker's demographic. In fact, most theatrical Mormon films of the past decade have sought crossover success, which by this definition would exclude them from the Mormon canon as well.

Even if Hunter's criteria do not entirely withstand scrutiny, his intention—to identify a group of films beginning with *God's Army* that share distinctive characteristics in terms of both content and production—is laudable. Films like *God's Army*, *The Other Side of Heaven* (2001), *The Singles Ward* (2002), *The Work and the Glory* (2004), and *The Errand of Angels* (2008) appear to form a historically cohesive group with greater similarities in style and content than differences. They therefore seem to mark the beginning of something like a new wave. Indeed, some of Hunter's most perplexing omissions are films like the 1977 *Brigham*, the 1931 *Corianton*, and the 1915 *The Life of Nephi*, which otherwise fit all of his stated criteria; they are excluded, however, simply because they predate *God's Army* and are not part of Mormon cinema's modern movement. While there should be accessible terminology for these post-*God's Army* films, it is unfortunate that Hunter uses the broad term of "LDS Cinema" for such a small and historically cohesive group, as of 2009 constituting barely one-twentieth of Mormon film history since 1898. The effect is to appropriate the name of an entire movement for its most recent manifestation. If these few theatrical films constitute "LDS cinema," then what are we to call everything else?[14]

This is perhaps an overly harsh critique of Hunter, who needed to establish a working definition for these films when only two had been released. As the discussion of Rick Altman will show, if questions of Mormon genre are ultimately beyond Hunter's initial essay, it is because the questions of film genre are often beyond all of us, to

a much greater degree than previous generic studies have admitted. Still, Hunter does raise several profound issues about Mormon film that warrant further scrutiny. Perhaps the most important of these is the religious affiliation of production personnel who work on supposedly Mormon films.

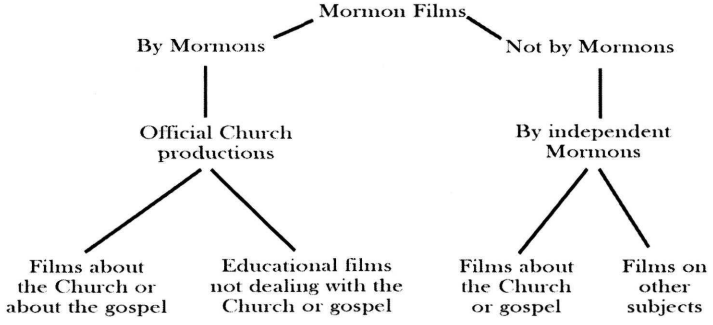
Categorizing Mormon Films in Terms of Production

Many discussions of Church-related motion pictures mention whether they are made by Latter-day Saints. In this sense, Mormon cinema resembles ethnic cinemas like Jewish or African American cinema, where the boundaries frequently blur around the edges, particularly when content and authorship are at odds. How does one classify a film about African Americans produced by Jews or Caucasians? Does one include a film by a famous African American director if it features white characters? Such films fall in the liminal space between cultures and hence often have their genricity contested, a pattern that holds true for Mormonism as well. For instance, *Wagon Master* (1950), directed by John Ford, a Catholic, is arguably one of the most resonant Mormon-themed films in existence, yet it is virtually never included in discussions of Mormon cinema. Religious cinema experiences further complications when the filmmaker's devotion to the faith changes or is enigmatic or problematic, as with the Catholicism of *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964), endorsed by the Vatican but directed by avowed atheist Pier Paolo Pasolini. This issue touches Mormon cinema with the recent work of Richard Dutcher, such as *Falling* and *Evil Angel*, made after his public disassociation from the Church.

Even with the possibility for such complex relationships, a simple schema of production personnel's religiosity can be a useful tool in allowing differentiation within the vast corpus that includes both *The Godmakers* and *God's Army*.

The first two tiers in Figure 1 deal exclusively with who made the films: the institutional Church, Mormons acting independently, or non-Mormons. The final tier addresses content: secular or religious. Demarcating this split is not necessary in an exclusively personnel-based discussion, but it does identify, for instance, how the secular *Johnny Lingo* qualifies as a Mormon film; any taxonomy that deals with films strictly in terms of the Mormonism of their content would exclude this work, regardless of its historical importance. For this

FIGURE 1.
WHAT IS MORMON CINEMA?



reason, not just to accommodate content-based discussions, understanding personnel is crucial to understanding Mormon cinema, and that includes secular films made by Mormons as well.

One could hardly discuss Jewish cinema without including the "non-Jewish" work of William Wyler, Billy Wilder, Mel Brooks, Ernst Lubitsch, Josef von Sternberg, and a host of others, and the same is true here: Mormon cinema is very much shaped by the secular work of Neil LaBute, Hal Ashby, Lyman Dayton, Kieth Merrill, T. C. Christensen, Ryan Little, and others (and not just directors), let alone the hundreds of Church-produced educational productions like *Johnny Lingo*. But admitting *Johnny Lingo, Napoleon Dynamite* (2004), and *Battlestar Galactica* (1978) into the corpus of Mormon films returns us again to some of the issues that Hunter dealt with by excluding such productions. To further assess whether this uniform exclusion is indeed appropriate, we must examine some films that appear to be near the periphery but whose content makes them prime examples of the expression of Mormonism in film.

Looking at Content: How Mormon Is It?

As this cursory analysis of production models reveals, there can be no linear scale of "Mormonness" for a film. Films are complex

works that should be evaluated individually, often with unexpected results. A film that initially appears to have nothing to do with the Church might, in fact, be quite thoroughly infused with Mormonism, while one that is apparently full of Mormon content might be rather devoid of it.[15] Disagreement on this issue largely fueled the controversy over *States of Grace* in 2005. Dutcher's supporters averred that the film used unconventional situations to explore the Mormon understanding of the Atonement, while his detractors saw it as a worldly film about sex and violence disguised under a Mormon veneer.[16] This disagreement merely shows that the religious content of a film may be different than anticipated and that Mormon material may appear in unexpected places, such as the mainstream cartoons of Mormon director-producer Don Bluth and the 1969 musical western *Paint Your Wagon*.

Don Bluth

Don Bluth began his animation career at Disney but left in 1979 to found his own studio, finding his greatest success in the 1980s with films like *The Secret of NIMH* (1982), *An American Tail* (1986), and *The Land Before Time* (1988). He has continued working in films, video games, and books up to the present. Many of his films' narratives, which he helps construct, invite a typological reading in which the events on screen are symbolic of larger mythological or theological patterns. Foremost among these is his use of the hero's journey, in which the protagonist travels from an initial heavenly union through earthly isolation and back to a more mature heavenly state.[17] In *An American Tail*, for instance, the young Fievel Mouse- kewitz is separated from his family en route to their new Zionistic home in the United States. He navigates through a dreary world that tests and tries him, longing to be with his family eternally. Eventually, the family's utopian vision is realized when their reunion transforms America into an earthly heaven.

Mormon author Benson Parkinson has identified an even more intricate typology in Bluth's 1997 film *Anastasia*, which depicts the surviving Russian princess several years after the fall of the Romanov dynasty. In Paris and not knowing her real identity, Anastasia must strive to remember her past life and reunite herself with her grandmother, overcoming the attempts of the undead Rasputin to

assassinate her. Eventually Anastasia and her grandmother recognize each other by matching amulets. Parkinson says:

> Read typologically, *Anastasia* holds up better . . . than the Disney films. Think of the St. Petersburg palace as a regal, pre-existent, celestial home, mostly-forgotten, towards which we grope, with little more than hope to guide us most the time. We are opposed by a sinister member of the court who has been expelled, and we have to be diligent and pure, and help each other, to overcome the obstacles he puts in our path. We're given emblems that help us recognize our heavenly parents when we find them, and once we're united with them we can't be separated again. Typologically speaking, Disney shows tend to boil down to, "True love (i.e. romantic love) conquers all." Anastasia boils down to, "If you're diligent in your quest, you can find your true identity and be sealed to your family eternally."
>
> How we think of typology depends partly on what we see the author doing. It's perfectly legitimate to find Christian allegory in *Snow White* or *The Lion King*, whether the authors intended it or not, because one view of typology is that these patterns in all the world's stories are pre-existent—they resonate because we knew them before we came. I think *Anastasia* is different, both because of Bluth's LDS background and because he's explored these same themes in his other films: discovering one's identity in *The Secret of NIMH*, and finding one's family in *An American Tail* and *The Land Before Time*. . . . I see Bluth as a Latter-day Saint trying consciously to give these themes a purer expression so they will resonate with people and prepare them for the gospel, or at least help make them truer to their natures.[18]

Parkinson may be more correct than he suspects. In a 1989 *Church News* interview, Bluth commented, "Everything I do is centered around the gospel. Even our films are, although the secular world would never realize it."[19]

Bluth made this statement soon after completing *The Land Before Time*, and this film is perhaps the strongest example of his point. Set in the age of dinosaurs, it tells the story of the young brontosaurus Littlefoot. Initially his herd consists of himself, his mother, and two grandparents. His mother teaches him about the Great Valley, where they must go, before being killed by a Tyrannosaurus rex. Unable to find his grandparents, Littlefoot forms a new herd of orphaned or abandoned herbivore youngsters and begins leading them to the Great Valley. Despite internal dissensions and the continuous threat posed by the prowling Tyrannosaurus, Littlefoot succeeds in leading his friends, after many challenges, safely into the

Great Valley, where they are reunited with their families, including Littlefoot's grandparents.

There are two legitimate ways to read the film typologically. The first posits Littlefoot as a Christ figure: His birth is auspicious—he is described as the herd's "last hope for the future"—with no physical father present. Later a leaf described as a "tree star" descends upon him like the Holy Ghost at Christ's baptism. He thereafter becomes a spiritual and literal leader of his people. This typology fails, however, to be completed via a Passion or Atonement process. In fact, it is his friend Petrie who is seemingly resurrected after the climactic battle with the Tyrannosaurus. The second and thus more consistent typology sees Littlefoot as an everyman undertaking a hero's journey, which is enhanced by his role as a prophet as he guides others to the Edenic Great Valley. Encouraged by visions of his dead mother, Littlefoot is described as the only one who knows the way. Like Anastasia, he overcomes a being like himself but completely infused with evil[20] immediately before finding his way to the valley and reunion with his family. At this point the film's title seems purposely engineered to give a double meaning to this extra-temporal heavenly state. Here, Littlefoot's ancient grandparents may represent heavenly parents he vaguely remembers from long ago; the facts that there are a mother and father and that he has retained a veiled memory of them begin to move clearly in the direction of doctrine specific to Mormonism.

There is, however, a third way to interpret the film, one that connects it to the historical Church as well as to Mormon theology. Key to this interpretation is the simple fact that the Great Valley is explicitly to the west, as the caravan is told to follow the shining circle—the sun—day after day over increasingly rough terrain. Thus, their journey becomes a representation of the 1847 pioneer trek: The previously acceptable surroundings in the east are no longer hospitable; the migrants have never seen the valley but believe they will reach it if they obey and persevere, walking every step of the way; the land becomes more arid and mountainous as they proceed; and the Great Valley itself (a simple rechristening of the Great Salt Lake Valley) is fertile but surrounded by deserts and mountains (something, admittedly, historically true in Utah only after irrigation). Littlefoot is both a Joseph Smith—he sees a

pillar of light and receives heavenly visitors—and a Brigham Young—he leads his followers across the plains. The film's closing line of narration even sounds as if it comes from a Church production on the pioneers: "And they all grew up together in the valley, generation upon generation, each passing on to the next the tale of their ancestors' journey to the valley long ago."

What Bluth has done, therefore, is to create a typological plan of salvation structure overtly patterned on the trek of the Mormon pioneers, creating a three-way equation between the dinosaurs' physical journey, the pioneers' physical journey, and everyman's spiritual journey. By rooting the narrative in physical, tangible, and relatively recent historical events, the film opens up new meaning on Church history: the pioneer as a type of each of us in mortality. The shadow of the pioneers has been consciously included. Don Bluth's secular films, then, are part of the religious tradition of the Latter-day Saints.

Paint Your Wagon

Bluth's insertion of his own faith into his films is not astounding, but *Paint Your Wagon* (1969, based on the 1951 Broadway musical) is a more surprising achievement. This movie was made with no Mormon involvement and treats Mormons comically, but it is still revelatory of LDS beliefs. Opening in No Name City, California, in 1848—the year between the Mormon pioneer trek and the California gold rush—the film shows how a hen-pecked Mormon man auctions off one of his wives, Elizabeth (Jean Seburg), to Ben Rumson (Lee Marvin), who immediately marries her. She in turn falls in love with his Pardner (Clint Eastwood) and eventually lives consensually with both men outside of town. As the city grows and civilized values encroach, this arrangement is found unsatisfactory. Elizabeth and Pardner evict Ben and pretend to be legitimately married until their desire for feigned monogamy becomes real. Eventually Ben leaves town of his own accord to seek greener, less civilized pastures.

Any discussion of the film's Mormon content must take into account the genres of the musical and the western. *Paint Your Wagon* is not the only musical western (or western musical) in history, but it seems to be peculiarly torn between the sensibilities of the two genres in a way that films like *Oklahoma* (1955) and *Seven Brides for Seven*

Brothers (1954) are not. The film features semantic and syntactic elements of both genres but gives precedence to the semantic elements of the western—guns, horses, and cowboys—and the syntax, or events, of the musical—a romantic narrative and even the fact that Elizabeth and Pardner essentially decide to "put on a show." In essence, the visuals belong to the western while the major plot points belong to the musical; the musical therefore eventually dominates, forcing the western (along with Ben) out of the narrative completely. The rough and tumble frontier town of No Name City is gradually subsumed into a musical milieu, and in the end Pardner and Elizabeth enact the musical syntactic conclusion of the boy getting the girl. Ben rejects this musical world in favor of the western. He literally and symbolically destroys No Name City, making it collapse in on itself as his underfoot mine implodes. Then he disappears, bound for a new frontier. The generic contrast at the conclusion is complicated immensely by the fact that Ben is singing the title song while Pardner and Elizabeth resolve their relationship in a showdown almost as terse as Eastwood's earlier spaghetti westerns. In these moments, *Paint Your Wagon* can seem torn apart by its conflicting generic affinities, and Mormonism is caught in the middle.

On the surface, the film's Mormon influence is minimal and rather inaccurate. Elizabeth's first husband Jacob is a completely comical figure, caught between two feuding women and complaining under his breath how Brigham Young can handle all his wives but he can't get along with just two. After Elizabeth's auction, Mormonism is completely eradicated from her character. This position suggests that Mormonism's only characteristic is plural marriage and that when Elizabeth loses her Mormon husband she also loses her Mormon identity; true religion is represented later in the film by monogamous Protestant families. Given this quick dismissal of Mormonism, however, it is interesting to realize that the entire body of the film is essentially a meditation on the ethics of polygamy. When Pardner falls in love with Elizabeth, he tells Ben and plans to leave to avoid disrupting their family life. It is Elizabeth who rejects this plan because she loves both men. If "my husband had two wives," she reasons, "why can't I have two husbands?" After some thought they all agree that on the frontier—that is, in the world of the western—people can do whatever they like. Polygamy and polyandry are accept-

able whenever there are no civilizing structures to dictate otherwise. The logic of this libertarian self-governance is so compelling that marriage ceremonies are dispensed with and Pardner moves in immediately.

Thus in 1969 a Hollywood film apparently accepted and even defended polygamy, the most controversial if antiquated of Mormon beliefs. The film could end at this point with a happy polyandrous resolution were it not that gold is discovered, the city booms, and the urban world of the musical begins encroaching, deftly utilizing the western's traditional play between frontier and civilization. The family's home lies outside of town and hence outside the troublesome parson's influence; but when Protestant families arrive, Elizabeth is forced to provide shelter for one, thus bringing her cottage within the confines of Protestant civilization. From this point on, the western is left behind and with it the compelling frontier logic that had allowed the protagonists to justify plural cohabitation. Elizabeth evicts one of her husbands simply for appearance's sake. The film's complete acceptance of Mormon thought thirty minutes earlier proves limited and conditional. It is just a matter of time, now, until the musical wins and plural marriage must disappear entirely.

Ben never fits in the new environment. While the others are becoming civilized, he busies himself corrupting a Protestant youth in the new whorehouse, and thus Pardner becomes the active dramatic character in the film's final third: He must choose between the dialectic forces of civilized/musical/Protestantism and uncivilized/western/Mormonism. He picks the former, and he and Elizabeth are described as "a real family after all" and "like a real husband and wife," implying that, in the musical, polygamous families are in some way false. Now the rejection of Mormonism seems complete, but it is a dissatisfying denouement given the fact, left over from the period of western dominance, that no marriage was ever performed between Pardner and Elizabeth, or for that matter a divorce between her and Ben, let alone with her Mormon husband. Thus, plural marriage remains the driving force behind their de facto union, strongly undercutting the Protestant ending with a lingering sense of polygamy's validity and importance. Ben's decision to rediscover his western frontier is sound, given that the No Name City which Pardner and Elizabeth have adopted is not only full of prostitution, greed, and gambling, but has literally just fallen from its foundations, a

house built over not just sand but empty air. It is possible at this point to feel that Mormon thoughts and values are more solidly founded than those of "civilization" and that they are afforded a permanent place where Ben is going, where they may not only interact with Protestant notions but even hold their own against them. The frontier–traditionally the place of freedom and opportunity in American mythology–is also the place where Mormonism can thrive. There is some validation of the faith after all.[21]

Paint Your Wagon thus provides a very complicated view of both LDS theology–at least as seen through the prism of polygamy–and film genres. Its complexity does not allow it to endorse or condemn plural marriage. Rather, it creates a space where polygamy can exist as part of a functioning society, dependent on generic norms. *Paint Your Wagon*, for all its camp, is therefore perhaps the most sophisticated fiction film ever made on American polygamy. Similar examinations could be made of many films and filmmakers, revealing in each case an unforeseen degree of consonance–or dissonance–with Mormon mores and beliefs.[22]

Hamid Naficy and *An Accented Cinema*

Despite the potential utility of studies such as these, Mormon cinema cannot be treated exclusively as a traditional film genre. Given its nature as a religiously based ethnic cinema, Mormon film also shares many characteristics with traditional ethnic cinemas, but these are highly modified by Mormonism's condition as a subculture within a larger national context. In examining Mormon film's ethnic components, it is therefore useful to explore the work of film and cultural scholar Hamid Naficy. Naficy, an Iranian immigrant to the United States, has identified a new type of ethnic filmmaker arguably most akin to Latter-day Saints: exiles and displaced people who are working in a host culture other than their own. Although most Mormons are not geographically exiled, their Mormon ethnic identity is remarkably similar to those exilic cultures discussed by Naficy, as can be seen through two key points. First, all members of the Church have a distinct national and racial identity in addition to their religious identity: they are just as black, white, Jamaican, Afrikaans, Chinese, Bolivian, or Indian as their non-Mormon counterparts. This prompts them to think of themselves as having a multivalent nature, including religious, racial, and national components.

Second, Church membership and hence Mormon culture is spread across the globe, from Heber to Hong Kong. This means that all Mormons, in adopting Mormon culture—whether as converts or lifelong members—accept their dualism and find themselves living, in a sense, as a minority in a host culture that both is and is not their own. This dualism is exemplified to a degree by the popular maxim that one should be "in but not of the world." A globally dispersed culture like Mormonism will manifest itself differently in each national/ethnic culture where it exists. In that sense, comparing Mormonism with diasporic and exilic filmmakers can prove quite profitable.

Hamid Naficy has studied Third World and Iranian cinema as well as theories of exile, displacement, and diaspora and their manifestations in popular culture. His 2001 book, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking,* examines similarities across a broad range of filmmakers who for various reasons have left their countries and are now working in host cultures. To my knowledge the first Mormon to suggest a connection between Naficy's accented cinema and Mormon cinema was Heather Bigley, in a paper presented at the University of Toledo in 2004. Bigley offers this cogent summary:

> [Naficy] works out qualities of postcolonial alternative cinemas. Careful to remind us that these cinemas are too diverse to categorize as a genre, he divides postcolonial cinema into three groups: Exile, Diaspora, and Ethnic/Identity films. All three worry over the relationship of the main character/filmmaker to the homeland and to the refuge country. Naficy calls them "accented" and then extends that name past postcolonial cinema: "all alternative cinemas are accented, but each is accented in certain specific ways that distinguish it."[23]

Despite the rather broad group of alternative films this definition may imply, Naficy's emphasis is decidedly on exilic filmmakers. Their films are generally differentiated from the mainstream in both their artisanal mode of production—using small multitasking crews—and their nonconformist aesthetics. They are often self-aware, autobiographical, or both; and they tend to emphasize issues like personal space, travel, communication, borders, and language. The very term *accented,* in fact, implies a linguistic precedent. Naficy points out that we all have accents for various reasons, including religion, but the cinema in question here "derives its accent from its artisanal and collective production modes and from the filmmakers' and audiences'

deterritorialized locations. Consequently, not all accented films are exilic and diasporic, but all exilic and diasporic films are accented."[24]

As a consequence, Mormon cinema, while accented, shares only certain characteristics with exilic or diasporic cinema. Although Mormons may expect to eventually build Zion in Jackson County, Missouri, they generally do not have a sense of exile like nineteenth-century pioneers or a yearning for what Naficy calls "a homeland yet to come" like modern Palestinians. Because Mormons are so completely subsumed within their national cultures, Mormon cinema most closely resembles Naficy's category of "postcolonial ethnic and identity filmmakers," focusing on life "here and now in the country in which the filmmakers reside"[25] rather than life in the homeland, a stance consistent with the modern Mormon emphasis on building Zion wherever Church members live. Consequently, Mormon films lack some important characteristics of much accented cinema such as polyglotism, a focus on geographical and other borders, written text on the screen, and, for that matter, politics.

Mormon culture, however, obviously remains distinct from its national host cultures, retaining unique beliefs and practices and adapting other national norms to fit these beliefs. Because temple worship has no equivalent in most contemporary societies, it is completely unique to Mormonism. Dating and courtship, in contrast, are general phenomena but are modified by Mormons to include provisions against premarital sex and teens dating before the age of sixteen, as well as substituting many culturally specific activities not based on theology or morality (such as, possibly, watching Mormon movies). In the United States, some Latter-day Saints embrace the hyphenated term "Mormon-American," simultaneously indicating their national affiliation and their resistance to complete homogenization within it; rather, they accept a native discourse that "lies[s] outside ideology and predate[s], or stand[s] apart from, the nation."[26]

Simultaneously, they also share a "horizontal and multisided [consciousness] involving not only the homeland but also the compatriot communities elsewhere,"[27] Zion throughout the world. There is a sense of fellowship and commonality within the Church despite differences in geography and national culture, and in general Mormons are concerned with how the Church is faring in distant lands. This international interest provides one way in which Mormon cinema

proves similar to exilic accented cinemas, despite Mormon film's tendency to mimic mainstream cinematic aesthetics. This international interest is often quite literal, as Mormon films frequently feature a displaced protagonist either as a pioneer emigrant or, perhaps more commonly, a missionary. Also, like other exilic films, Mormon pictures set in the Church's pioneer era almost invariably include geographic movement from one place to another. Ironically, however, this migration—which is usually undertaken en masse and not, as in most exilic films, by individuals—is not the central focus of most Mormon movies as it is in pictures like Gregory Nava's *El Norte* (1983, about two Guatemalan immigrants trying to enter the United States). Migration, for example, plays a relatively minor role in the *Work and the Glory* films and even *Legacy* (1993). In fact, there has only been a handful of fiction films in which migration has actually been the narrative's key focus: titles like the Church-sponsored *All Faces West* (1928), the major studio production *Brigham Young* (1940), and John Linton's *Perilous Journey* (1983) and Kels Goodman's *Handcart* (2002), both about the 1856 handcart expeditions.

Because missionary films are more common and tend to consistently feature many of the same semantic elements in similar syntaxes, they are sometimes considered the most developed subgenre within Mormon cinema. Missions, unlike pioneer emigrations, are a modern phenomenon with which all Church members are familiar. By definition mission stories trade in culture shock, foreign languages, homesickness, departures, homecomings, and letters—all components of accented cinema. Letter writing, for instance, figures heavily in both *The Best Two Years* (2004) and *The Other Side of Heaven* (2001). Letters form a significant preoccupation for the elders in the former and the spine of an otherwise cyclic narrative in the latter. Letters also figure in the plots of other films: a missionary's written request for advice to his father in *A Labor of Love* (1990), a Dear John letter in John Lyde's *The Field Is White* (2002), and Julie's letters, or lack of them, to her missionary boyfriend Wally in *Saturday's Warrior* (1989). Departures and homecomings also appear in many missionary films, including those just mentioned as well as *The RM* (2003), *Return with Honor* (2007), and, most poignantly, *States of Grace*, although in that case it is the disgraced missionary's mother who journeys to him.

But in the use of foreign languages, where one might most ex-

pect to see components of accented cinema, Mormon cinema circumvents expectations. The majority of missionary films obviates the problem of language by locating the missionary within his own country. Even when the missionary learns a foreign language, many recent films remain in English by either implying that the characters are speaking a foreign tongue when the actors are not–Tongan in *The Other Side of Heaven*–or contriving the plot so that the characters will continually speak English despite a foreign location–Holland in *The Best Two Years*. In contrast, accented films often assume a bilingual audience and dispense not only with English but with subtitles, something hardly done at all in Mormon pictures. One excellent exception, however, is the brief use of American Sign Language in Michael Schaertl's *Christmas Mission* (1998).

Two non-American Mormon directors living in the United States may have given us the best examples of diasporic Mormon cinema so far.[28] Ryan Little, from Canada, has worked on numerous Mormon and mainstream films, including directing two Mormon-themed features, *Out of Step* (2002), a romantic comedy about a Mormon girl from Utah attending the dance program at New York University, and *Saints and Soldiers* (2004), about an American Mormon soldier serving in France during World War II. Despite their divergent subject matter, these films are strikingly similar in their use of exilic themes. Both are about characters from the Mormon heartland journeying outside of it. Both emphasize the geographic displacement of their protagonists and how it affects them psychologically, leading to a decrease in mental acuity and preexisting skills–Jenny's dancing and Deacon's marksmanship. Both characters struggle to communicate their faith and decisions to their peers and companions, and both long for a connection with their distant parents. But *Saints and Soldiers* goes further than *Out of Step*: its German is not subtitled, and it is important that Deacon (played by Corbin Allred, the same actor who used ASL in *Christmas Mission*) is the only bilingual person in the film, having served a mission in Germany. A subtle scene with a French farmwoman is centered entirely around the characters' desire to communicate across language barriers. The film's ending also features virtually the only border crossing in Mormon film as the protagonists attempt to cross from German to Allied territory. Finally, Little also functions as his own cinemato-

grapher, doubling a production role as is common in the artisanal methods employed in much accented cinema.

Christian Vuissa, from Austria, has consistently devoted more of his output to Mormon films than Little, including founding the LDS Film Festival in 2001 and organizing it every year since. Vuissa's first feature, *Baptists at Our Barbecue* (2004), was a disappointing comedy that relied heavily on Hollywood aesthetics. But his earlier short film, *Roots and Wings* (2002), was much more complex, rewarding, and accented.[29] It featured a Mexican family living in the United States and dealing with the pressures of acculturation: a teenage son who plays basketball and won't speak Spanish, a brother/uncle who exhorts the father to return to Mexico with him, and the invasion of an American religion—Mormonism—that threatens to subvert their Catholic faith and pull the family apart. Significantly, the script was a semiautobiographical work by Mexican-American María Augustina Perez.

Vuissa co-wrote his second feature film, *The Errand of Angels* (2008), with Heidi Johnson, who similarly created a semiautobiographical script from her mission experiences in Austria, Vuissa's homeland. Besides the fact that this is the first film to ever feature female Mormon missionaries in the central roles, the most refreshing aspect of the picture is its extended use of German, not only with the natives but among the missionaries themselves. The film uses subtitles, and the American missionaries' poor language skills have been criticized by some as purposely disrespectful of the quality of fluency achieved by actual missionaries,[30] but the fact that German is used as extensively as it is marks a major milestone in the representation of missionaries on film. This film is also the missionary film most concerned with culture shock and acculturation, rather than proselytizing and the conversion of investigators.

While crossing borders and adjusting to new cultures is not the point of Mormon cinema in its broader sense, we can take the examples of these exilic films and build upon them as we examine all Mormon pictures, including those set right in the heart of modern Utah. Virtually all Mormon films are accented in certain ways other than those explained above, and it is these that, again, help increase our understanding of what Mormon cinema is and how to characterize it as an ethnic or generic cinema. The two most important such

characteristics are the films' incorporation of, first, Mormon language and, second, Mormon values.

Employing a vernacular language without translation for the audience is perhaps the most common and important way for alternative cinemas to express their independence, and Mormon films have excelled at this since their inception. *God's Army* was partly seen as revolutionary because it used missionary lingo without explanation, but older BYU films from Judge Whitaker's tenure (1953–74) likewise did not explain terms like "the elders' quorum presidency" in *When Thou Art Converted* (1968), "home teaching" in *Worthy to Stand* (1969), or even "tithing" in *Windows of Heaven* (1963). In recent years HaleStorm Entertainment has proven the most adept, if comically, at exploiting Mormon jargon. The best example from HaleStorm's productions is *The RM*, which employs an alphabet soup of LDS acronyms and features a pun-intensive restaurant location. The trend continued with other producers. *Napoleon Dynamite*, made by Latter-day Saints for a general audience, created a nationwide fad with its vocabulary, a heightened and stylized language based in actual Mormon profanity like "gosh," "heck," "freakin'," "retarded," "sweet," "dang," "fat lard," and the less-common "butt-load." *The Best Two Years* bases an entire subplot on one character's use of the missionary cussword "flip." When non-Mormon filmmakers get the vocabulary or basic customs wrong, as in *Angels in America* (2003), *September Dawn* (2008), or the HBO series *Big Love*, it is painfully obvious to insiders.

Not incidentally, music may function like language, enhancing authenticity and invoking increased meaning when Mormon tunes are employed. When Max Steiner's score for *Brigham Young* quotes "The Spirit of God," it has much greater resonance for the Mormon viewer than the general viewer because the former is thoroughly familiar with that hymn's lyrics and history as well as, perhaps, personal experiences in which that hymn was involved with spiritual or emotional manifestations.

On the second point, to say that Mormon films invoke Mormon values may sound quaint, but it is the logical and much more important extension of invoking Mormon language. The worldview of Latter-day Saints is different than that of non-Latter-day Saints, even within the same nationality, race, and economic class. Sharing that worldview makes Mormon films engaging for their audiences, but

non-Mormon viewers, who do not understand the "accent," can react with incomprehension or apathy. As a hypothetical example, a film about a recent convert's temptation to drink coffee could be gripping to Mormons but inconsequential and boring to others. At its best, when not trying to pander to non-Mormons by watering down its Mormonism, Mormon cinema is full of references to theology, doctrine, scripture, culture, and history that enrich the experience for the culturally literate viewer.

Given that understanding, however, it is still helpful to recognize the diversity that exists within Mormonism. *The Singles Ward*, for instance, is not a film about Mormonism in general but a specific group, single adults, in a specific location, Utah Valley, thus leaving many of the jokes and references incomprehensible for Church members as close as Idaho, let alone India. *The Singles Ward* was much criticized for this approach, but such a level of specificity can be beneficial as long as it is not treated as a true synecdoche for the whole of global Mormonism. It is also important to remember that the spiritual components of Mormon culture are fairly universal despite ethnicity or national host cultures. It is these spiritual characteristics—faith, repentance, family, revelation, and so on—that form the heart of Mormon identity and hence Mormon cinema.

Thus, while Mormon films do not always reflect accented cinema's emphases on internationality, they generally do reflect a Mormon culture superimposed upon a host national culture. Understanding this duality can help us relate Mormon films to the broader non-Mormon world, cinematic or real.

The final and most important way in which Hamid Naficy's theories aid an understanding of Mormon cinema, however, is in relating them back to Mormon society, including both the films' supporters and critics. The result is a much richer comprehension of how Mormon films function within their own social context. As mentioned, Mormon filmmakers are not marginal or subaltern but interstitial, emanating from where dominant and minority groups interact: "To be interstitial . . . is to operate both within and astride the cracks of the system, benefiting from its contradictions, anomalies, and heterogeneity." This duality affects the thinking of all members of accented communities, not just the filmmakers; thus, most "ethnic communities are highly sensitive to how they are represented by both . . . outsider and insider filmmakers. They often feel protective

and proprietary about their 'image,' sometimes even defensive–all of which forces accented filmmakers either to accede to the community's self-perception and demands or to take an independent path at the expense of alienating the community and losing its support." Naficy terms this dilemma "accented cinema's extraordinary burden of representation."[31]

Richard Dutcher is without doubt Mormonism's prime example of this dilemma. Indeed, Naficy's descriptions of Atom Egoyen and other filmmakers could have been written about Dutcher.[32] Like Egoyen, an occasionally controversial Armenian-Canadian director, Dutcher is an artisanal multitasker who has appeared in his films and incorporated autobiographical elements, principally in *God's Army* and *Falling*. Like Ryan Little, Dutcher depicts Mormon community members dealing and communicating with the outside world, whether on missions in *God's Army* and *States of Grace* or by bringing the outside into the cloistered Mormon heartland of *Brigham City*. In this light, we can see that the negative response of many Latter-day Saints to Dutcher's work is not dependent so much on the films themselves as on preexisting social issues within the Mormon community. Accented communities exert tremendous pressure on filmmakers to create super-films, containing "all of the best that the 'original' or the 'authentic' culture is perceived to possess *and* to represent as fully as possible the diaspora community,"[33] a task which is not only impossible but which can lead to films that whitewash the group's image and become artistically sterile. Despite criticism, Dutcher has eschewed this temptation, creating instead honest films that depict Mormonism with all its intricacies intact.

Those who object to Dutcher's films seem to do so for one of two reasons: either for portraying the faults of his Mormon characters, as occurred most publicly with the outcry over *States of Grace*, or, inversely, for depicting priesthood ordinances, a concern that preoccupied most critics of *God's Army*. On the surface these criticisms appear diametrically opposed–the one for showing faults and the other for showing spiritually private experiences–but they actually both stem from the same concern over a non-idealized cinematic image. Naficy gives many examples of the first type, such as the response of Indians against Mira Nair's *India Cabaret* (1985) for its exotic female dancing and *Salaam Bombay!* (1988) for its depiction of

poverty.[34] As for depicting ordinances, Naficy examines similar criticisms against showing the traditional Muslim slaughter of a sheep to welcome a new bride in Ghasem Ebrahimian's *The Suitors* (1989):

> These [negative] reactions . . . show that the exiles felt betrayed by a director who exposed and signified upon aspects of the native culture from an insider perspective but did so for the benefit of outsider audiences. This is because Ebrahimian violated two norms of Iranian collective identity: maintaining a clear separation between self and other, and loyalty to the insider group. . . . When indigenous practices are both produced and viewed outside their naturalized contexts, they become defamiliarized and may be devalued, particularly if viewers are defensive about those practices. If viewers are not defensive [perhaps Dutcher's goal], then defamiliarization may produce the promised critical awareness and pedagogical effect that Bertolt Brecht theorized.[35]

This critical awareness has been made available to Dutcher's viewers. When my brother first saw the scene in *God's Army* in which the missionaries bless and heal the cripple Benny, he assumed an ironic and detached attitude at the event's improbability. But after further introspection, he realized that such a blessing is indeed possible, an effect that might not have occurred had he heard the story in a traditional setting like a Sunday meeting. Precisely *because* it was presented in the defamiliarizing context of a movie theater, he paid greater attention to it and felt increased faith in priesthood power.[36] Still, accented filmmakers must be careful not to overstretch and offend too much of their target audience—as Dutcher has apparently done with *Falling*—or, particularly, potential investors for future pictures.

Culturally specific films have a much harder time securing financing and distribution than mainstream films, adding to the appeal of crossing over into the mainstream.[37] After *Saints and Soldiers*, Ryan Little switched to mainstream films, as have Dutcher, Andrew Black, Kurt Hale, and a host of other Mormon directors. Even Atom Egoyen has become increasingly homogenized into classical norms as his popularity—and budgets—have grown.

I believe that the Mormon accent diffused throughout Mormon film best exemplifies how it can be considered an ethnic cinema, particularly in explaining its reception among Mormons and non-Mormons and how anticipation of that reception can influence filmmakers' choices. In the context of this cultural setting, Mormon films do, however, exhibit characteristics more traditionally assigned to film

genres. Thus, while recognizing Mormon film's ethnic components, investigating its generic characteristics will lead to a comprehensive–if evolving–understanding of how Mormon cinema exists in the interstices between a singularly ethnic and generic identity.

Rick Altman

Rick Altman is a well-known film historian and theorist whose specialties include film sound and genre. In 1984 he published the article "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre" in *Cinema Journal* in which he proposed a new approach to film genre that reconciled two divergent strains in previous genre theory. Not only has the essay been extensively republished, but its approach has been widely accepted and applied in the ensuing years, including in Altman's own 1987 book, *The American Film Musical.* He remained troubled, however, by flaws in his theory and, in 1999, published *Film/Genre,* a book which revises his original thoughts.[38] Throughout the rest of this article, I will put Mormon film through the same evolutionary process, following Altman's theories from 1984 to 1999.

"A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre"

In his original essay, Altman begins with a summary of film genre studies up to that point. He posits that these contain three fundamental contradictions, two of which concern us here. The first is that recent genre criticism had taken a structuralist stance, treating genres as neutral constructs in an ahistorical space rather than as evolving phenomena generated by a linguistic community, generally Hollywood, and intended for a specific audience. In other words, they are treated as ahistorical artifacts when they are in fact historically mutable. Second, different people often discuss a single genre in vastly different terms: half take an *inclusive* stance, often compiling unwieldy lists of every possible film, and half take an *exclusive* stance, usually written as an essay, that proposes an elite group of films as the fundamental core of a genre. Altman illustrates this discrepancy in an invented dialogue comparing Elvis Presley films with *Singin' in the Rain;* Presley, because he sings, must be grudgingly admitted into the corpus, but *Singin' in the Rain* is "a real musical."[39] We have already seen this problem in Mormon cinema: the list of 4,591 films included in the Mormon Literature and Creative Arts

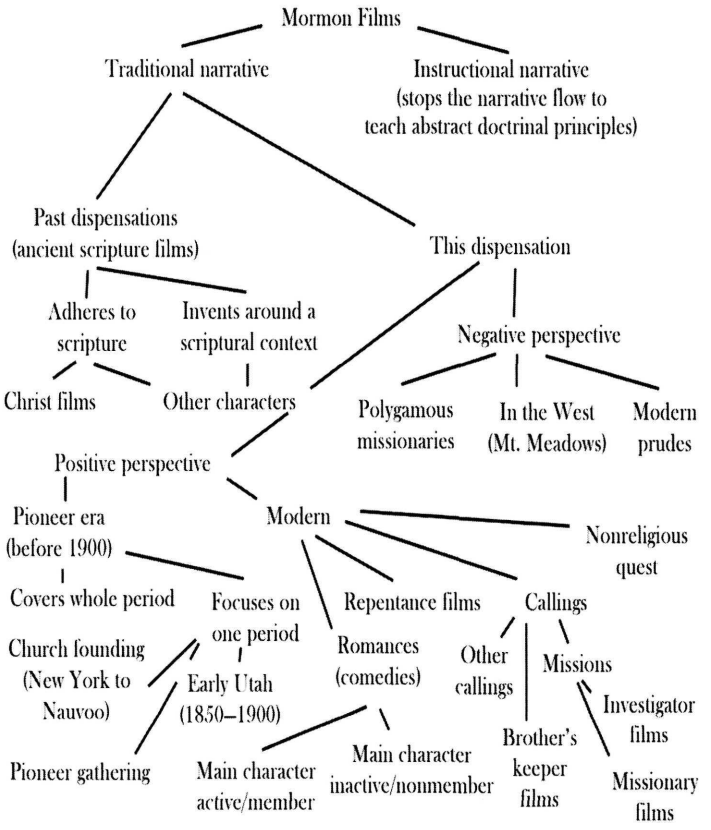
Database represents the tautological, all-inclusive approach. In contrast, Preston Hunter's essay delineates what he sees as the core of Mormon film, not by creating positive inclusive criteria but negative exclusive ones that whittle the genre down to its classical ideal.

How do these divergent positions exist simultaneously? A close look reveals that the first position deals with the semantics of genres, the second with syntax. Semantics in this case means elements—nouns—that usually make up a genre's content, like the guns and horses mentioned earlier as part of westerns. The syntax is the way in which these elements are composed or arranged—the verbs. Guns and horses may also appear in period romances and war films, but when they are arranged in a syntactic narrative structure that uses them in a way distinctive to the frontier—the main street showdown or charging cavalry, for instance—then the film can be called a western. Thus, guns and horses semantically exist in a broad range of films but are used in a specific way only in a narrower syntactic group.

The relationship between semantics and syntax is the area of play where Altman suggests the study of genre be located, thus alleviating the contradictions that had hitherto plagued the field. For example, genres historically may be created by either a stable set of semantic elements being arranged into a new syntax or by an established syntax taking on new semantic elements. Also, the discrepancy between critics who create broad tautological lists and those who focus on an elite corpus of highly similar texts would diminish as they both investigate what genres consist of and how these elements are arranged at both the center and the margins.

Applying this theoretical model to Mormon-themed films quickly shows that they cannot be considered a single genre, for the semantic and syntactic elements are too broadly drawn and too sparsely shared. Some semantic elements include temples, pioneers, missionaries, baptisms, covered wagons, handcarts, sacrament meetings, prayer, testimonies, meetinghouses, scriptures, family home evenings, and priesthood leaders—in other words, elements of Mormon history and culture. Arranging them syntactically, however, is problematic, as no body of films has used enough of them similarly enough to establish consistent patterns. This is true despite the fact that a few films share a handful of syntactic elements, such as a character repenting or undergoing conversion. Even if we examine just one semantic element, such as priesthood leaders, its syntactical

FIGURE 2.
WHAT IS MORMON CINEMA?



placement from film to film varies significantly; note for example the difference between Jared as the elders' quorum president in *The RM* and Wes as the bishop in *Brigham City*, or the difference between the home teachers of *The Home Teachers* (2004) and *Worthy to Stand*. If we recognize that the most common semantic element is Mormon characters, then we quickly see that the range of their syntactic use renders discussion useless. No single definition can aptly summarize all Mormon films.

There are, however, similarities among smaller groupings of films. Two pictures like *Legacy* and *Saturday's Warrior* could not seem

farther apart, yet both feature a romance between a young woman and a man converted by a missionary she knew beforehand, the rebellion of the oldest son against his father's faith, the rebellious son's return, and cultural conflicts between Latter-day Saints and the society around them, personified in street gangs/mobs. Furthermore, in *God's Army*, *The Other Side of Heaven*, *The Best Two Years*, and *States of Grace*, mission presidents reprove and encourage missionaries, a semantic element used in a specific syntactic manner. Similar examples proliferate throughout Mormon film, allowing us to create a taxonomy of potential genres and subgenres within the larger corpus of Mormon cinema.

In suggesting these schemata, I am including only films in which Mormon elements play a major role, excluding the Church's educational films and films that include only passing reference to Mormonism. Also, I am not specifically including nonfiction films, although many will fall within the same categories. (See Figure 2.)

The boundaries between these categories are plastic and permeable. Because they are also fairly self-explanatory, rather than list pertinent titles for each I would like to mention a few points illustrating how these schemata relate to Altman's original thesis.

The first division, between traditional and instructional narratives, is based upon a syntactic difference. The Church has produced many films for classroom and training purposes that subvert traditional narrative structures by pausing the film for class discussion, inserting portions of general conference sermons or other direct address, or inserting diagrams or other instructional materials. Otherwise, such films retain all of the semantic elements expected in Mormon films.

Films with traditional narratives can perhaps most easily be divided by their historical setting, whether in this or in past dispensations or eras. Those in the latter category are essentially set in the context of ancient scripture like the Bible and Book of Mormon. Of these, some adhere faithfully to ancient texts, including essentially every film to depict Jesus Christ, while others take narrative liberties. *The Testaments of One Fold and One Shepherd* (2000) embodies this division as its scenes from the Bible adhere strictly to the scriptures and even classical painting (primarily by Carl Bloch) while all the material set in America is completely invented. A similar dichotomy can be seen in the Living Scriptures cartoons of the New Testament

from the 1990s, where much dialogue and action are invented for other characters, including those in the parables, but virtually never for Jesus himself.

Many films set in the present era feature traditional Mormon semantics but not always in ways favorable toward the Church. Anti-Mormon films like *A Victim of the Mormons* and *Latter Days* (2003) have many of the same elements as pro-Mormon films but deploy them in remarkably different syntaxes, such as, in *Latter Days*, a missionary finding liberation in accepting his homosexuality.

With both negative and positive films on Mormonism, it is interesting to note that, with very few exceptions such as *The Other Side of Heaven*, they are either set in the present or before 1900; if more films were set in the early twentieth century then a new division would be in order. Pioneer-era films can either cover the Church's whole nineteenth-century history, as with *Legacy*, or focus on only one specific historical period, such as that of frontier Utah. Films with these settings often exhibit syntactic affinities with films set in the present (e.g., repentance or romance); but as period pieces, their semantic elements are remarkably different.

I have divided modern films into four categories, though there could be more. At this stage, many of the semantic elements, the physical trappings of modern Mormon culture, are shared. The divisions are thus based upon semantic emphases: a character's repentance, conversion, or spiritual epiphany; a traditional romance; achieving a goal not directly related to religion; or executing a Church calling. Repentance films can center on any type of spiritual awakening and often overlap with another plot such as a romance or mission service.

I have further subdivided romantic comedies depending on whether both characters, or only one, are active Latter-day Saints, with a further division for films where the love interest is inactive or non-Mormon (as in *Charly*, 2002) or the protagonist is (*The Singles Ward*). Likewise, "nonreligious quest films" refers to pictures that feature Mormon characters who are pursuing traditional secular goals, such as solving the murders in *Brigham City* or becoming rock stars in *Sons of Provo* (2005).

Films about Church callings can also be subdivided into several categories. Because of the disproportionate number of films dealing

with missionary work, I have made them a separate category, subdivided by whether the protagonist is the missionary (*The Errand of Angels*) or the investigator (*Roots and Wings*). The majority, though not all, of films dealing with other Church callings have been produced by the Church itself to inspire members to greater service; most of these were commissioned by the Sunday School or other auxiliary organizations in the decades when they held their own annual conferences. Examples include *Teacher, Do You Love Me?* (1986), *No Greater Call* (1967), *Continue to Minister* (1988), *It's the Ward Teachers* (1956), and so on. A significant subset of these films, which I have called "brother's keeper films," depicts those who, acting in their callings, reach out to someone who has strayed or is in spiritual peril, as in *What About Thad?* (1968), *That Which Was Lost* (1969), *Come Back, My Son* (1954), and of course *My Brother's Keeper* (1961).

This taxonomy is obviously imperfect and incomplete–many other potential categories could be added–but I hope it can help stimulate discussion of specific patterns within Mormon cinema. It is easier to discuss the semantic and syntactic similarities of films that focus on fulfilling callings or pioneers gathering to Utah than for Mormon cinema as a whole. It also provides a springboard for comparisons among groups. We can now examine how a semantic element like the temple is handled differently in the modern romance *Charly* than in a period piece like *The Mountain of the Lord* (1993). Such comparisons can help us identify and negotiate the interstices between apparently unrelated films and thus better understand the general unity among all Mormon movies.

Film/Genre: A Semantic/Syntactic/Pragmatic Approach

The most prominent flaw with the preceding taxonomy is that it still treats Mormon films as ahistorical entities, forever static and defined. Altman himself sensed that limiting discussion to semantics and syntax ultimately did not solve this problem, prompting him to return to the issue with a much more thorough and historically based analysis in his *Film/Genre*. In order to properly evaluate film genre, he examines the history and conception of genre itself, including predecessors of cinema such as literature and painting, before moving into a pragmatic analysis of how film genres follow similar patterns.

Since Aristotle, there has been very little agreement about what *genre* actually means. Altman points out that "the term inconsistently refers to distinctions derived from a wide variety of differences among texts: type of presentation (epic/lyric/dramatic), relation to reality (fiction versus non-fiction), historical kind (comedy/tragedy/tragicomedy), level of style (novel versus romance), or content paradigm (sentimental novel/historical novel/adventure novel)."[40] Essentially the only point of agreement is that genres exist, generally as stable *a priori* entities, and that critics are independent of them. Not only does Altman now dispute both claims, but he also asserts that the descriptive criteria used to separate genres (form, source, content, etc.) often render discussion futile.

A sampling of some of the generic listings on the Mormon Literature and Creative Arts Database illustrates the difficulty even within the "genre" of Mormon literature: biographical fiction, children's book, criticism, devotional literature, diary/journal, drama, Education Week presentation, humor, hymn, interview/panel, missionary story, one-person show, reference work, Relief Society lesson, romance, science-fiction, scripture-based fiction, tribute, young adult fiction, and many more, including a catch-all of "unassigned."[41] Such a broad range of generic characteristics often makes genres impossible to compare and hence ambiguous; missionary stories, for instance, can be told in any number of formats. More importantly, these are still ahistorical categories, disregarding how Mormon literature has been perceived over time.

To be overly reductive of Altman's analysis, the answer lies in realizing, not only that genres are ever changing, but also that the change happens cyclically, in predictable patterns. Whenever there is an established and successful genre, producers (authors, screenwriters, studio executives, etc.) immediately strive to differentiate their new work from it by adding an original element. Often, a few of these will share this new element (whether coincidentally or not), which results in a new *cycle.* If a cycle solidifies and gains general acceptance and a sense of permanence, then it has become a new genre.

A helpful analogy is to examine how generic products function in the grocery store. Generic brands are not actually brand-less, but have extremely plain packaging that simply explains what they contain: "generic products pay little attention to colour, shape and tex-

ture, instead straightforwardly stressing the nutritional contents of each item."[42] Name brands, by contrast, exist precisely to sell a name, not content. Packaging is designed to grab attention and differentiate a product from all others like it. Not only do marketers use color, design, slogans, and mascots, but they are more likely than not to misspell the product's name for emphasis, hence Rice Krispies, Cheez Whiz, Jell-O, L'eggs, Rice-a-roni, and my favorite, Kibbles 'n Bits Bac'n Cheez.[43] Thus cereal, pantyhose, or films that are considered generic are identified by their content, allowing consumers to know exactly what to expect from them, while those that strive for brand recognition use every means available to emphasize the name of the product and its uniqueness, thus discouraging equation with similar products except to superlatively praise themselves, as with "Most recommended," "Absolutely the Crunchiest," and "The greatest film of the year!" Thus film producers strive to actually *eschew* rather than promote genre.[44]

If one studio has a hit, however, others will probably examine what made that film unique from the preexisting genre and then flock to copy its innovations. If this characteristic is imitated and varied by a number of films across the industry, then a new cycle begins. In certain cases, this new component becomes standardized as a new generic quality, prompting producers to once again seek to move beyond it via a new variation. If "Cheez" becomes standardized, then we must modify it with "Bac'n," "Eazy," or "Whiz"; if a hardboiled detective becomes standard, then we might try making him a woman or having him sing. This process of passing from cycles to genres can also be seen as passing from adjectives to nouns—in other words, the appropriation of new semantics. When an adjective can drop the noun it modifies and become substantive by itself, then a new genre is formed which, in turn, almost immediately receives new adjectives.[45] For instance, such a process led from discourse to poetic discourse to poetry to dramatic poetry to drama to comic drama to comedy to romantic comedy to romance to musical romance to musical.[46] If we modified this last group by making it a "backstage" musical (films set in the theater, like *The Broadway Melody*, 1929, *Gold Diggers of 1933*, 1933, *42nd Street*, 1933, and even the remake of *The Producers*, 2005), then it is possible for these to cohere into a new genre known as the "backstager." Since historically this

term was never used, the musical remains the genre with backstage musicals a cycle within it.

The process is very evident in Mormon film. There is at present no monolithic genre known as "the Mormon." What we actually have is Mormon mysteries, Mormon comedies, Mormon romances, Mormon westerns, Mormon mockumentaries, Mormon dramas, Mormon musicals, Mormon weepies/chick flicks, Mormon biopics, and so on. Current Mormon cinema seems to be at a stage Altman describes thus: "Before they are fully constituted through the junction of persistent material and consistent use of that material, nascent genres traverse a period when their only unity derives from shared surface characteristics [here, Mormonism] deployed within other generic contexts perceived as dominant."[47] Currently, the strongest nascent genre in Mormon film is, as mentioned, the missionary film, with pioneer films possibly coming in second. These categories are the best candidates as fully fledged genres, not because they are the most uniquely Mormon but because they each contain the most cohesive set of shared semantics and syntax across a group of films.

Also, more than other categories, they can be seen as modifying a preexisting subset of Mormon film rather than the reverse, where a Mormon element modifies the dominant characteristics of comedies, romances, etc. World cinema has created many films about missionaries—*The Mission* (1986), *The Nun's Story* (1959), *Black Narcissus* (1947), *Nazarín* (1959), *Black Robe* (1991), *A Man Called Peter* (1955), and others—but they have never been considered a genre, and Mormon missionary films certainly are not modifications of them. If it hasn't happened already, Mormon missionary films will soon be seen as viable and common enough to constitute their own generic label, in which case producers will attempt to introduce new cycles. Indeed, *The Errand of Angels* may become the vanguard of a sister missionary cycle if more films follow in its wake; the publicity surrounding it—promoting it as the first film about sister missionaries—certainly fits this mold.[48] On the broader level, when Mormons and Mormonism cease to be modifiers and become the modified, then we will have a Mormon genre.

God's Army constitutes a key case. In March 2000 it was not the first film in the new Mormon genre, for no such genre existed. In-

stead it was essentially a drama, a buddy picture, or a coming-of-age story. The Mormonism was *God's Army*'s modification (the adjective) to its buddy picture/coming-of-age story genre (the substantive). Richard Dutcher, however, promoted it not as any of these genres but, in fact, as "the first of many unique and enduring Mormon films."[49] It may seem a risky endeavor to base a film's marketing around a genre that does not yet exist, but the key lies in realizing that Dutcher was promoting his company Zion Films as the creator of those productions. In 2000 both he and Mormon feature films were unique, and he could emphasize the supposed genre– and its dissimilarity to Hollywood productions–to promote himself. By the time Dutcher returned to similar territory with *States of Grace*, however, he had to differentiate from a plethora of existing Mormon pictures–HaleStorm, for instance, had certainly established a unique brand. As Dutcher said a few months after the film's release: "I realized that people had just begun to associate me with them [Hale-Storm]. In fact a lot of people have never seen *God's Army* but they just assume that it must be like the HaleStorm [pictures] because that's what they're familiar with. So now I'm very outspoken. I'm really trying to distinguish myself."[50] This realization came too late, however, as Dutcher's failure to promote his own brand of filmmaking had a greater effect on *States of Grace*'s box office receipts than the film's controversy.[51]

But like Naficy, Altman's most important point for Mormon cinema is the role of the community in creating genre. Genres are not only defined by filmmakers and marketers but also by those who consume and discuss them, both regular fans and formal critics. Genres are functional categories and, as anarchic as it may sound, the process of genrification–meaning the adoption and actual adaptation of a specific work into an existing genre–basically happens whenever enough people agree that a specific film belongs to a specific category. A film is what people say it is.

Likewise, after new genres arise from recent cycles, past films may be retroactively included in the new genre. This "regenrification"–it is "re-genrified" because it had previously been considered part of a different genre entirely–is performed by the consumer community. Film producers are too concerned with differentiating present works to bother with categorizing yesterday's products.[52] Altman uses scores of primary sources from the popular press to il-

lustrate this process with biopics, musicals, westerns, and other genres. For instance, nearly all historians, including Altman in his book on musicals, have placed the heyday of the musical in 1929 and 1930, immediately after the advent of sound synchronization. Yet now Altman provides a plethora of contemporary advertising sources that list these films as dramas, romances, and comedies. MGM promoted *The Broadway Melody* (1929), commonly known as the granddaddy of all musicals, as an "all talking, all singing, all dancing *dramatic* sensation."[53] Producers did not start grouping such films as "musicals" until around 1931, when the term became a pejorative to describe all that was wrong with them—in other words, differentiating the new films of 1931 from those released in 1929 and 1930. Historians then adopted this term with a positive connotation and used it retroactively.[54]

Likewise, *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), often seen as the first great western, was billed on its release as a railroad variation of the popular travel film genre. Furthermore, it sparked a series of robbery films, not westerns. Only later was it subsumed in the more stable western corpus—again, after the term had passed through a pejorative stage.[55] With the backlash against the perceived low quality of many recent Mormon films, perhaps we are closer to establishing Mormon film as a genre than suspected. Be alert for advertising that separates new productions from low-grade "Mormon films" of the past.

Today *The Broadway Melody* is a musical and *The Great Train Robbery* a western. Here, critics have been successful in claiming new territory through regenrification, a process in which power lies particularly in the hands of popular, rather than academic, critics. "If Leonard Maltin says *Thelma and Louise* is a road movie (rather than a chick-flick or a buddy film), who are we to disagree?"[56] Likewise, if Preston Hunter and Thomas Baggaley decide to include or exclude a particular film from Ldsfilm.com, then that is their prerogative. It is, after all, their website. Genre criticism is the one area where populist critics like newspaper reviewers, bloggers, and even Blockbuster Video employees are completely empowered. If a clerk puts a title in the horror section, then no amount of argument about its affinities with melodrama will transport it across the aisle. Hunter and Baggaley decided that *The Legend of Johnny Lingo* (2003) did not

meet their criteria for a Mormon film, and thus it has essentially been removed from generic consideration–for now.

This phenomenon speaks, not just to the power of Ldsfilm.com and other online forums, but also to the people who visit them, for a community is required to validate the critics. In this case, excluding *The Legend of Johnny Lingo* could happen only because Hunter and Baggaley already had authority in the community's eyes. Ultimately it is the entire community, not just the critics, who define the genre; however, it is the critics' not insignificant role to guide or reinforce this consensus. The internet, for its part, has greatly facilitated this process, cohering the diasporic or, to use Altman's term, constellated community of Mormon film fans by encouraging lateral communication that will continue to reinforce and redefine the generic status of past and future films. It is difficult to see how the current Mormon film movement could have taken hold without it.[57]

Also worthy of notice is the LDS Film Festival, an annual physical gathering that brings together enthusiasts to view new films which, by very necessity of its title, thereby expands and redefines what LDS cinema is. If such a venue were to have retrospective screenings of *A Trip to Salt Lake City* (1905) and *Trapped by the Mormons* (1922), then those films would be retroactively regenrified into the corpus, shifting the modern definition of Mormon cinema. So would the inclusion of *The Legend of Johnny Lingo* or *Napoleon Dynamite*.[58]

In this regard we can make a profitable comparison with the woman's film. This genre was created entirely by critics, not producers, by retroactively rereading existing films. For generations, studios released films under labels like melodramas or weepies that dealt with purported women's issues such as love, self-sacrifice, and domesticity. Then in 1974 Molly Haskell wrote a virtual manifesto grouping all such genres under the label "woman's films"–not a new term but one which had hitherto never been so broad–and condemning them as "emotional pornography," an opiate designed to make women accept their social position. This essay did three things: It identified a group of films as a cohesive genre that were not so identified at the time of their production; it introduced a feminist perspective into the evaluation of the films; and it led the way for other critics and members of the feminist community to evaluate the films *and* her essay, thus strengthening the concept of "woman's film" as a genre. When in 1987 Mary Ann Doane published *The De-*

sire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s, she removed the quotation marks from around the term, indicating that it had become fully accepted as a genre.[59] The elimination of quotation marks, though inconspicuous, is actually quite indicative of a term's stability, showing that it has moved beyond the initial cyclic stage. Even Preston Hunter, throughout his 2001 essay, placed the terms "Mormon cinema" and "LDS cinema" in quotation marks.[60]

The evolution of the woman's film also illustrates another of Altman's points: that in the process of redefining which films pertain to which genres, there is a continual process of moving the margins to the center. Weepies were marginal, B-films, and emotional pornography; but through their reclamation as feminist texts, they and their original consumers moved to the center of the struggle for women's equal recognition and representation in society. But as feminism has become accepted and even chic, traditional feminists now are often "contested and even supplanted by new alliances among lesbian, gay and bisexual groups," illustrating a continual margin-to-center movement in the sequence of women's films to feminist films to lesbian films.[61]

Altman produces examples from other social arenas besides cinema. "The Star-Spangled Banner," written in 1812, did not become the American national anthem until 1931. It later shifted emphasis from national holidays to sporting events, with traditional renditions being supplanted by innovative popular ones. This movement "involves the folding of the margins (a coalition of sports fans and popular music fans) into a new centre, where the Super Bowl serves as national holiday of a new America."[62] Likewise Christopher Columbus began as the Spaniard "Cristóbal Colón" in 1492, when Spain was reaching the height of its power, yet eventually became "Christopher Columbus," the father of English-speaking America, in 1792. This new status coincided with the move of American patriots from their 1760s marginality to a 1790s centrality. In 1892, his birthday became a national holiday and, as "Cristoforo Colombo," he became the father of all Italians as Italian immigrants moved from the margin to the center. By the most recent anniversary in 1992, he became the first rapist of the New World as Native Americans, politically correct lobbyists, and other revisionists moved to the center.[63]

The same processes can be seen in Mormonism. In a church that believes in continuing revelation, it is to be expected that certain doctrines and practices will change over the years. In some cases, however, Church members have completely recast—or regenrified—how they consider these doctrines and practices related to Mormons in the past, particularly concerning beliefs that have indeed moved from the margins to the center. When polygamy was practiced, therefore, "celestial marriage" referred to it alone. Since polygamy's abandonment, however, "celestial marriage" has come to indicate temple marriages, the doctrine that has moved to the center. Likewise tithing began its history as a marginal practice, peripheral to and simultaneously supportive of the more central doctrine of consecration (D&C 119); but as consecration faded, tithing transformed into the Church's primary financial system.[64] Similar patterns can be seen for the increasing importance of the Word of Wisdom,[65] the disappearance of second anointings,[66] the changing meaning of the gift of tongues, the rise of family home evening, the advent and transformation of Church auxiliary organizations, and so on.

Even pioneers are subject to change. Before 1897 the term referred exclusively to those who had arrived in Salt Lake City in the 1847 companies, but in that year the Mormon community made a conscious decision to redefine "pioneer" to include everyone who had journeyed to Utah before the transcontinental railroad in 1869.[67] In the 1900s "pioneer" came to often mean anyone who lived in Utah in the 1800s, and by 1997 Salt Lake City's sesquicentennial was celebrated throughout the global Church as the *Pioneer* Sesquicentennial; the change since the 1947 Utah Centennial reflects the global growth of the Church in those fifty years. By 1997 the pedigree of pioneer heritage was extended to all Church members throughout the world through means like the Church's documentary *An Ensign to the Nations*, which aired between general conference sessions that October and depicted "pioneers" in South Korea, Africa, and other areas. In the April 2008 general conference, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, a counselor in the First Presidency whose German family converted to the Church in his youth, said that though none of his ancestors were among the nineteenth-century pioneers, "I claim with gratitude and pride this pioneer legacy as my own," as could all other Mormons, regardless of location or genealogy.[68]

On the widest level, of course, the Church has been consistently redefined as it has moved from the margins to the mainstream in a process studied by Thomas Alexander, Armand Mauss, Gregory Prince, and numerous other Mormon historians.[69] This process might happen naturally, but, like other marginal groups, Latter-day Saints have a vested interest in speeding up the regenrification process and moving into an established position. Altman observes, "Those at the centre . . . regularly exaggerate the age, rootedness, and importance of current practice, openly resisting otherness, hyphenation and creolization, while those on the margins must use resistant reading practices, secondary discursivity and lateral communication to reinforce always frail constellated communities."[70] Mormons were once seen as pariahs, terrorists, and anathema to the principles of Christianity and democracy. Now they are often viewed as the pinnacle of conservative American values.

The name of the Church itself has signaled this process. Upon its organization in 1830 it was legally established as the Church of Christ. By the Ohio period, it had added "Church of Jesus Christ" while the Missouri Mormons met under the name of "Church of the Latter-day Saints." These titles remained interchangeable until an April 1838 revelation combined them as "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (D&C 115:4). Throughout this process Church members referred to each other as Saints or Latter-day Saints, while it was their enemies who began calling them Mormonites.[71] The suffix was eventually dropped, creating the substantive term "Mormons." But it still had a highly pejorative connotation, indicating a people who rejected the Bible in favor of new alleged scripture. From the Brigham Young period onward, Church members appropriated the title as a favorable term but continued to place both "Mormons" and "Mormonism" in quotation marks through at least the 1910s;[72] these faded away during the 1930s. This was also the time the Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir gradually changed its name, for publicity purposes in its new weekly radio broadcasts, to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.[73] The term "Mormon" became a source of pride for Church members and reached such a level of ubiquity that, in recent decades, Church leaders have striven to reemphasize the Church's actual name and its association with Jesus Christ–for example, adding the subtitle "Another Testament of Je-

sus Christ" to the Book of Mormon in 1982[74] and changing the Church logo to emphasize Christ's name in 1996.

Given the early pejorative use of the term "Mormon," it is not surprising that its first editorial attachment to a film was, as we have seen, with *A Victim of the Mormons* in 1912. The cyclic nature of the process was fully evident at the time: Nordisk Films, a large company from the robust Danish film industry, created *Victim* as a prestige production with top stars, a well-known director, and a practically unprecedented running length of three reels, making it the longest film released in Denmark in 1911. Its success in Europe and North America prompted an immediate cycle of copycats, with *The Flower of the Mormon City* from a Danish competitor of Nordisk and the American films *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, *The Mormon*, *An Episode of Early Mormon Days*, *Marriage or Death*, and *The Danites*, all within one year. Then, however, the cycle of Mormon-tinged thrillers slowed and dissipated rather than crystallizing into anything more than a minor cycle. Only half a dozen more such films were released throughout the next decade.

Church leaders, meanwhile, decided to reappropriate their cinematic image, much as they had done with the term "Mormon" a generation earlier. By 1912 they were seeking to create an epic motion picture of their own, telling a positive version of the Church's history; and in February 1913, *One Hundred Years of Mormonism* premiered to enthusiastic crowds in Salt Lake City—the "Mormon film" had been regenrified from its "anti-Mormon" origins. Not only that, but the success of *One Hundred Years* prompted another attempted cycle among Mormon film enthusiasts, although *The Life of Nephi* (1915) was the only other pro-Mormon film that reached immediate theatrical release.[75]

The pattern has repeated in recent years. Richard Dutcher has often spoken of how his dissatisfaction with depictions of Mormons in mainstream films like *Orgazmo* helped prompt his decision to produce *God's Army*. Then, following that film's success, a cycle of Mormon films emerged, with different variations—comedy, romance, adventure—upon the theme. Since 2005 the cycle has similarly slowed and dissipated, but that does not mean that Mormon cinema is dead. Rather, it means the audience and filmmakers are renegotiating what the generic components of Mormon film will be. What are its standard semantic elements? Into what syntaxes will they be ar-

ranged? This process is made exponentially more difficult by film's high production costs and, as Naficy pointed out, the burden of representation Mormon audiences place on Mormon filmmakers. When audiences reject elements of one film, it helps guide future productions, a dynamic which may have contributed to the general improvement between recent films and those of five or six years ago; note, for instance, the positive change between Vuissa's 2004 *Baptists at Our Barbeque* and his 2008 *The Errand of Angels* in both production quality and the choice of subject matter.

As this process plays out in the multiplex, popular and academic critics can reevaluate past and current films, expanding and refining the corpus of Mormon cinema to include anti-Mormon pictures, instructional films, viral videos on YouTube or MormonWebTV,[76] or whatever else speaks most pertinently to Mormon society. We will see changes in Mormonism's ethnic identity as it expands into new host cultures throughout the globe and as technology, including online video, allows diasporized or constellated Church members to be in closer connection with each other. As this ethnic identity evolves, it will in turn affect the semantic and syntactic elements placed into Mormon films. Mormon cinema as a genre will continue to depend on the cultural identity of Mormonism as an ethnicity, and subgenres like missionary films and pioneer films will continue to emerge and evolve as well. The movement will never be static, meaning that Mormon cinema will always allow new insights into Mormon thought, society, and self-perception, as well as Mormonism's relationship with the rest of the world.

Notes

1. Mormon Literature & Creative Arts database, http://mormonlit.lib.byu.edu/lit_genre.php?genre=Film (accessed June 1, 2009).

2. For a fairly complete history of Mormon cinema, see Randy Astle with Gideon Burton, "A History of Mormon Cinema," *BYU Studies* 46, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 12–163.

3. "Mormon Pictures in Demand," *Moving Picture World* 11 (February 10, 1912): 470, cited in Richard Alan Nelson, "Utah Filmmakers of the Silent Screen," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 7.

4. Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830-present), September 2, 1928, LDS Church History Library.

5. "God's Army: A Richard Dutcher Film," Zion Films, www.zionfilms.com (accessed June 12, 2000). This URL now leads to www.mainstreetmovieco.com, and the essay is no longer posted. A full transcript from the original site is in my possession.

6. Chauntelle Plewe, "LDS Filmmakers Sacrifice Everything for Their Movies," *Daily Universe*, August 22, 2003, 1. On his personal website, Dutcher says *God's Army* "forever stamp[ed] Dutcher with the title 'The Father of Mormon Cinema,' a designation he soon came to reject." Richard Dutcher, "Biography," http://www.richarddutcher.com (accessed July 17, 2009).

7. Many studies have dealt with the role of propaganda, including film, in Church proselytizing efforts. For one example, see Randy Astle and Lee Walker, "Propaganda and LDS Church Filmmaking: Gentle Persuasion or Ham-Fisted Handling?," *Irreantum: A Review of Mormon Literature and Film* 7, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 11–22.

8. There is some mild disagreement over whether to call the current movement "Mormon cinema" or "LDS cinema." Some have informally argued that "LDS cinema" refers exclusively to institutionally produced films. However, given the term's broad usage—for instance, in connection with the very popular LDS Film Festival—I don't believe that to be the case. In fact, while each term connotes distinct characteristics, I find the difference largely immaterial. To adhere to the dominant usage in journals like *Dialogue*, *Sunstone*, *BYU Studies*, *Irreantum*, the *Journal of Mormon History*, and *Mormon Historical Studies*, I use "Mormon cinema" in this article.

9. Dudley Andrew, *The Major Film Theories: An Introduction* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1976), 5.

10. For a brief review of the entire website, see Randy Astle, "Mormon Cinema on the Web," *BYU Studies* 48, no. 1 (2009): 165–67, also available at http://byustudies.byu.edu/reviews/pages/reviewdetail.aspx?reviewID=721.

11. Preston Hunter, "What Is LDS Cinema?" Ldsfilm, April 30, 2001, http://www.ldsfilm.com/lds_cinema.html (accessed July 20, 2003). All further quotations in this section come from this webpage.

12. *The Book of Mormon Movie*, released in 2003, two years after Hunter wrote this essay, shows the prescience of including this caveat.

13.Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 315–17.

14. In Astle with Burton, "A History of Mormon Cinema," I propose an alternative classification system which groups films chronologically, beginning in 1905, in five periods or waves of roughly twenty-four years

each, with *God's Army* appearing at the beginning of the Fifth Wave. Though the term "Fifth Wave film" does not refer exclusively to theatrical releases, it can still indicate this group of pictures, obviating confusion with earlier but generically similar titles. If, however, another form of film, such as online videos, becomes dominant during the remaining years of the Fifth Wave, a new title would be necessary for these theatrical films from 2000 to 2009.

15. Though I do not present any analyses of such films here, a frequent criticism of films like *The Other Side of Heaven* and *The Testaments of One Fold and One Shepherd* (2000) is that they present a veneer of Mormonism but are rather devoid of doctrinal accuracy and commitment to presenting the gospel undiluted.

16. Bruce Young, "Loving *States of Grace*—and Wondering Why Some People Hate It," *Irreantum: A Review of Mormon Literature and Film* 8, no. 1 (2006): 143–54 provides a summary of the controversy and defense of the pro-Dutcher view.

17. The hero's journey, perhaps most famously expounded by Joseph Campbell, has become one of classical film narration's most standard types. The hero begins in a stable position, is initiated into a world of trials and challenges, overcomes them to reach a goal or obtain a talisman, and is reunited with family or restores order to his world. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1949); Christopher Vogler, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (Studio City, Calif.: Michael Wiese Productions, 2007).

18. Benson Parkinson, "Review of *Anastasia*," Association for Mormon Letters webpage, February 24, 1998, http://mormonletters.org/Reviews/Review.aspx?id=3207 (accessed October 19, 2004).

19. Don Bluth quoted in Elayne Wells, "LDS Filmmaker Keeps Gospel at Core of Work," *Church News*, November 25, 1989, 6; also online at http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18618/LDS-filmmaker-keeps-gospel-at-core-of-work.html. Bluth adds: "The gospel gives you a pivot point around which you can make a circle for your life. Because the gospel's permanent and doesn't shift or change, it provides a strong base in all you do."

20. Rasputin hails from the same palace as the princess, and the Tyrannosaurus is just another type of dinosaur. It is their motivations that differ from those of the heroes. Like the scriptural Lucifer compared with Christ or everyman figures, the similarity of the villains' origin to the protagonists' does not prevent them from pursuing pathologically destructive goals.

21. One could argue that polygamy in the film represents the slip-

pery slope toward sexual libertarianism and that Protestantism rectifies this, which is in fact the traditional position taken by nineteenth-century anti-Mormon works. Such a reading would be difficult to defend, however: the polyandrous trio is quite happy until the Protestants arrive, and it is *their* presence, not the practice of plural marriage, that begins to disturb the protagonists' tranquility. Furthermore, Protestantism brings with it moral ills such as greed, worldliness, and pride that, historically, gold mining often fostered—and that Brigham Young firmly rejected. In fact, my argument could be stretched with only a little extrapolation to state that the values of civilized/musical/Protestantism are also aligned with capitalism and its attendant ills such as class division, poverty, and avarice. The values of frontier/western/Mormonism, in contrast, embrace egalitarianism, consecration, and even socialism, values perhaps much more popular with politically liberal playwrights and filmmakers in the late 1960s (although Eastwood's conservatism has been much discussed in the annals of film criticism).

22. Already such studies are beginning to appear. Michael Austin, "Theology for the Approaching Millennium: *Angels in America,* Activism, and the American Religion," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 30 (Spring 1997): 25–44, provides a superb example in his analysis of the stage version of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, analyzing the entire production through the lens of Mormon culture and, particularly, theology.

23. Heather Bigley, "Representations of Religious Women in Mormon Cinema," 1, Paper presented at the University Film and Video Conference, August 2004, University of Toledo, Ohio.

24. Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 23. These sentences directly follow the sentence that Bigley quoted above.

25. Ibid., 15.

26. Ibid., 16.

27. Ibid., 14.

28. In addition, American Tyler Ford's first feature film *Picadilly Cowboy*, later retitled *Anxiously Engaged*, depicts an American Mormon in England, with an extensive sequence shot in Scotland. (The film was produced while Ford was living outside London.) This film's affinity to accented cinema is very similar to Little's and Vuissa's films analyzed here.

29. In the interest of full disclosure, I served as one of two script supervisors on this film.

30. These critiques have been conveyed to me through personal conversations; to my knowledge none has as yet been published.

31. Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, 46, 64–65, 82.

32. Ibid., 46, 48, 56–58.

33. Ibid., 65.

34. Ibid., 69.

35. Ibid., 82.

36. This anecdote can also be given a phenomenological reading. My brother was serving at the time as the home teacher to Doug Stewart, the actor who played Benny in the film. His proximity to the actor in a relationship that slightly mirrored that of the cinematic missionaries may have caused him to place special emphasis on the scene and eventually reach the conclusion he did. The phenomenological nature of such spiritual epiphanies and their relationship to Mormon cinema is one of the most underexplored areas of Mormon film studies.

37. Jongiorgi Enos, "Why Crossover Is a Dirty Word," *Irreantum: A Review of Mormon Literature and Film* 4–6, no. 1 (Winter 2003–Spring 2004): 21–33.

38. Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: BFI Publishing, 1999), ix.

39. Ibid., 217. The entire article is an appendix to *Film/Genre*, pp. 216–26.

40. Altman, *Film/Genre*, 11.

41. Mormon Literature & Creative Arts Database; these and other categories are listed in the drop-down menu.

42. Altman, *Film/Genre*, 114.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 54–62.

45. Ibid., 50–68.

46. Ibid., 67.

47. Ibid., 36.

48. The film's title comes from the well-known LDS hymn "As Sisters in Zion": "The errand of angels is given to women; / And this is a gift that, as sisters, we claim." The poster features a headshot of actress Erin Chambers with a missionary nametag prominently displayed (and in sharp focus, compared with the soft fore- and background fields). Word of mouth about the unique feminine aspect of the film was strong at the time of its release. At the LDS Film Festival where it premiered, Vuissa spoke about the originality of making a film that told "the sister missionary story" to contrast with "the well-known sub-genre" of the male missionary film. Katherine Morris, "My Sister Katherine's Review of 'The Errand of Angels,' A Motley Vision, http://www. motleyvision. org/2008/my-sister-katherines-review-of-the-errand-of-angels/(accessed April

2, 2009). Likewise, screenwriter Heidi Johnson blogged about the film under the title "The Sisters Movie" (http://thesistersmovie.blogspot.com/). Elsewhere she describes her motivation in writing the script as a reaction against male missionary films like *God's Army*. Sean P. Means, "The Errand of Angels," Day of Praise, http://dayofpraise.blogspot.com/2008/08/new-lds-movie-errand-of-angels.html (accessed July 7, 2009). Critics were quick to pick up on the same point. Gideon Burton begins his online review by saying, "*The Errand of Angels* is the first film entirely about female Mormon missionaries, and director Christian Vuissa . . . gets the subgenre off to a vigorous start." Gideon Burton, "The Errand of Angels," Association for Mormon Letters Discussion Board, http://forums.mormonletters.org/yaf_poststt294_VUISSA-The-Errand-of-Angels.aspx (accessed July 7, 2009), and Catherine K. Arveseth begins her review for *Meridian Magazine* by describing the feminine content as "a first for Mormon Cinema. We've seen *God's Army* and *The Other Side of Heaven* portray the challenges of missionary service for Elders. But never before have we seen sisters in action." Catherine K. Arveseth, "The Errand of Angels Soars," Meridian Magazine, http://www.meridianmagazine.com/arts/080822errand.html (accessed July 7, 2009).

49. "God's Army: A Richard Dutcher Film," www.zionfilms.com.

50. Richard Dutcher, untitled presentation to an undergraduate course in LDS Cinema, Brigham Young University, March 28, 2006, transcript in my possession.

51. "Dutcher's Army Is Back—But Can It Stay?" *Sunstone*, Issue 139 (November 2005): 79, discussed the film's poor financial return and commented: "Dutcher, along with others, including *Deseret Morning News* columnist Lee Benson, speculates that the film's poor box office showing comes from the low expectations audiences now have for LDS-themed films, given the glut of poor-quality movies (with few exceptions) that followed in Dutcher's wake."

52. Altman, *Film/Genre*, 77–82.

53. Ibid., 32; emphasis Altman's.

54. Ibid., 31–34.

55. Ibid., 34–35.

56. Ibid., 93.

57. Astle, "Mormon Cinema on the Web," 161–81.

58. Altman, *Film/Genre*, 161–63, 169. A large number of secular films produced by Mormons screen at the festival each year, implying, as I argued earlier, that all films made by Church members have a place in or at least influence on the canon.

59. Ibid., 72–77.

60. Hunter, "What Is LDS Cinema?"

61. Altman, *Film/Genre*, 204.

62. Ibid., 203–4.

63. Ibid., 202–3.

64. Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 447–48.

65. Thomas G. Alexander, "The Word of Wisdom: From Principle to Requirement," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 78–88. Many modern Mormons have portrayed disciples of the past as adhering to this doctrine, which is actually quite modern—hence, omission of the fact that coffee was part of the pioneer diet and the belief that Jesus's miracle at Cana produced nonalcoholic wine.

66. David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002).

67. Untitled notice, *Improvement Era* 1, no. 2 (December 1897): 70.

68. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Faith of Our Father," http://lds.org/conference/talk/display/0,5232,23-1-851-24,00.html (accessed July 8, 2009).

69. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005). Mauss's analysis is particularly pertinent here as he identifies alternating periods of assimilation and retrenchment in Mormon history somewhat parallel to Altman's periods of generic assimilation and cyclic experimentation.

70. Altman, *Film/Genre*, 205.

71. See for instance the history in Josiah Jones, "History of the Mormonites," January 1831, http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/JJones.html (accessed January 7, 2009).

72. For two of many examples, see David O. McKay, *Conference Report of the Eighty-First Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 6, 1911, 53, and Heber J. Grant, "The Example of Abraham Lincoln and What It Should Mean in the Upholding of Constituted Law and Order," *Deseret News*, February 18, 1928, in *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002), 96.

73. Michael Hicks, a historian of Church music, email to Randy Astle, August 31, 2005.

74. "Since 1982, Subtitle Has Defined Book as 'Another Testament of Jesus Christ,'" *Church News*, January 2, 1988, http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18111/Since-1982-subtitle-has-defined-book-as-another-testament-of-Jesus-Christ.html (accessed June 3, 2009).

75. Astle with Burton, "A History of Mormon Cinema," 30–38. Brian Q. Cannon and Jacob W. Olmstead, "'Scandalous Film': The Campaign to Suppress Anti-Mormon Motion Pictures, 1911–12," *Journal of Mormon History* 29 (Fall 2003): 42–76.

76. The latter is at http://mormonwebtv.com/joomla/index.php (or redirected from www.mormonwebtv.com). One of the newest experiments in online Mormon video is the serial film *The Book of Jer3miah*, which premiered at http://www.jer3miah.com/ in February 2009. See Jill Weinberger, "The Book of Jer3miah: Not Just for Mormons Anymore," Salon, June 12, 2009, http://www.salon.com/tech/giga_om/online_video/2009/06/12/the_book_of_jer3miah_not_just_ for_mormons_anymore/index.html?source=rss&aim=/tech/giga_om/online_video (accessed July 15, 2009).

A Failure of Moral Imagination: Guantanamo, Torture, the Constitution, and Mormons—An Interview with Brent N. Rushforth

Note: *Gregory A. Prince, a biographer and chair of* Dialogue*'s Board of Directors, conducted this interview in Potomac, Maryland, in June 2009. Brent N. Rushforth is a partner at a law firm in Washington, D.C., and practices in antitrust and white-collar defense litigation. For the past four-and-a-half years he has represented,* pro bono, *prisoners at the Guantanamo Naval Base in Cuba.*

Prince: You have been involved in Guantanamo for some time, and recently one of your cases was in the headlines. Give us the background of the ongoing legal battles there, and then tell us of your involvement in them.

Rushforth: The process that is now unfolding in Guantanamo grew out of our panicked response to 9/11. A friend of mine, a lawyer in Washington, very shortly after 9/11—within a year or so—had gone to Guantanamo to represent a prisoner there. He had received death threats, one of which he thought came from within his own firm. I don't tell that for reasons of over-dramatization, but simply to reflect the state we were in as a country. It was a state of panic. Shortly after 9/11, I sat on the lawn at Farragut Square and talked to one of my law partners who said, "I think we're moving to Oregon, because there we will be out of the maelstrom that may happen." I think that reflects that we were really in a state of panic when we invaded Afghanistan.

What happened is that as the Americans attacked Afghani-

stan, mostly bombing and Special Forces—this wasn't just infantry; this was bombing from B52's and Special Forces seeking to find Osama bin Laden—at the same time, the United States instituted a bounty-hunting program, to have the Pakistanis and others seek out and capture Arab men who were anywhere in the area. Of course, the Pakistanis are not Arabs, and the Afghanis are not Arabs; but the Saudis and the Yemenis who were in the area were sought out, captured, and sold to the Americans for bounties, in the belief that they were up to no good and in the hope that they would provide information as to how we could find Osama bin Laden.

Prince: Comment on the amount of the bounty, and how much of the average annual income in that area that it represented.

Rushforth: The annual average income was about $250. Certain parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan are very poor. The bounties mostly started at around $5,000. They went up from there. But you can do the arithmetic, and it's about twenty years' worth of income to these folks. I think it qualifies as a fortune in that part of the world. These were the bounties being paid for virtually any Arab man who happened to be in the area. Many who got caught up in this net had nothing to do with being adverse to the United States. Even those who may have gone looking for trouble—young boys, eighteen or nineteen years old—never found trouble. In fact, some of them went to Afghanistan prior to 9/11. Well, prior to 9/11, jihad had nothing to do with the United States. It had to do with tribal warfare in Afghanistan; and before that it had to do with driving the Soviets out of Afghanistan, which we not only applauded but also financed and provided the weaponry for.

So when we call these guys jihadists, first you have to be careful as to which jihad you are talking about. And secondly, many of these young men went to Afghanistan before the United States ever got involved; and when the United States got involved, and our bombs started to fall and our Special Forces started to be on the ground in Afghanistan, these guys took off. They wanted nothing to do with being adverse to the United States. Many of them were captured within weeks after the United States came in with their B52's and their Special Forces, and they were captured

on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan *on their way home!* They wanted out!

Let me talk about how I got involved. My friend Tom called me and told me about his representation, and said, "Come on in. We need help." So I volunteered, and about four and a half years ago I was asked to represent, initially, four of the so-called detainees. They are prisoners, and that is what I call them.

Prince: Was there a clearinghouse that tried to get all of these men represented?

Rushforth: Yes. There is a very fine organization, based in New York City, called the Center for Constitutional Rights. They had gone to the Arab world, sought out the families of these prisoners, and received authorization through the families to represent these prisoners. I then went to the Center for Constitutional Rights, and they assigned me four prisoners to represent.

There is a very fine, dedicated group of lawyers. One of the pleasures of this representation is that it is one of the most courageous and—I'm not speaking about myself—one of the finest group of lawyers I have worked with.

So, four and a half years ago, I went to Guantanamo. You can't fly over Cuban air space, so you have to fly way out over the Atlantic Ocean, and come in to the southeast tip of Cuba, which is about 800 miles from Havana. Cuba is a very big island! Guantanamo formerly was a very sleepy naval base. It couldn't service the big ships in today's navy, because the water in its harbor is not deep enough. So it was pretty sleepy.

Donald Rumsfeld, George Bush's Secretary of Defense, conceived of the idea of putting these prisoners in Guantanamo. The *clear* hope and theory of putting these prisoners in Guantanamo was to put them in a legal "black hole" where they would never see legal representation and would be away from American due process. That was clearly the intent—where they could be tortured, where they could be abused and, frankly, where they could be held forever, whether or not they were guilty of anything. That was the intent, and we know that because that's the position the government argued before the Supreme Court, three times.

I was privileged to sit near Seth Waxman when he argued the Boumediene case. The notion that our constitutional principle of

habeas corpus applied to these prisoners, who were clearly held under the power of the United States, hung by a thread. Seth Waxman's argument was brilliant and moving. It carried the Court 5–4. The Bush administration supposed that these guys would never see the inside of a courtroom. They created a legal black hole, but it did not remain a legal black hole because the lawyers and judges in our system cracked it wide open. Ultimately the Supreme Court cracked it open. Some think this decision puts us at risk, but I think it saves us. It saves the Constitution. It saves our most cherished values. It says that, even in the face of enormous fear and danger, we adhere to our values. We don't torture. We don't subject these folks to inhuman abuse. And we don't imprison them without giving them a right to raise their hand and say, "You've got the wrong guy. You don't have a basis to hold me." And in many, many of these cases, they are right.

What does *habeas corpus* mean? This is a seven-hundred-year-old principle of Anglo-Saxon common law. Magna Carta stuff in 1215. The barons at Runnymede told King John, "You cannot arrest an Englishman without allowing him *habeas corpus* rights," which means you can tell the king, "Stop. You've got the wrong guy." That puts the burden of proof on the king to come forward with the evidence establishing that there is a basis to hold that prisoner. It's the same principle today. It's one of the foundations of a free society. In fact, Joseph Smith filed many habeas petitions in Nauvoo to avoid imprisonment. That's what I'm doing for these prisoners. "Dear United States: Offer some proof to the court that you have a basis for holding this guy."

Well, when that issue came before a federal district court judge in the spring for one of my clients, we had a full-blown trial. Full evidence. The United States could bring any witness into court that it wanted to. It could bring any evidence into court it wanted to. It could say anything to the judge that it wanted to, in terms of providing that basis. It was after a full evidentiary hearing. The judge, Gladys Kessler, clearly treated this case as one of the most important she has ever had. She had memorized the facts in the record. She wrote a forty-five-page opinion deconstructing every single fact that the government had presented and ultimately concluded the government had no basis whatsoever to hold Ala Ahmed as a prisoner. She ordered him released and or-

dered the United States to report back to her regarding what they were doing to make sure he could get released. I'm not making this up! For a federal court judge to say to the command- er-in-chief in wartime, "You have no business to hold this guy whom you have imprisoned for more than seven years," is a big deal.

Prince: Were there obstacles thrown up even for you to represent these guys in the first place?

Rushforth: Well, my firm was very supportive. Many lawyers share a very proprietary notion about the rule of law. There is a sense that we are not a government of human beings; we are a government of laws, and everyone is under an obligation to obey the law and will suffer consequences if he or she doesn't. It's a principle that we all talk about.

When I set out to represent these guys, I found two things. First, because of the panic that had stricken the United States when those towers fell down—and it's a very human reaction, and of course the government had an obligation to protect us, and naturally we were all panicked—the government started telling us, through the bully pulpit and with the bullhorn, that the guys we had captured were the worst of the worst. They were murderous terrorists; and if we let them out, or if we so much as flinched, they would cut our throats. So when I first went to Guantanamo four and a half years ago, I had no idea whom I was going to meet in the prison camps. As far as I knew, they *were* terrorists. All I knew was that I believed, and still believe, that even they are entitled to fairness and due process.

Prince: And if the government can't prove them guilty, then they go free?

Rushforth: That's the fundamental proposition. And now, it is a proposition that has been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. It's the law! So that's the first point. We were in a national panic. I didn't know who these guys were.

The second thing is that the U.S. Department of Defense, after it rounded up these eight hundred guys and took them to Guantanamo, released five hundred of them. We often forget that. Remember that Dick Cheney and others are saying, "These are the worst of the worst." Well, the U.S. Department of Defense flew five hundred of them home. Just let them go. Now, there is

all this talk about recidivism and claims that some of them have returned to the battlefield. Well, of the five hundred who have been released, maybe a handful *have* returned to the battlefield. But the Department of Defense did it. No court ordered them released.

Prince: And in the process, we probably created some enemies and drove them in that direction.

Rushforth: There's no question about it. You and I would be angry if a government held us without cause. There's a great deal of anger. But the thing that has surprised me—and I happen to believe this based on my own personal experience—is that the prisoners whom I represent have the capacity to differentiate between the people and the government of the United States, on the one hand, and the Bush administration on the other. They believe that what happened to them was caused by an administration that had, regardless of the cost, basically launched a crusade. My clients are not angry at me, and they are not angry at the people of the United States, and they are not angry, ultimately, at America. They are furious at the people who have perpetrated this legal outrage—basically the Bush administration.

And so am I, because this was done in my name, as an American. I deeply resent it because it violates the Constitution. It violates the law. I don't believe that I should be protected at that cost, because the cost is too high. It violates a right that is too precious.

Prince: How many trips have you made to Guantanamo so far?

Rushforth: Frankly, contrary to your daily advice to me, I haven't kept detailed track, but I think fourteen or fifteen times over the last four years—three or four times a year. It's quite a trip. Guantanamo itself reminds one of the phrase from Hannah Arendt, "the banality of evil," because part of Guantanamo looks like Dayton, Ohio—no disrespect to Dayton. It has a navy exchange that looks like Wal-Mart, with a Subway sandwich shop, a McDonald's, and a golf course that has been dubbed "the worst golf course in the world"—because it's basically a desert. But it looks like a little town in America, on the windward side of Guantanamo Bay. We stay on the leeward side, and every morning we go across to the windward side on a navy patrol boat. Then we and our escorts get in a van. We stop and get some food for our

prisoners, and then travel the four or five miles out to the coast where the prison camp is located.

Ernest Hemingway said in *The Old Man and the Sea* that the water off Cuba is purple, and it truly is about the deepest indigo blue or purple color that you can imagine. It is absolutely, stunningly beautiful. But many of the guys there have never seen the sea, even though they are located a hundred yards from it, because they are kept in isolation. But the little town of Guantanamo, before you get to the prison camp, looks like America.

As a kid, I grew up in California. We had moved there from Utah. My dad was a lieutenant in the navy in World War II. He taught sailors how to jump off a carrier deck, which at that time was seven stories above the sea, without killing themselves. He was an athlete, so that was his job. We were stationed in San Diego. I was born in 1941, so of course I was only four years old when the war ended. But as a high school kid I read about the internment of the Japanese in California, under then-Attorney General Earl Warren, who changed his character when he became Chief Justice. I remember, even as a high school kid, thinking, "Well, thank heavens that kind of unconstitutional, aberrant behavior is now behind us." And lo and behold, who would have thought that in my dotage, sixty years later, I would be sitting with prisoners in Guantanamo who had been captured and sold to Americans and held without any basis, because of our panic during the so-called war on terror.

Prince: When you first went down, did you have any notion about the role of torture in all of this?

Rushforth: No. In fact, it was over time, where my guys felt enough confidence and trust in me that they would begin to open up on the subject of torture. The first time I met Mohammed Ghanem, he had clearly had the stuffing kicked out of him by the so-called "ERF team"—the Emergency Response Force. I was standing, waiting to go in to visit one of my prisoners when an ERF came down the hall of the prison camp toward me. It scares the stuffing out of you! They are five linebacker types dressed in black, wearing black plastic body armor all over their body, and a plastic shield that comes down over their face. You can imagine five of these guys coming into your cell. It's a rough business.

There have got to be some guys who are there to keep order in the camps, but these guys, in my experience—well, with Mohammed, for example, the day before I first met him, an ERF team had worked him over. He was in very, very bad shape.

Prince: You could see it?

Rushforth: Oh, absolutely. His face had been beaten, his arms and legs had been beaten; he was badly beaten. It was startling. What had happened is that these guys had come into his cell and had abused the Koran. They had thrown it on the floor, stepped on it and spit on it; so Mohammed, unadvisedly, had spat on a guard. That was enough to have the ERF team work him over. The beating was an overreaction and, in my judgment, had been instituted by the guards by abusing his religious sensibilities.

Prince: But that doesn't rise to the level of torture.

Rushforth: I agree. I would not necessarily call what the ERF teams do torture. What I would call it is abuse. But torture is a different proposition. Torture, with respect to the two prisoners whom I represent who have suffered torture, is something that takes place in the context of interrogation. It includes sleep deprivation. There's a "Frequent Flyer Program," which basically means that you are moved maybe twelve times a day, day and night, and you can't sleep. This goes on for days at a time. I don't know how many of our readers will have gone for a full night without sleep, or maybe two nights. I don't think I've ever gone for two nights without sleep. I've gone one night without sleep many times as an undergraduate, where I was trying to get something done. But it's hard even to imagine going five, six, seven nights without any sleep, and that's what happened.

Nudity, religious abuse, beatings, and quite graphic sexual abuse. The sexual abuse has been graphic and horrific. In fact, I have been instructed by one of my clients that I cannot publish the details of it in any way, shape, or form, because he fears for his life in Yemen, if he is to return. The only time I can talk about it at all is under seal in court, where it will be sealed forever. When he talks to me about it, he does so in a highly, highly credible way. He does not exaggerate. He talks about it in a very calm way. I believe him, completely and totally, when he tells me the story of what has happened to him. The notion that it has been perpetrated by

agents and representatives of the United States, in my name, is appalling.

Prince: Did this start to come out spontaneously, as you developed a rapport with these guys?

Rushforth: Yes. There is no question that they revealed these details to me because they trust me. I have told them as I have represented them that it is important that the judge knows what has happened to them, because it reflects on their treatment at the hands of the United States, and it reflects on their case. What was the United States doing? Here is what the United States was doing; I alluded to this earlier.

When the United States invaded Afghanistan, the support of Americans for that invasion—to find Osama bin Laden—was about 100 percent, including me and you. It was a perfectly legitimate, appropriate, important, critical function of our government to try to protect us. Nobody is arguing that. But these guys, including my clients, were caught up in that net, and then they were brought to Guantanamo in early 2002, within months of 9/11, and within six or eight weeks after the United States invaded Afghanistan.

These guys were first taken to Bagram Air Base; and as my federal district court judge said, "What we have been learning about Bagram is worse than the Spanish Inquisition." People were beaten to death at Bagram by agents of the United States. They were tortured severely, including beatings, hanging from the wall, throwing guys repeatedly, head-first, into the wall, sexual abuse, waterboarding—brutal tactics and torture.

The notion that this stuff is not torture is fanciful. It's just pure rationalization. When you see President Bush standing and saying, "The United States does not torture," given what we now know was actually going on—well, it's really repugnant to see the President of the United States lying to us and telling us that we are upholding the standards of America when the standards of America were being trodden underfoot by the policies of the United States government. Here is what we need to bear in mind. None of my clients was captured anywhere near a battlefield. None of my clients was captured with a weapon. None of my clients is accused of having killed an American. None of my clients had anything to

do with being on a battlefield, killing Americans. They were captured fleeing Afghanistan, and they were sold to the Americans, and the Americans incarcerated them for the purpose of gathering intelligence—trying to find out where Osama bin Laden was, and so on. The Supreme Court has said very clearly, "You can't just capture a guy and hold him forever, for purposes of seeking intelligence from him. That is not legal and it is not constitutional."

These guys were captured, thrown first into Bagram, then flown to Guantanamo. They have been there now for seven years, for purposes of interrogation. And, most importantly in this context, they were thrown into what everyone—Rumsfeld, Cheney, Bush, and all their lawyers—believed was a legal black hole. They would never see lawyers. They would never see the inside of a courtroom. They would never enjoy due process. They were "enemy combatants," so-called, who could be held forever for purposes of keeping them away from a battlefield, which, by the way, they had never been on in the first place (speaking of my clients) and interrogated. And this could go on indefinitely, as long as the so-called war on terror went on.

Prince: And they were content to just let them rot, to die?

Rushforth: Absolutely. No end in sight. It was the lawyers and the courts who cracked this egg open. Let me be very clear about that. We would know *nothing* about what is going on today in Guantanamo without lawyers. It was the lawyers who went down and then began filing *habeas corpus* petitions in federal court in Washington. That is what cracked this thing open for the world to see. Other lawyers like David Addington, who was Cheney's lawyer and later chief-of-staff, and Scooter Libby, and our co-religionist, Jay Bybee, at the Justice Department, were given the task of rationalizing torture.

I didn't know that at the time. I didn't know that these guys had been tortured. Frankly, I assumed that they hadn't been—except maybe, here and there, a real bad egg like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. But not these guys, who were, at very worst, foot soldiers, if they were that. It turns out that they were *never* foot soldiers against the United States.

It wasn't really until I had been in Guantanamo many times—I started going before the Boumediene case was decided, and it

wasn't clear that these guys were ever going to get *habeas corpus* rights, although we were fighting for it—but when the Supreme Court ruled, then we really began to prepare these *habeas* cases in detail. So it was a couple of years into my representation of these guys, and by that time I had developed a very strong, trusting relationship with them. These guys, now, are quite confident that I am fighting for them. But it wasn't until a couple of years into that representation that they really began telling me the torture story.

Prince: You had heard about torture by that time.

Rushforth: Right.

Prince: But this was different.

Rushforth: Absolutely. Torture was an abstract concept. I certainly had read about and heard about some of the big guys being tortured: Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Abu Zubaydah. Abu Ghraib came along, I believe in 2003 or 2004. I had been in Guantanamo by the time Abu Ghraib came out. Then, in the context of Abu Ghraib and all those photographs, my conversations with my own clients began to focus on torture. It turns out that everything that has been pictured for the world that happened at Abu Ghraib, happened, and worse, at Guantanamo.

Incredibly, these guys have kept their sense of humor and their power to differentiate between an entire people, the American people, and a "few bad apples." This notion that there were just a few bad apples somewhere down the ranks in our military that led to all of these abuses—the actual truth of the matter is there *were* a few bad apples. But they were at the very top, and they included President Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, and Cheney's chief counsel, David Addington. And unfortunately, they included the lawyers who legalized our dark side, this policy of torture, including our own Jay Bybee. If you want to say there were a few bad apples, the apples were at the very top of the bushel, and they infected the entire bushel. There is absolutely no question that this was a policy instituted at the very heart of and top of our government, carried out in an organized way.

So we have arrived at a place where America has, in the world today, the reputation of a country that tortures, a country that abuses. When I really let myself go and think that this was

done in my name, as an American citizen, it makes me very angry. I abhor it.

I hate to say that about Jay Bybee. I don't know him, but I know you know him. The only thing I know about Jay Bybee is the memo that he signed and perhaps helped to author. I understand John Yoo was substantially the author, and Jay Bybee signed it as the Assistant Attorney General. I must say that memo is shocking! It's shocking in its poor legal reasoning, in the authority that it left out, and most shocking in its concept of the commander-in-chief. In fact, the Jay Bybee memo—the now-infamous torture memo when Jay Bybee was the Assistant Attorney General of the United States—did not refer to an opinion some two or three decades earlier that very clearly held that waterboarding is torture. The notion that you could write the memo purporting to analyze whether certain techniques were torture or not without citing the law that anyone on Google could have found, shows how sloppily the memo was done.

As I was reading the Bybee memo and listening to these stories by my clients in Guantanamo, I was also reading a book called *Washington's Crossing* by David Hackett Fischer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). I am poorly educated on the Revolutionary War, so I was trying to fill in that gap a little bit. One of the stunning moments was reading about George Washington after the Battle of Trenton in 1776 and battles of early 1777. The British and the Hessians were torturing American prisoners-of-war severely—torturing some of them to death. They had captured tens of thousands of American soldiers after the Battle of New York. It was despicable, uncivilized, brutal. Tens of thousands of American soldiers died in prisons in and around New York and other parts of America that the British had taken.

As commander-in-chief, George Washington issued a general order to his troops saying, "We will not torture." So the prisoners of war that the Americans captured were not tortured, generally speaking. There were incidents, but the troops followed Washington's general order. In fact, they had captured 10,000 Hessian troops in a battle in New Jersey and were marching them west into Pennsylvania where they would be held. Battle imperatives dictated that the American troops guarding these Hessians had to go participate in other battles, so they told the Hessians to march

themselves off to the prison in Pennsylvania. And the Hessians did! They knew they were not going to be tortured or killed. This news spread like wildfire among American troops, Hessian troops, and British troops. After the war was over, many of the Hessians—and many of the British troops—repatriated themselves into the United States because of how they had been treated during the Revolutionary War.

You like to think that history is somehow an upward line of progress, but it isn't. George Washington, the Father of our Country, under the most powerful imperatives, fighting for the life of our country at the moment of its very birth, issued this general order that we would not torture, even though our own prisoners were being tortured and killed by the British and Hessians. And now, here we are, arguing publicly as a society about whether torture is essential to keep us safe.

One example to consider is the case of Abu Zubaydah, because it has been so much in the news recently. He is someone who is being represented by two friends of mine. He really illustrates the fundamental bankruptcy of the central argument of the torturers. The notion is that if somebody has the secret of the nuclear terrorist and he's sitting in front of you, of course you would torture him for the greater good, to learn where the nuclear bomb was about to go off. That's the central argument. At the heart of it, it has no truth to it whatsoever. You never know whether he has that knowledge or not. Torture won't tell you.

Abu Zubaydah was captured in Faisalabad, Pakistan. It was a shoot-out with Pakistani operatives, and he was shot three times as he was diving out a window. They brought a guy over from Johns Hopkins to do surgery on him to keep him alive, because they thought that he could be a source of information. For a long time, as he was recovering, they engaged in the same kind of interrogation that we did during World War II, namely, highly professional, very comradely interrogation. For example, one of the FBI agents learned the nickname that his mother used for him and began to call him by that name. They treated him with courtesy and respect. And that's where he gave up his important information about Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. When they started to waterboard and torture him, he started giving them stuff that was use-

less. They never got anything of use out of him after they started to torture him.

He gives the lie to the central argument of the torturers: the "greater good" that justifies extracting information by torture to find out where the ticking time-bomb is. That *never* happens in real life. It happens only on "24" with Jack Bauer providing the torture.

Prince: Plus, these are warriors who are on suicide missions anyway.

Rushforth: That's exactly right. So the central premise of the torturers, as now advocated by Dick Cheney, is utterly false. As the professionals would tell you, the way you get the good stuff is to engage with the person being interrogated.

Prince: And isn't that how you have gotten the cooperation of your clients?

Rushforth: Yes. But that, of course, is very different. When I first went to the prison camps in Guantanamo in 2005, the CIA folks—the interrogators—had told them that I was a CIA operative, that I was a homosexual, that I was Jewish—and as Jerry Seinfeld would say, "Not that there's anything wrong with that"—but clearly the purpose of it was to prevent any kind of confidential or trusting relationship from being established. I was quite forceful in telling my clients that the only reason I was there was to represent them and that my only duty as their counsel was to try to give them due process and the fairness of the American justice system. It took me about the first day that I met with each of my clients to really establish a trusting relationship, and I've had that trusting relationship with them ever since.

Prince: But it came through camaraderie, not through force.

Rushforth: Oh, absolutely! The torture stuff, as the good professionals in this business will tell you, simply doesn't work. And the notion that waterboarding isn't torture belies the fact that in the past we executed some Japanese for waterboarding, we court-martialed our own soldiers in Vietnam for waterboarding, and we prosecuted a sheriff in Texas for waterboarding. The notion that it's not criminal and that it's not torture is just fanciful. It's astounding to me that we are having this public debate.

Furthermore, the whole notion that this is just about waterboarding is a total red herring. These guys have been hung from

hooks, beaten, held naked in cold rooms, sleep-deprived, and sexually abused. So it's not just about waterboarding. Waterboarding, for one reason or another, has just become the focus. You could just as easily think of these rooms where the CIA and other folks have gone about their business as medieval torture chambers, or southern prisons where blacks were abused and tortured a hundred years ago, because that's what they have been.

Anyway, back to my own prisoners. It evolved over my representation of these prisoners, that they have now confided the most lurid details of their personal torture at the hands of the United States. It makes me want to weep—that agents of my government have done this. As I was listening to *Washington's Crossing* on CDs, commuting to work, and listening to the account of George Washington's general order, I honestly *did* start weeping. *That* is what makes America what it is in the world, and that is what we have now given up.

One of my clients said to me the day I first met him in Guantanamo, "As a kid growing up in Yemen, America was always an idea to me. The idea that America represented is that you would be treated fairly, and you would breathe the air of freedom in America. I have lost that now." Sitting there as an American, that made me want to weep. We have lost a great deal of what has made us, as Ronald Reagan used to quote, "the city on the hill." That quality is what we stood for in this world, and we've given it up. We've lost it. We've sold our birthright for a mess of pottage. It's a very bad bargain.

I want to speak about the guys I represent, because they're the human consequences of what we have done. Let me tell you about three of them.

First, there is Mohammed Ghanem. He's a tough guy, a soldier. But here is the point. He's never been averse to the United States. One of the things that the United States puts in his list of allegations, for example, is that he fought for Muslim causes in Bosnia. Well, it turns out that the United States was *also* fighting for Muslim causes in Bosnia. So that's supposed to somehow show up on the dark side of his ledger? He tells me passionately that he has never intended to be averse to the United States. He fought against Communists. He fought against the Soviet Union in Af-

ghanistan. But he has been languishing in Guantanamo for over seven years without being charged with anything at all. He has never had a hearing.

Prince: If he were filling out a job application, what would he put as his occupation? Professional soldier?

Rushforth: Yes. He's a soldier for Muslim causes. One of the guys on my team was a paratrooper in the U.S. Army in the Vietnam War. As the two of them sat in the room together, they bonded. They're two soldiers talking to each other. We all like Mohammed. Now, Mohammed is a soldier for Muslim causes. I told him, "One of the things the court will ask is, 'Will you return to the fight against the United States?'" His response was, "I've never been in a fight against the United States. As long as you are not telling me that I can't fight on the Saudi Arabian side of a war if the Shiia regime of Iran invades Saudi Arabia, then sure, I'll sign a declaration that I won't be adverse to the United States." I responded, "If that happens, the United States Marines will be fighting alongside you." This is a complex struggle, and Mohammed deserves his day in court. He deserves justice from the United States, and he hasn't had it. He is the most difficult case, in the sense that he was at least *on* a battlefield.

The other guys I'm representing were never on a battlefield, never close to a battlefield. One guy has a fiancée who has waited for him. She has just graduated from medical school and is a doctor in Yemen. When he returns home, as he will, he'll be married. He wants me to bring Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream to his wedding. He will return to a hero's welcome but not because he has ever been a terrorist. He hasn't.

He was captured coming across from Afghanistan, where he was an ambulance driver, taking medical supplies to the poor. As soon as the United States got into Afghanistan and started bombing, and things got really hot, he said, "I've got to go home!" He was there because of the longstanding Muslim tradition that you do charitable work in memory of your father. His father, a businessman dealing with medical supplies and pharmaceuticals, died when Fahdel was two. Fahdel decided, "What I can do in the memory of my father is to work with the Red Crescent," and that's what he did. He went to Afghanistan, was an assistant to an ambulance driver, and drove the ambulance sometimes, to deliver med-

ical supplies to poor people in and around Kabul. When the bombs starting falling and the Northern Alliance was coming down and attacking Kabul, he headed out. He was arrested on the border of Pakistan. The first time he ever saw snow was when he climbed up over the mountains to go into Pakistan.

He was wearing a Casio watch. The United States alleges, in its charges against him, that sometimes a Casio watch is used to set off explosive devices. But the United States has also admitted, in response to my discovery requests, that there are thousands upon thousands of people who wear Casio watches who are not terrorists and who wear their Casio watches for the purpose of telling time. And there is no evidence—I mean *no evidence*—in the record that Fahdel ever had any kind of training about how you use a Casio watch or any other kind of watch to set off explosive devices nor, perhaps most importantly, that he ever engaged in such activity. He told me—he was looking at my watch, a Rolex given to me by a client—"I should have been wearing a Rolex!" I said to him, "Inshallah," which means "God willing," and we both laughed.

Fahdel has a great sense of humor. He wants to go home. If he were my son, I would want him to go home. And he deserves to go home. He was cleared by the Department of Defense almost two years ago to go home! Why is he still sitting there? Maybe because the United States is embarrassed that it had kept him for five years with no basis, so "let's keep on truckin' and keep him there." He's sitting there because of bureaucratic denseness on our side, in a cell that is seven by twelve feet.

When I asked him, "Have you ever been tortured?" he said, "No, not unless you count the fact that I have been sitting in this cell for seven years, with nobody telling me why I'm sitting here. I would actually call that torture, but that's up to you." It's a pretty potent argument. I read a piece by a psychiatrist, in, I believe, the *New Yorker* a few weeks ago, that basically confirmed what my prisoner had told me—namely, that, when you keep someone in isolation over long periods of time, it is, in fact, torture. It has the psychological effect of severe torture. So that's Fahdel.

Let me tell you about Ala Ahmed. He grew up in Aden. I went to Yemen a couple of years ago and met his family. His brother is a surgeon's assistant. He was wearing chinos and a madras shirt and

carried a briefcase. He looks like an American kid, and so does his brother Ala, who is still sitting in Guantanamo. Well, we finally got his case to court, before Judge Gladys Kessler, whose forty-five-page opinion held that the government's evidence was of *no* value. The purported testimony against him was so deeply flawed that she gave it no credence. She held specifically that there was no evidence he had ever been trained in Afghanistan for any military activity, no evidence that he ever engaged in *any* military activity, and no evidence that he did anything other than live in a house where he was seeking further education in Pakistan, which has a reputation for high-quality education in Islam.

Yemenis and other Arabs have, for years, gone to Pakistan to further their education. He was captured in a house where twenty other people were living. A couple of them have purportedly admitted to being connected with Al Qaeda. The other eighteen were students who had no connection with any terrorist activity whatsoever. Judge Kessler characterized that evidence as a classic case of guilt by association. There is no evidence against Ala whatsoever that he ever engaged in *any* activity adverse to the United States. He had no weapons; he had no other paraphernalia; he had no terrorist literature; he had nothing on him when he was captured; there was nothing in his locker in the house; he was characterized by other people who were captured in that house as being a quiet, unassuming student of the Koran. He is known in the Guantanamo prison as "the sweet kid," and he is. He is a sweet kid.

Judge Kessler cleared him of *any* wrongdoing and ordered the United States to do everything in its power to release him. So he is still sitting there, pending the government's decision on whether to appeal the case. I hope they don't appeal it, because the Obama administration is trying to shut the place down. Ala ought to be home with his family. He has been at Guantanamo for seven and a half years with no justice, no fairness, no due process whatsoever.

One thing that has happened here, as I sometimes tell my kids, is a failure of imagination. If anything like what happened to Ala Ahmed happened to one of our kids or one of our acquaintances, people would be outraged. People would be up in arms, and it would take very little to get them active in trying to set this injustice right. But we have suffered, and we continue to suffer, from a failure of imagination, because we just can't put our own

kids in the place of Ala Ahmed. But guess what, he likes Ben & Jerry's ice cream. He wants to go home so that he can get married. He wants to see his brother again. Whenever I talk to his brother, which I do over the phone a couple of times a month, he weeps for Ala. He wants his brother to come home so he can embrace him.

We can't imagine our own children or our own acquaintances in Ala's position. "He has a funny-sounding name; he is from a far-away country; he is not like us." But it turns out that he *is* like us. And he has been sitting, at the pleasure and hospitality of the United States, in a seven-by-twelve cell for seven years! If you personalize this, it's a tragedy. It is a disgrace and a tragedy, what we have perpetrated.

Now, let me talk about the human cost of our torture policies. When I stood up before Mohammed's judge, a woman named Colleen Kollar-Kotelly, I said, "Judge, I have been trying cases in federal court for well over forty years, and I am about to tell you something that I thought I would never say. And that is that the United States of America has tortured my client." I proceeded to tell her some parts of the torture story. Other parts are yet to come in this trial. It's tragic, not only for Mohammed, but also for the United States, in that we have abrogated our principles of justice and fairness, and we have abrogated our commitment to the Constitution of the United States. We have done it all based on the notion that it makes us more secure.

I happen to adhere to Barack Obama's statement that it has not made us more secure but that we *can* pursue policies that keep us secure, that are consistent with our commitment to our Constitution and consistent with our highest principles. Here is what gives me hope. I'm telling these stories now to federal court judges, who are experienced and independent. Under our Constitutional system of separation of powers, they do not have to fear that, if they rule against the United States they will lose their jobs or lose their heads. When these federal judges hear these stories, they are outraged. The first case I argued that involved torture led the judge to order the United States to give me every piece of information about the torture that has occurred.

The connection for me between the policy and the behavior of agents of the United States is a deeply personal one. We've

been reading the memo, authored in part and signed by Jay Bybee, issued here in Washington, in the antiseptic corridors of power. I'm going to get to the Mormon involvement here in a minute. This memo is theoretical and antiseptic. We now have Dick Cheney leading the charge that these measures were necessary for the protection of the United States. But then I sit in a little, tiny cell in Guantanamo with a young man who has suffered torture and been severely abused by agents of the United States and it stops being antiseptic and theoretical. It comes home.

One of my partners, who was with me when the story of the Bybee memo was coming out, had to stand up and walk to the back wall of the cell. He was crying. I was trying not to cry, because it was important to elicit the full story, which we did.

Prince: This was as the client was describing the torture?

Rushforth: The client was describing the details of what had happened to him. I've tried many cases with my partner over the last twenty-five years. He asked me after this session, "Is there anything in that story that you don't believe?" I said, "Not a word." He said, "I agree. It is completely and entirely credible."

So you come from the antiseptic memo, which in itself makes you scratch your head, since it claims that abuse isn't torture unless it leads to organ failure or death. You wonder where in the world that came from. It comes out of a very dark place.

Prince: How about, "Torture is not torture unless it is intended to be"?

Rushforth: That's the second part of the Bybee memo's analysis. It basically defines torture out of existence. If the commander-in-chief does it for some other purpose than torture per se—anyone can say it is done for the purpose of gathering information—then it's not torture? Well, then, there's no such thing as torture. That's a theoretical debate. To me, it is chilling even on the page. I've had that debate with members of my ward, members of my stake, and they keep it antiseptic, theoretical. To me, the words themselves are chilling.

Prince: In that crowd of people, you don't necessarily represent the majority viewpoint.

Rushforth: I don't. I had a conversation with a friend in the Church who was describing prosecutorial abuse in the United States against a bunch of young men—evidence had been fabri-

cated about an alleged rape. It was a clear case of prosecutorial abuse.

Prince: For the purpose of promoting one's own political career.

Rushforth: For the purpose of ambition. My friend was absolutely outraged and went on for some time about "how could this happen in America?" I listened, and at the end of that—and it was true venting and outrage, and rightly so—I said, "I completely agree. This was outrageous, completely and totally outrageous. The reason that you are so outraged is because you can put your own sons in the position of these kids who were abused by this prosecutor." And in fact, some of them had gone to school with his kids. "It doesn't take a great leap of imagination to say, 'How could this happen? It could happen to my own kids!' Now, let me tell you about an abuse that's maybe a thousand times worse, and that is what has happened to my young clients in Guantanamo. The reason that you are not so outraged about this is a failure of imagination. It is a failure of us being able to say, 'That could be my kid.' Let me just tell you, that *could* be your kid. They are just the same. They like Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. They want to go home and get married and raise a family. They have been wrongly arrested. They have been wrongly detained for going on eight years, and they have been tortured by Americans."

Prince: And his response?

Rushforth: He listened. He listened. I think for a moment it had an impact. The problem is, as we go about our lives it is hard for us to hold that thought. It is hard for us to realize that, if it happens to these kids, it happens to us and to our kids. I feel privileged to have spent the last four or five years being in the middle of this legal fight because it keeps at the very top of my consciousness the qualities that are most precious about our country. Without those qualities, Mormonism could not have been restored. I couldn't practice my religion. We are in some respects, even today, a persecuted minority religion. See what happened to Mitt Romney's campaign. The majority in our country still sees Mormonism as a sect, and a kind of weird sect at that. But for our Steve Youngs and Bill Marriotts, we'd be seen as a bunch of weirdos. And yet, we are free to walk into our ward house and practice our religion because of

what is precious about America. And that is its freedoms. Yet we have perpetrated war crimes. We have committed torture, abuse, and religious abuse, as a country, against these young men and vilified them as the "worst of the worst."

When we torture people and deliberately offend against their religion, we surrender our moral authority. It's a terrible abrogation of what is most precious about our country. It flies in the face of what George Washington did when he was founding our country. It flies in the face of the freedom that made the restoration of the gospel possible.

Now, let me tell you of a conversation I had with one of my Jewish law partners. I came back and launched into a vitriolic tirade about America torturing these guys. Then I said, "The thing that hurts me very deeply is that four of the guys at the heart of this were Mormons, and I'm a Mormon kid from Utah." He listened patiently to my tirade, and then he said, "Brent, what I don't get is that you are so upset about Mormons being involved in this. What's the big deal? Mormons are just people." That really focused my thinking. His attitude was that it didn't surprise him. Why was I so upset by it? As far as he was concerned, Mormons are good people generally and he has no bone to pick with them, but he said, "Why would you think that Mormons would not be subject to the same kinds of forces of fear that are abroad in the land—that we are all subject to?" In other words, as he put it, "Morality is not an institutional thing. Morality is a personal thing. So it doesn't surprise me. What interests me is why you are so upset by it."

So I started thinking, "Why *am* I so upset by it?" I recognize that I'm making value judgements about the torture memo written or signed by Jay Bybee and about the participation of two Mormon psychologists in the development of the CIA's torture program, and another Mormon lawyer in the White House participating in the so-called legal analysis leading up to the adoption of these policies. I recognize that I could appear to be self-righteous. I don't want to be holier than thou, but that doesn't stop me from assessing what I think is wrong about this behavior. If I'm taking the risk of being judgmental and self-righteous, so be it.

But here's what upsets me. We, as Mormons, often behave and speak as if being Mormons raises us above normal human be-

havior and makes us immune to normal human influences. I understand that we attach a very high value to the restoration of the gospel. But Brigham Young once said something like this: "Mormonism doesn't make us better unless we *are* better." In other words, morality is personal, whether you have the benefit of the restored gospel in your life or not. The choice is yours; the choice is mine. My partner was right. Morality is not institutional.

My second point may be either parallel or even slightly contradictory. Another thing that upsets me stems from the Church's making moral pronouncements and giving us moral direction. Don't get me wrong, I think that's exactly what the Church should do; it doesn't hesitate to tell us in detail the rules of sexual morality, for example. I think that's important in our society, and I think it is a very legitimate function of the Church. The Church took a strong and decisive stance in favor of Proposition 8 in California by framing it as a moral, rather than a civil rights issue, although there is a strong civil rights component to the debate. However, the strength of its voice on Prop 8 stands in stark contrast to its silence on torture. That's the cause of my discomfort.

Torture carries both moral and political dimensions, the latter being in the area of national security. By speaking out so loudly on the moral aspects of homosexual marriage, the Church effectively shifted the attention of its members away from its civil rights aspects. But its absolute silence concerning the moral aspects of torture gives the strong impression that this is merely a political issue. Well, you can see the result of leaving it to the politicians. A strong statement by the Church condemning torture on moral grounds would have been heard, and it would have been a source of great pride and reassurance for me. Instead, the Church sat this one out, and that saddens me greatly.

That is disturbing to me, but as my Jewish friend would say, the morality of it is an individual choice. So let me speak as an individual. Does my Mormonism—does my Christianity—inform my attitude toward these prisoners in Guantanamo on a personal level? Does it inform my attitude toward my country torturing these guys? The answer is that it absolutely does. Does that sound as if I think it didn't inform Jay Bybee's judgment? Yes, it does,

and I think it's a tragedy. Now, I don't know Jay Bybee personally—

Prince: He was elders' quorum president in the Washington DC Singles Ward when I was in the bishopric, and he was a great elders' quorum president. He's a good friend.

Rushforth: I am informed that he is a very fine man and a fine and active member of the Church. He is now a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and I am told by others that he is a really good judge—all of which makes it deeply puzzling and deeply hurtful that he would write or sign a memorandum that is legally indefensible. It doesn't cite precedent. In fact, it ignores precedent. It is four degrees from the norm of any constitutional reasoning. At one point it talks about the President's authority as commander-in-chief, yet it doesn't mention the case of Youngstown Steel, which is the definitive case on that issue. When Harry Truman tried to take over the steel plants, the U.S. Supreme Court said, "You can't do it. It doesn't fall within your prerogatives as the commander-in-chief." Well, Bybee signed a memo that, without citing or analyzing that case, basically concludes: "The President can torture somebody if his intent is to garner information because that falls within the power of the commander-in-chief." It's preposterous, and it has led us, as Jane Mayer said in her book, to the dark side. Now we have Dick Cheney, who is fundamentally repudiated by the majority of the American people, saying that, "Well, without torture, we would be attacked again." It's fear mongering.

Prince: You and I have both read Jane Mayer's book, *The Dark Side* (New York: Doubleday, 2008). She outs three Mormons in it. Tim Flannigan was in the "Circle of Five," that was essentially the war council. There were two psychologists, James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen, who had developed techniques for protecting U.S. troops who might fall into the hands of enemies.

Rushforth: Yes, the SERE program: Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape.

Prince: Ironically, Jay Bybee had the highest profile among these Mormons, but Mayer apparently did not realize that he is a Latter-day Saint. As I recall, the three that she identified as Mormons were the only characters in the entire book whose religions she disclosed.

Rushforth: That's right. I have had many conversations with Jane Mayer. Her reporting is wonderful. It is very accurate and very enlightening.

Prince: The two psychologists were working together. The other two guys, one presumes, were just part of this overall government machine. I don't think that there was a Mormon cabal in there—just these four guys who were doing their thing, and the common denominator was that they were all Mormons.

Rushforth: Let me address that for a second—not because I've figured this out, because I haven't—but I've thought a lot about it because of the connection that I have lived through between the memo and what has happened to my clients. It is horrific. It is something I never thought I would encounter. And so, I have given a lot of thought about how fellow Mormons could, by my lights, be led so far astray, could come down on the dark side.

Prince: And not just go along, but lead.

Rushforth: Yes. Lead. Here is what I have come up with. It is worth about what you are paying for it. I grew up in Kaysville, Utah, a block away from Kaysville Second Ward's rock chapel, built from the rocks of the Wasatch Front. When you're knee-high to a grasshopper, you are told, "Don't question the Brethren." Of course, that's one of the fundamental principles of practical Mormonism. Gene England once showed me a letter from Bruce McConkie. Gene was one of the founders of this great journal, as was I. The sentence that jumped out and punched me in the nose read something like the following: "From Bruce McConkie to Gene England. It is my job to do the thinking. It is your job to do the obeying." To my own thinking, that is about as contrary to fundamental, underlying gospel precepts as it can be. We are thinking machines, as far as I am concerned. That is what we are supposed to do. And in fact? I don't want to get too far afield here; but in the beginning, eons ago when we were co-existent with our Heavenly Father that first war was fought for the purpose of our being able to think and choose. That's the purpose. So when somebody says, "It's my job to do the thinking and your job to do the obeying," I'm thinking, "Well, that comes out of a dark place. I don't understand that."Now the tension between critical thought and personal revelation on the one hand and obedience on the

other has always been with us. Joseph Smith was big on free agency *and* obedience (he reacted badly to disloyalty), so maybe the tension is part of the human condition. But we often err on the side of obedience and it can dull our capacity for critical thought at the very moment that our freedom may depend on it.

I once asked a friend who runs a major American corporation, was a stake president, and now is in the leadership of the Seventy, "When you show up at your work every day at 8:00, how deep into the day do you go before somebody says to you, 'That's really not a good idea'?" He said, "'Maybe an hour or two.'" I said, "Okay, now, how deep into your career as the stake president did you go before anyone said to you, 'You know, that's not really a good idea'?" He said, "It's never happened." That, I think, is a flaw in our structure and in our culture.

I've gotten a little far afield, but here is the point. When we are taught that you don't question the Brethren, that may be okay if you are talking about a prophet. I don't quite think it is because I still think you have to differentiate between when a prophet is speaking as a prophet and when he is kind of ruminating and hypothesizing. I think there's room for open, critical discussion even when you are dealing with a prophet, when he is discussing a topic from his human perspective. I think it's wonderful that your book, Greg, on David O. McKay has been so well received. You humanized David O. McKay in a way that, to me, was a brilliant treatment of what it means to be a prophet. He was a prophet, and he was also a human being. You can't be a prophet without being a human being. I thought the story you told was a wonderful story.

But even today, we have substantially lost the message of your book. Somehow we believe that unblinking obedience is what the gospel is about, and then we transfer that over to Republican politics, and we say, "If the commander-in-chief does it, it's legal," as Richard Nixon put it. And that's basically what the torture memorandum says.

Now, fear is a powerful thing. When I get on the commuter train between Washington and New York and somebody blows it up in Philadelphia, we're going to be gripped by fear again. It doesn't take much. But fear is what has led us to the dark side. I believe that it led us to the abrogation of our principles, to the violation of our Constitution, and to the stench and tragedy of

Guantanamo. Do I think it is in the highest tradition of—this is the part that sounds self-righteous, but I'm going to say it—our religion to try to bring justice and fairness to these prisoners in Guantanamo? Yes, I do.

I have talked with them about my religion. In fact, quite remarkably, one of the reasons they trust me so much is that they see me as a man of faith. It's a different faith, but it's not completely alien. Mohammed and I have talked about the fact that Abraham is the father of his religion and also of mine. My faith informs what I am doing in Guantanamo. It certainly makes me feel like a powerful advocate for fairness for these guys, for fairness under the Constitution and fairness under our system of justice. We're having some success in that regard.

Let me bring it back to where I have come regarding what has happened here. When you are taught that you cannot question, and you are even told you cannot think, then there is a great danger—and that's what I think we may be seeing here—that somehow, when you are in other corridors of power, you transfer the notion that when somebody speaks with authority, you must not question it. Rather, you must rationalize that power. That's what I think happened here with that memo, which rationalizes a horrific abuse of power, a fundamentally unconstitutional abuse of power, one that goes contrary to George Washington's founding principles on which this country is based.

I think that the Mormon principle—which I've explained I see as problematic even in that context—of "You don't think. Your job is to obey authority" got transferred from the religious setting to other corridors of power, namely secular power, the exercise of power by the commander-in-chief, and bingo, you have a horrific rationalization of power. You combine that with personal ambition, and you combine that with the Mormon notion that only the Republican Party is blessed by God, and then you have a real toxic mix.

Prince: There is one other element here. This issue, rather than being a debate between two political parties, is cast in unambiguous terms as good versus evil.

Rushforth: Good versus evil. Even in our own society, if you questioned this unfettered exercise of power and authority, you

were a traitor. My friend who first called me when we were getting involved in this, received a death threat. I haven't, but another close friend later played me a very chilling voice-mail that he had received on his office phone. It called him a coward and traitor, and said to him, "Just know that I am watching the back of your head." It was really quite chilling. It's the same point you're making. It wasn't a debate between two political parties or two points of view. It was, "Either you are with us or against us, and if you are against us, you are a coward and a traitor."

Prince: It's a practical and horrific outcome of what we heard in 1964 from Barry Goldwater: "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice."

Rushforth: Yes. It is a replay. And have no doubt about this: These are extreme views. Jay Bybee's memo is the expression of an extreme Constitutional view. I can't predict what will happen. I do think the great debate that is taking place because President Obama has backed strongly and explicitly away from torture and abuse—especially with Dick Cheney fueling the fire—will not go away any time soon. I understand the argument that we have to move forward. But frankly, you can't move forward until you understand and bring daylight to what has just happened. We can't just act as if what has just happened is the ordinary course of business. It isn't. What has happened is a horrific deviation. I believe that it's a criminal and unconstitutional deviation from our core principles. It is more dangerous to us than anything the terrorists can do to us. In fact, it is the worst thing that the terrorists can do to us—namely, to scare us into walking away from our principles. That is what the torturers would have us do.

I don't mean to sound self-righteous, and I'm sure that a lot of people will think I am, but I'm very proud of my Mormon heritage. My Mormon heritage has led me to fight hard for the right of my clients, not only to receive due process but to be faithful Muslims without being a target of United States torture and abuse. I like to think that my motivation comes, in part, because of my Mormon heritage. And so, it hurts me, it pains me to think that Mormons have become so deeply involved in the dark side of things.

Prince: Is Judge Kessler's ruling a landmark for this whole scenario? Is this the first major ruling that goes in that direction?

Rushforth: It's not the first. There are other, very fine federal

district court judges who are addressing these *habeas* cases. But I believe it is a wonderful opinion. It certainly, in some ways, is the most comprehensive.

Prince: Is it precedent-setting?

Rushforth: It doesn't bind the other judges. Only the Court of Appeals binds the other federal district court trial judges. But she is a very fine and highly respected judge, and so we hope that it will have a very strong, profound impact.

I wish you could have been in Judge Kessler's courtroom. It was a classified hearing, so the doors were shut, and everyone in the courtroom had security clearance. Judge Kessler read her opinion to Ala as he was sitting in Guantanamo. It was a very powerful moment. You had a federal district court judge, dressed in her black robes, sitting up on her bench, in all the majesty of the U.S. justice system, reading to this prisoner her analysis of why the United States government has never had grounds to hold him as a prisoner. I was extremely proud of my country. In wartime, a United States federal district judge, under Article III of the Constitution, sat on her bench and told the commander-in-chief of our armed forces, "You cannot hold this prisoner. You have no grounds to hold this prisoner." That was a powerful moment, and it deeply affected me.

I deeply believe that, given the flaws in the human heart and the flaws in the human mind and all of these forces to which we are all subject, our system of government, our system of justice, and the separation of powers is an inspired system. The only reason I can travel to Guantanamo and can provide legal counsel to these prisoners is because of our system of separation of powers. The only reason that the United States military at Guantanamo gives me any deference whatsoever is because I have the power to bring them before an independent judiciary.

I wish that our readers could walk with me into these prison cells at Guantanamo and experience the power of our system of justice. It is a remarkable system. It has broken down under the weight of the fear that followed the 9/11 attacks, and we are just now beginning to see it rise again and assert the independent power of the judiciary. It's a wonderful thing. It's what makes America, America. It's so interesting, this trip, Greg. There is a

real, working telegraph system within the prison camps. The prisoners know almost instantaneously when something like this occurs. As I walked into the prison camps this last week, the power of what happened when Judge Kessler read her opinion to Ala Ahmed was palpable. A lot of it gets attributed to me, and that's very gratifying. My guys were infused with the sense that what I was doing for them and what the courts can do for them is extraordinary. Despite all this fear of the military, the United States judiciary can say, "The United States commander-in-chief has no power to hold you." I wish that everyone could feel the *palpable* power of that realization. It was pretty extraordinary.

So I'm hopeful. And having just come back from Guantanamo forty-eight hours ago, I have to say that I'm hopeful about Guantanamo, too. It was powerful to go striding into the prison camps with Judge Kessler's opinion in my pocket. They call each other "the brothers." Well, that day, we were all brothers.

Update: On Saturday, September 26, 2009, Ala Ahmed was reunited with his family.

Six Voices on Proposition 8: A Roundtable

Introductory note by Russell Arben Fox: In November of 2008, I posted some reflections on my blog about California's Proposition 8 (http://inmedias.blogspot.com/2008/11/personal-thoughts-on-proposition-8.html). It started a long conversation with many other individuals, some Mormon and some not, some California residents and some not, some straight and some gay, some married and some single, some scholars of philosophy, religion, government, and law, others just passionate and informed observers of the whole controversy.

It occurred to several of us that it would be valuable to put together, in a somewhat formal way, a sampling of our conversation, as well as to enlist some additional views from others who hadn't participated directly but who had something worth hearing nonetheless. The result is the following roundtable, a symposium of voices, all speaking briefly one way or another, and from a variety of ideological, religious, and intellectual perspectives, about Proposition 8, same-sex marriage, homosexuality, Christian doctrine, Mormonism and Mormon political activism, the nature and symbolic significance of marriage, the politics and constitutionality of marriage laws, and the personal, professional, and spiritual conflicts which this particular debate–certainly far from the last our nation will see–gave rise to.

The contributors are, in alphabetical order: Lindsey Chambers, a Ph.D. candidate in philosophy at the University of California–Los Angeles; Russell Arben Fox, an associate professor and director of the political science program at Friends University in Wichita, Kansas; Mary Ellen Robertson, director of Symposia and Outreach for the Sunstone Education Foundation, who lives in Ogden, Utah; Robert K. Vischer, an associate professor at the University of St. Thomas Law School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and author of Conscience and the Common Good: Reclaiming the Space between Person and State *(Cambridge, England:*

Cambridge University Press, 2009); David Watkins, a lecturer in political science at Seattle University; and Kaimipono Wenger, an assistant professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego, California.

Two Models of Political Engagement

David Watkins

The hard-fought campaign over Proposition 8, which in November 2008 rescinded the legal right to marriage for same-sex couples in California, is evidence of an important political success for religious conservative political groups who support and seek to advance traditional marriage. Unfortunately, it's a victory they can't appreciate and perhaps can't even entirely comprehend.

On the one hand, they won an electoral victory. Proposition 8 passed with a narrow 52 percent majority of the vote. But their true accomplishment doesn't turn on this particular outcome. Indeed, this narrow accomplishment required a tremendous drain on the limited resources of money, political capital, and good will. The construction of a majority coalition supporting Proposition 8 necessitated the deployment of a number of misleading arguments in which opponents were demonized and in which dubious claims about the legal ramifications of same-sex marriage for churches were made. Moreover, the vote took place at what appears to be very nearly the last possible moment such a coalition could be put together in California. The demographics and direction of existing public opinion suggest that a majority coalition against marriage for same-sex couples will soon be a thing of the past. While religious conservative opponents of marriage for same-sex couples have figured out how to mobilize existing opposition, fears, and concerns, they have not developed a successful strategy for halting or reversing the momentum that exists for marriage rights for same-sex couples.

But the real political victory here—the one that religious conservatives can't yet appreciate or comprehend—has little to do with the fact that Proposition 8 managed to put together a slim

majority coalition. The arguments they have been making for several decades now about the value of marriage have had some considerable success, as evidenced by the priority and value now being placed on marriage. As George Chauncey argues, in the early years of the modern gay rights movement, known as the gay liberation phase, marriage rights as a political goal occupied a marginal position.[1]

While test cases were launched for same-sex marriage (same-sex couples applied for marriage licenses in Louisville and Minneapolis in 1970), a substantial portion of the leadership of gay and lesbian organizations found this avenue unappealing. Gay liberation was tied to sexual liberation and a radical critique of the existing social order, both of which were seen as having little to do with marriage. Lesbian feminists in the gay liberation movement often found marriage even less appealing as a political goal: It was a tool of the master, a patriarchal institution, something to be brought down rather than reformed. For many early activists, focusing on marriage rights gave too much value to marriage and served as an insufficiently radical and transformational goal for the gay liberation movement.

Obviously, less than forty years later, marriage has moved from the margins to the center of gay rights politics and activism. Chauncey suggests two important reasons for this shift, both occurring in the 1980s: the AIDS epidemic and a lesbian "baby boom." In the former case, end-of-life decisions or property inheritance normally reserved for spouses fell legally into the hands of family members who had, in many cases, abandoned their sons and brothers in their time of illness and who now rejected the wishes or seized the homes of the partner who had cared for their dying relative. Without the legal rights and recognition that go along with marriage, the relationships and families that gays and lesbians had only recently found the space to live publicly and openly were vulnerable.

But Chauncey's account is incomplete, I think. If practical matters regarding legal rights and privileges served as an impetus for the turn toward marriage rights, it has become something more than that. It has become a movement that seeks recognition for the families and lives that have been created on equal footing.

In formulating the demand for equal recognition, marriage has become something worth being equal to. If not, why not simply accept the civil union compromise? The recognition that marriage has a positive, stabilizing, even conservatizing influence has become part of the argument for marriage rights for same-sex couples. Some version of David Brooks's claim that "we should regard it as scandalous that two people could claim to love each other and not want to sanctify their love with marriage and fidelity"[2] has found support in the gay and lesbian community.

This "conservative case" for marriage rights for same-sex couples is not a new argument. It has been made by, among others, Jonathan Rauch, Andrew Sullivan, David Brooks, and the editors of *The Economist*.[3] My purpose here is to consider why this argument has little or no purchase in conservative Christian circles. It seems to me there are two possible modes of culturally conservative and broadly traditionalist political engagement. I'll call these the influence model and the control model. In the influence model of traditionalist political engagement, the goal is first and foremost to make the case, through words or actions, that some traditional modes of living, habits, norms, and values have function, purpose, and beauty that are in jeopardy of being diminished, obscured, or lost. The goal of the influence model is to influence the course of social, political, and cultural change in a way that the value of the traditional is not dismissed but incorp- orated and transmitted into the futures we build together.

In the second, or control model, of conservative political engagement, attention fixates on a particular mode of being which is seen to best embody the values and norms they seek to protect. Those employing this model attempt to control social and political outcomes to fit their image of life in that particular fashion. They undertake political engagement, not to influence the shape of future change, but to prevent it to the extent that such change might take us further away from the ideal-historical mode of living, which is usually a highly idealized version of a time in the recent past.

A prominent example of this approach can be found in David Blankenhorn's *The Future of Marriage* (New York: Encounter Books, 2007), a book heavily promoted by the Family Research Council, a prominent conservative group working against same-sex marriage rights. On the first page, Blankenhorn recounts his

first serious attempt, as a long-standing advocate of marriage's value, to grapple with the issue of same-sex marriage. He explicitly rejects the idea that his role is merely to influence future developments in the meaning and practice of marriage. While his tone is measured and he makes a conscious effort to consider the potential benefits of same-sex marriage, he nevertheless concludes that failure to control this particular feature of marriage will have substantial deleterious consequences: the social devaluation of marriage, higher divorce rates, more children growing up without fathers, a loss of religious freedom, and possibly polygamy and group marriage, among many others.

Christian conservatives have had some notable success in their arguments about marriage as viewed from the influence model. But as demonstrated by Proposition 8 and the high priority placed on resisting and turning back the right for same-sex couples to marry (and in many other states, though not in California, civil unions as well), Christian conservatives are stuck in the control mode of political engagement. One of the many problems with this mode of political engagement is that it is inevitably quixotic. It's based on a sociology that's entirely too static for modernity; outcomes such as the future of marriage can be influenced but cannot be controlled.

The only victories such a mode of political engagement can produce are like the electoral victory of Proposition 8: sure to be fleeting in content, alienating, and divisive. It provokes bad arguments. Tying the case against same-sex marriage to complementarian theories of gender will be unpersuasive to the increasing number of opposite-sex partners whose marriages are based on egalitarianism, but the argument is required by the nature of the idealized historical moment in the history of marriage which they've made the focus of their political vision.

But the inevitable political failures of the control mode of engagement have another consequence: They reinforce a sense of distinction and separation between the Christian community and the secular world. This attitude, however, leads to a retreat from the world, from political engagement, and from democratic politics. Whatever the reason Christian conservatives are stuck in control mode, it is unfortunate, as it undervalues their contributions

and commits them to an oppositional politics that all too often and too quickly turns ugly. Moreover, the influence model is a form of political engagement best suited for pluralism: It allows success at influencing those who do not share all elements of your comprehensive worldview.

I've often said that one of the most compelling reasons that marriage rights for same-sex couples should be legally and socially recognized is exceedingly simple: They do what married couples do, and live as married couples live. They have built lives together, cared and sacrificed for each other, and raised children together. In these substantive ways, in the ways that make up the social practices of marriage, their commitment to the values of marriage is as strong as that of legally married couples. But it's not the same: Their commitment is, in an important sense, greater. Opposite-sex couples often stumble into marriage; it is, for many, just doing what's expected and taking the path of least resistance. Same-sex couples don't have that luxury; the project of building a life together as married couples do—emotionally, socially, financially, and within a religious community—faces far more substantial obstacles. That so many choose to overcome those barriers and build these relationships can just as plausibly be taken as a sign of health and staying power for the institution of marriage.

It is an odd consequence of the control model of political engagement that, even as it makes the case for marriage, it presents marriage as a weak institution, able to thrive only if buttressed by a specific set of gender norms and roles. In defending marriage, they end up vastly underselling it.

This is why the concern that same-sex marriage amounts to a "forced redefinition" of a venerable social institution, thus potentially weakening it and reducing its appeal, is misplaced. To the extent that marriage is being redefined, that redefinition is not taking place exclusively in the legal and political realm. It has been going on for decades now, long before any state court or legislature considered the issue. Same-sex couples have been building lives together as members of communities, families, and churches. These changes are social and cultural as well as legal and are no more "forced" than social change normally is. This change has been influenced positively by the conservative, traditional case for mar-

riage. I look forward to the day when conservative defenders of the value of marriage are ready to celebrate with me.

Notes

1. George Chauncey, *Why Marriage? The History Shaping Today's Debate over Marriage Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

2. David Brooks, "The Power of Marriage," *New York Times,* November 22, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/22/opinion/22BROO.html (accessed July 4, 2009).

3. Jonathan Rauch, *Gay Marriage: Why It Is Good for Gays, Good for Straights, and Good for America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004); Andrew Sullivan, "The Conservative Case," in Andrew Sullivan, ed., *Gay Marriage: Pro and Con* (New York: Vintage, 1997), 146–54; David Brooks, "The Power of Marriage"; *The Economist* editorial board, "Let Them Wed," *The Economist*, January 4, 1996, http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=2515389 (accessed July 4, 2009).

The Church's Use of Secular Arguments

Kaimipono Wenger

One fascinating development in the Proposition 8 debate in California was the extent to which secular arguments—involving legal, political, and sociological claims—came to take center stage, even in announcements from the Church itself. The Church's initial forays into the same-sex marriage debate are, of course, much older than Proposition 8. A decade earlier, when Hawaii temporarily instituted civil unions for same-sex couples,[1] the Church issued "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." The proclamation drew on ideas of divine intent and accountability, stating: "The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan," and "We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God." While warning of relatively vague "calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets," the proclamation made no specific political, legal, or sociological claims.[2]

Church statements during the Proposition 22 campaign in

2000 included the use of more secular arguments than had been deployed earlier.[3] The Prop 8 debate refined and built on this precedent. During the Proposition 8 debate, Church leaders and representatives made a number of political theory arguments, mostly centered on the question of democratic legitimacy; they also made a number of specific sociological arguments relating to same-sex marriage, and further made a number of legal arguments, mostly predictions of problematic legal consequences if Proposition 8 failed to pass. The extensive use of secular arguments meant that the Church necessarily gave less emphasis to moral, spiritual, scriptural, or theological claims.

There may be disadvantages to this rhetorical move. The Church's primary role in modern society has not been that of legal or political analyst or social scientist; to the extent that the Church relies on those kinds of arguments, it is working outside its expertise. In addition, a Church position based on legal, political, or sociological arguments is vulnerable to counter-arguments within each of those disciplines. Indeed, it turns out that some of the Church's secular arguments about Proposition 8 are problematic for a variety of specific reasons.

1. Political Arguments. In the Proposition 8 context, the Church and individual members made a number of political arguments hinging on a particular idea of democracy and the role of courts. The Church's very first official statement to congregations opened with a naked political-theory argument:

> In March 2000 California voters overwhelmingly approved a state law providing that "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California." The California Supreme Court recently reversed this vote of the people. On November 4, 2008, Californians will vote on a proposed amendment to the California state constitution that will now restore the March 2000 definition of marriage approved by the voters.[4]

The Church's "Divine Institution of Marriage" press release of August 13, 2008, made similar arguments, stating:

> The people of the United States—acting either directly or through their elected representatives—have recognized the crucial role that traditional marriage has played and must continue to play in American society if children and families are to be protected and moral values propagated . . . .

> In contrast, those who would impose same-sex marriage on American society have chosen a different course. Advocates have taken their case to the state courts, asking judges to remake the institution of marriage that society has accepted and depended upon for millennia. Yet, even in this context, a broad majority of courts—six out of eight state supreme courts—have upheld traditional marriage laws. Only two, Massachusetts and now California, have gone in the other direction, and then, only by the slimmest of margins—4 to 3 in both cases.[5]

Individual members also employed this sort of argument. Notably, author Orson Scott Card—appointed in early 2009 to the political group National Organization for Marriage[6]—wrote in June 2008 for the *Mormon Times* section of the *Deseret News* and published on the section's website that same-sex marriage decisions in Massachusetts and California "[mark] the end of democracy in America."[7] He elaborated: "No constitution in the United States has ever granted the courts the right to make vast, sweeping changes in the law to reform society. Regardless of their opinion of homosexual 'marriage,' every American who believes in democracy should be outraged that any court should take it upon itself to dictate such a social innovation without recourse to democratic process." Card went on to label the California court "dictator-judges" and wrote that "any government that attempts to change [marriage] is my mortal enemy. I will act to destroy that government and bring it down."[8]

There are serious problems with this political rhetoric in the Prop 8 context. First, this simplistic political analysis largely misses the point of courts in a democracy. Theorists from James Madison to Alexander Bickel, John Hart Ely, and Bruce Ackerman have explained the complicated role of courts in a democracy.[9] While there is some disagreement on specifics, most theorists accept Madison's influential idea that minority groups must be protected from "tyranny of the majority."[10] Given the danger that majority groups will overreach, the role of courts becomes a "counter-majoritarian" safety valve to protect vulnerable groups. Cases like *Brown v. Board of Education* illustrate this principle. *Brown* involved the undoing of majority-passed laws and exactly the sorts of "vast, sweeping changes" that Card decries—and it's a damn good thing that it did.

This function of the courts is part of our constitutional system of checks and balances, which Church leaders have often called inspired. And in fact, the Church itself has drawn on exactly that understanding in the past. Brigham Young and other Church leaders made clear their views that marriage laws were not subject to simple majority definition if those laws affected minority rights. Early Church leaders repeatedly asked the courts, in cases like *Reynolds v. United States*, to override majority rules about marriage.[11] The recent shift to a simple majoritarianism ignores the Church's own prior understanding of courts as providing counter-majoritarian protection for minority groups.

A second problem with this political argument is its limited scope. It assumes a world where same-sex marriage is always imposed on an unwilling majority by divided courts. However, the political winds are shifting, and it is not clear how much longer that description will apply. The 2009 unanimous Iowa decision[12] suggests that the era of 4–3 court decisions may be a thing of the past. Even more importantly, state legislatures in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine recently enacted same-sex marriage laws.[13] And given the demographics of Prop 8 support and the huge drop between Prop 22 support (61 percent) and Prop 8 support (52 percent) just eight years later, it seems quite likely that California voters themselves will also pass a same-sex marriage law within perhaps the next half dozen years. In a world of legislatively enacted same-sex marriage, majoritarian arguments lose their bite.

2. Sociological Arguments. The Church also made a series of specific sociological arguments against same-sex marriage. To some extent, these echo the Proclamation on the Family's warning of calamities, but they add far more detail. For instance, the "Divine Institution of Marriage" press release cites specific findings from David Popenoe, David Blankenhorn, Maggie Gallagher, and other researchers.[14] However, the sociological evidence that children suffer from being raised in same-sex households is far from unanimous or conclusive, and a number of recent studies support the opposite view. Those studies have proven crucial in court decisions; for instance, the Iowa Supreme Court in *Varnum v. Brien*, after reviewing the studies cited on both sides, concluded: "The research appears to strongly support the conclusion that same-sex couples foster the same wholesome environment as

opposite-sex couples and suggests that the traditional notion that children need a mother and a father to be raised into healthy, well adjusted adults is based more on stereotype than anything else."[15]

As the number of same-sex marriage increases, abundant evidence will be added. If new evidence fails to support the Church's view—that is, if the evidence shows that children raised by married same-sex couples are not disadvantaged—such findings will further undermine the sociological arguments the Church has made against same-sex marriage.

3. Legal Arguments. Church leaders and members also made a number of legal claims regarding Proposition 8. For instance, the "Divine Institution of Marriage" press release included legal claims relating to adoption agencies, tax exemptions, and school curricula.[16] An October 8 broadcast to Church members in California went further. Elder Quentin L. Cook, a former California attorney, reiterated and detailed the claims relating to school curriculum, adoptions, and tax exemptions. Elder David A. Bednar, an educator, extended the claims still further, stating that "there could be sanctions against the teaching of our doctrine" unless Proposition 8 passed.[17]

These kinds of claims received even more elaboration in a widely circulated document, "Six Consequences the Coalition Has Identified if Proposition 8 Fails."[18] This document was circulated at the ward and family level through email and blogs.[19] And of course, LDS law professor Richard Peterson of Pepperdine University made similar legal claims about school curricula in a series of extremely popular political advertisements ("Think it can't happen? It's already happened!") which were widely credited with turning the tide among undecided voters.[20]

However, many writers, including Mormon attorney Morris Thurston, have demonstrated that those legal claims range from dubious to flat-out wrong.[21] For instance, popular emails (not to mention General Authority broadcasts!) claimed that Catholic Charities was forced out of Massachusetts because of same-sex marriage. The "Six Consequences" document states: "Religious adoption agencies will be challenged by government agencies to give up their long-held right to place children only in homes with both a mother and a father. Catholic Charities in Boston already

closed its doors in Massachusetts because courts legalized same-sex marriage there."[22] But in fact, this example is inapposite. As the *Boston Globe* has detailed, the Catholic Charities investigation dates back to 2000 (four years prior to the *Goodridge* case which legalized same-sex marriage) and was based on state anti- discrimination law, not marriage law.[23]

Claims that Church leaders will be sued for hate speech or that the Church will lose its tax-exempt status are also legally dubious at best. A letter from fifty-nine professors of constitutional law and family law at California law schools criticized the use of "misleading claims about the current state of the law or about what Proposition 8 would do," and stated directly: "Prop 8 would have no effect on the tax exemptions of churches" and "Prop 8 would have no effect on teaching or the protection of parental rights already provided by state law."[24]

For that matter, the *Marriage Cases* opinion itself—which established same-sex marriage in California to begin with—belies some of the more alarmist claims. It states outright: "No religion will be required to change its religious policies or practices with regard to same-sex couples, and no religious officiant will be required to solemnize a marriage in contravention of his or her religious beliefs. (Cal. Const., art. I, § 4.)"[25]

In addition to being of dubious veracity, the legal claims, like the sociological claims, are ultimately forward-looking in nature and thus vulnerable to being positively disproved over time. With half a dozen same-sex marriage jurisdictions, it will be easy to see whether the predicted parade-of-horribles (Church leaders sued for hate speech, tax exemptions revoked, Elder Bednar's unspecified "sanctions against the teaching of our doctrine") will, in fact, occur. Most legal scholars are confident that no such results will take place. Massachusetts has allowed same-sex marriage for five years now, and there have been no lawsuits against the Church for failure to marry same-sex couples, no hate speech prosecutions against Church leaders, and certainly no gay weddings in the Boston Temple.

If the predicted dire consequences do not occur, their absence will further undermine the alarmist arguments made by Church leaders and members during the Prop 8 debate which depended in part on legal claims. Indeed, some recent develop-

ments, like the passage of a same-sex marriage bill in New Hampshire with explicit protection for religious organizations,[26] suggest that predicted clashes between same-sex marriage and religious freedom are far from inevitable.

Overall, the use of secular arguments, whether legal, political, or sociological, was probably a winning strategy for the short term and very likely helped to pass Prop 8. But the transitory and vulnerable nature of many of these secular arguments means that they are unlikely to be effective as long-term building blocks in a Church strategy on same-sex marriage.

Notes

1. The Hawaii timeline is complicated. The Hawaii Supreme Court first ruled in 1993 that the same-sex marriage ban might be discriminatory. This led to further court hearings in 1995 in which the Church sought to intervene. During this time, the Church and Church leaders made several statements about same-sex marriage and homosexuality, one of them being the Proclamation. The Church was not allowed to intervene in the court cases, and ultimately Hawaii ended up adopting a Reciprocal Partnership statute instead of marriage. See generally "Chronology of Mormon/LDS Involvement in Same-Sex Marriage Politics," http:/ /www.mormonsocialscience.org/?q=node/59 (accessed July 3, 2009).

2. This may be expected, because the proclamation is presented as a revelation or quasi-revelation. However, as this essay will discuss, the Church took a different approach in the Prop 8 debate years later.

3. See generally Robert Salladay, "Mormons Now Target California: Church Asks Members to Back State Ballot Initiative," *San Francisco Examiner*, July 4, 1999, A-1, discussing Church efforts in the Proposition 22 campaign. The Church also contributed a significant amount to the constitutional amendment campaign in Alaska. See Bob Mims, "Church Funds Initiative to Ban Same-Sex Marriages in Alaska," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 5, 1998.

4. See "Preserving Traditional Marriage and Strengthening Families," letter from the First Presidency to be read to California congregations on June 29, 2008, http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/california-and-same-sex-marriage (accessed July 3, 2009).

5. See "The Divine Institution of Marriage," Church Press Release, August 13, 2008, http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/the-divine-institution-of-marriage (accessed July 3, 2009).

6. Lisa Riley Roche, "Guv Draws Scrutiny over Stance on Civil Un -

ions," *Deseret News*, April 20, 2009, http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705298582/Guv-draws-scrutiny-over-stance-on-civil-unions.html (accessed July 3, 2009).

7. Orson Scott Card, "State's Job Is Not to Redefine Marriage," *Mormon Times* (section of *Deseret News*), July 24, 2008, http:// www.mormontimes.com/mormon_voices/orson_scott_card/?id=3237 (accessed July 3, 2009).

8. Ibid.

9. See, e.g., John Hart Ely, *Democracy and Distrust: A Theory of Judicial Review* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980); Alexander Bickel, *The Least Dangerous Branch: The Supreme Court at the Bar of Politics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986).

10. Madison's views are expressed most strongly in two of the *Federalist Papers*, No. 10 and No. 51.

11. See generally Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

12. *Varnum v. Brien*, 763 N.W.2d 862 (Iowa 2009).

13. Edith Honan, "Power Struggle Impedes New York Gay Marriage Vote," *Washington Post*, June 29, 2009 (discussing recent developments in the legal status of same-sex marriage in different states), http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/29/AR2009062903079.html (accessed July 3, 2009).

14. "The Divine Institution of Marriage."

15. *Varnum v. Brien*, 763 N.W.2d at 899n.26.

16. "The Divine Institution of Marriage."

17. The October 8 Broadcast is available in video form at the lds.org website, in two parts. The Bednar/young adult portion is at http://www.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/media/mediaplayer.swf?media=http://broadcast.lds.org/newsroom/video/flv/bednar_edit02_150k.flv&type=FLV , and the Ballard/Cook/Clayton portion is at http://www.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/media/mediaplayer.swf?media=http://broadcast.lds.org/newsroom/video/flv/California_Broadcast_8Oct08.flv&type=FLV (each accessed July 3, /2009). I have not been able to locate any official transcript of the broadcasts. Various websites have published unofficial transcripts, including at http://wikileaks.org/wiki/LDS_church_Proposition_8_broadcast_transcript,_8_Oct_2008 (accessed July 3, 2009).

18. The document as popularly circulated was not attributed to any author. The document is available online in a number of locations on both sides of the debate. See, e.g., http://protectingmarriage.

wordpress.com/2008/09/14/six-consequences-the-coalition-has-identified-if-proposition-8-fails/ (accessed July 3, 2009).

19. I personally received the document several times in email from family and ward members. This seems to have been a common pattern, especially in California. See also Morris Thurston, Guest Post: "Rebuttal to 'Six Consequences if Proposition 8 Fails,'" Mormons for Marriage blog, September 18, 2008, http://mormonsformarriage.com/?p=35 (accessed July 3, 2009). He notes that the "Six Consequences" document was circulating among members, especially in California.

20. Michael Foust, "Historic Campaign Secured Prop 8's Passage in California," *Baptist Press*, November 6, 2008, http://www.sbcbaptistpressorg/bpnews.asp?id=29277 (accessed July 3, 2009), asks, "How did supporters of Proposition 8 manage, in a mere seven weeks, to turn a 17-point polling deficit into a five-point Election Day victory?" The answer? "A number of factors, led by three main ones: a solid consistent message about the impact of gay marriage on public schools, better-than-expected fundraising and historical cooperation among various religious groups to back the measure and get out the vote." Peterson's commercials are available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOWjhqT_me8 (school curriculum) and http://www. youtube. com/watch?v=fNaHpHl3t8g ("whether you like it or not"). Many Pepperdine alumni expressed discomfort with Peterson's identification as a Pepperdine professor in the ads. See Jaimie Franklin, "Proposition 8 Ad Angers Students, Pep Intervenes," *Pepperdine Graphic*, October 2, 2008, http://graphic.pepperdine.edu/news/2008/2008-10-02-gay-marriage.htm (accessed July 3, 2009).

21. Morris A. Thurston, "A Commentary on the Document 'Six Consequences . . . if Proposition 8 Fails,'" http://www.mormonsformarriage.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/mat-responses-to-six-consequences-if-prop-8-fails-rev-1-1.pdf (accessed July 3, 2009). Thurston's essay shows in detail how "Six Consequences" misstates fact and law in its assertions.

22. "Six Consequences."

23. See "Catholic Charities Stuns State, Ends Adoptions," *Boston Globe*, March 11, 2006; "Seven Quit Charity over Policy of Bishops—Deplore Effort to Exclude Same-Sex Adoptions," *Boston Globe*, March 2, 2006.

24. The press release was printed by a number of news organizations. See, e.g., Press Release, "Letter from Legal Scholars about Proposition 8—Leading Legal Scholars Reject Prop 8 Arguments," *San Diego Union Tribune*, October 30, 2008, http://www.signonsandiego.

com/news/politics/voterguide/20081030-prop8letter.html (accessed July 3, 2009).

25. *In re Marriage Cases*, 43 Cal.4th 757, 855 (2008).

26. Abby Goodnough, "New Hampshire Legalizes Same-Sex Marriage," *New York Times*, June 3, 2009, notes that the final bill included extensive protection for religious organizations.

How We Talk about Marriage (and Why It Matters)

Robert K. Vischer

A decade from now, same-sex marriage will likely be the law in a majority of states. Given the domino effect of legislatures embracing a cause that has successfully claimed the mantle of equality, coupled with the stark generational shift in views on same-sex marriage, our national conversation seems headed toward a resolution. Nevertheless, the conversation will remain vital to our country, not just in terms of the end result, but in terms of the way the conversation unfolds. It matters very much how we talk about same-sex marriage, as well as how we talk about those who reject the idea of same-sex marriage.

To begin to understand why the conversation is so difficult, we need to understand why opponents of same-sex marriage—particularly those whose opposition is rooted in their Christian beliefs—have struggled to halt the swing in public opinion. Two factors that have little to do with the issue's merits have nevertheless created nearly insurmountable obstacles for Christians hoping to persuade their fellow citizens that marriage must be limited to a husband and wife.

First, Christians in general have been much more outspoken about same-sex marriage than about other threats to the sanctity of marriage: no-fault divorce, the rise of prenuptial agreements, popular culture's pervasive denigration of marriage, et cetera. I recently spoke to a group of conservative evangelical Christians about same-sex marriage, and this is the image I used to convey the GLBT community's distrust of Christians on this issue: "Imagine

that marriage is a house, and the Christian is sitting on the front porch. The house is engulfed in flames. A gay person is walking down the sidewalk, lighting a cigarette with a match. The Christian stands up and yells, 'Hey, don't throw your match near my house—that's a fire hazard!' Viewing the scene, the gay person can't help but conclude: 'This isn't about marriage. This is about me.'"

Second, over the past fifty years, few prominent Christians have taken leadership roles in condemning obvious injustices against the GLBT community. Instead of letting Anita Bryant and Jerry Falwell define the "Christian" perspective on the law's treatment of homosexuality as the gay rights movement began to gather momentum, what if more mainstream Catholics, evangelicals, and Mormons had been outspoken regarding job discrimination, harassment, and violence targeting gays? Just as it became impossible to separate bans on interracial marriage from the scandalous history of race in this country, it is becoming difficult to separate bans on same-sex marriage from the scandalous history of homosexuality in this country. I am not suggesting that there are no grounds for distinguishing bans on interracial marriage from bans on same-sex marriage, but the historical contexts of the bans are leading the public to embrace similar conclusions regarding their rationales. History has made it too easy for observers to conclude that opposition to same-sex marriage is part of a rearguard action by Christians who are perceived as trying to marginalize gays and lesbians at every turn.

The difficulty of the conversation is exacerbated by the merits of the case against same-sex marriage. Especially when aligned against captivating concepts such as "marriage equality," the arguments available to same-sex marriage opponents are ill-suited to sound-bite advocacy. Same-sex marriage does change marriage to the extent that it further decouples marriage and procreation, but it is difficult to translate this change into terms that resonate with America's live-and-let-live pragmatism.

Most arguments focus on the importance of connecting children to their biological fathers and mothers. The thrust of the argument is not always clear, though. Emphasizing "biological" appears to marginalize adoption, not just parenting by same-sex couples. Emphasizing "father and mother" makes more sense, sug-

gesting that both genders are necessary to child-rearing because men and women have different functions in child-rearing. But as socially grounded gender roles become fuzzier, our confidence in biologically grounded distinctions between the caregiving functions of men and women has become a bit shakier, as has our confidence in the constitutional validity of such characterizations. Does the fact that, all things considered, we would like children to be raised by mothers and fathers mean that we should prohibit adoption by same-sex couples, especially if the alternative is a life in foster care? And if we are willing to permit adoptions by same-sex couples, do we thereby lose a fundamental premise of the case against same-sex marriage?

The strongest argument against same-sex marriage seems to be, "Look, we're messing with the definition of a very important social institution that has served us well for many years. Because the idea of two men or two women being parents together is relatively new, we do not have enough empirical data to say whether children will be better or worse off. We should not take that risk." But if people acknowledge the risk, count the cost of excluding an entire class of committed couples from the stabilizing and identity-affirming institution of marriage, and conclude that gender differences are no longer a sufficient basis for that exclusion, do Christians have a compelling, publicly accessible reason for telling them that they are making the wrong decision?

These concerns about same-sex marriage are not inconsequential, though, and they cannot be written off as thin covers for bigotry. In that regard, we have to care about more than the merits of the same-sex marriage debate; we also need to care about the way in which we carry on the debate—especially the assumptions made about the opposing side. Much of the rhetoric offered in support of same-sex marriage is unhelpful and unproductive. Take, for example, a recent speech by New York Governor David Paterson, who unveiled his proposal for same-sex marriage and made it very clear what he thinks of anyone who does not get on board:

> Anyone that has ever experienced degradation or intolerance would understand the solemn duty and how important it actually is. Anyone that's ever experienced antisemitism or racism, any New Yorker who is an immigrant, who has experienced discrimination, any woman who has faced harassment at work or suffered violence

> at home, any disabled person who has been mocked or marginalized, understands what we're talking about here. We have all known the wrath of discrimination. We have all felt the pain and the insult of hatred. This is why we are all standing here today. We stand to tell the world that we want equality for everyone. We stand to tell the world that we want marriage equality in New York State.[1]

Yes, it is undeniably true that many gays and lesbians have experienced discrimination, violence, and marginalization on account of their sexual orientation. But to imply that all opposition to same-sex marriage is coming from a place of "hatred" is inaccurate and irresponsible. It further polarizes a debate that is already deeply contentious. And when the governor of New York appears eager to engage in this sort of stark line-drawing, it does not bode well for the future viability of religious liberty. Same-sex marriage is well on its way toward becoming the law of the land, but the tone and substance of the political discourse used along the way matter a lot.

The debate about marriage is not, and should not be, primarily a debate about individual rights. The state has an interest in marriage beyond its general interest in facilitating the satisfaction of individual preferences. Marriage is an essential social institution; and reasonable, caring, non-bigoted citizens can disagree about how malleable the institution can be without losing its social function. Christians who oppose the redefinition of marriage are not invariably engaged in gay-bashing, nor are they plotting a theocratic takeover of government. Their arguments may not prove persuasive, but their arguments are often (though not always) perfectly consistent with the norms of public reason—i.e., not dependent on religious authority or experience for their persuasive appeal. While I readily concede that not all Christians have honored the spirit of public reason in this debate (e.g., "God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve"), it is important for proponents of same-sex marriage to do so, especially when responding to Christians who have tried to ground the conversation in public values.

Especially in the wake of Proposition 8, the conversation has shown signs of devolving from an exercise of public reason into an exercise of public shaming. One television ad supporting Proposition 8 showed two Mormon missionaries entering a lesbian couple's home saying: "We're from the Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter Day Saints, and we're here to take away your rights." The missionaries remove the couple's wedding rings, ransack their house, and rip up their wedding certificate. A voice proclaims, "Members of the Mormon Church have given over $20 million to pass Proposition 8" and urges viewers to "Say no to a church taking over your government."[2] Picketing churches, mocking religious tenets, and shaming believers—all of which happened in Proposition 8's aftermath—hollow out the conversation about marriage by reducing it to a crass form of religious identity politics. The best way to encourage religious believers to embrace accessibility in their political discourse is to engage them as citizens rather than through a direct attack on their religious identities.

By using religious identity as a stand-in for substantive arguments about the meaning of marriage, some proponents of same-sex marriage seem intent on narrowing the circle of legitimate political participation, as some Christians would undoubtedly like to do, though on different grounds. A Christian's political views cannot help but be shaped by his or her religious beliefs. Christians should be encouraged to articulate those views in terms that are accessible—even if not agreeable—to their fellow citizens. At the same time, those other citizens should work to engage Christians on the merits of their expressed views, not on the reasonableness or rationality of the sources from which the views derive.

I am not suggesting that religiously shaped political positions should somehow be immune from criticism. But battling over the policy implications of religious beliefs is different than targeting the religious communities from which those beliefs emerge. In particular, shaming Mormons based on their support of Proposition 8 has to be seen against the background of this country's long history of shaming Mormons in general.

Proposition 8's supporters came from a variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and, yes, most of them are religious. But the debate about marriage is about more than religious identity. Marriage as an institution contributes significantly to the common good, and thus we all have a stake in its viability and vitality. As our society's view of marriage changes (as it surely does), we cannot dismiss or demonize disagreement as a product of mere prejudice, personal animus, or ignorance. Doing so may not alter the trend toward same-sex marriage that is currently tak-

ing shape, but it will put further strain on the social fabric of a post-same-sex-marriage America. Maintaining a rich and respectful public conversation about the meaning of marriage is hard work, but abandoning the project creates a void that is quickly filled by the concept of marriage as a private contract. Marriage is not solely about individual rights, or privacy, or equality; marriage is a set of substantive commitments that transcends easy calculations of individual self-interest, but is crucial to the perpetuation of inter- and intra-generational caregiving in our society. Recognizing its public dimension could be the start of a wonderful conversation.

Notes

1. "Governor Paterson's Remarks on the Introduction of a Marriage Equality Bill," April 16, 2009, http://www.state.ny.us/governor/keydocs/speech_0416091_print.html (last visited on Jun. 29, 2009).

2. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q28UwAyzUkE (viewed and notes taken June 29, 2009).

An Evangelical Perspective

Lindsey Chambers

As an evangelical Christian living in California, I had mixed feelings about the Christian community's involvement in Proposition 8. I had just started attending a new church during election time. One Sunday, I was handed a bulletin with every issue on the ballot listed and my new church's stance delineated in full. Essentially, I was given a voting guide: which politicians were God's chosen leaders, and what God wanted me to vote for on every proposition.

It took only a brief scan of the guide and an earful of the congregation's easy and enthusiastic assents to send me into a "righteous" fury. I tore the guide to pieces and spent the remainder of the service mourning the state of America's evangelical community. There was no dialogue. There was no room for prayerful consideration of the issues. I was given an order, and I was supposed to follow without question. But I *did* have questions. As

both a Christian and a political philosophy student, I have questions about what role my faith *should* play in my political involvement; "should" is an important and difficult notion for me both as a Christian *and* as a reasonable citizen.

From a Rawlsian standpoint, there are reasons to support same-sex marriage even if one believes same-sex marriage is wrong from a religious perspective. The problem of justice, as framed by Rawls,[1] arises because our project of social cooperation is between people who disagree about what constitutes a good life. We come to the table of cooperation with a pluralism of values, and this pluralism is taken as a fixed feature of our society. Though we have competing interests and different values, we share an interest in finding a reasonable way to work and live together that goes beyond a mere *modus vivendi*. The fact of pluralism precludes us from adjudicating our competing claims by appealing to any one doctrine of what is good or best, be it a metaphysical or a moral doctrine.

Our task, then, is to find some common ground on which we can structure society. Part of being a good-willed and reasonable participant in this project is recognizing that the claims made by other members of society have equal worth to our own; and in light of that recognition, we endeavor to justify our political activity in a way that is universally acceptable to those other members.

If we are all involved in a project of social cooperation under such terms, then Christians have a duty to come to the discussion of same-sex marriage in good will. They must be ready to make their arguments universally acceptable, and doing so requires that they do not appeal exclusively to their religious convictions in the justification of their position. They need not give up their religious convictions, but they cannot expect those convictions to carry weight in the public square. Religious participants have a duty to recognize that the claims of the homosexual members of society are *as worthy* as their own in our project of cooperation.

Justifying a ban on same-sex marriage, then, cannot be merely based on religious appeals to the alleged evils of homosexuality because such claims are not universally acceptable. One type of justification that is, or could be, universally acceptable is an appeal to harm. Christians could try to make a case that same-sex marriage harms either its participants or some third party. I be-

lieve Christians would be hard pressed to find a suitable paternalistic case against two consenting adults committing themselves to a long-term monogamous relationship. In fact, it is that sort of relationship that is championed by both sides of the divide, and part of the motivation for the Christian opposition to same-sex marriage is to protect this sort of relationship for heterosexual couples. Christians must, then, be able to make a convincing case that allowing same-sex marriage would cause considerable harm to the institution of marriage itself, and would therefore harm society as a whole. Such an appeal would require two forms of argument: one argument must show why the institution of marriage is valuable to society, and the other argument must convincingly show that same-sex marriage would harm this institution.

Regardless of whether one's political commitments are individualistic or communitarian in nature, it is possible to find broad agreement that there is something important about a person pursuing a life of meaning. A life of meaning for some people may involve spending their lives in a loving, committed relationship. One would be hard-pressed to make a paternalistic case against such relationships for homosexual couples while supporting such relationships for heterosexual couples. Because we typically see such relationships as valuable, it seems that, as long as those individuals are in a position to consent to such a relationship and as long as they are not harming any third parties, we ought to promote such endeavors. Marriage is a valuable institution because it promotes, or has the potential to promote, the sort of long-term and committed relationships that are conducive to many people's flourishing. Because both sides of the Proposition 8 divide agree that such relationships are valuable and worth promoting, the real question is whether marriage, as a valuable institution to society, is in danger. If Christians want to justify a stance against same-sex marriage, I believe this is where the burden of justification lies, and it is a burden I think they are unlikely to meet.

Intuitively, increasing the number of participants in the institution of marriage ought to strengthen it (or at least its appeal), especially now that cultural norms seem to be shifting away from marriage for younger generations. If there is an enemy to the institution of marriage, the prevalence of divorce is the more obvi-

ous choice. I should note here that I do not believe marriage, as it is legally and religiously understood, is the only way to promote the sort of relationship that both sides find valuable. Consequently, I am open to marriage being one form of this relationship (one male, one female) and some other institution being a sign of commitment between same-sex couples. If it is the relationship that matters, and if some alternative to "marriage" promotes this sort of relationship at least as well as (or perhaps better than) marriage, then I think that remains a viable choice (particularly if it is the more politically feasible option).

With that caveat in mind, I want to turn to the attitude of the (Protestant) evangelical community. This community, *my* community, vehemently opposes same-sex marriage. They have scripture on their side, to a point. The Old Testament warns against homosexual relations, as do parts of the New Testament—more commonly in the form of broader imperatives to remain sexually pure. If we're honest, we must admit that such imperatives are frequently disregarded. Many Christians are quick to point out that the Bible explicitly says a man will leave his father and mother to be with a woman, that they will become one flesh (Gen. 2:23–25, New International Version). Yet as Paul reminds the Corinthians, there is a difference between holding fellow believers accountable to the law of God and holding non-believers to such a standard: "What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church?" (1 Cor. 5:12, NIV). How can we expect someone who does not acknowledge God's law to live under it? How did Jesus handle God's commands? He explained God's commands to us, but he did not legislate them. He loved the sinner, he communed with the sinner, but he did not bring the sinner under condemnation of earthly laws.

Should the Church spend its time and resources fighting a political battle, or should it be more concerned with the battle for souls? We are called to love one another as God loves us. We understand God's love best when we are loved by others. Promoting the committed relationship of two homosexuals may be the best way I can love and minister to them. That position doesn't mean I'm committed to marrying them in a church under God, but it may mean that I'm committed to promoting their chance at happiness and the stability of their relationship. In doing so, I can be a light in their lives, and showing them light is the best way I can

point them to my heavenly Father. As Jesus commanded us, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16, NIV).

Note

1. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

The Political Is Personal

Mary Ellen Robertson

As a California native, I have a stake in my home state's politics, especially on social issues such as same-sex marriage. I was living in Pasadena, California, in 2000 when Proposition 22, defining marriage as being between a man and a woman, was roiling the political waters. And in 2008, I watched from Utah as the LDS Church's new political machinery kicked into gear to pass Proposition 8.

As I've observed these two campaigns, I have questions about the effects of participating in campaigns to define marriage the same way Latter-day Saints and many other conservative religious groups do. I'm concerned about the trade-offs in Church members' participation, particularly because there's little discussion of the unintended consequences or human cost of these actions. I have been pained by the often insensitive behavior of Church members in their zeal to pass these measures and the interpretation of some that the Church's position on gay marriage gives them carte blanche to proudly display their homophobia. What have Mormons sown and what will Mormons reap as a result of our fervent campaigning against same-sex marriage?

During the campaign to pass California's first gay-marriage ballot-initiative, Proposition 22, in 2000, I was single. Because I knew what it was like to want to be married but not have the option available, I was unwilling to deny the option of marriage to anyone—straight or gay—who wanted to participate.

During the months preceding the election, I endured politicking, testimonials, and much inflammatory rhetoric at church and

in panicky forwarded emails about the dire consequences if Prop 22 didn't pass: massive school curriculum changes that would make gay sex education mandatory and families headed by same-sex couples seem *normal.* Such claims played on Church members' emotions and fears rather than making any rational sense.

My reaction was to leave in protest—temporarily. I wrote a letter to the stake presidency, my bishopric, and Relief Society president. In it, I explained that the relentless campaigning at church disturbed my spiritual equilibrium and contradicted Joseph Smith's approach of teaching correct principles and letting us govern ourselves. Since the campaigning at church was having such a negative effect, I explained that I would not attend services until after the election.

The reaction was mixed. The stake president read parts of my letter in a ward conference as an example of how *not* to approach the issue. In a one-on-one conversation that I initiated, he insisted that I could not have a spiritual confirmation that differed from the Church's official position on the issue and warned that I was on a slippery slope to apostasy. A counselor in my bishopric called to thank me for writing the letter; he had wrestled with the issue and the public position he had to take because of his calling. The other recipients did not respond.

I purchased a "No on 22" sign for my apartment window and volunteered at the phone bank for the "No on 22" campaign. When I returned to church about eight weeks later, the stake president seemed surprised to see me there, even though my letter had indicated that my hiatus from meeting attendance would be temporary.

Eight years later, the machinations surrounding the LDS Church's involvement in Proposition 8 made previous efforts to pass Prop 22 look like amateur hour, making me wonder if the Church had hired the political equivalent of a vocal coach, tutor, stylist, and agent.

The 2008 campaign was far more polished and tightly organized, though still scripted to appear publicly as a "grass roots" effort on the part of individual Church members. I didn't have the front row, first-hand experience of being in California this time, but Prop 8 was nearly inescapable in the news media, at church, and on social networking sites.

Rather than leaving in protest as I had before, this time I joined the protest. I posted attorney Morris Thurston's thoughtful, reasoned article titled "A Commentary on the Document 'Six Consequences . . . if Proposition 8 Fails'"[1] on my FaceBook page. I identified California Mormon donors (including my parents) on the Mormonsfor8.com website.

My dear friend, Marilyn, was working for the "No on 8" campaign in Los Angeles and asked me to make reminder calls to "No on 8" volunteers. I took the unpopular Saturday night shift, calling from 6:00 to 10:00 P.M., and took a bit of wry pleasure from making calls from my 801 area code land line. After Prop 8 passed, I joined thousands of like-minded folks who attended a rally and marched around Temple Square in Salt Lake City on November 7, 2008. I carried a sign that read "Every family has value."

Even though the measure passed, thanks to significant Mormon involvement and financial support, many Mormons seemed caught off guard by the public reaction after the election. Had Mormon leaders and members stopped to count the cost of taking such a high-profile role in Prop 8? As we continue to reflect on Church members' participation, what have we sown and what will we reap?

In some Church media outlets and conservative Mormon-themed blogs, opposing same-sex marriage and protecting traditional marriage were painted as the epic battle of our lifetimes. Writers and speakers intimated that those who didn't fall into step with the Church's marching order had an insufficient grasp of the gospel. They just didn't understand; otherwise they'd be on the correct side of the issue. After all, the prophet had spoken.

Sowing such seeds results in divisions and contention among Church members. Those who feel they are right express feelings of superiority. People who have a different opinion—often because of a close relationship with gays or lesbians—are demonized and treated as if they have joined the enemy if they express support for marriage equality.

This high-stakes politicking can undermine goodwill and cohesiveness among friends and family and inflict serious damage on a ward community. Some individuals used the campaign as license to vent their uncharitable feelings about gay people. In

2000, a man in my ward commented during a Church meeting that AIDS was the means by which "those faggots were getting what they deserve." His views were challenged by other members of his quorum, thankfully. But this man was heavily involved in fund-raising and house meetings to promote Prop 22, and such incidents make it harder to believe that Church members' political activities are not motivated by visceral anti-gay sentiment.

Even if the sentiment expressed by that man is not the norm among Church members, the Church's position against same-sex marriage (and its tepid statements regarding civil unions) can make Mormons seem homophobic to outsiders and critics. Whether the charge of homophobia is fair, contributing huge amounts of money and time to defeat measures aimed at recognizing and giving legal structure and support to gay couples sows the seeds of a reputation for unfriendliness to the gay community.

As has been widely pointed out, Mormon involvement in promoting traditional one-man/one-woman marriage seems hypocritical given our polygamous past. The Mormon practice of plural marriage was established at great personal cost to many participants and resulted in Mormons being demonized, subjected to violence, being forcibly expelled from the Midwest, and being subjected to thirty years of steadily increasing legislative and judicial pressure from the federal government. Contemporary Mormons condemning same-sex marriage lack credibility and can come across as hypocritical.

Another area where the Church's involvement has been problematic is promoting the idea that politicking against same-sex marriage is a grass-roots effort coming from individuals rather than one organized and maintained by the institutional Church. Given the June 2008 letter from the First Presidency encouraging members to "express themselves on this urgent matter to their elected representatives in the Senate," it's hard to buy Mormon involvement as a grass-roots movement.[2]

Most Church members comply when the leadership merely implies there is one true course of action or a right way to vote on a ballot proposition. Mormons involved in Prop 8 say loudly that the campaign is not being run by the Church, but many inside and outside the Church see such a claim as disingenuous. Technically, no, President Monson is not personally running the campaigns

against same-sex marriage in California and other states. But General Authorities, savvy Mormon lawyers, public relations professionals, and Church employees are most definitely involved; and it would be ludicrous to suggest that top Church leadership knows nothing about their activities on such a high-stakes moral issue.

While Mormons may have helped win the battle against same-sex marriage in California, I believe they've lost the war—probably at great cost to the Church over the long run. The strong negative reaction to Mormons' involvement lingers and could cause problems in current/future missionary and humanitarian efforts. Our efforts have caused division within our "tribe" between Church members who feel differently about same-sex marriage. Outsiders have cause to be suspicious about Mormons' involvement in political campaigns, and our actions and reactions have swelled the ranks of people who actively hate Mormons. I believe we'll be reaping a Prop 8-tainted harvest for years to come.

Notes

1. "A Commentary on the Document 'Six Consequences . . . if Proposition 8 Fails,'" http://www.hrc.org/documents/Responses_to_Six_Consequences_if_Prop_8_Fails.pdf, print-out in my possession.

2. "First Presidency Urges Support of Marriage," press release, http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49041/First-Presidency-urges-support-of-marriage.html (accessed July 2008), print-out in my possession.

Four Reasons for Voting Yes

Russell Arben Fox

I don't live in California, and so the questions of what I thought of Proposition 8 and of my Church's involvement in it were never presented to me with any more force than that of any other announcement from the pulpit after sacrament meeting or any other stray comment that gets mentioned in Gospel Doctrine class. I've no doubt that there were many wards throughout the country (and perhaps throughout the world) where, for reasons having to do with the beliefs and priorities of local or regional

leaders, or perhaps due to some combination of demographic or cultural factors, the ecclesiastical demand to support Proposition 8 firmly, or at least announce your opinion about it vocally, was very strong. But that wasn't the case for my ward in Wichita, Kansas, and I suspect that it also wasn't the case in the great majority of wards and branches throughout the Church.

For which I'm grateful—and not because I don't like politics in Church. The truth is, I think Mormon Church life would actually be *improved* if our congregations were more political, but that's a different argument. No, my gratitude stems from the fact that the lack of any intensity on Sundays meant I had time to think through how I would have approached Proposition 8, without ecclesiastical pressure from above or social pressure from below.

Would I have voted for the proposition if I'd lived in California? I think probably yes, reluctantly, for four reasons:

1. Because my church asked me to.

2. Because I agree with some (but not all) of the philosophical arguments which my church and others who pushed for the proposition adduced as part of their case for the proposition.

3. Because, all things considered, I will almost always side with any proposition or referendum that involves setting matters directly before voters and thereby demands of them democratic deliberation and legislative compromise, rather than contenting ourselves with all-or-nothing decisions issued by courts;

4. Because—and this is important—it was a narrowly focused proposition, one which would have reestablished a formal distinction between same-sex relationships and heterosexual marriages in the state of California, but which would not have removed any substantive rights that gay couples currently enjoy under state law.

Note that key word "reluctantly." I include it for at least two reasons. First, California is almost certainly the wrong place for this kind of struggle. It is far too large and too diverse to be, I think, responsibly conceived of as an arena within which an argument about what a community wants or expects or believes when it comes to marriage could be worked out. Second, the specific political arguments which the "Yes on 8" side made use of—as opposed to the more tentative and general philosophical ones which I, in part, agree with—were often complete paranoia and nonsense. Such crummy and inflammatory arguments are enough to

make me want to vote against something in principle, even if I see the general point of the proposition.

With regards to (1), a fair question to ask is: If I am supposedly obedient enough to take seriously the way leaders of the Church ask us to vote, why do the arguments mentioned in (2) matter at all? Well, they matter because (a) my commitment to the Church doesn't ever quite override my reasoning faculties, and because (b) the Church leadership didn't actually "tell" anyone to, or at least not so far as I am aware.

Did our prophet, and all the rest of the Church leaders (or at least, those Church leaders who actually spoke out on this matter, which was only a tiny minority of all those who potentially could have spoken out) really *want* the Saints in California to vote a certain way? Absolutely. Official statements were read in California wards encouraging members of the Church to organize and vote in support of the proposition, along with references to scripture, and statements were put out by Church media, and directives came down from Church leaders giving advice and support to regional leaders in California who contacted members and involved them in various campaign activities, and many millions of dollars were raised along the way. But does that asking and encouragement equal being "told" to do something? I don't think so. The official language from Salt Lake City was always one of "encouraging" members, not ordering them. Perhaps that will change, as these conflicts over same-sex marriage continue. But for now, that is how things stand.

With regard to (2), what, then, were the arguments that I considered persuasive? Well, to me, the general point of the proposition was one of drawing distinctions. I do happen to accept the deep cultural and/or communitarian and/or conservative presumption at work behind most traditionalist thinking about marriage. That is, I believe that civilized society depends on sustaining certain norms (like heterosexual marriage). I also believe that many (not all, but many) norms reflect essential characteristics of the way the majority of human beings has historically related and will continue to relate to one another. And I further believe that opening up social institutions to forced redefinitions—as if said institutions were based on nothing more than self-satisfying, mu-

tually agreed upon contracts—undermines their ability to support and draw the good out of those norms regarding human relationships for the benefit of society.

But allow me to quote Noah Millman, a commenter on cultural matters whose writings can be most often found on The American Scene blog (http://www.theamericanscene.com/), on this topic, as he's much clearer about the subject than I:

> [Many advocates of same-sex marriage want the state to] redefine marriage to mean any exclusive partnership . . . between any two individuals regardless of their biological sex. . . . That's not what marriage means, nor ever has meant, because the complementarity between men and women is at the heart of the meaning of marriage. Marriage has changed an awful lot over the centuries, and we in the West have ultimately repudiated the polygamy and consequent second-class status for women that were central to marriage for its first few thousand years as a legal institution. But the proposed redefinition would be, essentially, a linguistic falsehood. For that reason, I fear that it would . . . make the traditional language of marriage relating to complementarity of the sexes appear to be nonsensical[;] it would make it that much harder for men and women to learn how to relate to one another, and form stable marriages. And because it would have advanced under the banner of rights such a reform would implicitly concede that marriage is a choice rather than a norm—a choice we all have a right to make but, by the same token, the right not to make if we prefer to live otherwise.[1]

While it's unlikely to get much of a hearing by partisans on both sides of this struggle, I would note that Millman is not arguing against any kind of legally recognized same-sex marriage; he's merely arguing against our currently existing marriage system (which is by no means the only possible set of marriage laws and understandings available either today or historically) being expanded to include same-sex couples.

So what do we do for same-sex couples? We create a new institution exclusively for same-sex couples that would have many—perhaps even all—of the rights and responsibilities of marriage. Will this proposal ever fly? Probably not. We reduce so much to either/or questions of legal rights in this country, partially by (unintentional) constitutional design, partially by inclination and habit, with the result that consensual, democratically deliberated dis-

tinctions that might otherwise emerge are rarer in our polity than they ought to be.

Distinctions along the lines of "differentiating between black and white people in deciding which kind of jobs are appropriate for them is invidious discrimination, whereas distinguishing between gay people and straight people in determining which sort of marriage union is appropriate for them is not" probably wouldn't survive in our legalistic environment, in which the claims of "separate but equal" are dismissed without argument as relics of a pre-*Brown v. Board of Education* era. And as much as it frustrates me to say so, perhaps that's for the best; perhaps, given our polity's history of discrimination and sexual paranoia, there is little reason to believe that a fully democratic engagement over which forms of marriage could be best accommodated within our history and culture would result in the fair but distinct forms of recognition I'm gesturing at here. But it is depressing to believe that the only alternative is for judges to forbid our legislative bodies from even trying.

Admittedly, there are practical reasons to doubt all this as well: the evidence that such "distinctions" could even be operable is, admittedly, minimal. I tend to think that the French were on the right track when they established their *pacte civil de solidarité*, first instituted in 1999, to serve as an alternative to marriage, thus avoiding unnecessary fights with various religious communities. But they failed to articulate what they were doing as a route for gay couples in particular; and as a result, heterosexual couples looking to avoid the social implications of marriage flocked to civil unions, which warped the legislation's potential to be a model for addressing the deeper issues of "distinction" which I think are—or at least ought to be—relevant here, to the extent that you think any of this is worth worrying about.

I would also add that if the California proposition had moved beyond what I saw as simply insisting upon a distinction, I wouldn't have voted for it. This is the point I made in (4). For all the problems associated with it, the truth is that I am fundamentally a modern person and therefore a believer in modern liberties, one of which is the right to privacy which the Supreme Court defined and defended (however dubiously) in *Romer v. Evans*. I do not

want to see sodomy recriminalized, and I do not think gay and lesbian couples deserve any less legal and economic protection than state laws provide to straight couples

Finally, with regard to (3), I have to confess that, as both a modern American (and thus a believer in individual equality) and a Christian (and thus a believer in a God capable of performing an act that demands a response which could potentially trump every single other commitment or connection any individual may have), it's hard to maintain hard and fast rules that always give priority to community integrity, popular decision making, and public opinion, especially when I am confronted with a question that potentially involves the rights and moral worth of individual persons. Still, I'm pretty cautious when it comes to all such interventions in the political process in the name of higher principles because I respect the messy compromises of democracy. Failing to do so is, I think, to set oneself up as an elite decision maker by virtue of one's position or enlightenment, and treat the beliefs of others as contemptible.

Practically speaking, in the American political context, this means I'm suspicious of judicial review and the ability of courts to mandate, in the name of Constitutional principles, practices that to my mind really need to be hammered out in our conflicted, divided communities by the folks who actually live in them.

And, in the end, all other things being said, Proposition 8 *was* an opportunity—a basically reasonable, only minimally harmful opportunity—to say, "Judges don't rule in our democracy; majorities do." And if you think trusting in majorities is itself somehow retrograde or wrongheaded, then you must have a sufficiently large suspicion of the democratic process to make any anger you may have about the result of Proposition 8 seem pale by comparison.

Note

1. Noah Millman, http://gideonsblog.blogspot.com/2005_11_01_archive.html#113224786664342821#113224786664342821 (accessed May 1, 2009).

Truman Madsen: In Memoriam

Truman Madsen, Architect

James E. Faulconer

Truman Madsen was a speaker *extraordinaire*, one of the finest orators in the Church, able to speak extemporaneously in a captivating voice. Alert to his audience, he was able to thread the pieces of his story together in a way that made each listener feel that he was speaking personally to him or her. For many American members, his tapes and lectures on Joseph Smith have been the basis for a contemporary myth of the Prophet. I see no one on the horizon who is likely to be able to take his place as our official orator and story-teller. But Truman's importance to readers of *Dialogue* is less as a speaker than as an architect. Almost single-handedly, he built a room to talk.

Truman's slim volume, *Eternal Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), had a profound effect on me, and others who were also students in the late sixties or early seventies say that it was equally important for them. If my informal survey of students in philosophy classes at Brigham Young University is accurate, it continues to have that kind of influence on earnest seekers. The book was not academically profound, but it had no pretensions to be. As Truman says in the introduction, its chapters were intended "as a kind of 'midrash.' . . . The goal has been to clarify rather than to verify, with little room for argument, except an implicit appeal to introspection" (viii).

The result of that goal was that one can find much to challenge in the book. For example, is it true that we must understand the doctrine of preexistent intelligences to imply that we have existed eternally as individuals? Truman takes that assumption as settled doctrine; and though I lean very much in his direction, it is not obvious that the question has been definitively answered.

And doesn't Truman create straw persons in his descriptions of orthodox Christian and other beliefs? For example, is it true that religious existentialism, such as that of the nineteenth-century Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, is "utter pessimism"? (29). That is a strange way to describe the attitude of the author of *Works of Love*. And doesn't Truman assume that being is a thing rather than a process or event—doesn't he reify being—when he argues against the dualism of traditional theology by dismissing its concerns for nothing and for being? (31–32, 44). Similarly, doesn't he dismiss too easily some of the traditional problems of theology and the philosophy of religion, such as how it is possible to speak meaningfully of a being who transcends our mortal finitude? (35). And how does defining freedom as self-determination remove all of the problems of freedom and determinism? (66 note 9). It would not be difficult to add to the list.

But adding to the list would be beside the point. It would mean refusing to recognize the book and the subsequent work for which it is a metonym for what it claims to be and is: a primer to aid us in introspecting on the intellectual strengths of our belief in the premortal existence of spirits. If, as such a primer, the book raises these questions and more, it fulfills its function, inducing us to think. Perhaps it will someday even goad one of us to provide the promised "tome which is not pressed [as Truman was] for abbreviation" (viii).

For those like myself, *Eternal Man* was important, not so much because of the problems with which it dealt or the positions that it took on the questions of the eternality of individuals, divine omnipotence, the materiality of the Divine, human freedom, and so on, but because of what Truman Madsen created by writing it. More than teaching a particular doctrine or suggesting any particular solution to a philosophical or theological problem, *Eternal Man* gave its readers permission to think and talk about these kinds of problems, to read the books listed in its many footnotes and books like them. Speaking through his book, Truman said, "It is good to think about and deal with these issues." It gave those of us in college and graduate school in the late 1960s an alternative to the two most common positions taken with regard to such things, positions that Truman describes well: "One position assumes that they [the ideas about preexistence] are so remote and

incomplete that a 'practical man' avoids thinking about them. The other assumes that by mere reference to pre-existence one can 'explain' all events and eventualities" (14). By publishing *Eternal Man*, Truman Madsen said to me—and to many others—"Take seriously the admonition from the Prophet Joseph Smith that introduces chapter two: 'When things that are of the greatest importance are passed over by weak-minded men without even a thought, I want to see truth in all its bearings and hug it to my bosom'" (23). Reading *Eternal Man* made me want to avoid being one of the "weak-minded." The book gave me an intellectual goal and told me that my new goal was not only commensurable with my faith, but an expression of it.

Reminding us that Joseph Smith described the gospel as requiring "careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts," Truman said, "A related kind of authority is needed in this realm. It is what, in the vernacular is called 'room to talk'" (ix). By suggesting the possibility of taking our faith seriously while also understanding the writings of scholars, of thinking about both without being ashamed of or frightened by either, Truman Madsen built such a room and opened its door. Many entered.

Given today's hypersensitivities of various kinds, such room to talk is as difficult to come by as it ever was. Some, recognizing that many current trends of thinking are not consonant with the gospel, think that we should shut our eyes and ears to such things and that we especially should not speak of them to the young for fear of corrupting them. For others, repetition of conventional wisdom about the gospel without investigation is enough to answer all questions. And still others, convinced that this or that seemingly new-fangled notion is, at last, the answer to our problems and questions, would either ignore the gospel or twist it into a shape that fits better their new-found intellectual faith? But all these kinds of problems respond to the difficulties of the intellect with one kind of dogmatism or another. They shut the door on any room to talk.

Truman Madsen was not interested in shutting doors. He did not shut his ears or repeat conventional wisdom or fall prey to every new idea that came down the pike. Truman made it perfectly clear that turning one's mind to the beliefs, history, and culture of

Mormonism was exciting and fun, an expression of faith that must be joyful, rather than anxious. I am glad to have spent most of my life in the room that Truman built.

Truman G. Madsen: A Glimpse from the Extended Family

William Clayton Kimball

On the occasion of his fortieth birthday, Truman Madsen wrote my grandmother, Dessie Grant Boyle, a very long letter. She had raised Truman after his mother (and her sister), Emily Grant Madsen, died shortly after the birth of his younger brother, Gordon. Emily, on her deathbed, said she had no worries about her three sons because her sisters would raise them. Truman was two and a half when he came to live with the Boyles. Dessie already had four daughters and a son, Doug, who was just four months older than Truman. His brothers, Grant and Gordon, were taken in by different sisters.

In this letter, which my grandmother let me read, he talked about what it had been like growing up in her home. I learned a great deal both about him and about my mother's family. He always claimed that he was the 'goodie-goodie' and that my Uncle Doug got blamed for all of their misdeeds, which, Truman claimed, were legion. Gram would often say, "Go see what Truman and Doug are doing and tell them to stop!"

I remember from the letter Truman's comment that few families would have split infinitives as the topic of conversation at the dinner table. He also said he had few memories of fighting but knew there must have been some because my mother, Betsy, who was ten years older than Truman, got a broomstick in the face once. He didn't say who was wielding it.

My grandmother told me that her worst moment during those years happened one afternoon when she walked into a third-floor bedroom in their home on South Temple. Truman was balanced on the window sill with nothing in front of him but open air. If

she'd screamed, he would probably have fallen out. She moved quietly until she could grab him and yank him back into the room. Then she went to pieces.

This living arrangement lasted for approximately seven years. At that point, the boys' grandfather, Heber J. Grant, told their father, Axel Madsen, that he thought they should be raised as brothers. Axel bought a house, hired a housekeeper, and brought his three boys together. My grandmother never quite got over "losing" Truman, and he continued to be a regular in her home.

When Truman and Ann married, I was a young teenager. Ten years later he was the New England Mission president, and I arrived in Cambridge to begin graduate work at Harvard. They took me in from the first and treated me like immediate family. I was invited to stay occasionally in the mission home at 15 Hawthorn, and travel with them to missionary conferences. I took copious notes on Truman's talks. I was amazed that his missionaries, for the most part, were not scribbling away as I was. They were overwhelmed by his eloquence, as most people were, and probably thought they'd never forget what they were hearing.

Truman had the great gift of extemporaneous brilliance. The things I heard him talk about as a mission president were both profound and immediate. He tried to record all of his speeches and, as became his practice, drew on his inspiration as a speaker as the basis for his extensive writings. His missionaries worshipped him, and most seemed to think he'd either be translated or called as a General Authority when he was released as mission president. The combination of his natural gifts and the focus of his interests produced a body of work that will be fresh for generations. Many people have commented on his voice, which was deep and powerful. It may be that his tapes and videos will outlast his books. Vast numbers of people were touched by the projects he undertook.

When the Madsens went to the BYU Jerusalem Center in the late 1980s, it added a new focus and depth to their lives and gave Ann her own academic areas for specialization. It also expanded the number of people who came into contact with them. Both Truman and Ann had the natural gift of friendship, and over the decades they made literally countless numbers of friends both on a personal level and for the Church.

In September of 2007 the Madsens came to the Cambridge Reunion held in the Longfellow Park chapel which was destroyed by fire just eleven days before Truman's death. The day after the reunion, speaking in sacrament meeting, both reminisced about their early married lives in Cambridge and their habit of returning over and over again to the area. Present at that meeting was a couple from New Hampshire whom the Madsens had first met and befriended when they were presiding over the New England Mission. The couple joined the Church and through them many others had been converted. It's a scene that was probably reproduced everywhere they went.

One of Truman's first published works was a small book called *How to Stop Forgetting and Start Remembering* (1964). It was based on talks he'd given at BYU Education Weeks. He noted that he didn't have a photographic memory but recommended a number of techniques which could be substituted. These techniques were certainly the way he remembered all the things he read and learned about Joseph Smith. He often said he tried to learn something new about the Prophet every week. It was probably more like every day.

In one article, Truman created a new version of the account of Ulysses and the Sirens from the Odyssey. Rather than have young Latter-day Saints put beeswax in their ears, as did Ulysses's sailors, to shut out "the world," Truman suggested that the gospel message really positions a better band in the front of the boat which drowns out the tempting songs of the Sirens. That was, finally, one of the things that he did best. Those who heard him speak or who were touched by his lectures, his books, and his videos were given a "better sound" which could overcome the contrary messages of the world.

Mormon lore tells us that as we die and move into the next life, we are greeted by those we "have loved long since, and lost a while" (Hymn #97). That moment for Truman might have been the first time in his clear memory he saw his mother's face. And right behind her, my grandmother, the only mother he ever knew. What could be sweeter?

Brattle Street Elegy

Note: In September 2007, the Cambridge Massachusetts Stake History Committee sponsored a three-day reunion commemorating the growth of the Church in Boston and the surrounding towns. Claudia Bushman delivered the following reminiscence as part of that celebration.

On May 17, 2009, the LDS chapel at 2 Longfellow Park in Cambridge was destroyed by fire. The fire has been ruled accidental, probably caused by an electrical malfunction in the attic. That day, Samuel Brown, a blogger at By Common Consent and former Cambridge University Ward member posted news reports and made space for commenters to share their memories associated with the building. Following Claudia Bushman's essay are some of those comments, reprinted with permission. The blog post, links to news reports and photos, and dozens of further comments can be viewed at http://bycommonconsent.com/2009/05/17/in-memoriam-the-cambridge-mass-chapel/.

We Should Do a Study

Claudia L. Bushman

It is a great pleasure for me to be here with all of you Cambridge veterans and to be asked to represent the huge cohort of LDS women who have sat in these pews—those who have preceded me and those who have come after me. What an opportunity this has been to recall some of my happiest and most vivid memories. What happened to me here? Just about everything important that has happened in my long and eventful life.

I feel very privileged to have been plucked from the West Coast and placed on the East Coast. I was hesitant about leaving California. I could see the Pacific Ocean from my San Francisco bedroom window. I thought that I could not live without an ocean in view. My atlas map indicated that Boston was on the East Coast

and that Wellesley was pretty close to Boston, so I thought I'd be near the ocean. So much for geographical innocence, but I did have many compensations.

I was here for the dedication of this building in 1956. I sat right about here when President David O. McKay came out to speak. I remember the date because I was very pregnant with my first child, my daughter Clarissa, wearing what I thought was a particularly pretty blue jersey maternity dress with a sleeveless overcoat. There had been some doubt that I would make it to the dedication at all because Clarissa was due on October 1, but she was not born until the 3rd, and so I was here, a member of the dedication choir. We sang "How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place" from the Brahms German Requiem and the "Hosannah Anthem." As I recall the dedication, I also remember that I spent time at the rehearsals making a christening dress by hand with white lace and embroidery, white on white. Many Bushman babies have worn it since. So the birth of this building is closely allied to the birth of my first child. I became a mother here.

But I have detailed memories that precede the dedication. When I began as a freshman at Wellesley College in 1952, I called the mission office and asked for directions to the chapel, an aged dark Longfellow house on this same location. I was quite scornful that the missionaries were unable to provide clear and concise directions on how to get here. What were they there for, if not to help people get to church? I discovered why they couldn't give directions after transferring twice and finally coming in on the long-gone Mount Auburn streetcar and walking up through a rather scruffy Longfellow Park. It was a long and complicated journey.

That first day I was incensed and grumpy. When I finally met some of the other college students, my question was, "Why did the Church ever buy property in this slum?" Not a very nice thing to say when the Church had sacrificed to buy two spacious and significant houses on Cambridge's finest thoroughfare, Brattle Street. But after growing up in beautiful San Francisco with its emphasis on the new, the beautiful, and the fashionable, I found Boston drab, frumpy, full of treasures but too sure of itself to bother to show them off. Boston and Cambridge are much better looking now than they were then, but still it was insulting and je-

june for a brash westerner to say such things of the glorious city that we have all come to love.

Still, the snide comment was a great benefit to me in that year as a Harvard sophomore, Garr Cranney (whose wonderful and long-lived mother, Naomi, just recently came to the end of her productive and virtuous life), decided to take me on as an almost-lost cause. He decided to educate me about the glories of Boston and Cambridge. Once a week he took a bus to the family home in nearby Belmont, borrowed a car, and drove out to Wellesley to pick me up. Then on the twelve-mile ride back to town, he would lecture me about some magnificent site we were about to visit. "Today we are going to the Saugus Iron Works and this is important because . . . . We're going to see the Christian Science Mother Church and the mapparium. . . . The Cooper-Frost-Austin house is the oldest house in Cambridge, built in . . ." He worked hard on his preparation and learned a few things himself. He also took me to Celtics and Red Sox games and explained the only sports strategy I've ever learned. After a while, I began to take him to concerts and art museums and tell him why they were important. As a result of this activity of students teaching each other, we became close friends, we both became better informed, and I became much more appreciative of Boston. I've been to lots of places, more than most of you, I'll bet. And I did come to appreciate Brattle Street.

When I first came to church in Cambridge, we met only in the morning for Sunday School. The trip in took longer than the service. This difficulty was alleviated when I discovered that Clare and Rulon Robison, long-time pillars of the Church, brought the Wellesley girls to church. Rulon, a teacher of voice, conducted a rousing and informative song practice. I remember him noting that a good singer could hear instruction and learn from it so he had improved by the next time. But he commented that our congregation always began from scratch. I thought that this idea was refreshing and vowed to do better.

Soon after my arrival, the ward instituted an evening sacrament meeting of the old style. The Robisons still came in, and then went home after the morning meeting, but I wanted to stay for the evening meeting. This meant that I was soon lunching and

museum-going with one male student or another, because, for one thing, I frequently forgot to bring carfare and lunch money and had to charm someone into taking me to lunch and then persuading someone with a car to drive me home to Wellesley. But this is what girls were used to in the old days. I expected it, and it happened.

I do remember how shocked I was after attending a formal dance at a Harvard house. I watched a girl and her date stroll out of the hall. He kissed her goodnight, she unlocked her bicycle, tucked up her taffeta skirt, and rode away to Radcliffe. We Wellesley girls would never have put up with that. And I am still shocked—shocked, I tell you!

I was surprised when Ira Terry, the branch president, called me in that first year. He said he had gotten a letter about me. Amazing! It seemed that my lively grandmother feared the worst about me—that I had disappeared from view as many young Mormons did on going to another city. She urged him to find me and put some pressure on me to come to church. The letter even had a threatening tone. He had better get busy and do it. President Terry urged me just as strongly to write to my grandmother and tell her that I was very active in church. I know that it doesn't always happen, but I have watched with interest as many young people, supposedly fleeing from Zion, become more religious here, decide to go on missions, and get married in the temple. Meanwhile, when young people from here go west to BYU, they sometimes get bored, alienated, and into trouble. This is all anecdotal evidence, but I think we should do a study.

A related phenomenon was one I experienced each year in September as the wives of new graduate students came to town and at testimony meetings, in tears, told how sorry they were to be away from their mothers, their wards, and Zion. Then in June, another group of wives and mothers would stand, weeping, and say how much they regretted having to leave Cambridge which they had come to love so deeply. We should do a study about that as well.

I loved coming to church here with its variety of interesting people of all ages. I particularly liked teaching Junior Sunday School which I was soon called to do. Wellesley was a paradise, but it was occupied only by girls ages eighteen to twenty-two, along with a few desiccated professors and administrators. I, who

had been very active in church, but also very casual about it, now spent Sundays going to church and, of course, engaging in social activities. At college I stopped doing any school work on Sunday. At the same time, I became a better Church person, I also became a more serious student rather than the smartie I had grown up to be. It was much longer before I became a serious student, and I doubt that I am really one yet, but the seeds were planted then.

The student group in my day was small and tight. People told me right away about all the other students who were around but whom I had not yet seen. Chase Peterson was the senior member of LDS students in Boston, having been to prep school and Harvard College, and about to attend Harvard Medical School. He was widely admired, so it was in tones of hushed awe that I was informed one Sunday that he was in the infirmary with mumps. For some reason, I joined a group that went to see him there. I was eager to see this heroic paragon. But there he was in flannel pajamas, suffering from a childhood illness, not in his most imposing and impressive style. I was, however, impressed at how stylish and nonchalant he could be, even as an invalid.

Richard Bushman, another important absent student, was off on a mission to the New England States, whose headquarters were in another old house, next door to the old house where we had church. I guess that people in the Salt Lake missionary office thought he had learned the language and would be able to communicate with and convert the locals. He had told his Harvard friends that he would be going to some exotic clime to preach the gospel and was somewhat crestfallen to have to admit that he would be only moving next door, as it were. He drove around New England checking on the missionaries from Connecticut to Nova Scotia all by himself as missionaries were in short supply during the Korean War. When he came to Cambridge, his mission president, J. Howard Maughan, who always called him Dick, warned him to stay away from his old friends, but somehow he turned up once at an after-church gathering in the room of one of his old friends. I happened to be there, and we met, beginning a relationship that bloomed after his return to school.

I was here when we began the many projects to raise money to build this chapel. How could that ever be done? We were a poor

bunch, nothing like today. We had ward suppers. We made small individual donations. We had some way to make money on stockings. Betty Hinckley had the Relief Society sewing purse inserts for a few more dollars. George Albert Smith Jr., who taught at the Harvard Business School, seemed our most established and successful member. He wrote to all his friends and former members of the branch and asked for contributions. Did we have to furnish 50 percent then? I just remember that it was a lot of money. I thought there was no way we could raise enough, but suddenly it was time to begin to build.

The locals were not pleased that the upstart Mormons were building on Brattle Street. Mark Cannon told me just this year that McGeorge Bundy, then a Harvard dean, had told him how much "he enjoyed seeing the disappointment of some of his Cambridge friends at their inability to prevent the spoiling of the neighborhood by the Mormons getting established with a new chapel. He believed that their unhappiness was very much deserved as a result of their negative attitude." But then McGeorge Bundy was a serious politician, as some of us remember, and was talking to Mark. In a more positive version of the same kind of comment, I remember George Albert Smith Jr. saying that a friend, looking at the plans, suggested that the Brattle Street facade enclosing the cultural hall looked pretty institutional, even penal, and suggested that it be broken up some with windows or other architectural devices. You can check to see how much compromise was made.

Bill Cox, the cigar-chomping engineer and insurance man married to our Relief Society president, was a potent force in policing the construction. He came every night to see that any slipshod work was torn out and replaced the next day. Cox reconverted himself to the Church by this building construction and went on to become branch president and later Manti Temple president where he singlehandedly, according to my sources, prevented the modernization of that august building. He was one of the category of "Irascible Saint" common in Mormonism.

And so, if you know that I became a mother in Cambridge, you'd better believe that I also became a wife. After his mission, Richard began to come and visit me at Wellesley. He was never very nice to me. He was very stern in his invitations, and we usu-

ally had study dates at the old Recreation Building. Even our movies were few and far between. He seemed so much more mature and serious than I was that we could hardly manage to carry on a conversation. I knew he disapproved of me, and he got so he would write letters between visits setting me straight about various things.

So when he actually proposed to me, I was astonished. I was not completely naive. I had already had a few proposals and could read the clues. But I never saw this one coming. I thought he had been coming out to see me on an assignment from the elders' quorum. Of course, he would tell a different story. In any case, I soon got used to the idea, and we became engaged. We were married after his graduation from Harvard and after my junior year. It wasn't until after we were married that I discovered he was really a very different person than I had thought. He had certainly not known who I was either. We stayed on in Cambridge for his graduate work and my last year of college. I graduated in maternity clothes.

We joined the ranks of the young marrieds. I remember Nora Cox collecting my fifty cents dues as I was now a member of the Relief Society. We were called to supervise the New England Mission Mutual Improvement Association, the forerunner of the Young Women and Young Men, then in its infancy in the mission. We traveled around and visited the branches, encouraging meetings, activities, and reporting systems to bring along these young congregations. We also organized mission-wide youth conferences bringing in the kids from Maine and Vermont to camp out in the chapel. I was also asked to be chairman of the first girls' camp—pretty remarkable since my lone camping experience was two weeks at Girl Scout camp which resulted in my being asked to leave the organization. But all these things are examples of the great opportunities we have in the Church. We are asked to do things that no one in another setting would ever ask us to do, and we learn how to do them. I have often said that everything I ever needed to know I learned at church.

Richard had come to Cambridge in 1949. I came in 1952. We left together in 1960. We went to BYU for Richard's first job. After three years, we went back east again, this time to Providence,

Rhode Island, for two years of a post-doctoral fellowship. We were once again called to head the youth organization in the New England Mission. The MIA had developed considerably in our absence. Then it was back to BYU for three more years, which made a total of eight since we had left Cambridge.

At that point, Richard had earned a sabbatical, so we returned to Cambridge where he had a fellowship at the Charles

Warren Center to do historical research for another year. The plan was to stay only for that year. BYU was paying half his salary, and Richard felt financially and spiritually obligated to return to Provo. That was our home. We had finally bought a house there. But circumstances contrived to make it attractive to remain in Cambridge. Richard's dissertation, his first book, had won a big prize and he was hotly pursued. The most vigorous campaign was waged by Boston University. The history department there finally persuaded him to stay and even bought out his BYU sabbatical.

I was glad to stay. I had been able to finish up my master's degree in American literature at BYU, but I could not see what else to do there. By then I was a mature wife and the mother of five children, but I wanted to go back to school. Boston University, with reduced fees for faculty wives, made that hope a possibility. This next time around in Boston we stayed for eleven years, leaving in 1977. It is a great gift to us to have visited the Cambridge scene twice over such a long period.

The 1970s were an exciting and fearful time in our nation's history. When Richard won his big prize at Columbia University, we were present for the last big event before Low Library was occupied by insurgents, the police were called, and the administration toppled. That summer we were in San Francisco, not too far from Haight-Ashbury which Richard travelled through daily to get to Berkeley where there was also trouble. We got to Cambridge in time for the take-over of good old Harvard. Anti-war demonstrations, civil rights activities, and other civic unrest encouraged the efforts of women to new possibilities.

It was a good time for me to begin work on a doctorate, even if I did have another baby along the way. I decided to study women's work of the past, using myself as a sort of touchstone. I said I was doing female studies, the first person I knew to stake out such a field. This activity gave me something to think about while I did

the dishes. It gave me something to escape to from my household labors. And school was painful enough that I was glad to escape it to make cookies and read to little people. Even scrubbing the floor was more welcome than writing papers. I also escaped the competition of LDS women for cleaner houses, more perfect children, and more good works. School worked very well as a device to insulate me from things I didn't want to do and also gave me the sense that I was making some kind of progress.

So I was very interested when Laurel Thatcher Ulrich invited me to her house with a group of ward members to discuss our lives as Mormon women. She and others had dramatically worked together to publish a very successful guidebook, *A Beginners' Boston.* Now we would talk about territory even closer to home. So began a series of memorable mornings when we met together for fervent discussions, voices raised, tears falling, and toddlers stepping on our toes, as we discussed authority, birth control, housework, and other burning issues.

Our first project in that group was to edit an issue of *Dialogue,* the renowned pink issue. But that was just the beginning of a long series of activities that came to include dinners, retreats, sponsored speeches, research trips to the library, painful hours before the typewriter, a class for the institute, a book from the papers, still in print as *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah,* and eventually a newspaper, *Exponent II.* We found we could work together—that working together for tangible products added richness and satisfaction to our lives, that the lacks of some were made up for by the talents of others, and that there was nothing we considered doing that we could not do.

I've been a project person all my life. I've done lots of projects before and since that Boston run, but I've always felt that this was our finest hour, to coin a phrase. We labored on in ecstatic innocence before the serpent entered the garden. These were such heady, happy, constructive, effective days. We could accomplish so much. One innovation, one project after another, and we still have monuments available to remind us of those grand times.

The LDS scene in Cambridge had changed a great deal between our two sojourns. There were many more people. Many more successful people. More people staying. To see progress, we

had only to look back a little way. As Richard says, a ward becomes a stake in twenty-five years. The old Cambridge Ward reached as far away as Holliston. This time we had multiple wards in our building. Richard became the president of the student branch. I still took the children to the family ward and was asked more than once if I had married out of the Church. I agreed that my husband belonged to another church.

L. Tom Perry, the businessman who served as our innovative stake president before being drafted for his current stint as an apostle, encouraged creative activities. We held many special activities in our stake. When he departed for Salt Lake City, Richard became the stake president. He has since been bishop twice elsewhere and is now a patriarch in New York City where we sometimes live.

Our heritage from living in Cambridge is incalculable. I think all of us are different than we would have been from having had this experience. I certainly am. We share rich memories and a sense of initiation that others lack. Many of my best friends, even those I don't often see, date from those wonderful days. We share so many assumptions and memories that we just pick up where we were last time. We find friends everywhere, and now the children of many of my friends are friends to each other, and their children are also friends. How lucky we are to have had this rich gift in our lives. Maybe we should do a study about that!

Always Sacred—*Sam Brown*

I first arrived in late August 1990. Two weeks earlier, I had undergone a conversion experience that had jolted me from world-weary agnosticism to a fervent belief in God and the Restoration. Simultaneously I left the rural Rockies and arrived in the former capital of Massachusetts Bay Colony, the town of Cotton Mather, Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, and the Loeb Classics Press.

That first year will always be sacred to me. Bishop Clayton Christensen's gentle demeanor, deep spirituality, and brilliant mind. The after-church dinner that seamlessly combined soup kitchen and social gathering, the homeless that I met there, the statue at the Episcopal Divinity School across Brattle Street from which Phil Barlow famously drew such strength in the 1980s (see his essay, "The Uniquely True Church," in the anthology he edited, *A Thoughtful Faith* [Centerville, Utah: Canon Press, 1986], 235–58), the Gospel Doctrine classes that Steve Rowley taught in his droll monotone, at once playful and rigorous, the baptismal font behind the kitchen where a trickle of converts shared our community and beliefs, and the Relief Society room where we often met afterwards to celebrate that new life, the institute library where we read uncorrelated books and debated Mormon identity late into Sunday nights, the sacrament hall with its circular window playing the light from shimmering trees across the way, singing Longfellow's plaintive hymns fifty feet from the house where his wife met her own doleful end by fire, the testimonies on fast Sunday brimming with passion and eloquence and fear and glory and uncertainty and conviction, the musician who, when I was ward mission leader, asked me to give him blessings of strength at least twice a month, an impetus to maintain my own spirituality that I don't think he ever fully comprehended, the godparents of all of our children, my wife, Kate Holbrook, many of my dearest friends and favorite people–I know from that ward house.

That church will forever be the emblem of my spiritual home in Mormonism. I am desperately sad to see it go.

Not Your Typical Mormon Space—*Deborah Theobald*

We drove by the church on the way home today and saw the huge water streams going into the building. The damage will be extensive. I am resolved to work hard to make sure that, when they re-

build on that spot, they go outside the approved architectural plans of the Church to respect the history and the love of that place.

It wasn't your typical Mormon space in either the physical architecture or the spiritual composition. When you meet with people who were in some part or fashion associated with that space, there is an immediate bond, a recognition of experiencing something different. The departure from the typical Mormon church building layout was a catalyst for a departure from the culture of the Mormon West that was all that I had known before—challenging, wonderful, and deep.

The creaking floors in the hall, shifted door frames in the upstairs classrooms, and settled walls spoke to the history of the building, grounding me in a past that wasn't really mine but which felt important to me. I was one of those people who walked on that worn carpet, sat in the balcony, and as a young person contemplated what my commitment and faith would be.

My husband and I met there, and I acquired several key pillars of my testimony there. I'm glad I showed my kids the spot. I was hoping they would someday attend there. I hope by then it will hold the same trust and promise.

Falling in Immediate Love—*Dawn Roan*

I first visited Longfellow Park in 1994 when I was investigating colleges, and I immediately fell in love . . . in love with the architectural symbolism of the building, like the tiered, round window in the chapel that seemed at times to me like a depiction of the three degrees of glory or like the scope of a rifle suggesting the need to stay on target and keep the goal in our sights, a window that simultaneously lets in light and yet doesn't clearly display all that is on the other side; in love with the unique faith, personal conviction, expressiveness, humor, optimism, and testimony of the members who met there; in love with the rich history of the place itself, its conduciveness to meditation, and its proximity to the Charles.

Spending four years in its hallowed halls learning, growing, and communing was a blessing, a privilege. I, too, mourn the loss.

Training Sessions—*David Graham*

I remember attending many events in the Cambridge Chapel dur-

ing my time as a counselor in a bishopric back in the 1960s. This was when Boyd K. Packer was the mission president. He gave us very valuable instruction during our bishopric training sessions. I pray that the many valuable records there were preserved.

So Glad, So Sad . . .—*Rachel Pauli*

I was baptized in that church. I was a member of the University and Longfellow Park I wards. This is such sad news. I am glad to hear everyone is okay. I am sad to know that such a beautiful, special building is lost. I am grateful for all the memories: lessons, programs, conferences, meetings, and spiritual experiences I had there. I was baptized in the Longfellow Park Building. I gave my first talk and met my husband in that chapel. The Longfellow Park Building provided a blessed space for me to receive the most sacred gifts I have been given in my life. My prayers go to the ward members who need a new spiritual home.

My Spiritual Home—*Jason Wood*

I started attending the Longfellow Park chapel in the fall of 1993 as a new student in the University Ward. I didn't know a soul. I still live in New England today, and this chapel has been my spiritual home for most of the last sixteen years. It has seen me through countless friendships, wonderful shared experiences, and two marriages, on a long strange journey that I wouldn't have believed could have happened to me if someone had told me so on the day I first walked in there.

I have many happy memories of my time in that church—playing the organ, DJ-ing Church dances, rehearsing and performing with various groups, hiding out up in the balcony watching people scratch each other's backs, distributing copies of the late great *Juvenile Instructor.* Many of the closest friendships of my life were forged in that building.

Lots of things have changed over the years, but that building was always my rock, a focal point of my adult spiritual life.

It was a wonderful building too, full of nooks and crannies to explore, like that weird passageway between the gym and the Relief Society room. It was wonderfully unique; and, like others, I hope that whatever ends up there eventually will not lose that character.

I only find myself in Cambridge on Sunday mornings about once a month these days. On the morning of the fire, I was singing a service at Christ Church around the corner on Garden Street. It is not unusual to hear sirens occasionally during services, but that morning they kept getting progressively louder and more numerous. It became clear that something unusual was happening, and near the end of the service the priest said a prayer for whoever was affected by the fire. I had no idea it would be me.

When the service ended and the doors opened, smoke wafted in. As I walked outside, someone said the Mormon church on Brattle Street had burned down. We rushed over to the smoldering ruins of the church and watched for several hours as the firefighters worked to put out the blaze. It was strange to see water pouring into the charred remains of the chapel, to see the collapsed roof beams littering the gym, flames flickering along the rose window, and to see the upstairs hallway illuminated with bright sunlight, no longer shielded by a roof.

Several neighbors and ministers of neighborhood churches stopped by to talk. One remarked how horrible it was to see a place of gentleness consumed in such a violent manner. We moved around to the front of the building and watched the firefighters start to wind things down. Ward members had lined up and were busy pulling as many books as possible out of the library, which is now downstairs where the mission office used to be. There was a touching moment as two firefighters carried a large portrait of Jesus ministering to the rich man out of the front door of the church.

I am glad that fate found me up in Cambridge the morning of the fire, and that I had a chance to say good-bye to the building that has meant so much to me over the years.

Anchored with Meaning—*Mary B. Johnston*

This church building has heard so many songs and souls. It has witnessed so much painful and redemptive spiritual journeying. Freud and Darwin were welcomed right along with the Three Witnesses. In the chapel I sang "Amazing Grace" Aretha Franklin-style while Brandon Ingersoll accompanied me on guitar.

I met so many dear friends in this building—worshipping, praying, dancing, doubting, loving . . . I cannot think of a build-

ing save my childhood home that means more to me. Thank you to everyone who has written and who has anchored this beloved space with so much meaning.

Treasures—*Linda Hoffman Kimball*

I started attending the chapel at 4 Longfellow Park in 1969 when I was a freshman at Wellesley College. It was my introduction to Mormon life, since I had joined the Church in Illinois at age nineteen after waiting two years for my parents' permission to be baptized. I had so many thoughtful, spiritual mentors there. I thought the whole Mormon Church was just like my experience in those University Ward for years.

My first Mormon Sunday School teacher was Tony Kimball who quoted C. S. Lewis all the time and gave articulate, intellectually and spiritually rich institute lectures. That was my introduction to C. S. Lewis; it was the perfect segue for me—a committed Protestant Christian whom God had just tapped to become Mormon. Others here have mentioned the large round window in the chapel and its changing hues, "target" design, etc. I always enjoyed finding a kind of cross in it, a comforting hidden treasure to my way of thinking.

I remember plays on that stage. Watching *Wait until Dark* on a movie night in the gym. Dances in the low-lit cultural hall, including one tune I recognized as "Sympathy for the Devil" although I don't know that anyone else knew what it was. I experienced Relief Society for the first time in that room with the lovely bay window. I attended meetings with missionaries at the mission home, then just a few doors down. I remember black carpet with a floral pattern in squares in the foyer.

I remember confiding in my bishop, Richard Bushman, that I'd been thinking about attending a different college for my senior year and his telling me that he thought that the answer to that decision would have something to do with meeting my husband. I asked him if he were speaking as a guy with a hunch or as a bishop under inspiration. He said he thought it was as a bishop under inspiration. I stayed at Wellesley and, although it took four more years for all the pieces to be in the right place, I did meet my husband in that building. Our first child, Christina, was blessed in

that chapel by my husband Chris. That was a rare event in our singles branch, where Roger Porter served as bishop.

After a thirteen-year absence while we lived in Chicago, we returned to Massachusetts for my husband's work. That brought us an entirely new Longfellow Park Ward experience as he served as bishop for a couple of life-changing years. When our son Peter attended Brown University many years later (and after we'd moved back to Chicago), he traveled up from Providence to Cambridge on Sundays for church in that building and taught Gospel Doctrine class for a while.

So much of my shaping as a Latter-day Saint Christian was nourished by the generations of friends and mentors I met in that building. Its destruction by fire is stunning news. Happily the experiences and memories, wrestlings and witnesses that affected me in that building are worked well into the marrow of my bones by now.

Holding a Master Key—*Chris Kimball*

Heresy, I know, but . . . it was a quirky old building that didn't work very well. While I would never have chosen to tear it down, after the fire the only architectural feature I would replicate is the window in the chapel.

But the people, the music, the Sunday lessons. Those are priceless. In two different decades (the '70s and the '90s), in several stages of my life, in multiple administrations, the Longfellow Park chapel was and remains the one Mormon place where I have felt comfortable and allowed. Where I felt I could speak without fear, and listen and sing and pray and learn. Not that everybody was like me. Rather everybody was so not the same that there was room even for me without quibble or constraint.

When I left the building in 1996, I spirited out a master key that opened every door. I know that action was forbidden and I have no defense before the law or the Church. I never used the key; I haven't been able to find it for at least a decade now; and anyway, in the ordinary course of events, the locks were probably changed within a year or two. Furthermore, I didn't really have any use for a key. The half-dozen times I've been in the building since the mid-1990s, I found the Longfellow Park-side doors wide open.

The point is that I wanted access. I wanted to sit in the balcony and watch the people and sing a hymn and see the light change in the window. And pray. The spirit of God—a very big God with wide, welcoming arms—was in that place.

Wonderful Small Things—***Christina Kimball Ingersoll***

My mother sent me the link to this blog site and she has posted here as well. Linda Hoffman Kimball and Chris Kimball met in the Longfellow Park building that fell yesterday. I am the baby who was blessed there some twenty-nine or so years ago.

I remember wonderful small things from that time. My dad and one of the congregants designed a physically beautiful program for worship. I remember one Easter or perhaps Palm Sunday (not a commonly recognized Sunday in Mormon circles) when the program included hand-made, gauze-like, orange paper and a poem about the balm of Gilead.

My most powerful memories, however, are from the late '90s when my dad, Chris, was bishop of the Longfellow Park Ward. During his tenure, the ward first split by ages; but before that, I had the luxury of spending quite some time as a high-schooler in the company of friends years older than myself. It was great for me to make connections with those who attended at that time, some of whom I stay in touch with even now.

And of course, I remember the window. Complete with all of its multiple meanings and ever-changing colors as the seasons passed. I remember marking it as a sure sign of spring when the tree outside unfurled leaves enough to partially cover the lower left quadrant.

I find myself once again back in Cambridge but attending a church that feels very strongly like home to me about a block away, the United Church of Christ on Garden Street. It was an emotionally charged but powerful Sunday for me to be asked by my senior minister, who knows me well, to try to reach out on behalf of my UCC church community to offer our prayers and our meeting space to the LDS community.

I'm very pleased to learn that First Church will be hosting some of the congregants who were attending Longfellow Park while the new building is worked out. I feel certain that there is a silver lining pending in the form of new friendships, the opportunity to show

support, and the chance to build up the interfaith community in Cambridge, as I think Christ would have us do.

Spiritually Housed—*Natalie Williams*

I'm presently a member of the Longfellow Park First Ward and have been here since 2006. I know it's just a building, but the Longfellow Park Chapel was one of the reasons I knew Boston was my home. For at least the first six months I lived in Boston, my heart was full of comfort and a general feeling of "rightness" when I entered that building every Sunday.

Far from the hub of Church activity out west, chapels in this area are hard to come by. The Longfellow Park chapel was the oldest in Massachusetts, boasting a rather unusual history and design. All of that's gone now—the roof collapsed, windows broken, and a charred brick shell a ghost of the lively activity historically housed within the walls. So many, many unknowns for the members of our wards—where we'll meet, if our wards can stay together, if we'll be disbanded during the rebuilding . . . The magnitude of the situation is still surreal and hard to fathom.

The fire today has destroyed the physical facade; but for hundreds of members of the Church currently in the Longfellow Park wards, the spirit of what we felt within those walls will now be spiritually housed within each of us, as a physical facility no longer exists. Maybe this is the chance for us individually to help rebuild the building that rebuilt so many of us.

In a Magical Place—*Kristen Smith Dayley*

Today I live in Seattle, but my heart is (and always has been) in Boston. When I got the text, in between Sunday meetings, that the Longfellow Park chapel had burned, the tears sprang rapidly. I found it difficult to explain to my Pacific Northwest ward members the depth of the loss to the Church and countless members around the world.

My first memories of church are in that building, as is my first experience with repentance. A fellow Primary classmate convinced me to stuff grass through the mailslot into the bishop's office, something that haunted me for days until I confessed to my mother and then had a very pleasant visit with Bishop Gordon Williams. Years later I had the privilege of returning

while attending graduate school and starting my career. During that time, I learned to serve and love in ways I could not previously have known without the people, places, and events that I believe could only have come together in a magical place like Cambridge.

Even though I have been gone for over a decade now, I have spent the last five years traversing thousands of pages of oral histories regarding the Church's growth in New England and in the Cambridge area in particular, hoping to produce, at the end, a manuscript that would have meaning and messages for many—not just those of us who have come to love Cambridge because it is a part of us. Having invested those years in this effort, I am flooded by the realization of all the things that have transpired in the Longfellow Park Chapel—the most significant of which were not publicized events, but the little life-changing interactions, moments, and bits of inspiration that have impacted thousands of people over the last fifty-three years. I know my life was changed there, and will ever be grateful for that.

Homeless Memories—*Heather Craw*

The Longfellow Park building was as quirky and original as its congregants. I hope the church will use this fire as an opportunity to build a more orthodox, rectangular, "Mormon" building in Cambridge and hopefully stamp out some of the heretical leanings that thrive amid secret passages and peanut galleries.

If you know me, you know I'm kidding. What a waste to lose something so special! Some of the best memories of my life are homeless now.

So Many Firsts—*Branden Morris*

I feel really sad about this, but also a little bittersweet. I've never been one to feel sentimental about buildings, but this news today has prompted a sweet little trip down memory lane. As is the case for so many of you, that building and all it represented is a critical part of who I am today.

I was baptized into the Church in '93 as a college freshman, after having had lots of LDS friends in high school and finding I missed their influence after starting school. I remember taking the missionary discussions with the assistants to the presidents

from the mission office, which was then in the meetinghouse—after cold-calling them and telling them I wanted the discussions.

The couple of years I spent in the then-University Ward were amazing. I met some wonderful people (many of whom, thanks to the internet, I've recently reconnected with), and had several amazing experiences that were not only a highlight of my undergraduate years, but also of my spiritual development: my first temple experience, following an overnight ride to Washington, D.C.; my first opportunity to accept a calling and give service in the Church; my first experiences with repentance and forgiveness. We had such a great community for so many of those "firsts."

My Personal Brand of Weirdness—*Erika Peterson Munson*

In 1967 when I was eight years old, my family moved from Salt Lake to Cambridge. The building on Longfellow Park quickly became a symbol for what I had brought with me from Utah: a traditional faith and a culture that at first seemed at odds with the strange new world I encountered.

It took a little while to be proud of that place. I blamed some of the culture shock I was feeling on that colonial architecture. It wasn't the warm contemporary building that I was used to in the Federal Heights Ward in Salt Lake (another meetinghouse rare in its uniqueness and beauty). I remember absolutely dying of embarrassment when, at my mother's behest, my carpool (not a churchgoer among them) would drop me off at the steps of the Cambridge Ward for Primary on Thursday afternoons. I was baptized there on a gray November Saturday afternoon, still homesick for Utah.

But soon enough I figured out that being different was prized in the Harvard community of the late '60s. I could embrace Mormonism as my personal brand of weirdness and be respected for it.

I used the round glass window in the chapel to get me through sacrament meetings. (Remember when they were an hour and a half?!) You could count the squares, then divide them, rearrange them in your mind. There is a golden color of sacrament meeting light that came through the window that, in its own humble way was as unique as anything in a Venetian painting.

Blessed are the children that get to grow up in student wards.

Sure, our numbers were often few, but we got the very best teachers and role models you could ever ask for. I wanted to grow up and be like all those graduate students: loyal, smart, and always asking questions. These busy people not only taught us the gospel but coached us through roadshows on the stage, readied ungraceful teenagers for dance festivals, decorated the gym for dances . . . Thank you Connie Cannon, Diane Wilcox, Hal Miller, Cheryll and Dean May, Kathryn Kimball, Sandra Buys, Val Wise. One of my fondest memories in the gym was my Beehive basketball team's Billy Jean King-inspired challenge to the Scouts. After several weeks of intense practice with coach Randy Wise, we were sure we could beat the boys. The media was alerted. On game night we came charging out with Helen Reddy's voice blaring. We lost. With honor!

It was always special to sing "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" in the Cambridge chapel, knowing that Longfellow wrote the text right next door. The choruses from *Messiah* I have memorized were learned in the chapel choir seats under the direction of Judy Dushku. And who out there was lucky enough to hear the amazing performance of Bach's Mass in B Minor on Easter Sunday in 1981? (Thank you, Paul Dredge!) In addition to filling every choir seat, we squeezed a fine orchestra, including two beautiful kettle drums, around the piano and the sacrament table. Tympani in a sacrament meeting! Only in Cambridge.

I ended up being a Harvard student myself; and no matter what chaos was going on in my life, the Sunday walk along Memorial Drive from Eliot House to Longfellow Park was always therapeutic. When the guy I'd been dating for two years finally said, "I think we'd better see the missionaries," it wasn't long before he was baptized in the Cambridge font. Our last calling before leaving Cambridge was Primary music in that sweet little room upstairs with the teeny little pews. My favorite Sunday was reenacting the First Vision where a little female Sunbeam was cast as God the Father.

Especially the Friends—*Bruce Young*

So many memories! It would take a book to record them all.

I was there from 1976 to 1983 and returned many times, including a three-and-a-half month visit in 1997. I still remember thoughts I had while the sacrament was being passed, fine talks at

church (one lasting fifty minutes, the content of which I've forgotten, and much shorter ones that stirred me then and that I still remember), some of our more interesting ward members who bore their testimony of global conspiracies instead of the gospel; a visit by a Massachusetts congressman (if I'm remembering rightly; I think Linda may have arranged that—please correct me if I'm wrong); a memorable gathering during the blizzard of '78 when Cambridge shut down and we shared food storage treats in the cultural hall; dances, service projects, firesides, musical events, institute classes, crushes, long talks about the meaning of everything, and much, much more.

Especially the friends. It's as if we clung to each other, many of us far away from the homes we grew up in, others not that far from their geographical homes but having moved to a new spiritual home. I remember being delighted at one home evening to realize that I was one of the few "non-converts" there.

My friends from the ward constituted most of my life at that time. My Church experiences were far more important, really, than my graduate classes (though a few of my fellow graduate students became friends, too), and many of my friends from church remain intensely dear to me still.

Something that struck me while reading the responses to the fire: Though the years I spent there seem a magical, unrepeatable time, it appears that many of those who came later feel the same way about their time there. And how about those who came before me? I know of some of them by reputation, and they seem legendary.

One of those who preceded me, Carlfred Broderick, has spoken evocatively of his student days there. (See his "The Core of My Belief," in *A Thoughtful Faith,* edited by Philip L. Barlow [Centerville, Utah: Canon Press, 1986]), 85–101 and listen to some of his tapes.) I can picture the stories he tells in those rooms and hallways that are now in ruins.

But my own time there—and the people I know—have taken on something of that legendary stature in my mind, too.

Matzoh for Sacrament—*Steve Rowley*

I first entered the Longfellow Park chapel on September 4, 1977. It was fast Sunday. I was a new physics grad student at MIT and a convert, baptized only about six months previously. This pair of

circumstances very quickly convinced me that everybody knew more, felt more, read more, did more, understood more, *was* more than I would ever be.

Fortunately, the building was full of fascinating nooks and crannies. For example, there was a trap door in the ceiling of the second floor restroom by the balcony—at that time the only passage into the attic above the chapel. Do you know how quiet the attic above a chapel is between meetings on a winter Sunday afternoon? Since I had no social skills to speak of, it was good to explore the building and try to figure out what the different rooms were for, how they felt, what people did there, why they cared. As it happens, they cared a lot. And I learned a lot trying to figure out why they cared so much.

Everybody loved the rose window. At various times, the glass was various colors—even violent orange for a year or so, until unanimous objection to the color led to fears that a "midnight maintenance" team would perform an unauthorized vitrectomy. My favorite was the pale green shade of glass that changed with the sunset during our late sacrament services.

Over time, I found some measure of community there. Another ponytailed, bearded, hippie liberal intellectual, more or less, was just fine. I had no real idea how unusual that was, since the limits of this building were nearly my only experience of the church. But in Cambridge, it was kind of normal; the extraordinary tolerance of the community reflected the gospel quite well. This was the place where I spiritually came of age, watching the examples of wise, kind people. And, of course, observing the occasional counterexample of a few non-wise or non-kind people. And being non-wise or non-kind myself, on occasion, and meeting forgiveness.

Once, somebody brought matzoh for sacrament, during Passover. Everybody was cool with that, which made a big impression on me. Okay, there was the after-church meal of bagels and ham, but everybody had the grace to laugh about it.

I went to church there for twenty-three years—twenty-three years in a singles ward. I probably drove several bishops nuts. For no particularly obvious reason, they made me a Sunday School teacher for fourteen consecutive years. I could never quite figure

out how that happened, other than that maybe they could keep an eye on the weird folk. Kept me out of the attic, anyway. Maybe they could confine to one classroom those who wanted to talk about the documentary hypothesis, nuances of *almah* versus *bethulah,* the Pauline themes of Alma, or Campbell's hero cycle in the Book of Mormon and the D&C. Whatever. It was a place in the community, with meaningful work to do, acceptance by others. In some ways, that's how I imagine the celestial kingdom. It's also where I got to know my wife.

Yes, I know it wasn't the building that did all this. But the sense memories are hard to separate from the things that really matter: the community of crazy, mostly kind people. I still miss it terribly, even years after marrying and finding another ward. Yes, I hope we rebuild a nice, funky building. But even more, I hope maybe someday we can rebuild a nice, funky community. Maybe someday.

An Anchor for Me—Paula Kelly Caryotakis

I am so sad about this tragedy and cannot stop thinking about it! This building became a home away from home for me after I moved to Massachusetts from California in 1988 to work in Boston. For three and a half years, it was an anchor for me; jobs, addresses, and housemates changed several times, but my membership and participation in the Cambridge University Ward always stayed consistent. Before moving east, I had never lived more than fifty miles from home, so my move to Boston was the true beginning of my adult life. The Longfellow building was where my testimony solidified and my spiritual adventure truly began.

I have so many memories of both the building and the many friends I met there. I remember Jenny Atkinson's fantastic Sunday School music instruction (where I learned that a hymn is not always a hymn because sometimes it is a chorale or a gospel song) and I also remember your cheesecakes, Kristine, and thinking you were crazy for going shopping on the bus!

I remember volleyball on Monday nights in the gym, Sunday district dinners, and how stinky the bathroom was by 3:00 P.M. because of all the diapers left in the trash by Cambridge I Ward mothers.

I remember men knitting in church, new freshman women

looking a little wide-eyed in Relief Society, and men trying to crash Relief Society because they liked our lessons better.

I remember feeling so lucky when I scored a parking space on Longfellow Park or Brattle and feeling bummed when I had to walk several blocks—especially in the rain. I remember hanging out on the front steps on warm spring evenings, watching the seasons change through that beautiful round window and looking up at the brass chandeliers in the chapel.

I remember some very memorable testimonies (Sam, I remember the day you gave yours.) Most importantly, I remember Bishop Clay Christensen's warm, gentle, and welcoming leadership style, and getting to know some of the most remarkable people I have ever known. In many ways, Sunday was the best part of every week and it was because of the experiences I had in that build

Not the Building—*Erin L. Crowley*

I made my husband repeat the news three times and show me the pictures before I could believe him. I joined the Church a few months before leaving for college in 1995, and the University Ward became the place where I really learned about the gospel and developed a testimony. (And learned how *not* to cook tacos for two hundred people!)

I, too, spent countless moments pondering the symbolism of the beautiful round window. Enough years have passed that the exact layout of the building has faded somewhat from my mind, but the feeling of the window, the light, and the amazing souls that shared that sacred space with me still lingers.

I've met in a variety of buildings as a member of the Church, including converted warehouse space in the branch where I first joined in Connecticut, a farm house/barn in Guatemala, the historic Twentieth Ward chapel in the Avenues of Salt Lake complete with the only stained-glass windows I've ever seen in an LDS chapel, and more than a few of the cookie-cutter 1970s brick eyesores that seem to pepper the growing stakes of this country. I've worshipped in enough different buildings to know that it is not the building that makes the place special, it is a combination of the Spirit, the gospel, and the amazing people who share the space.

Even knowing that, I still deeply mourn the loss of the Cam-

bridge chapel. I have so many wonderful memories. My life has been forever touched by my experiences there.

My prayers are with those of you who currently worship there. I hope the hearts of your neighbors in Cambridge will be touched and that somehow you will find a way to worship together while the building is being repaired/rebuilt.

Equally Warm, Whether Empty or Full—*Aja Fegert Eyre*

While an undergraduate at Harvard, I attended the University Singles Ward from 1997 to 2000 and then the Grown-Up Ward from 2000 to 2001. I am overwhelmed with grief and sadness and also grateful for Sam's efforts to provide a forum to mourn together.

I think I lived about one-seventh of my college years at the chapel. It wasn't unusual for me to spend six to eight hours at the chapel on Sundays with all the meetings and events afterward: dinners, choir, baptisms, etc. In fact, I have to confess that I once even took a two-hour nap up on the balcony while everyone was in Sunday School and Relief Society. Whew! I've confessed. I feel better.

It was my home in Cambridge. The dorms were just temporary housing. I, too, remember being volunteered to head up the after-church dinners as a freshman (Agh!) and organizing countless skits and lip-syncs for those ward parties. Do you recall how during Christmastime the whole chapel would smell like pine boughs thanks to the Relief Society's annual wreath-making event and the fat pine trees in the front foyer? Also, there was nothing better than a fast and testimony meeting in the singles ward.

For four years, I walked twenty minutes to and from that church at least twice a week, and that is quite a task when you wear high heels on brick sidewalks. It was always a joy to finally reach the back door and come in to find the halls plastered with "flirting" singles. (I sometimes wonder how any of us found our spouses there, considering how socially strange most of us were.) I loved being there alone, too—to practice on the organ or to meet with Brother Christensen. It was a unique building in that it was equally warm whether empty or full.

I was hoping that my kids would someday attend church there, and hopefully they will. It will always be a hallowed place, and I

am sure the church (and the Cambridge City Council) will make sure the new building there will be appropriate and equally worthy of our adoration.

Rest in peace, old friend.

Not Different from My Home—*Katsu Funai*

My wife led me to the news and to this website. We met while we were attending the ward in 2001. I share the sentiments of many who have left comments here.

I clearly remember my first Sunday in the Longfellow Park chapel in August of 1998. Though I had a testimony, I was spiritually underdeveloped. I remember the trek I made with my father from the Harvard Square red line exit, past HMV Records, down the ragged brick sidewalk, into the back door of the church by the kitchen. I was a freshman at Boston University, with my major yet undecided, freshly arrived in the United States for the first time that week from Zurich. We comfortably situated ourselves in the left back corner, and the sacrament meeting convened. That week I was quite overwhelmed with the new and different world that I was about to face, including the new ward in it. Then I remember hearing a familiar opening hymn sung in a language I had never heard it in before, and right away that holy spirit lifted me. I came to a realization that, unlike all the new places I had visited earlier that week, this place was not different from my home.

That same year I was spiritually tested, and though I never lost my burning testimony, I never came out as a strong active member of that ward. I remember those who persistently helped me through the hard times, including my home teachers, my home teaching companion, those in Boston University's family home evening group and the bishopric. I received my patriarchal blessing and my mission call.

Upon returning from my mission, I was determined to give/return as much as I could to the Lord and get as much as I could out of my Church experience. The Lord had changed me in two years, and I was determined not to let him down. The blessings I received in that ward in the next two years are immeasurable. I made some of the dearest friends that I have, gained more testimonies and memories through service, met, dated, proposed to,

and married my wife in the Boston Temple in June 2003. It was one of the happiest moments of my life.

Like many of you I recall that circular window, omnipresent during our sacrament meeting, counting how many possible pies could be conjured out of it. When I saw a picture of what's left of that window, I could no longer contain my emotion and I wept with gratitude and sorrow. It represented everything that is dear to my heart that happened there. Even now I can close my eyes and remember the intricacy of that building and how much time I spent there. I miss all of that. I miss all that the Lord blessed me with in it.

Tribute to a Building—*Arthur Shek*

I attended the University Ward from 1995 to 1999 as one of the MIT strong. Thanks to Sam for putting up this page. It really hits home.

I, too, pay tribute to the building where I was baptized, amazed at the huge turnout of university students I had never met, where I spent many a spring day bonding with fellow students on the long walk to and from MIT along the river, the long-suffering winter walk from the T stop down snow-embattled Brattle Street, the mediocre post-church dinners among students destined for greatness, and where I met my wonderful wife.

I am glad to have walked through its empty halls and chapel one last time in 2006 when I attended Siggraph in Boston and left my fellow Disney employees for one night of nostalgia.

Giving Church a Try—*Michelle Osborn Hickman*

I showed up on the Harvard campus as a seventeen-year-old for "pre-frosh" weekend. I hadn't planned to attend church as part of this visit; I figured I'd take a train home Sunday morning, so I didn't pack any dressy clothes. But on Saturday, I happened to pick up a long floral skirt at a used-clothing store in Harvard Square.

Sunday morning, I thought maybe I'd give church a try and take a later train home. I got dressed, with only an oversized ugly old T-shirt to wear with my new/old skirt. I asked my roommate of the weekend if I could get away with this outfit, and she said I looked kind of funky and Bohemian—something I'd never been called before (nor since, for that matter). I wasn't quite sure if it was a compliment, but decided to risk it.

I set off on my own, without quite knowing where the church was. I wandered around, got lost, and almost gave up. I finally arrived, and the sacrament was already in progress, so I plopped myself down in the foyer. At that moment, I was overcome with the Spirit. I was so relieved and grateful to have found this building. I felt as if I had found my way home.

I joined the congregation in the chapel after the sacrament had been passed and, of course, didn't know a soul. But after the meeting, a sweet, smiley, young (and very young-looking) MIT student, struck up a conversation with me. It was Tona Hangen (What was her last name back then? I forget.) I was so grateful for her small gesture of kindness, helping this painfully shy, awkwardly dressed, self-conscious newcomer feel welcomed.

I was always incredibly intimidated by the collective brilliance of the University Ward, but I loved listening to Bishop Christensen's wise and gentle and loving words, Steve Rowley's fascinating lessons, and especially Collin Beecroft all decked out like Whitney Houston, singing, "I Want to Dance with Somebody!" at the ward talent show. Other memories: Preparing hundreds of baked potatoes with Bill and Donna and Ed in the kitchen; arriving at church red-faced the first day I wore my engagement ring, holding hands with Troy, thrilled to be engaged, but mortified at the attention we attracted; Sam Brown's long hair and the cast on his arm and his moving testimony freshman year; Elder Enzio Busche's talk on God as a dyad; Kristine Haglund's Sunday School lesson that began with these words on the blackboard: "'God is dead'—Nietzsche" followed by, 'Nietzsche is dead'—God," which tickled my funny bone. Wonderful lessons by Marion Bishop Mumford, and Heather Pratley, and countless other people, whose names elude me at the moment. So many other good and loving and thoughtful and good-natured people—Mary Carol, Elaine, Cannon, Mike and Diana, and so many more. Bishop Wheelwright, whom I never saw without a smile on his face, and his wonderful, warm, friendly wife. Pouring out my pain and anguish and questions to God in quiet prayer while sitting in the chapel, and feeling His love and peace fill me from head to toe.

Thanks, everybody, for this trip down memory lane.

The Bonds Endure—*Jim Johnston*

In 2002, when Richard and Valerie Anderson moved from Arlington to Utah after decades as members of the Cambridge Ward and several other wards in eastern Massachusetts, they bequeathed to us an original pew from the Longfellow Park Chapel. They had been the stewards of this surplus bench since the chapel was remodeled some years ago. Their nickname for it was Pepe Le Pew. We still have the bench and now cherish it in a new way. If you would like to see it and sit in it, let me know by email (JimJ@johnstoncompany.com).

My own history with the chapel goes back to when I was fifteen, in 1970–71. Our family (my parents Peter and Charlotte, and siblings Jeff, Mary, and David) lived in Watertown and attended church in Cambridge. Gordon Williams was bishop, Maryann MacMurray was seminary teacher, and Dean and Cheryll May taught the youth Sunday School class. Some of the other families we knew were Bushman, Manderino, Clay, Bledsoe, Romish, Van Uidert, May, Ulrich, Dushku, Miller, White, Walker, Lyon, Merrill, Peterson, Horne, Gardner, Gilliland, Reiser, and many more.

Now I'm fifty-four. My wife, Mary, and I moved to Manchester, New Hampshire, in 1985. In 1992 we moved to Lexington, Massachusetts, and became members of the Arlington Ward of the Cambridge Stake. We've been here ever since. In September 2007, we attended the Cambridge Stake Reunion at the Longfellow Park Chapel. (For more on that, including a history of places the Church has met in Cambridge over the decades up through the dedication of the Longfellow Park Chapel in 1956, and beyond, see http://cambridgereunion.blogspot.com/.) I maintain a list of all who attended the reunion, but it is incomplete. If you attended, please let me know by email.

I saw the smoking ruin of the chapel yesterday about 2:30 P.M. and have felt sweet sorrow ever since. Such wonderful bonds we have with each other . . . The bonds endure.

Freudian Analysis of Lehi's Dream—*Ty Bennion*

My mother just emailed me to let me know about the fire; and although I am typically a lurker on this site, I have to write a few words simply because I associate this building with my Mormonism as much as any other single structure. First, it is good to see

several familiar names from my time as an undergraduate from the fall of '87 through '91. I also fondly remember Steve Rowley's Gospel Doctrine lessons, although until five minutes ago, I felt my experience might have been more unique–Steve, fourteen years?!

Like others, I associate that building with intellectual inquiry that is found throughout the Church–but seemingly never in such a concentrated form. It wasn't just Steve's lessons, although they set one heck of a tone. In my freshman year at Harvard, I joined a study group populated with upperclassmen who, I recall, once spent two weeks (because one just wasn't enough) discussing a Freudian interpretation of Lehi's dream. We all agreed it was complete bunk at the end, but it wasn't rejected out of hand, which still feels right to me. I have lost track of the friends I made in that building, which is typical of me, but the conversations during the weekly University Ward linger-longers remain special to this day.

I credit my choosing to remain in the Church with the decision I made the first Sunday in that fall of '87 when I elected to walk to that beautiful colonial building rather than stay back in Canaday Hall with my new roommates. Had I chosen differently, for all I know the decision would have been permanent. I distinctly remember making that walk with a profound lack of conviction or testimony. In that building I moved from simply going and not really knowing why, to having the testimony that it was the right place for me to be–despite my occasional misgivings or gripes.

Six years later, in my second tour of duty in that building, I baptized my wife in its font, thanks largely to the tireless efforts of some of my graduate school classmates and the fellow members of the Cambridge Third Ward who couldn't believe that a non-member spouse had fallen into their midst. I am eternally grateful for their efforts; as I hope will be the three beautiful girls to whom we are sealed, and their children . . .

Finally, tonight I will pray that it is rebuilt, with real bricks. Cinder blocks are an abomination as they diminish the Spirit of the Lord, but I claim no authority on this final point.

Move Back in a Heartbeat—*Marilyn Lee Brown*

When Leo said yesterday, "The Cambridge church is burning

down," my first words were, "Oh, no. I hope they can at least save the organ," a modest but serviceable pipe organ—always a treasure in a Mormon chapel. The pictures make it clear that the organ was one of the first things to go. It was my privilege to play it for many sacrament meetings between the fall of '68, when I arrived, and the spring of '77, when we left.

Leo and I met in this chapel in the fall of 1970 and were married a year later, so it will always have a special place in our hearts. Only two of our six children got to see where their parents met. All the people of our era who have been mentioned here—and more—are still so dear to us. After seven years of living in La Jolla, I thought I had finally stopped pining for Boston. Reading this blog and seeing the pictures of the Cambridge chapel burning have made me realize, "No, I'd still move back in a heartbeat if I could."

A few of my most vivid memories of events in this building: listening to Paul Dunn on many occasions during his tenure as mission president, George Romney (HUD Secretary at the time he spoke to our singles conference), Juanita Brooks, the first guest speaker for the annual *Exponent II* weekend celebration, Jack Anderson with his big, booming voice, who started his talk at our Boston-produced Education Week by pounding the pulpit and pronouncing, "There is a menace in the land, and his name is Richard Nixon!" The presiding authority turned pale and the audience gasped. This was about the time the "tapes" were released, but only he in that room had seen the transcript. I knew he was right, and soon events were rolling toward Nixon's impeachment and eventual resignation.

Bishop Lyon remains the most loved and influential bishop in our lives. I still remember Linda Hoffman's first testimony and so many other sacred and moving experiences in the Cambridge chapel, as well as many of the ward members with whom we matured spiritually during our time in Boston. What a privilege it was to take institute classes from Steve Gilliland, Richard Bushman, and Truman Madsen. Many times I've wished I had a yearbook from our wards in Boston when I see names I know or should know called as General Authorities and general auxiliary officers, mission presidents, serving in Congress or other important government posts, quoted in the *New York Times,* writing books, and in other ways leading and excelling.

It's not the building that I feel such nostalgia for—it's all the people, and the things that happened in the building—and that remains unchanged. We look forward to another reunion, having missed the one in '07, and send our love to all.

Looked like a Church, Sounded like a Church
—Molly McClellan Bennion

How I've enjoyed your memories, especially of the bright and beautiful people and the warm acceptance!

I find myself thinking of the physical structure which no doubt cannot be replicated under current codes but which I pray will be rebuilt to model and honor that lovely church. I arrived in 1965 as a college student and an investigator and to a building that looked like a church, felt like a church, sounded (the organ) like a church, and drew my heart and mind skyward through the rose window.

The typical building where I first explored the gospel in high school never felt quite right, and it has taken me some time to adjust to similar buildings since. It boils down to "Do architecture and beauty matter?" Of course they do. By its very difference, the Longfellow Park chapel nudged us to accept difference, be happily different, and to seek more that was lovely. Had it not been for my years there, I not only might not have joined the Church but I also might not have stayed in the Church. I'm still gratefully running on fuel I stored within those walls.

How Beautiful Our Waters of Mormon
—Jillaire Wangsgard McMillan

I attended the University Ward from 1997–2000 and then the Cambridge Second Ward 2000–2002. My younger brother now attends the Cambridge First Ward and called me Sunday morning (my time) with the shocking news of the fire. He was standing there watching the hoses pour water in. I was brought to tears that day as I reflected on the loss of that building and all the memories I had in my years there.

For me, the Longfellow Park building and that after-church dinner was the comforting place I went after my first few days as a culture-shocked freshman. Years later it's where I sat shoulder-

to-shoulder with shell-shocked Latter-day Saints for a special broadcast from Salt Lake City a few days after the September 11 attacks.

Before I met him (at an after-church dinner), my husband, Damon, was baptized in that building, received both priesthoods there, and decided to go on a mission. I think he put it best when he said, "Whenever I read in Mosiah about the waters of Mormon and 'how beautiful they are to the eyes of them who there came to the knowledge of their Redeemer,' I think of that building and how my testimony of Christ, and every other good thing I have now, come from the years I spent there."

Some things do last forever, and I think many of us gained those things sitting inside the walls of our beloved Longfellow Park chapel.

A Deep Reverence in My Heart—*Clayton Christensen*

Dear friends, It has made me shed tears all over my keyboard to read these notes from so many of you with whom we've shared wonderful times in the Cambridge Chapel. I have the experiences in my mind and my journal, of course, but the building was like a filing cabinet in which they were stored and organized, and I fear many of them will be a lot harder to recall now that the cabinet has been gutted.

I remember sitting on the stand in December 1989 listening to the magnificent ward choir in the Christmas program, accompanied by Jenny Atkinson. As they sang "In the Bleak Midwinter," a spirit came into my heart that told me in the most powerful way that I wasn't just the bishop of the University Ward but had been given the inestimable privilege of worshipping with and learning from one of the most extraordinary groups of Latter-day Saints that had ever been assembled.

From that time to the present, I have had a deep reverence in my heart for each of you, and for all of the truth you taught me by your words and your lives. I will be forever grateful for the privilege it was to be your bishop in that sacred building. I pray that, even though the filing cabinet has been burned, you still will be able to feel my love and gratitude for you.

Part of Our Family—*Lisa Romish*

The chapel on Longfellow Park held so many, many family memo-

ries and history that I feel as though a part of our family is gone. My grandparents were some of the people who were instrumental in getting the building built and helping the Church grow in the Boston area. Grandpa went to the neighbors in the area and explained what the Church wanted to do by removing two homes to put the chapel up. My grandparents were thrilled about the chance to have a chapel that belonged to them in this area and for people to feel welcomed.

It was from this building that my mother, Ann Hinckley, gave her farewell address before leaving on her mission and her homecoming talk afterwards. It was there that she met my father, after his talk on the symbolism in architecture in the building. It was the place they were married prior to driving to Salt Lake City to be sealed. All five of us children were blessed in the Longfellow Park chapel and three of us were baptized there—one against her will, due to a bad experience in the basement. My father was a branch president and bishop there. My brother received his Eagle Scout award there on one of those really hot summer evenings. Oh the memories of this building for the Romish family run deep! It makes the loss of this building so heartbreaking.

I remember the "Sing Your Own *Messiah*" and wreath-making during the holidays. I remember Primary and swinging from the trees out front. I remember the cry room, nursery, and balconies as places to hang out. I remember wonderful friends who became like family to us since all of our relatives were in the West. I remember lots of happiness, love, and strong spirits.

I hope that it is rebuilt in the same style and that more people can share the memories of such a historic place.

May Many Phoenixes Rise—*Allison Pingree*

Dear friends, I received the news about the fire from Mary Johnston at work Monday morning. After clicking open a few images and reading Steve Rowley's wonderful tribute, strong waves of grief welled up inside of me. I had to close down my email altogether because I knew that, if I didn't, I wouldn't stand a chance of getting any work done all day.

Later, in the quiet of the evening, I gave myself over to reading the postings and poring over the photos. I cried and cried. Last

night, sharing the narratives and images with a dear friend, more tears came.

Like many of you here, I've been pondering what it is that I'm grieving in the loss of that building, and I think it's actually many things: something about youth and tradition; fear and anxiety giving way to hope and courage; the right mixes of challenge and support, faith and reason, head and heart, legacies and new pathways.

My parents attended church for two years in that chapel right after they were married; Dad was getting his MBA, and Mom soon became pregnant with my oldest brother. They lived in Holden Green, and drove a red Volkswagen bug. I grew up hearing stories of their time in Boston, saw Christmas cards every year from friends they made during that time, and wondered if I'd ever have the chance to go to that place that loomed larger than life in our family lore.

I did get that chance, I'm grateful to say, in the fall of 1986, when I started my own graduate school journey. I attended the University Ward in 1986–87, then Cambridge First after marrying in 1987. From then until we moved to Nashville in 1998, that chapel and that community formed my spiritual home—and has continued to do so, though in less obvious ways, ever since.

It was there that I taught dozens of Relief Society lessons (adapting the manual to address issues that mattered—depression, parenting, grief and loss, community . . .), co-led Family Relations classes, and held the most glorious Church calling ever: ward choir director. Rob and Cheri Hancock were the backbone of our group, and we made beautiful music together. I was pregnant with my daughter while in that calling and still believe that she grew in my womb hearing heavenly sounds.

That's the only calling I've ever had where I felt I could bring my passion, full-on, without restraint or shame. I could move my body, command with strength, and let my emotions flow—smack dab at the front of the chapel—to make something holy. I remember Sibyl Johnston's father, composer Ben Johnston, offering his pieces (hand-written) for us to sing in our Easter service.

I remember Dian Saderup's kindness and Keith Dionne's spunk. I remember Pandora Brewer's beautiful solo voice in "I Wonder as I Wander" and Marion Bishop's gift for helping us see scriptures in new ways. I remember the study group that met

monthly on Sunday nights—newly married couples, young families, graduate students making our way into adulthood together.

I remember Annie Hoyle, the sweet little woman from Yorkshire, England, whom we picked up to bring to services every week and who became our adopted grandmother. When Annie died, Erin Burns and I helped to dress her body for burial—an experience that I count as one of the most sacred in my life.

I remember all of these times and people and so many more, with both gratitude and yearning. In grieving the burnt building, I grieve the passage of time, the decay of all things physical, and the difficulties of finding and sustaining community that can truly embrace difference.

May many phoenixes rise from those ashes.

Buildings

Tona Hangen

Our new, low, brick ward building is about a mile from my house. It's an easy walk there, on clean, neat sidewalks, through a young development of nearly identical ranches and split-levels in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. Yet most of the time we drive there—to save time, I suppose. Primary is on Tuesday afternoons. We also receive the sacrament in Primary on Sundays, or Junior Sunday School, as it was known then, separate from the "big" sacrament meeting.

My mother writes a story in my baby book (although I'm no longer a baby) that after one morning meeting, I went home with another family for lunch. On the way back to church for the afternoon meeting, they asked me if I would want to sit with them, or with my family. I explained in all seriousness that I must sit with my own family. They told me there may not be room on the bench, to which I replied the obvious: that with one person missing there will be a hole on the pew where my family sits and so of course there will be room. It is from this story that I realize my memories extend back to before the consolidated schedule. The mile drive from home is no hardship for my family, but for many families who live—as we do—in what Utahns persist in calling "the mission field," Sunday is an all-day affair and gasoline is expensive in the early 1970s.

With the new building, its crisp rust-colored carpet and dark paneling marking it as a loving creation of that least stylish of decades, my family becomes a sort of pioneer. The building is new, the ward is mainly young families, the area is rapidly changing from farmland to suburban tract housing. My dad, in his mid-thirties, is a member of the bishopric. One Sunday, he conducts the meeting and asks for a show of hands for someone's calling. Then, "Any opposed?" he asks, the pro forma question which does not really invite a response. A child in my Primary class—the "bad kid" in the class—raises his hand high. My dad looks down from the pulpit, smiles a little, and says, "We'll ignore that."

Once a year, the ward holds a "corn bust" in a local park. It in-

volves a corn-shucking contest, all the corn on the cob you can eat, Frisbee playing, three-legged races, and the like. The heat and humidity make everything wilt and shimmer. I'm amazed at how fast the grownups shuck corn and how fiercely they compete.

The aerobics craze hits; the Relief Society starts an aerobics class at church once a week. It must be in the summer, because I remember attending and trying along, doing doggy-kicks to Captain and Tennille's "Love Will Keep Us Together" in the gymnasium.

I remember my Merrie Miss leader conducting personal progress interviews, so I must be about ten. I shyly confess to her, since this is a private setting, that I think I was born in the wrong century. I long to live in the nineteenth century, all those petticoats and trims. I have been poring longingly over the old issues of *Godey's Lady's Book* which the public library keeps in a locked cabinet, but which they will unlock and release to a polite and persistent child. My leader stares. Then she comments incredulously, "But they had to wear black wool stockings in the summer." *Fine by me*, I think. When I pick beans in the family vegetable garden, I wear a dress-up pioneer dress and an apron.

Sunday School class, age thirteen. It's a large class. The ward has grown. We have filled the building to capacity. Our classroom must meet in the center of the gymnasium inside a carpeted portable cubicle. It's noisy, distracting. Our class is large and rowdy, even rude. We are trying the teacher's patience week after week. He must have decided to try something drastic. He hands us each a letter to read in silence. It explains that he cannot go on teaching us in the usual way. He would like us to consider trying an experiment instead, an experiment on the Word. He invites us to make the gospel real in class. I don't remember the details, or even whether the culture of the class changed. I do remember that he punctured the placid complacence of same-old Sunday School, and that he addressed us as moral agents who were making dangerous choices. I remember that his pain and his frustration came through clearly in the letter—that he felt he was failing to reach us. I found that admission rather shocking, even a little terrifying.

I'm on a youth temple trip at the Washington DC Temple. I'm perhaps fourteen or fifteen. I'm sitting in the waiting line, swing-

ing my feet which don't touch the floor. The air is chlorine-heavy and warm, the splashing is muffled, my friends are quietly whispering. I notice a woman standing there, on the edge of the font. She's more visible in my peripheral vision than when I look straight at her. She is simply standing there, watching the font. She stands there until a certain name is read. I feel that name like a jolt. Then she is gone.

My second ward building was the brick chapel on Longfellow Park in Harvard Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I arrived at MIT in the fall of 1988; my parents dropped me off at my temporary dorm for Rush Week—choose housing, fraternities, take nighttime campus tours through the hacker tunnels, make major decisions all in one overwhelming week before classes begin. I remember a sudden sense of panic that I hadn't gone to BYU. How would I find someone to marry? I did not have long to worry.

My new ward was chockful of bright, good-looking, earnest, edgy, talented people. The talks were erudite works of literature. The Gospel Doctrine lessons openly mocked the insipid Church manuals. The activities calendar was one eternal round, with something for everyone, any night of the week. The building hummed with events, dances, institute classes, volleyball tournaments. Every Sunday after church, for two dollars, you could eat a meal—homeless people came through the line along with Harvard and MIT students whose dorms didn't serve dinner on Sundays. The ward was divided into districts and each took a turn preparing the meal.

In mid-fall, I was asked to coordinate the Thanksgiving meal. I'd never cooked a turkey in my life. I was in the thick of my first semester at MIT, nearly drowning in the blast from the "firehose," and this calling felt monumentally hard. Yet somehow I pulled it off—met new people and delegated to them, borrowed cars, learned where the Haymarket vegetable stalls were, bought birds, mashed potatoes. Those meals became a punctuating rhythm to my church attendance and service.

There was always music involved. I remember one evening a group of four college women looked for space in the fridge for leftovers. We stood shoulder to shoulder, gazing into the shelves meditatively. Someone started singing, "Nearer, My God, to Thee" and we picked up the harmonies, weaving and improvis-

ing. Suddenly we realized we were singing into the open fridge, and we cracked up laughing until we fell over, gasping.

The chapel had one long wall of tall, mottled-glass windows that let in light but only suggested what lay beyond. Behind the pulpit, a huge circular-paned window dominated the wall, veiled the leaves outside, invited light. I sang in many choirs in that building. We sang difficult, complicated music, boundary-pushing music, orchestrated by musicians of unusual quality. One stands out, a performance of a lengthy and complex arrangement of "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief." The choir director, Elise Phelps, was a sylvan redhead, elegant, whose silk blouse had French cuffs fastened with little navy blue buttons. I remember that she was transported by the emotion of the words, transported to tears while conducting, lit by the transcendent light from the circular window behind us. I thought she looked as Jesus must have on the Mount of Transfiguration: "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:2).

In spring, my district prepared a video for the ward's contest. We had one afternoon to make it, so we could not edit the film. It had to be made in sequence, just stopping the camera between scenes. It was the decidedly low-tech offering from a group of overworked MIT students without access to any technology except the camera itself. We met at the chapel, each bringing a couple of vegetables. We had a vague idea we'd make a spoof of CNN News, calling it VNN News, the Vegetable Network News. We thought up skits on the spot. One imitated the sportscaster for the Boston Celtics, calling the plays on the basketball court. We made several commercials. We broadcast live from various places in the building. I think I was "Corny Chung" and my friend Brian Eastley was "Dan Radish."

For our closing skit, we went outside, down across Longfellow Park, across Memorial Drive, to the steel guardrail that ran along the bike path next to the Charles River. Traffic whizzed past. We chose a particularly large tree along the path, right next to the guardrail. I narrated the scene, reading from 1 Nephi 8, Lehi's dream of the tree of life. The overspreading tree, the iron rod leading to the tree, the river of filthiness alongside. The dazzlingly white fruit? Our only white edibles were big onions. We

elected Dave Barrett to play Lehi and instructed him to pluck the white fruit from the tree. It was obvious on camera that it was an onion, but he bit into it with brave determination, giving a masterful impression that it was sweet beyond all that was sweet.

It was in that building, about a year later, that I washed lasagna pans after one of the church dinners with a good-looking, funny surgical resident, Don Hangen. We were in a hurry, because a friend, Kristine Haglund—who had been in charge of that night's dinner—had invited a group of us to attend a sing-along of Haydn's "Lord Nelson Mass" down the street at the Longy School of Music, and we were eager to go. The conversation with Don over the dishes turned to fast-paced banter and movie quotations. Within a week we were dating. By October, we were something of a couple. No one was fooled when we sat next to each other in church, folded our arms reverently for the prayers, and linked fingers under our folded arms. The Halloween dance was coming up, disco ball, costumes, soundtrack by Fine Young Cannibals and Dead or Alive. We decided to make something of a public announcement—a bold move in a singles ward in which speculation about couples was a full- time hobby. We went as Velcro. He was "fuzzy" with a rugby shirt striped with the stuff, and I was "sticky" with a shirt similarly striped with the opposite side. After slow dances, we made a satisfyingly loud ripping sound as we pulled apart. We got engaged over Thanksgiving break.

After we were married, we moved over to the Cambridge First Ward, the "married" ward in the same building. The unit embraced a small deaf branch and a Mandarin branch. Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking units met in overlapping schedules with the singles ward and the married ward. Haitian converts were among our newest and most sincere members. One Haitian woman paid her tithing by giving the church a carpet-cleaning machine. Relief Society hour was palpably charged with emotion, an invisible but immovable dividing line between stay-at-home-wives-of-graduate-students and women-getting-their-own-advanced-degrees. I remember awful, awkward, weeping, angry lessons. The intense atmosphere was like the air before a thunderstorm. Conservatives and liberals, each highly defensive and in the throes of their own self-identity crises, hurled charges and counter-charges. Lightning

bolts of the Spirit sometimes, cathartically, struck during meetings, mercifully followed by the loving, steady rain of tears.

My husband was called as bishop, the first one not to be called away from the "family" ward in Belmont but to be called from within the ward itself. During his time as bishop, a young member of our ward, Daniel Von Dwornick, found out he was HIV positive. Eventually he came home with hospice, a hospital bed set up in their third-floor walkup apartment, his wife handling everything with grace and grief, and a steady stream of meals and visitors. We had a special training session at the church to give volunteers medical protocol for helping the family. I remember that one task I did often was to walk the couple's little terrier around and around the neighborhood near the church. I remember that one day in the midst of the usual chaos in the apartment, the Relief Society president came running up the stairs, charged through the door, unplugged the constantly ringing phone, and plugged her own answering machine into the wall so his wife, Ruby, could finally begin to screen her many calls.

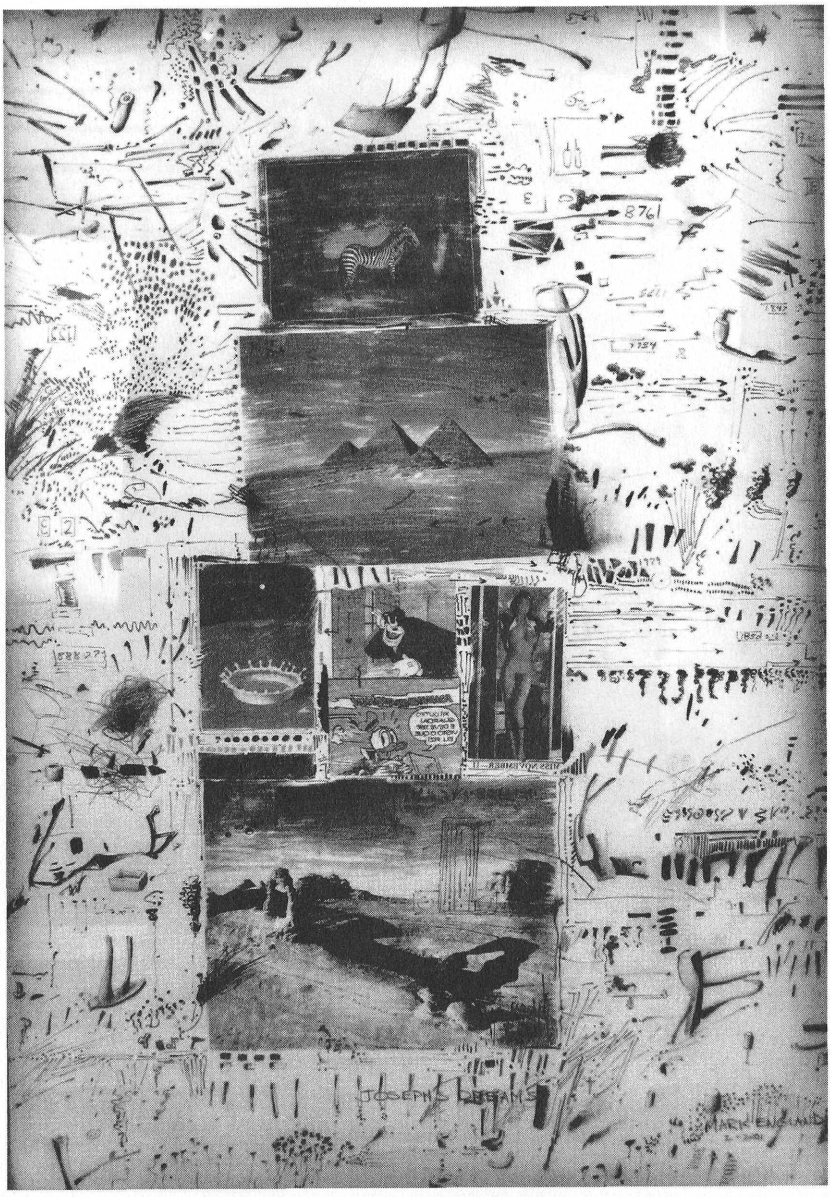
The Boston Mission offices moved from Cambridge to Belmont in those years, vacating a large suite on the ground floor. Part of it—the prettiest part with the low bay windows—my husband turned into the nursery. The other part became a family history library, which I helped stock and staff, as people wandered in off the street, in search of themselves and their stories.

In the summer of 2008, the building had a fiftieth reunion. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich headed up a committee to collect memories, document the building's past, and sponsor a series of events around the building's significance in the Mormon diaspora, the Cambridge community, and the growth of several generations of Boston-educated Mormons. I strolled the halls, peering at the photographs. Some of my own memories felt too raw to process, although we had moved one stake over and had been away for over ten years.

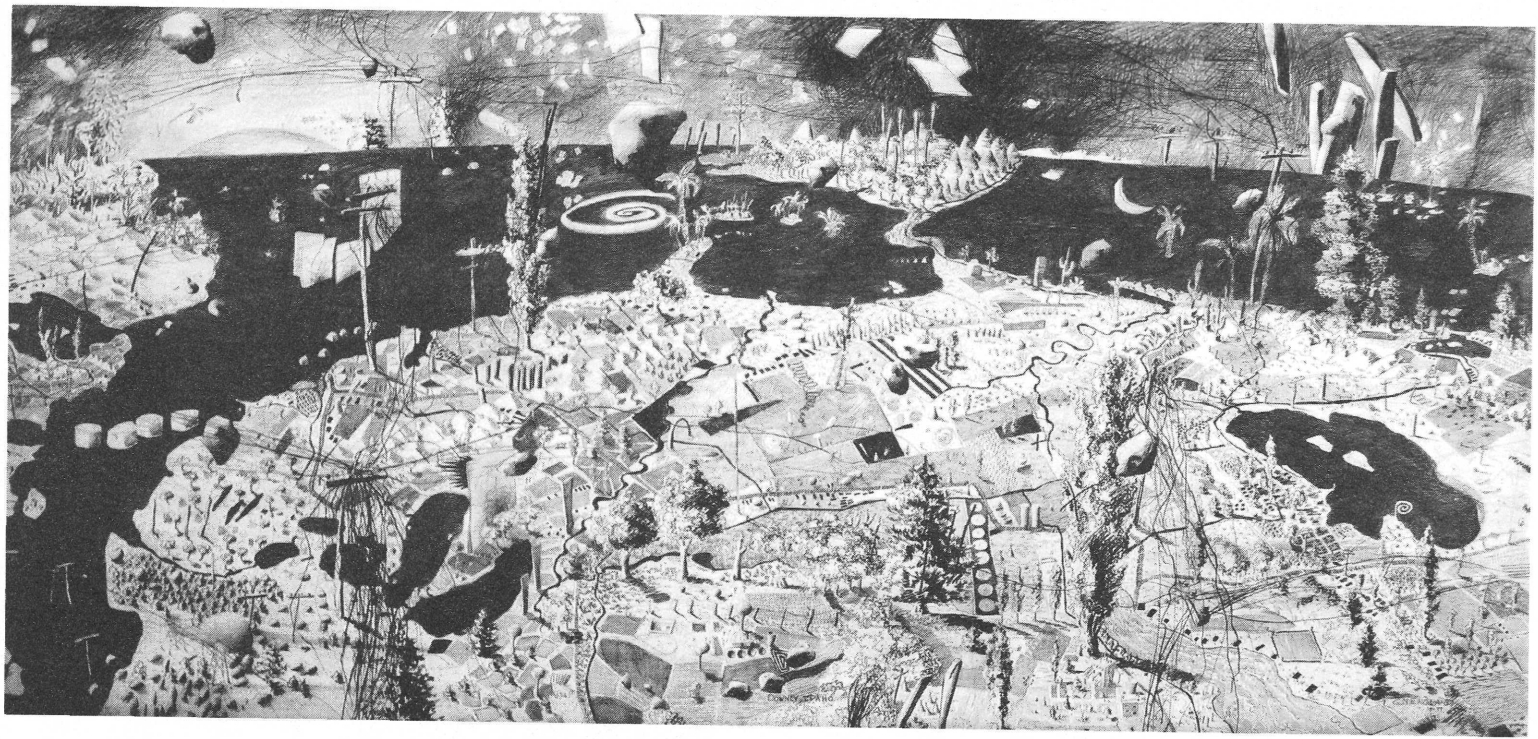
In May of 2009, I felt that umbilical cord tying me to the Cambridge chapel tighten and tug. We had one of those new-fangled, slightly awkward broadcast stake conferences from some studio room in Salt Lake. Afterwards, someone came up to me and my husband, with a photo on his iPhone that had been sent by his

son, who attends the Cambridge Ward. The building was in flames. Oddly enough, it started during the broadcast. Apparently it began in the attic, below the roof, and the building burned from the roof downward. Since it was a broadcast, everyone was in the chapel on the ground floor. No one was in the second-story classrooms. Everyone got out. Some of the paintings were salvaged, as were some of the institute's books and papers; I heard that after the fire was out, a line of intermingled Mormons and Quakers made a bucket brigade across the lawn from the chapel to the Friends meetinghouse, and handed books down the line for safekeeping in the Quaker building. That afternoon I called Kristine and we cried on the phone together.

It's a little like the death of a person, the sudden loss of a sacred building. The tangible reality—the organ and the piano and the hymnals and the chalkboards and the pipes and the walls, the furniture and the layers of paint—ascended to heaven in billowing black smoke. For me, it's the building where my childhood faith became something more complex, where it was forged and refined, tested, found wanting, and nourished. It's where I laid myself on the altar. That it has turned out to be a burnt offering strikes me as biblical, as oddly resonant with stories of the pillar of fire and the tabernacle in the Old Testament. It reminded me of Joseph Smith's curious account of the dedication of the Kirtland Temple: "The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple), and were astonished at what was taking place" (*History of the Church* 2:428). I think it's their same astonishment which I feel most often—at the convoluted, densely woven web of experience in my own life, which is part of some larger, dimly perceived tracery. I am surrounded by tendrils of human connection, buoyed by the mundane physicality of churches, blood, flesh, and food—and occasionally transfigured from the light in the circular window.



Mark England,
A Small History of Joseph Smith,
mixed media/collage on paper,
16"x 10",
2000.



Mark England,
Biography of Eugene England,
pencil on paper, 42"x 85",
1999.

Handmaid

Clifton Holt Jolley

"I have not spoken in secret,
in a dark place of the earth." –Isaiah 45:19

She turns at the well, the pot on her hip,
resting before filling it,
lifting it, returning home. The Pool of Siloam.
Hezekiah's Water Tunnel,

the western fountain on the Road to Emmaus.
The Pool of Bethseda.
She could swim Jerusalem from well to
dreaming issue beyond

the western wall. "The word of God is like
water in the desert,"
she whispers, lowering the pot to the damp,
"although darker

than we imagine; deep, rare, like happening upon
the blossoming
of dates in a savannah where the only grass
is sand, the trees

this one tree beside a well. The word of God
is an accident
we discover or do not, except for these
wells in this place

where one knows the way from Siloam to
Hezekiah's channel,
from water through the desert and to home."
She is walking,

the water on her hip as though she were
balancing a child. She is singing, low:
"I am the handmaid of my Lord. I am a vessel
for the water that is the world."

The Man with One Foot Outside of Hell

Reed Richards

A man must not despair of God's Mercy; for Zardusht says: "I beheld one whose body, with the exception of one foot, was entirely in hell; but that foot was outside. The Lord said: 'This person, who ruled over thirty-three cities, never performed good deeds; but having one day observed a sheep tied up a distance from her food, he with his foot pushed the grass near her.'" –Moshan Fani, The Dabistán, "Gate the Fourth," of ***The Hundred Gates of Paradise***

Moshan Fani, in the Dabistán, or School of Manners,
tells how in Zardusht's dream
the only light was the fire of a kind of purity
burning like a star far beyond
the dark side of ordinary evil.
In Zardusht's dream, Moshan Fani explains, Hell
had as many gates as Heaven,
but the combinations were as easy as walking through,
and each opened directly on the side of a scaly precipice
near the bank of a river of tar.
No one remembers his first sin—
they fall like slag over the guilty,
victims, in the end, of their own crimes.
As proof that the punished do not stop sinning,
there are none who do not, every thousand years or so,
steal an oasis from misery:
the hope that their wretched lives
have only plotted wretched dreams,
that as they dreamt of waking from death to anguish,
just so they will wake from sleep
to unrelinquished mortality, reproved and reprieved,

and this present tangent of troubled conscience
will teach them to live better lives.
Pleasant delusion in unpleasant circumstance!
Moshan Fani explains that a man must not despair
of God's mercy, but in Zardusht's dream God has
learned irony from the worst of his creation.
The unluckiest of the punished
is the one whose limping charity
has consecrated the moral foot,
earned him the horrifying privilege of truth,
left him without dreams.
Heaven, Zardusht tells, has a hundred consecutive gates,
hard to pass through, but its frontier
is as close as your heart.
This man ruled his cities harshly,
but his name was lost even to the Almighty
and to the devils who lashed him with the tails of serpents
and placed spiders on his eyes.
Of Hell's tenants only he knows, and Zardusht knows,
who will wake from his dream on the desert rocks
that no more than one step away
the air is stirred by the linen of angels.

A Perfect World

Reed Richards

Shy people would be kings and queens
of their own secret realms.
They might require everyone to wear sunglasses
for an hour every day while conversing
with strangers.
Jowly dogs wouldn't slobber.
I would give cats ten lives, and in return
when I go to bed Spud
would quit pouncing on my toes.
It's fun but I need sleep, plus
it makes holes in the blanket.
Burger King
would stop making crusty french fries;
the rude lady
in the hospital cashier's office would get fired
and would send notes of apology to everyone she's
been rude to, and we would say,
"Fine, but you are still fired."
Suffering
would be God's way of forgiving us.
It would snow
sometimes, for taking pictures, but I wouldn't
bother the farmers with it when they need
good weather. Horses are nice when they let you
come right up to them with a hand outstretched
full of grass from the other side of the fence.
They take it carefully between their teeth
and let you pat their nose.

Not
much else would spring to hand when
our wishes outrun our needs.
We wouldn't want to miss the great pleasure
of going looking and being reunited
with things thought lost. This morning
I knocked over a stack of books
and found one I thought I would
never see again, full of many wonderful poems
by Hungarian poets! In my head Hungary
was a land of sentimental gypsies,
of rustic kitchen curtains with cheap lace,
of tole-painting peasants' funny attempts
at making things symmetrical. You think their eyes
must be on the sides of their heads, like birds'.
They speak a brutal, complicated language.
They eat rutabagas and clap their rough hands
and dance like hens and bears
to brutal, complicated music. Bartok is God's way
of settling scores with Liszt and Brahms,
but what about war and pestilence,
what about Hitler and Stalin?
But now I love Hungary because the poets
are sad enough and no sadder. Life for them
is brutal and complicated. They make lace
out of burlap, a world out of rubble.
Maybe we will learn.

Self-Portrait as Burnt Offering

Holly Welker

The prophet says:
I have earned a right to the voice of prophecy.
I have suffered and seen the future
and suffered by the seeing.

I am neither a prophet nor
much good at making things up as I go.
I speak in sensible tones.
I observe the present moment.
I record the moment's events.

I review the record and say,
Well, I suppose that is what happened.

I've learned this about memory: the fact that
I can't trust it doesn't mean I should foreswear it.
The same is true of weather forecasts and prayer.

Early on I discovered an elemental preference:
the story I shy from all water and earth,
the one that intrigues me air and fire.

Jehovah, angry god of an angry desert, watched
smoke ascend to heaven. In that desert
the firstborn child had to be offered
as a sacrifice, or a sacrifice made in its place.

The second child you got to keep.

Smoke is Jehovah's offering, water
his weapon. He killed first by flood.

Movement starts from the center.
Smoke ascends, water falls. In
my desert and the desert of my forebears
our offering to God is
water: sweat spilled digging
reservoirs and irrigation canals,
the water flowing in them.
My ancestors vowed to make the desert blossom.
Prosperity became an offering but not a sacrifice,
the unretainable thing God demands you keep.

The prophets of landscape say:
our dams will outlast the water they hold.

Prophecy and history flow from the present.
I learned history and doctrine; I was
seared by probability and logic but
never by prophecy and faith. My parents'
second child, I would not be kept.
I made myself the sacrifice to be offered for the first—
a resentful gift, evaporating like water in the desert,
leaving behind defiling blackness and a stench like smoke
from the charred timbers of a fallen church,
from a witch writhing in the stake's flames,
from a heap of smoldering books.
The God I was offered to can do nothing
with me but cast me away
and hope there is no other god to find me precious,
who will hand me back to my family and say,
Here, I know how to sacrifice, too.

Gentle Dad

Mary Lythgoe Bradford

for Leo Thomas Lythgoe

You chose a wife for her beauty and vulnerability
and planted her in your inherited acre
where your sweat and intuition shaped the fruits
of your coupling. Two girls and two boys looked
to you for instruction.
I, firstborn girl, followed your furrowed field,
dropping seeds and watching shoots. You took me
in the hayrick to collect food for the cows.
In winter you cooked towels on the woodstove
and laid them on my chest before they caught fire.
You believed that ice packs cured sore throats,
that hot bricks in bed blocked the 'flu. You knew
that bright orange segments could chase nightmares
into morning.

When I chose to follow my mother's learning,
you clothed my soul with your body's earnings.
Now, as evening shades your eyes, I take your hands in mine
to give you a daughter's blessing:

Bless you for the nights you stayed me through.
Bless you for the mornings you sang awake.
Bless you for the tears you couldn't hide.
Bless you for the plans you helped me make.

May your last journey carry you
to a world of tillable land
where storytellers chant the ancestors back,
where companions festooned in love
wait to greet you, and work well done
protects you from regret.

Relinquishing

Mary Lythgoe Bradford

Tibetan monks descend on
the nation's capital
with healing in their saffron robes
and laughter in their chants.

In seven days they mold
a sand mandala of intricate
mosaics signifying the life
of the healing Buddha.

Crowds gather to watch
smiling gods destroy their art,
raking the sand into a bag
and praying the river to receive it.

Art collectors mourn the loss
as the monks explain:
"We live to consecrate the earth
and to relinquish it."

Like the monks, we live in the moment,
raking spirals across
the grains of the strand,
watching them vanish with the tide.

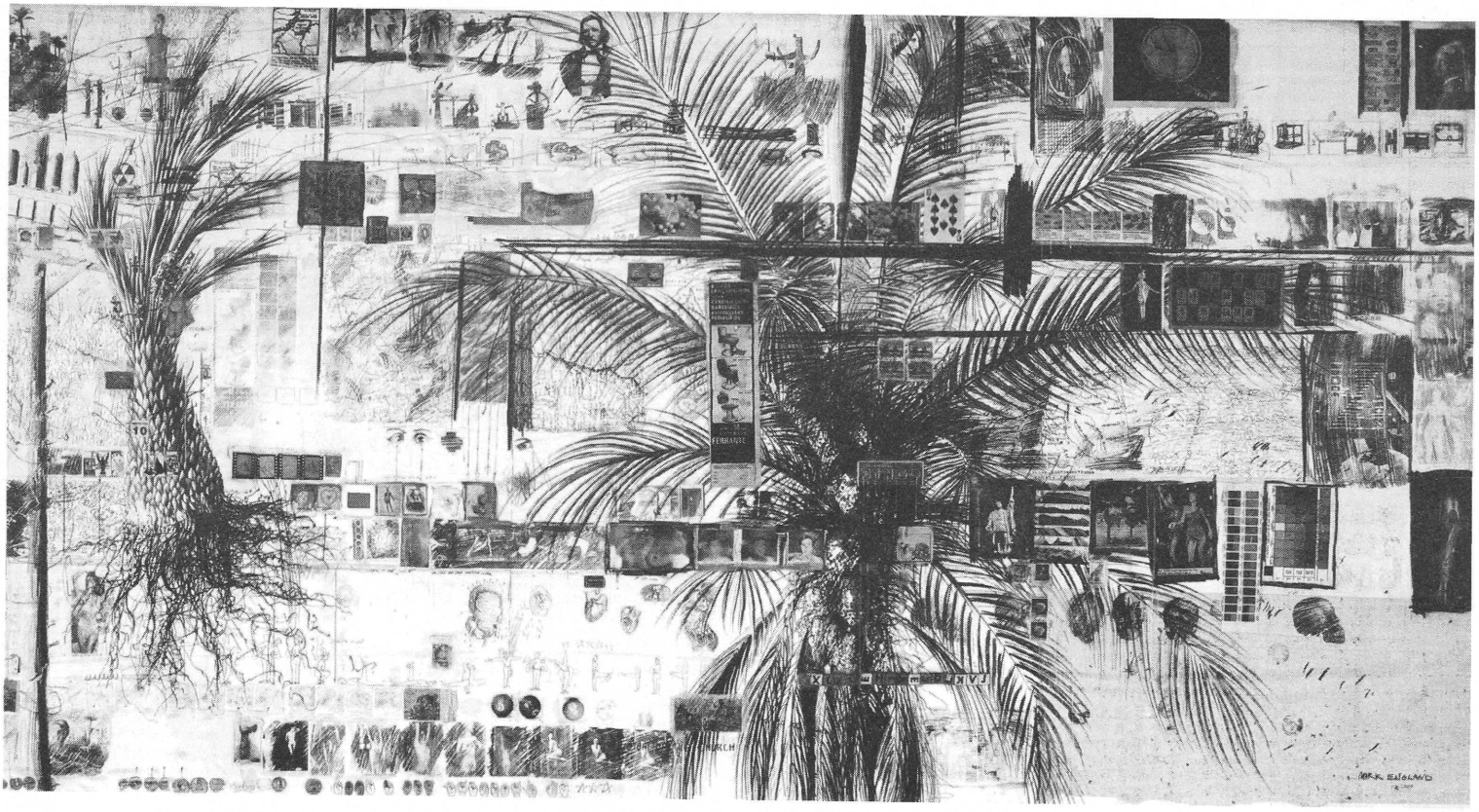
Singing into the wind,
teaching our children to walk away,
reciting love poems to the dead,
we pray to invisible gods.

Oceanography

Mary Lythgoe Bradford

Some say we came
from the sea
and some can name
the way
we shall return:
We burn, we burn
at the end of a giant cable.
Lowered, we bend
then are able
at the last,
the final blast,
to freefall.
One scuba knot
is all
until caught
in giant cranium
arches—manganese, uranium?
Who shall reveal
the purpose
of the yellow eel,
that green porpoise?

Who created the bright
pink cod that lies
without light
but with wide eyes
in a tangled bed?
That tree ahead
is hung with beads for what
religious holiday?
Sheltered in that
hut of coral clay
what new babe wails?
Shall we know all?
or join the fleet
of tall
tentacles, wedged
together
clamped against
the weather,
steeled, wrenched
out of all knowing,
seablowing.



Mark England,
Complete History of the Church,
Mixed media on paper, 48"x 96",
2000.

Body and Blood

Michael Palmer

It's six o'clock, time for dinner and *Little House on the Prairie* reruns. I walk up the stairs as my mom is pulling some string beans out of the microwave. She asks me if I'll set the table while she gathers everyone for dinner, and I say yes. After my dad, brother, and sister show up, she turns the television down for family prayer. I can see the television glare flickering off the silverware and windows, but it's quiet while everyone kneels down.

My dad gives the prayer himself. He asks Heavenly Father to watch over my sister at college in Price, Utah, and says thank you for the food and the gospel and the prophet. I haven't figured out whether I want to say Amen at this point in my life so I just mutter something—not Amen, but not silence either.

The dinner is a Mormon casserole with cornflakes on top of cheese potatoes, and the episode is the one where Mr. Edwards ends up reluctantly housing a chimpanzee circus refugee. The chimpanzee's name is Rose, and she's a burden at first, spilling flour everywhere and pulling down the shelves in the Edwards's kitchen. Like all *Little House* episodes, it's a rerun on KBYU.

I've seen this one before and know that Rose and Edwards eventually develop a bond, but I don't feel like enduring the glares and dropped forks that would follow a request to switch the channel two turns to the right and watch *The Simpsons* instead. Sure, and maybe while we're at it we can ask God to cancel church this Sunday and we'll stay home and gamble on football games. Missing family dinner altogether is also out (*If that's how you want to repay your mother for making this meal for us, that's your choice),* so I'm here. But I eat my potatoes fast.

By the time Mr. Edwards has to fake Rose's death because she has been declared a danger and a menace for hitting Nellie in the face, I am finished and ask if I can clear my plate and be excused. I am sixteen years old, and I've been waiting all day for night to fill

the city, for family dinner to be over so I can meet my friends at the park.

* * *

We meet at Anderson Park because it's private. The sign says there's a dusk-to-dawn curfew, but no police patrols ever come by, and there are ten-foot lights beaming into the pavilion at every angle. The lights shine all night long, so at any hour you can read the insults and numbers to call for a good time etched into the metal benches, and you can see bodies moving on the grass, too.

The park is hard to find if you haven't lived in Pleasant Grove your whole life. It's pocketed at the back of a residential neighborhood and can easily be mistaken for a rich person's yard if you don't see the green sign. It takes twenty minutes to walk there from my house. I walk through the orchard, always on the lookout for deer, and then up Locust Avenue. I cut through the grounds of Pleasant Grove High School, across the football field, and up the bleachers. I cross the street and take Anderson Way. The park is the dot of a question mark at the end of a curving dead end.

I am the fourth one there. Travis is in the pavilion pouring a small bottle of something brownish that he must have stolen from his brother into a half-empty one liter bottle of Pepsi. Steve is showing Charles how to punch and quickly move back into a defense stance. Steve is the one who owns the boxing gloves, which are what gave us the idea in the first place. He is also the only one who claims to know the approximate rules of boxing. The rest of us know only one fighting strategy: Try to hit the other guy somewhere in the face as fast and hard as you can. I have heard lots of times that if you hit hard enough, you can knock some nose bones or something up into the brain and can kill someone. I don't know about that, but a fast, hard hit will at least turn the electricity off most people. Even if the juice cranks itself back up, you get the pleasure of seeing the other guy's nose bleed while you get your ass kicked.

We spend on average three nights a week boxing in a park. I win a majority of my fights, which is a surprise even to me. In P.E. class, I spend my time taking frequent trips to the locker room where I walk the rows of lockers and look in the mirror until Coach opens the door and says, *Whoever's in there, you better get the heck back*

out here now! I don't get my ass kicked in school, but I don't win any fights or stand up for anyone either. I am skinny and tall with thick, sinister eyebrows. When I see my reflection in bus windows or in the bread aisle mirrors, my posture is slumped, and my movements look shadowy and uncertain. I look more like the type to sneak poison into your lunch than start a confrontation.

Most of the reason I win fights at Anderson is that my friends-turned-opponents are, for the most part, even lower on the spectrum of physical prowess than I am. Most of them have been getting picked last in every sport their whole lives. They can't throw a spiral, although they can beat your ass at *Tecmo Bowl.* Likewise, their *Street Fighter* skills don't translate from their thumbs to the rest of their bodies. I've spent a good portion of the last four, five years repeatedly losing at these and other video games in Charles's basement, the punishment made much worse afterward when everyone starts talking about how Stephen King's *Dark Tower* series has informed their life philosophies. This is what I get for having acne on choose-your-friends day in junior high. So even though we say the fighting is all for fun and nothing personal—no winning, no losing, no big deal—and even though I stay light and humorous between fights, I do take personal pleasure in what I consider to be my chance for long overdue vengeance. I think I look forward to boxing nights with more devotion than the others. I remember them more vividly. It's real winning or losing for me. I sit with Travis on the bench and ask him questions until the others show up. Lane drove his car and picked Chris and Jeff up on the way. That made seven of us for the night.

Usually we do just two or three fights each before people want to go steal sodas at Smith's or play guitar and video games in Charles's basement. My first fight is Jeff. Most of this is a joke to him. He says he "abhors" violence but doesn't mind playing along, just for fun. Every time I see Jeff these days he invites me to something he calls "Rock Church," which he describes as "God without the religion." The basic idea seems to be having church on Saturday in regular clothes and, sometimes instead of a sermon, taking hikes in nature. "Don't you think that's a better way to celebrate Christ's message?" he asks.

Hell, no. True, my Christian celebration is tiresome and lacks

zeal, but I haven't yet found a better option for being a Christian than doing what I've done all my life: put on a tie, sit in church for three hours indoors every Sunday, and then enjoy the six days and twenty-one hours until I have to do it again. It doesn't make my body hum; but if there's an alternative, it has to be better than driving up to hippie church in Salt Lake.

Jeff and I face off and start circling each other. His comical Popeye stance signals that this won't take long. I punch him right, left, then right again, the last one harder than necessary since he was just playing around. He drops the gloves and says, "Settle down, killer." I ask, "Where's your Rock God now?" He points out that his God is the same as mine but all I have to say is, "I should just do my second fight right now."

Up walks drunk Travis. A bigger guy, he has a lot of force behind his punch, but it isn't likely to connect if you keep moving. I run a few circles around him, and his fat, semi-drunk ass gets tired right away. His punches are as easy to avoid as snowballs from a five year-old. I only get in two punches before he needs a breather and gives up, too. I stop moving and notice that it's cold outside for spring.

While others fight, I relax in the pavilion, thinking I'm done for the night. I feel bad about hitting Jeff and say, "Sorry." He says, "It's cool, man." I'm talking with the others in the pavilion when Lane asks me if I want to go one with him before we take off.

I don't know the best way to say this, so I'll just say it like this: I hate Lane. When I complain about him to the other guys, they say I just don't like him because he's new, which is maybe a little true. He moved here eight months ago with his family from California into one of those huge Ivory Homes up on the mountain. We have to wind through a private driveway and park behind two SUVs just to get to his house. There's a pool table in his basement, and he owns every video game system ever created. Besides that, he wears bandanas all the time and talks about California as if it's the Garden of Eden. "Until you see the Pacific, you don't know the immensity of water. If you want to see real hardcore, go see a hardcore show in L.A.—all the best bands go through there. Mormonism is just, different in California. I think it's simply that you see diversity all the time."

But I think mostly I hate him because I've never beaten him at boxing. I already know I'm going to lose but agree to fight anyway.

He holds his gloves up in front of his face like I can't see him back there. I am too frustrated to wait for his first move, so I just try to hit him as hard as I can between the gloves on the chin. He blocks it. He's fine. He hits me a few times playfully, asks if that's all I've got. Like I mentioned, it is. So I take a few more wild-ass swings and he hits me back, still playing. There's nothing more frustrating than tasting blood in your mouth, throwing your fists as hard and fast as you can, only for the dust to clear and reveal the target of your fury smiling back at you.

He hits me three times in the mouth and I give up. I say, "Well, it's been fun, but I better take off." I'm in a bad mood, so I decline Steve's offer for a ride home. I don't pay attention to the night spilling over the city as I clench and unclench my fists all the way home.

There's a little blood on my lip, but I don't worry about that too much. My parents chalk up minor bleeding to boys being boys. They've been worried about me since our sit-down the day after I bought a women's coat from Savers last winter, so as long as I'm clear that the blood on my mouth came from boxing and not as a result of cross-dressing, we'll be fine.

I walk through the front door and straight to my room, too angry about getting my ass kicked to sleep. I pace my room, open my closet, then fall into bed and think about hitting Lane's face into one of the linden trees that circle our self-made boxing ring. Then stand again. And repeat.

* * *

Kylie lives on Locust Avenue, which connects to the football field at Pleasant Grove High School, if you're willing to hop a fence. She and I go this way often during school to download music and eat food at her house because her mom works days. She's the only girl I hang out with regularly. I am in my post-acne days by now and looking forward to a life of slightly above average looks, but it is hard to talk to any girls without (a) having to introduce myself in some dumbass, awkward way or (b) hearing them point out that they haven't seen me at any Church activities lately. ("You know, we're playing broom hockey this Wednesday at the cultural hall, and I really hope you can make it.") It's much harder

to tell Jill with green eyes that I'm busy than that plank-faced Young Men's leader, Brother Peters, even though I doubt God cares whether I spend Wednesday playing broom hockey in the cultural hall or boxing with my friends.

Anyway, Kylie is my age and beautiful. She has already designed and got her own tattoo—a fish bending over her left foot and ankle, like every step for her is an arc out of water—and she has no problem letting laughter take over her body like spirit possession. I should be writing about her in my journal at night while trying to think of ways to accidentally bump into her at school in the morning. But it isn't like that: I've avoided making any advances. Reason number one is we're friends. I don't want to be messing up my only hanging-out option during school besides riding in Steve's truck to get bean burritos from Taco Amigo. Reason number two is she's dating Jacob Pelton from West Valley. I hated him at first because he's twenty-three and because there's been more than one occasion where I've been in the kitchen helping Kylie's sister with math when a tickle fight breaks out between those two in the next room. I didn't even think about giving him a chance until I learned that he was a kickboxer. And not a kickboxer like I'm a boxer—a real kickboxer, with a winning record, who wins money for his fights.

Jacob has black hair, green eyes, and a tattoo on his left bicep of a skull with a banner that says CTR draped underneath. He describes himself as Straight Edge. I have some idea what he means by that. I go to punk/hardcore shows, and I've heard the term on the news reports about gang violence in Salt Lake. But Jacob says most of the media coverage of Straight Edge has been lame. He says, even when I don't ask, that Straight Edge is just a way of living clean—no drugs, no alcohol, no casual sex. He points out that the principles are consistent with Mormonism and that just because he was Mormon didn't mean he couldn't be Straight Edge, and vice versa. Straight Edge gives him "a positive outlet more than one day a week." He uses the word "positive" a lot.

Kylie summarizes Salt Lake City Straight Edge as "sexually repressed Mormon dudes substituting violence for getting no sex." I know Kylie likes to smoke and sometimes drink, but I guess those two like each other enough that ideological differences aren't a problem. Jacob brings over a lot of new zines about Straight Edge

and hardcore for Kylie to read; but since she isn't interested, I end up reading most of them. The wording in the zines is similar to that of the Boy Scout manual in that both suggest the most intense, vivid experience can only be had by a sober mind. I've heard that sentiment in church, too. They're big on it in seminary. After reading enough and asking enough questions, I asked Jacob if he could teach me to fight and he seemed excited about it. Me, too.

Good idea. Kylie rolled her eyes when we told her the idea but said we could use her garage in the afternoon while she did her homework. The first time we train, we make some space by moving the tiller, a tool box, and some gas cans to the side of Kylie's garage. There's a dusty punching bag her dad never used in there.

Jacob watches me punch the bag and gives me advice on balancing my stance. I'm glad that he's training me, glad also that he isn't taking it too seriously and trying to make me do any one-handed push-ups or chase a chicken. After punching the bag for an hour and sparring with him for a little while, his basic summary is that, as someone who's "skinny and not too coordinated," I need to use my long arms and legs to my advantage and not let anyone close. This is how you throw a kick to the ribs without letting your defenses down; this is how to defend in the first place. Since you are not the strongest, wait for the other guy. Most people will leave an opening. Just wait.

* * *

It's Sunday and I'm sitting with my family at church. I can see Lane's family sitting a few rows ahead of us. I don't know why we are in the same ward since they live half the face of a mountain away and it's not like there's a shortage of wards in Pleasant Grove.

Lane himself is up on the stand getting ready to bless the sacrament. He is wearing an X-Men tie that I would probably like, except for my commitment to despising him. It's been a few weeks since he last kicked my ass, and I think I am turning into a better fighter. After the song, Lane gives the prayer for the bread. "O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it; that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son . . ." I am at the age where I should be up on the stand saying the prayer; but for a while there, I stopped going to church and I

haven't been ordained a priest. I gave my parents the usual reasons, the ones a lot of my friends were giving: I told them I was worried about polygamy being an eternal principle, and did they know black people didn't get the priesthood until 1978, and don't they see that the whole structure of the Church is patriarchal, just look at the way you two act, and so on. Not that I've figured out the answers to those problems–just that I pay more attention to the kinds of places those comments are thrown around. In the spotlight booth of the auditorium during Light and Sound class, for example. Dudes get high, then start talking about everything that's wrong with Mormonism. Fine. But I'm finding the only thing more boring than Mormon martyrdom is ex-Mormon martyrdom. So I started to feel bad about annoying my parents and sort of dissing my mom, and now I'm back to missing church the old way: by getting sick an uncanny number of Sundays. In turn, they let the excessive sicknesses slide so I don't go total heretic on them again.

I'm not sure what to do with the sacrament when it reaches me. Some weeks I take it, some I don't. Hunger is a factor, along with my sense of spiritual self-worth for the week. Today I pass it to my brother without taking any bread.

It is the first Sunday of the month, which means that, after the sacrament, it will be time to hear the testimonies of the congregation. I never waste sick days on testimony meeting. Regular sacrament meeting is set up this way: your basic organ accompaniment and Sister Parry singing with too much emotion, adding her own unnecessary harmony instead of just muddling through the song with everyone else, then partaking of the sacrament, a few scheduled talks, another song, a closing prayer. But during testimony meeting, it's open forum after the sacrament.

In our ward, that means Sister Eldridge time. She walks up every month, and then the person who stands up at the same time to share her testimony has to act like she was just tying her shoe. This is because Sister Eldridge tends to talk about her personal problems for a long time, and she's hard to follow. When I was nine, she got up there and talked about how she had received inspiration in a dream that it was time for another child. The Eldridges' marriage was apparently one where you didn't have sex except to procreate, and looking at Brother Eldridge makes that rule seem

more divine than it would usually sound. So she wakes him up, says, It's time, I just had a vision, whatever. Surprisingly long story short, Brother Eldridge's surprise is so great that he "spilled the seed!" and now Sister Eldridge was in front of us, unpregnant, nearly crying like always.

That was the first story about sex I can remember hearing, and I don't know how I pictured it at the time. But I've been looking forward to her testimonies ever since. Today I vocalized my excitement on the car ride over, and my mom said I shouldn't talk like that. Sister Eldridge is going through a hard time. I thought she was always going through a hard time, I said. Well, this time she just got divorced. Her husband cheated on her and moved to Denver with another woman. Oh.

So this month, I was thinking, she wouldn't stand up. Church wouldn't be cathartic enough. But toward the end of the service, she walked up and stood in front of the podium like usual, looking like an old statue. "Since I lost all that money in the divorce and have been working two jobs, it's been tough on the kids. But you've all been supportive. And most important, I still have faith. I still have the Lord to help me fight through this. I don't know where I'd get strength without that faith."

When she finishes the chapel is quiet. I am not sure where to put my eyes, so I open up the hymn book and start thumbing through the pages.

* * *

Jacob has been teaching me to fight for two months when he says I should ride with him, Kylie, his trainer, and his brother to watch him fight in Salt Lake. I am still boxing regularly with my friends at the park, but I'm holding back a little bit. I haven't used any kicking moves. By now I'm used to the crazy spontaneity that accompanies hanging out with Jacob and Kylie, but for once they're giving me advance notice. The Salt Lake fight is a pretty big deal. Someone is paying for Jacob's room and board, and he gets prize money whether he wins or loses. He won't tell me how much. I still haven't seen him in a live fight against anyone but me, and I have a month to come up with some reason to be gone for one weekend. I say, "Hell, yes."

I tell my mom I'm going camping up American Fork Canyon

that weekend and then ask Steve to back up the story in case she asks. She says, "Okay." We've been getting along. She's not thrilled that I dyed my hair black; but once she found out that Straight Edge meant no drugs or alcohol—especially following the incident last summer when the police brought me home for underage drinking in the parking lot of Smith's, she seemed fine with it.

Less than an hour before his fight, Jacob's brother and his trainer have their hands on the crown of Jacob's head and are commanding his body—in the name of Jesus Christ and by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood—to be strong and fast, if it be God's will. Kylie isn't in the room. She said she was feeling too sick to watch and needed to get some air if she was going to make it through this. I am starting to feel sick, too, and offer up a prayer of my own, hoping that God, or Rock God, or some important associate of theirs is a kickboxing fan. It wasn't so much an articulate prayer of words as much as a mash of thoughts and emotions nailed together with anxious hope.

"Amen," I say as they remove their hands. Then Jacob stands up, straightens his shoulders, and starts shadowboxing in front of a chipped mirror. He turns away from the mirror and keeps punching, light and fast, at the bare, black wall. I notice that the floor is sticky and that Jacob isn't wearing shoes. I hope there's no broken glass on top of the various spills.

"Pelton," calls the bouncer from outside the door. "You're up."

Outside the warm-up room, the club looks more glamorous. Earlier we saw the fight being advertised on the large marquee out front. The cheapest tickets were $50. Jacob is the first fight of the night—the audience is still noncommittal at this point, moving between buying drinks and trying to find their seats. I wondered what the crowd at a fight would look like, but mostly they look the same as you would get at a Jazz game—a lot of middle-aged guys in khakis and polo shirts.

The ring is in the center of the venue, with chairs rippling out from the expensive seats up front to bleachers lining the perimeter. There are big-screen TVs in both corners. The announcer, a cameraman, and the judges sit ringside. Take everything out, and the space has the look and feel of a dance ballroom. Jacob's opponent is waiting for him in the red corner. His name is Gomez, and

he's huge. The program says he's two inches taller than Jacob and thirty pounds heavier, but he looks much larger up-close.

Jacob climbs into his corner and waits. He jumps around, looking a little lethargic. The ref asks if he's ready. He says yes.

Two minutes later, the announcer yells: "In the blue corner, fighting out of Salt Lake City, Utah: Jacob 'The Bruiser' Pelton!" I didn't know that was Jacob's fighting name and made a fast vow to help him find a new one if he lived. The audience is still indecisive. The announcer suggests they take their seats. It's the first fight of the night; and besides the cash, the winner is awarded only the potential right to be an injury replacement in the later tournament fights.

After hitting sportsmanship fists with Gomez in the center, Jacob turns around, looks back at us. The freaky crocodile grin from a mouth that hadn't expressed much of anything all day gives no hint that he shares the nervousness I'm feeling for him.

"You ready?" his trainer asks, pinching his mouthpiece.

"Yeah," Jacob says, and he looks like he is holding back laughter.

The fight is supposed to go three rounds. If there's no TKO along the way, the winner will be determined by the judges' decision. "Only three?" I'd asked Jacob earlier. "Someone gets knocked out before three almost every time," he said.

As the bell rings, Jacob starts out defensive, mostly knocking down Gomez's midsection kicks. Gomez's legs are thicker than the young poplar trees in my mom's yard, and every time his foot connects with Jacob's hand there is a sharp, slapping sound. Kylie finds her way back, asks, "How's he doing?" I say, "I don't know." Ringside, I shift my weight with every punch and kick, keep my eyes on the clashing bodies. I watch as though, if I look close enough, I can absorb the movements Jacob is using. There is something volcanic about the way he moves, not the way he was dormant a minute ago in the dressing room and now might erupt, but that there are signs of the pressure gathering. Throughout the first round, Gomez doesn't land a clean blow, while Jacob lands several kicks to Gomez's stomach and left thigh.

In the second round, Jacob goes straight for Gomez, quickly deflecting a punch then kicking him in the ribs, chasing him

across the ring. He seems to anticipate all of Gomez's moves in that round and knocks him down at the very end. Gomez picks himself up slowly before the bell rings and moves to his corner for the final round. Gomez lands a few punches, but by now he is so battered that they don't seem to have any power. Jacob is landing rhythmic blows to Gomez's exhausted face. Finally Gomez falls over again. This time he doesn't get up. Kylie hugs me around the waist as the bell rings, and I can feel tension leave her body and mine, too.

After the fight, Jacob says he could go ten more rounds, and I believe him. Watching him doesn't make me want to be a fighter—I don't have the body for it, and I know Jacob has been training for years—but it does make me want to feel whatever surge gave Jacob his energy, to switch from being unable to control my body to moving it as fast and naturally as a river of water.

* * *

I am back in Pleasant Grove and back in church. The sacrament has been passed. This week the main speaker is a recently returned missionary who served in New York. I turn my head to look at the clock every minute and swear that the big hand is moving backwards. "Well played, God." I try to read the hymn book for a while, and then something the missionary says catches my attention.

"Even though I think these members had good intentions, I think it is important to remember that where we choose to put ourselves does make a difference. While it might seem okay to go to bars as long as you aren't drinking, or to be in a casino as long as you aren't gambling, ask yourself: do you think the Spirit is waiting for you there? In D&C 87 the Lord counsels us: 'Stand ye in holy places . . . '" I think about the smoky club of Jacob's fight.

"Temples and churches are holy—even our homes should be holy," the missionary says.

This is where he loses me. The answer is church? That gets you three hours a week. What am I supposed to do when I'm not in church, just stay at home all day praying and hope it's holy enough? I start to wonder about my holy places, where they are, and how I can find them. I don't feel any different on the days I take the sacrament compared to the days I don't. I want some-

thing like a scar, something to show that I'm here and that I'm doing something. I start to wonder if bread and water can ever stand in for body and blood.

* * *

It's summer, and though it's too hot to move outside in the day, it's warm all night, so we've been fighting later and later. By 11:00 P.M., Pleasant Grove is almost as quiet as the desert. The streetlights every few blocks seem to glimmer more slowly than usual, like the wandering spectators at Jacob's fight, bored and waiting for something to happen. In between the streetlights, I can see dark blue slash across darker sky, can see the stars as I walk to Anderson Park. The cool night air makes it impossible to remember how brutal it will feel twelve hours later when the sun comes up swinging and keeps swinging all day long.

Though I shudder a little bit to catch myself thinking this way, tonight the city is sparkling, all the way from the stars to the grates in the gutters. I decide I'll suggest we try some kickboxing. A little cheap, I guess, since it's new to everyone else, but I don't care.

When I get there, I ask Lane right away if he wants to throw in a little kicking action. He cocks his head to the side as though considering all arguments and says, "Sure, why not?"

We put on the gloves and face each other. I make a promise to myself that if I lose to him now, I will walk in front of traffic on the way home, then remember that the only traffic I saw walking up here was two girls on a scooter, but still, I tell myself, "Just don't lose."

We start out slow. He is smiling as usual, throwing a few play jabs my way. I wait. Then he does a little bit of a kick with his right leg, just to get a feel for it. He nods as though satisfied with a new menu choice. I move a little closer, act like I am going to punch him, then wait. Finally, he tries to hit me in the side of the head. I block it with my left hand and kick him in the stomach. The kick surprises him and he leans over a little bit. He tries to retaliate with a kick near my hip, but it bounces off and seems to hurt him more than me. He is short of breath. This is it. I punch him in the mouth as fast as I can. Then I try another kick. I'm out of form now, just swinging. I throw a fist for every huge house on the mountain, and I throw them as desperately as I want to get out of

my beige and undemanding life forever. I am not strong, but I am thorough. Someone pulls me off. Everyone gathers around Lane and glares at me. Someone asks, "Dude, what the hell?" I don't even turn back to see the damage. I just walk out of the park and all the way home.

* * *

It's a Saturday evening in August. The sunlight is down to its last traces, orange behind the mountains. Well-prepared drivers are starting to switch on their headlights. Jacob and Kylie are already in Salt Lake, so I borrow my mom's white Astro van and say I have to work until midnight at the grocery store tonight. She says just bring it back as soon as you can. Somewhere around the freeway entrance, I feel a little bit of ambivalence about lying to her, and I remember that I'll have to wake up in the morning to join her and the rest of my family for church. But instead of turning around, I turn up the music and pound my palms on the steering wheel all fifty miles north to Salt Lake City.

I take the 600 South exit off I-15 and meet up with Jacob and Kylie at a vegetarian restaurant near the club.

"Hey, there he is," Jacob says as I sit down. "So, you stoked?"

"Don't be stoked," Kylie says. "Don't do anything stupid. Don't get in any fights. Don't be sucked into the performance."

"Come on, lighten up, Ky," Jacob says. "After all, which experiences do you think you're going to remember when you're ninety and in a diaper?"

He looks at both of us. I honestly don't know the answer to that question.

After we finish eating, we move up the street to the club where black-haired kids are already waiting in line for the show. Three bands are playing: Bane, Poison the Well, and Hatebreed. By now I am used to seeing the kids in black bandanas, with graceful cursive tattoos on their bodies, and X's taped to or written on their hands. I look up and down the line and try to determine which of these people I could beat in a fight if it came down to it.

The doors open soon, and more waves of black-haired kids materialize. We flow in with everyone else. Kylie goes straight to her usual spot at the bottom of the stairs that go up to where you can order drinks. It's a good spot because it's private, and you can

climb two stairs and see what's happening on the floor and stage. The music has started by the time we get there, and I see bodies flying around as though propelled by the sound of the guitar. By now I've seen my share of spontaneous fights at shows, and I expect them. These were different than Jacob's fights, as he told me while we hit the punching bag in Kylie's garage. Different strategy, he said, but for me the main difference was that it wasn't bulky guys who drank Muscle Milk fighting in a ring but skinny dudes like me in a corridor, or on the stairs. So far I'd stayed comfortable in the margins, unaffected except as an observer, but I am ready for that to end tonight. I feel confident after the Lane fight and want to put my adrenaline to good use.

Bane and Poison the Well play their sets without much happening in the crowd—fists fly in the pit, a few people call each other out, nothing really comes of it—but the place is vibrating. And two songs into Hatebreed's set, I see a group of four kids start to attack two others like piranhas. That starts it. To my right someone tries to climb the railing but is pulled back by fingernails that leave his shoulders and back bleeding. To my left someone takes a knee to the face. The movements look choreographed and electric, sort of poetic in a head-torn-from-the-shoulders sense, an observation that's easier to make from the stairs, with your teeth in place.

Kylie pushes us toward the exit. We are fighting our way through when a metal bar stool ricochets off the wall and stings me in the neck. Another guy knocks Jacob into the wall. It may be an accident, but Jacob says, "Come over here. I'm going to crack your spine like an ice tray." My first reaction is to ask Jacob how long he's been planning to say that.

Even though I have been waiting for a fight all night, the desire is wavering now that fists and bodies are all around me. I know that Jacob will probably win whatever fight he walks into, so I just follow him and act like I have his back.

Then Jacob and I are face to face with three other guys in the corner opposite the exit, elevated above the pit. I can't tell if they know each other or just happen to be standing next to each other. One of them is the guy who pushed Jacob into the wall, so Jacob goes after him. The one to the right looks just like me—thin, tall. He

doesn't seem to know his next move. That takes the nervousness out of my bones. I hit him in the face—a graceless, rookie jab in that flat area to the left side of the mouth that always makes people fall over with no blood in movie fights. He doesn't fall or bleed, but the punch otherwise feels good. He looks surprised. I move fast to his left as if I am going to move out of the picture, and then hit him again on the side of his face. And then again, with my elbow.

Someone grabs my shoulders and throws me into the wall. I hear my shoulder blades collide with brick. Then someone yells, "Cops!" and instead of getting my ass kicked, I'm the first body shoved out of the way as my assailant moves for the exit.

I look back at the guy I punched. He puts his hand to his mouth, which is bleeding, and then to his eye. His contact pops out. It's sitting on his blood-smeared hand like Charon's boat on the River Styx. I start to wonder if he even knew the guy Jacob was fighting.

Jacob pushes me through the corridor and out the door. Kylie is already out there. Police cars are lining the side of the street all the way down the block. Broken triangles of glass reflect the streetlights on the sidewalk. I bend down to pick up a piece. It's sharper than I expected and slices into my index finger a little bit. I wipe the blood on my hoodie and put the triangle of glass in my pocket. The point cuts my palm as I let go. I can't tell if it broke skin, but I taste blood when I lift my hand to my mouth to see.

We walk up the street as if we are bystanders who happen to be walking by. Jacob tells me I need to be ready to move in case someone approaches, and I am.

Nauvoo Polygamy: The Latest Word

George D. Smith. *Nauvoo Polygamy: "... but we called it celestial marriage"*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008, xix, 705 pp. Charts, photographs, appendices, bibliography, index. $39.95. ISBN: 978-1-56085-201-8

Reviewed by Brian C. Hales

In 1994, businessman and Mormon history researcher George D. Smith wrote "Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841–46: A Preliminary Demographic Report" (*Dialogue* 27, no. 1 [Spring 1994]: 1–72), which contained groundbreaking research on 153 men and hundreds more women who were involved with plural marriage in Nauvoo. Recently, his long-awaited follow-up to that article, a 705-page book, has been printed by Signature Books, of which Smith is the publisher. In September 2009, the John Whitmer Historical Association awarded it Best Book of the Year.

Having continued his documentation of Nauvoo polygamy, Smith modified his original list of 153 men, subtracting eight and adding fifty more. In addition, his lists have been supplemented by the names of hundreds of new plural wives, all helpfully compiled in Appendix B. These lists represent a colossal research effort. Through analysis of historical and genealogical records, George Smith has compiled a must-have reference for historians dealing with Nauvoo polygamy that provides birth, death, marriage, and sealing dates for male polygamists in Nauvoo and their known wives and the number of children from the unions. Probably due to errors in the primary sources, a few problems appear in Appendix B.[1] However, for many researchers, this appendix alone, comprising an impressive seventy-two pages of data, will merit the $39.95 cost of the volume.

The book divides the presentation of evidence into two sections, the first division focusing on Joseph Smith and his wives, and the second including an additional thirty-two men and fifty-four women sealed before Joseph Smith's death.

George D. Smith asserts that Joseph Smith had thirty-eight plural wives (171, 135, 208, 219), more than the thirty-three posited in Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Jo-*

seph Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997). (See Compton's review of *Nauvoo Polygamy* immediately following this review.) George D. Smith fails to provide new documentation for these marriages (see discussion below) which, in my judgment, lowers the evidentiary bar. Without new historical evidence to support the addition of plural wives, George D. Smith's reinterpretation of the data seems less reliable than Compton's well-documented and more conservative tally.

Smith deserves credit for trying to identify the plural wife whom John C. Bennett identified as "Miss B*****". According to Smith, she is Sarah Poulterer (also known as "Sarah Poulter," "Sarah Davis," "Sarah Royson," "Sarah Rapson," and "Sarah Bapson"). His logic is intriguing: "Before Bennett's departure from Nauvoo in early July 1842, [Joseph] Smith apparently married Sarah Poulterer, whose maiden name was Davis or Rapson ("R," not "B")" (135). Unfortunately, George Smith provides no additional evidence to substantiate the claim and continues: "When Bennett referred to one of Smith's wives as Miss B*****, this led to speculation about her identity. Later chroniclers seem to have conflated these names to produce "Sarah Bapson." In an apparent reliance on Bennett, the LDS Church accepted the existence of a "Sarah Bapson" who appears in the sealing records for April 4, 1899" (135).

Each plural wife is presented in a two-to-ten-page vignette, providing a handy reference. This section comprises Chapters 2–3, or nearly two hundred pages (53–239). Interspersed are descriptions of pertinent historical events, which sometimes seem distracting but which provide necessary continuity and a more complete picture of Nauvoo happenings.

George D. Smith's biographical information on polygamy participants, in most cases, does not present new historical data, but repackages previously published materials like that found in Compton's *In Sacred Loneliness*. I was grateful for Smith's use of footnotes, which allows instant and clear access to reference materials cited, although the documentation itself is not without problems (see below). In contrast, Compton implemented an unconventional citation system that I find difficult to use. Still, his biographies of Joseph's plural wives, even if the reader stops at Joseph's death, provide more voluminous bibliographical informa-

tion, in-depth research, and analysis on each plural wife than that found in *Nauvoo Polygamy*.

The second category identified in George Smith's data consists of an additional thirty-two men and fifty-four plural wives who were sealed before the Prophet's death, a genuine contribution to our knowledge of Nauvoo polygamy. Additional categories can be extracted from George Smith's data as shown in the table.

TABLE 1
NAUVOO POLYGAMY, 1839–47

Time Period	*Joseph Smith*	*Prior to Joseph Smith's Death (June 1844)*	*Joseph Death to Nauvoo Temple (December 1845)*	*Sealed in Nauvoo Temple*	*Post-Nauvoo Temple before Trek West*	*Totals*
New Male Polygamists	1	32	51	108	7	196
New Plural Wives	38	54	135	263	34	524

George Smith follows these polygamists statistically into the Utah period, tracking later polygamous sealings for those men who began their polygamy experience in Nauvoo. Taken together, his documentation constitutes a significant contribution to the understanding of plural marriage as it began on the shores of the Mississippi River in the early 1840s.

In addition, *Nauvoo Polygamy* manifests an impressive writing style and a flowing narration that is easy to read. It supplies twenty-four photographs, several tables, and a fourteen-page index to help readers understand the material presented.

Authors who approach Nauvoo plural marriage are faced with many ambiguities and deficits in the historical record. Joseph Smith dictated only the revelation that is now Doctrine and Covenants 132, never expounded the topic in public except to deny its practice, and does not refer to it explicitly in his personal

writings.[2] The only polygamy insider and journal-writer friendly to the Prophet who left a contemporary record is William Clayton.[3] Four men (John C. Bennett, Oliver Olney, William Law, and Joseph H. Jackson) left contemporary writings, but all were dissenters who had their own, hostile perspectives on Joseph Smith and polygamy. In addition to these five men, a few sources contemporary with the three years between Joseph's 1844 death and the 1847 trek west provide additional, but also limited, insights.[4] Beyond these sources, everything learned about Joseph Smith's polygamy comes from later recollections, which are subject to important limitations.

In dealing with inadequacies in the historical record, chroniclers of Mormon polygamy are forced to either write brief treatises or quote extensively from late reminiscences. The accompanying gaps must be filled in by each writer. As the most recent treatment of Mormon plural marriage, it appears that *Nauvoo Polygamy* implements a predominantly naturalistic view of Joseph Smith's motivations and behavior. While writing *No Man Knows My History* (1943), Fawn Brodie seemed conflicted as she sought to understand Joseph Smith's motivations for introducing plural marriage. Writing to a correspondent, she confessed: "The more I work with the polygamy material, the more baffled I become." Ultimately she decided Joseph Smith was "a mythmaker of prodigious talent" and concluded: "I think polygamy was disguised whoredom. But the disguise was so good that it metamorphosed the system into something quite different."[5] In contrast to Brodie's confessed uncertainty, George Smith's work seems to proceed from a confident and consistent judgment that libido was the exclusive force empowering Joseph Smith's polygamy.

Nauvoo Polygamy is comprised of a short introduction and nine chapters. The first chapter discusses pre-Nauvoo polygamy, with only six pages (38–43) devoted to the relationship in Kirtland between Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger. Granted, it is not the focus of George D. Smith's study, but its brevity largely sidesteps two key controversial issues: the chronology of the affiliation, and whether it was a plural marriage or adultery.

On the issue of timing, with the research assistance of Don Bradley, I have found nineteen separate documents referring to that association. The first private writing to mention the episode

was penned in 1838; no reference appeared in print until 1842. Only eight provide a date, four placing the relationship in 1832–33 and another four in 1835–36.[6] George D. Smith places the relationship only in the earlier window: It occurred in "that same year [1832]" (22); "maybe as early as 1832, but certainly from 1833 to 1835" (38); and "Fanny was assumed to have been sealed to Joseph in about 1833" (222). H. Michael Marquardt, another Joseph Smith researcher, leans toward a later date because Oliver Cowdery "discussed the matter with Joseph Smith and others in the summer and fall of 1837."[7] It seems unlikely that Oliver Cowdery, who viewed the relationship with abhorrence, would have discovered the relationship in 1832 or 1833, but failed to react to it for three to five years. One of the four references pointing to the 1832–33 time period is consistent with an 1833 relationship that was not discovered until 1836. However, *Nauvoo Polygamy* does not discuss this possible reconstruction.

The second controversial point that George D. Smith passes over too quickly is whether Joseph and Fanny's relationship was a plural marriage or an extramarital affair. He sees it as an affair and does not include Fanny on his list of Joseph Smith's thirty-eight plural wives: "At first, Joseph did not seek a formal wedding" (38). "It . . . should not be construed to imply that Fanny was actually married to Joseph" (41–42). George Smith relegates Compton's discussion of Mosiah Hancock's account describing a wedding ceremony to a footnote (41 note 90). However, Don Bradley has identified new evidence corroborating that a marriage occurred, including Eliza R. Snow's holograph affirmation on a page also containing Andrew Jenson's handwritten comments. Snow was a well-placed eyewitness to Kirtland events.[8] Importantly, other evidence exists indicating a marriage relationship and thus making assumptions of adultery less reliable.

Later chapters review historical treatments of polygamy from past decades, as well as the reactions of Church leaders to the suspension of its practice. Perhaps the strongest and best-documented of all of the chapters is the last, "Antecedents and Legacy." By following the movement of Christian polygamy across Europe starting in the sixteenth century, Smith provides an interesting preamble to Joseph Smith's introduction of polygamy in Illi-

nois in the 1840s. George D. Smith's discussion of the "legacy" of plural marriage in the LDS tradition reflects balance and insight.

Generally *Nauvoo Polygamy* portrays Joseph Smith's plural marriage using secular language: "Joseph Smith initiated a social system that appealed to deeply held human concerns. People want to be counted among the elite, the initiated few, the chosen of God or, as Joseph promised, to be given the unheard of opportunity to become as gods themselves. Some women yearn to marry powerful men; some men seek the comforts of several women" (407). He describes plural marriage as "the thinly veiled restoration of an ancient patriarchal order" (212), a "marital innovation" (280), and as a "new sexual morality" (359). Plural unions are termed "romantic interests" (261), "adventuresome marital arrangements" (225), "communal relationships" (242), "extracurricular romances" (247), "theological philanderings" (334), and simply, "entanglements" (237).

George D. Smith characterized the revelation on eternal marriage (D&C 132) as either a "message [from] an all powerful being or merely wishful thinking on the part of his earthly servant" (214). In contrast, essentially all Nauvoo polygamists saw it as a revelation as valid as any Joseph Smith had previously dictated. Contrary to most accounts from the pluralists themselves—who were often nearly as distressed by the idea as the women—George D. Smith hypothesizes: "It is easy to imagine that most men who entered polygamy did so in a cursory way" (289).

He also links Nauvoo polygamy's genesis to the widespread cultural influence of Egypt, drawing an explicit comparison between Joseph and Napoleon, whose ardent love letter to Josephine the introduction quotes:

> Curiously enough, the way Joseph did this [institutionalize polygamy] was through his passion for ancient Egypt, derived from Napoleon's invasion of that country a few years before Smith's birth. Just as soulful kisses and succor appeased one desire in each of these two men so both men had another inner stirring which was awakened by contact with a forgotten civilization. They showed a fascination with ancient Egypt, especially the hieroglyphic writing that was thought to hold the occult secrets of an unrivaled spiritual and temporal world power. The French adventurer's findings lit a fire in Smith that inspired even the language of his religious prose. . . .

> Little did Napoleon dream that by unearthing the Egyptian past, he would provide the mystery language of a new religion. (x–xi)

At times, this naturalistic framework seems to require somewhat strained readings of the evidence. For example, on August 18, 1842, Joseph Smith wrote to Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, including their seventeen-year-old daughter, Sarah Ann, in his discreet salutation of "Dear, and Beloved, Brother and Sister, Whitney, and &c." At the time, he was hiding from Missouri marshals at a home just outside Nauvoo. In his loneliness, Joseph passionately petitioned the trio to pay him a visit:

> I take this oppertunity to communi[c]ate, some of my feelings, privetely at this time, which I want you three Eternaly to keep in your own bosams; for my feelings are so strong for you since what has passed lately between us, that the time of my abscence from you seems so long, and dreary, that it seems, as if I could not live long in this way: and if you three would come and see me in this my lonely retreat, it would afford me great relief, of mind[.] if those with whom I am alied, do love me, now is the time to afford me succor, in the days of exile, for you know I foretold you of these things. I am now at Carlos Graingers, Just back of Brother Hyrams farm[.] it is only one mile from town, the nights are very pleasant indeed, [and] all three of you can come and See me in the fore part of the night[.] let Brother Whitney come a little a head, and nock at the south East corner of the house at the window; it is next to the cornfield, I have a room intirely by myself, the *whole matter* can be attended to with most perfect saf[e]ty[.] I know it is the will of God that you should *comfort me* now in this time of affliction[.] (143)[9]

On the first page of his introduction (ix), George D. Smith refers to this letter and confidently defines "the matter" and Joseph's request for "comfort" as a sexual "tryst" with Sarah Ann. *Nauvoo Polygamy* also alludes to this incident in other places (142, 147, 185, 236, 453, 459). On one occasion, George Smith quotes the letter, employing ellipses, to create the appearance that Joseph's request was to Sarah Ann alone, not to Sarah Ann and her parents: "The prophet then poured out his heart, writing to his newest wife: 'My feelings are so strong for you . . . now is the time to afford me succor. . . . I know it is the will of God that you should comfort me now'" (53).

While Joseph Smith's letter's language is indeed somewhat ambiguous, George D. Smith does not address other possible in-

terpretations. In the text the Prophet also asks the three Whitneys to afford him "relief of mind" and "succor." Neither term has an inherently erotic connotation. If isolated from the context, "comfort" might be considered suggestive. However, I scanned Joseph's journals and discourses looking for other occurrences of "comfort/comforted" and found a total of eleven; none communicates a sexual overtone.[10] In addition, intermixed with Joseph's pleas for a consoling visit are clear references to all three Whitneys. He did not single out Sarah Ann at any time. George D. Smith's interpretation of the Prophet's plea for "comfort" seems unduly narrowed and incomplete.

Todd Compton provided a different view: "There are evidently further ordinances that Smith wants to perform for the Whitneys. This is not just a meeting of husband and plural wife; it is a meeting with Sarah's family, with a religious aspect. . . . Three days later, on August 21, Newel and Elizabeth Whitney were sealed to each other for time and eternity."[11]

George D. Smith comments several times that Joseph Smith had polygamy on his mind in the 1820s, even as a teenager (xiv, 12, 21, 29), but supporting documentation is equivocal. He also provides some psychoanalysis based on limited clinical data, stating that Joseph eventually came "to effectively de-emphasize the feelings of sin and guilt he had once experienced" (21). George D. Smith lays out the following hypothetical reconstruction:

> Did young Joseph experience the usual challenges and questions accompanying adolescence? Is there anything to suggest a coming-of-age struggle? A few passages from his autobiography indicate that two years after the family moved to New York State, he confronted some uncertain feelings he later termed "sinful." At a time when boys begin to experience puberty, "from the age of 12 years to 15," or 1817–21, he "became convicted [convinced] of my sins." Seeing his awakened emotions as "sinful" seems to have reflected parental admonitions prior to the age of fifteen or sixteen (1820–22), when he also sought divine assistance for his worries. "I cried unto the Lord for mercy . . . in the 16th year of my age," he wrote. In response to his prayer, a personage he would later identify as Jesus confronted him and said: "Joseph my son thy sins are forgiven thee." Even so, he reported that he again "fell into transgression and sinned in many things . . . there were many things that transpired that cannot be written." These cryptic words echo in his subsequent statements to friend and counselor Oliver Cowdery, leaving us to

> suspect that he was referring to the curious thoughts of an intense teenager. . . .
>
> Two years after his initial autobiographical sketch, Smith addressed similar vaguely defined infractions of youth, including "vices and follies," he wrote. The contemporary definition of "vice" was "every act of intemperance, all falsehood, duplicity, deception, lewdness and the like," as well as "the excessive indulgence of passions and appetites which in themselves are innocent," according to Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary. "Folly" was defined as "an absurd act which is highly sinful; and conduct contrary to the laws of God or man; sin; scandalous crimes; that which violates moral precepts and dishonors the offender." In other words, "vices and follies" implied sins great and small, which conceivably involved sex but were not limited to it. (17-18; brackets George Smith's)

George Smith reasons that Joseph Smith confessed to "sins great and small, which conceivably involved sex but were not limited to it." However, the entire quotation, published in December 1834 in the *Messenger and Advocate* is susceptible of a different reading:

> During this time, as is common to most, or all youths, I fell into *many vices and follies*; but as my accusers are, and have been forward to accuse me of being guilty of gross and outrageous violations of the peace and good order of the community, I take the occasion to remark, that, though, as I have said above, "as is common to most, or all youths, I fell into *many vices and follies*," I have not, neither can it be sustained, in truth, been guilty of wronging or injuring any man or society of men; and those imperfections to which I allude, and for which I have often had occasion to lament, were a light, and too often, vain mind, exhibiting a foolish and trifling conversation.[12]

The full quotation therefore lends itself to a self-accusation of silliness and light-mindedness, not sexual sin. George D. Smith also neglects to quote Joseph Smith's later history: "In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But I was guilt of levity, and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been" (JSH–1:28).

To explain why dozens and then hundreds of other men and women would follow Joseph Smith, entering into plural sealings, *Nauvoo Polygamy* explains that "persuasion was a primary force in acquiring followers" (1–2; see also 229, 331). "Much of the acceptance of celestial marriage relied on Smith's charisma and the in-

clination of other men to be drawn to the privileges that Smith convinced them were their birthright" (215). "Smith was able to wrap himself in the authority of the Bible and enhance his prophetic aura while persuading the unconvinced" (252). "Joseph Smith's creativity helped in many ways to shape the climate in which plural marriage was introduced. He spoke in coded messages about the "privileges" he said were rightfully a man's" (55). George Smith also explained:

> The primary expressed reasons for practicing polygamy were belief in the "revealed word" of God and a demonstration of loyalty to Joseph Smith. By this logic, if it had not been "right," the prophet would not have revealed it. Smith exercised remarkable influence over his followers. He assured them that plural marriage was necessary for celestial-afterlife glory and that there was an urgent need to "raise up seed unto the lord" in this life, promising them a world of spiritual splendor. This caught their imagination and drove them to feats of endurance and devotion. (385–86)

Consistently omitted are reports of spiritual experiences that many participants described as playing a critical role in their decisions to enter plural marriage. In dealing with such supernatural elements, Compton included them "without offering positive or negative judgment so as to reproduce the world view of nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints."[13] George D. Smith apparently judges such reports as subjective and thereby categorically excludes them. Yet in doing so, he provides his readers with a primarily interpretive work, rather than attempting to re-create the social-religious environment that Church members experienced in the early 1840s, the environment that nursed Nauvoo polygamy into existence.

One weakness of virtually all published texts that discuss Joseph Smith's polygamy involves doctrinal issues. Understandably, historians shy away from theological issues, striving instead to explicate historical events. However, at one point, George D. Smith reflects minimal theological research by quoting a 2008 *Salt Lake Tribune* article as an authoritative source of LDS doctrine (412). Particularly problematic is the author's elaboration of a verse from Doctrine and Covenants 132: "Where there was resistance, the prophet inveighed against it, revealing God's rule that 'no one can reject [polygamy] and enter into my glory' (D&C 132:51, 52,

54)" (6; brackets George Smith's). Although he cites verse 51, the quotation appears to be a variation of verse 4. George Smith's bracketed insertion of "polygamy," redefines the "new and everlasting covenant of marriage" as referring strictly plural marriage (55, 409, 412), which is consistent with the views of many twenty-first-century polygamists.

However, polygamy has never been doctrinally equivalent to eternal marriage or celestial marriage. While Church members may have used the terms synonymously during the 1852–90 period when participation in the new and everlasting covenant of marriage demanded plural marriage, official Church teachings still acknowledged a distinction. For example, Church President John Taylor specified in 1883: "God has revealed, through His servant Joseph Smith, something more. He has told us about our associations hereafter. He has told us about our wives and our children being sealed to us, that we might have a claim on them in eternity. He has revealed unto us the law of celestial marriage, associated with which is the principle of plural marriage."[14] This doctrinal position is explicated in Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20, which states that when "a man marries a wife" monogamously in the new and everlasting covenant by proper authority and they live worthy, they receive exaltation. It could be argued that section 132 does not mandate plural marriage, but it does mandate eternal marriage.

Throughout *Nauvoo Polygamy*, George Smith repeatedly points out that the *History of the Church* does not chronicle Joseph Smith's plural sealings at any time, including the daily entries when the ceremonies were performed (82, 88, 99, 117, 128–29, etc.). He seems to imply a coverup; however, the original manuscripts for the *History of the Church* were compiled in the 1850s by men living polygamy in a place and time where plural marriage was legal. While the reasons for their editing choices are not always obvious, the decision to exclude references to Joseph Smith's plurality was not made by a monogamous Church historian attempting to suppress embarrassing details, but by polygamous defenders openly living the principle.

A curious idiosyncrasy of the Smith text involves the use of the word "favor."[15] He writes: "This 'restoration of all things' became, in part, euphemistic for extending the 'favor' of multiple

wives to his selected associates" (45). At numerous points, even a chapter title (241), he uses "favor" as a synonym for a plural marriage (xiii, xv, 45, 47, 217, 241, 244, 245, 410, 453, 473, etc.). However, this usage rests on only one secondhand possible statement by Joseph Smith. On March 7, 1843, William Clayton recorded: "Elder Brigham Young called me on one side and said he wants to give me some instructions on the priesthood the first opportunity. He said the prophet had told him to do so and give me a favor which I have long desired."[16]

Another term with potentially misleading connotations is George Smith's use of "courtship" or "courting" to describe Joseph Smith's interactions with potential brides (54, 70, 73, 116, 117, 159, 184, 185, 205, 207, 230, 264, 274, 275, 326, 441, etc.). George Smith also refers to "romantic overtures" (231) and Joseph's "advances" (232). It is true that John C. Bennett, in his controversial exposé, *History of the Saints*, accused Joseph Smith of trying to kiss Nancy Rigdon and Sarah Pratt in separate encounters and also alleged that Brigham Young attempted to kiss Martha Brotherton.[17] However, Bennett is the only author to make such charges. In her 1892 testimony in the Temple Lot case, Emily Partridge indignantly repudiated questions about premarital physical contact with Joseph Smith :

> Q. Did he lay his hand on your shoulder?
> A. No sir.
> Q. Did he have his arm around you?
> A. No sir.
> Q. He did not put his arm around you?
> A. No sir, nothing of the kind. He just said what he had to say and did not touch me. . . .
> Q. Was he in the habit of putting his arm around you?
> A. No sir, never. He was a gentleman.
> Q. He never put his arm around you?
> A. No sir. He never did for he was not that kind of a man. He was a gentleman in every way and did not indulge in liberties like that.
> Q. You never saw anything unbecoming in him?
> A. Never in my life . . .
> Q. You were alone together.
> A. Yes sir.
> Q. You and Joseph Smith?
> A. Yes sir . . .
> Q. Did he offer to take your hand then?

A. No sir.
Q. Or put his hand around you?
A. No sir.
Q. At any time or place?
A. No sir, not before we was married.[18]

None of Joseph's wives reported common courting behavior such as walks, buggy rides, the exchange of physical affection, or flirtatious conversations, whether publicly or privately. The only encounters for which records have survived describe Joseph's teaching the principle, sometimes accompanied by an intermediary. Lucy Walker testified that "it was not a love matter" when she was sealed to Joseph Smith.[19] On other occasions, she added: "The Prophet . . . explained it to her, that it was not for voluptuous love"[20] and "Men did not take polygamous wives because they loved them or fancied them or because they were voluptuous, but because it was a command of God."[21] When she agreed to marry Joseph Smith, she recalled: "He led me to a chair, placed his hands upon my head, and blessed me with every blessing my heart could possibly desire."[22] George Smith's use of "court" and "courting" could easily create confusion, unless he is able to document evidence of more traditional courting between Joseph and his prospective wives.

George D. Smith's treatment of polyandry continues to perpetuate the confusion between "ceremonial polyandry" and "sexual polyandry." A woman who ignores a legal marriage in deference to a priesthood sealing with a new husband would be guilty of "ceremonial polyandry." She has experienced two marriage ceremonies, one legal (without a legal divorce) and the second religious marriage as in a priesthood sealing for time and eternity. However, if she discontinued conjugal relations with her legal spouse due to the sealing, she would not be practicing sexual polyandry. Proving the presence of ceremonial polyandry does not justify the assumption of concomitant sexual polyandry. Specific documentation is needed to show that Joseph Smith would blithely defy his own scripture that states that if a woman, "after she is espoused, shall be with another man, she has committed adultery, and shall be destroyed" (D&C 132:63; see also v. 42).

Importantly, evidence supporting sexual polyandry in Joseph Smith's polygamy is at best ambiguous and often sensationalized.

Frequently presented as an example of sexual polyandry has been the Prophet's relationship with Sylvia Sessions Lyons. I found that *Nauvoo Polygamy* failed to accommodate alternative interpretations and contradictory evidences on several points, including this association. For example, he wrote: "He [Joseph Smith] married her [Sylvia Sessions Lyon] on February 8, 1842. . . . Years later, at about fifty, she apparently initiated, but for some reason did not sign, an affidavit that read: "Cylvia Lyon, who was by me sworn in due formal law and upon her oath[,] that on the eighth day of February A. D. 1842, in the City of Nauvoo, county of Hancock[,] State of Illinois[,] She was married or Sealed to President Joseph Smith'" (98–99).

None of the details relating to the unsigned "affidavit" were recorded, so we do not know her level of involvement in its creation or even whether she agreed with its contents. The same collection of affidavits includes another nearly identical document, also unsigned, that gives the same day but a different year: February 8, 1843.[23] On their face, neither document contains any reason for accepting one as more reliable than the other, but George Smith does not mention the existence of the second document nor does he discuss important evidence that indicates a connubial separation or religious divorce that may have occurred between Sylvia and her husband, Windsor Lyons, prior to her sealing to Joseph Smith.[24] It is true that by not obtaining a legal divorce, Sylvia Sessions may have engaged in "ceremonial polyandry." However, the practical dissolution of her civil marriage prior to her sealing to the Prophet would have eliminated any possibility of sexual polyandry. Consecutive sexual matrimonial unions (the first legal, the second religious) would have resulted. George D. Smith does not address these possibilities or the accompanying evidence.

Another debatable position reflected in *Nauvoo Polygamy* deals with John C. Bennett, whom George Smith classifies as "perhaps Joseph Smith's closest confidant" during the inauguration of plural marriage in 1841. "Much of what he reported can be confirmed by other eyewitness accounts" (65). "Bennett was well positioned to know all about any behind-the-scenes transactions" (67). "About that time [September 1840 to July 1842], Smith was courting several women, all while Bennett was still a guest in the Smith home and otherwise accompanied the prophet's every step" (70).

George D. Smith offers two primary pieces of evidence to support the conclusion that John C. Bennett was a polygamy insider. First is the assumption that, since he was sustained as an "Assistant President" in early 1841, it would have been essentially impossible for Joseph Smith to have kept him in the dark regarding the practice of plural marriage (68–69). However, the Prophet successfully concealed the practice from William Law, who was called as a counselor in the First Presidency on January 19, 1841 (D&C 124:126), until 1843.[25] Joseph also kept his own brother Hyrum, who was associate Church president and Church patriarch, in the dark until May of 1843, nearly a full year after Bennett was cut off.[26] It is true that Bennett boarded at Joseph's home and presented himself as unmarried (he had actually abandoned his wife and children) while Hyrum had his own home and family. Yet if Joseph could successfully hide the practice from Hyrum and William Law, who both held higher ecclesiastical positions than Bennett, during the same period and for nearly a year thereafter, he could have also concealed the practice from Bennett. Meanwhile, although there is ample evidence for Joseph's and John's close association during several months in secular things, there is no evidence that Joseph felt particularly motivated to confide in him, discuss new doctrines with him, or seek the kind of spiritually based intimacy that he had had earlier shared with Oliver Cowdery and Sidney Rigdon.

George Smith also offers as evidence for Bennett's involvement his identification of a few of Joseph Smith's plural wives (65, 71). It is true Bennett was positioned to hear rumors and provided seven names (five of them verified) at a time when Joseph Smith was sealed to perhaps a dozen women. But beyond these five names, nothing in Bennett's writings and accusations resembles the teachings of celestial marriage that, according to other sources, Joseph Smith was secretly promulgating. In fact, on October 28, 1843, over a year after his excommunication, Bennett sent a letter to the *Hawk Eye* (Burlington, Iowa), admitting: "This '*marrying for eternity*' is not the '*Spiritual Wife doctrine*' noticed in my Expose [*The History of the Saints*, printed in October 1842], it is an entirely new doctrine established by special Revelation."[27] Joseph first taught eternal marriage in January 1840.[28] Thereafter, he

never, to my knowledge, taught plural marriage without teaching that those unions could be eternal. I conclude, from Bennett's 1843 admission of ignorance about eternal marriage during his sojourn at Nauvoo, that Joseph never confided to his volatile counselor his secret teachings of eternal and plural marriage.

George Smith asserts: "After his [Bennett's] disagreement with Smith, the record of his celestial marriage was apparently expunged" (119), and Bennett's "marriage record may have been deleted after he had a falling out with Smith" (243, also 263). In fact, there are no contemporary marriage records for even Joseph Smith's plural sealings. Since no such records were kept, there would be no historical basis for asserting that Bennett's record was "expunged." Catherine Fuller, one of Bennett's victims, affirmed that marriage ceremonies were not part of Bennett's seduction techniques. On May 25, 1842, she testified to the Nauvoo High Council:

> Nearly a year ago I became acquainted with John C. Bennett, after visiting twice and on the third time he proposed unlawful intercourse being about one week after first acquaintance. He said he wished his desires granted. I told him it was contrary to my feelings he assured me there was others in higher standing than I was who would conduct in that way and there was no harm in it. He said there should be no sin upon me if there was any sin it should come upon himself. . . . John C. Bennett was the first man that seduced me.[29]

There is no record that Bennett ever performed or participated in even a faked ceremony as part of persuading Catherine to share his bed. Apparently he found persuasion alone sufficient for at least a half dozen women he seduced in this way.

I have identified several other problems of documentation and interpretation, of which the nine examples below are representative.

First, George Smith describes Joseph as "pursuing" Helen Mar Kimball (198): "Later when Joseph asked for Heber's only daughter, Helen Mar, the obedient disciple offered his fourteen-year-old girl without question. This occurred on or about May 28, 1843" (302). The footnote for this allegation contains four references, two of which are incomplete, but none of which corroborate this specific interpretation. I am aware of no evidence that Joseph instigated these events; rather, according to Helen Mar's own statement, it was Heber who initiated the union

because he had "a great desire to be connected with the Prophet."[30] George Smith also refers Helen Mar's "physical union at age fourteen with a thirty-seven-year-old man" (201); however, to date no evidence has been located from Helen or anyone else that the sealing included sexual intercourse. Stanley B. Kimball, Heber C. Kimball's biographer, states:

> Many years later in Utah she [Helen] wrote a retrospective poem about this marriage from which we learn that it was "for eternity alone," that is, unconsummated. Whatever such a marriage promised for the next world, it brought her no immediate earthly happiness. She saw herself as a "fetter'd bird" without youthful friends and a subject of slander. This poem also reveals that Joseph Smith's several pro forma marriages to the daughters of his friends were anything but sexual romps. Furthermore, the poem reinforces the idea that, despite the trials of plurality in mortality, a "glorious crown" awaited the faithful and obedient in heaven.[31]

Second, George Smith states: "During the 1830s and 1840s, Mormon communal practices extended to property as well as to marriage" (11). Again, no evidence is provided to support this allegation. It is true that Latter-day Saints experimented with communitarian economic arrangements in the 1830s in Kirtland and Missouri, arrangements that were not continued in Nauvoo. However, charges of "communal marriage practices" are undocumented and contradicted by all teachings and practices associated with the law of consecration.

Third, George Smith mistakenly writes: "Levi Lewis reportedly told Martin Harris that Joseph had tried to 'seduce' one of Emma's friends, Eliza Winters" (29; also 18, 232).[33] In fact, according to the original source, it was Lewis who reported Harris as making this allegation, not the other way around.[33] This error transforms a second-hand account with significant plausibility problems into a first-hand allegation, providing credibility that is not deserved.

Fourth is the assertion that "Emily Partridge's autobiographical writings vividly substantiate the intimate relationships he [Joseph] was involved in during those two years" (185). This claim seems to go beyond the evidence. Although Emily's personal writings establish frequent interactions with Joseph, including his proposal of plural marriage and the resulting conflict with Emma, she never mentions sexual relations or affectionate interchanges

in her writings. She verified sexual intimacy with Joseph Smith only when questioned pointblank concerning the issue while providing a deposition in the Temple Lot case in 1894.[34]

Fifth, the history presented in *Nauvoo Polygamy* is not always consistent with available manuscript evidence. George D. Smith reports: "After Bennett's announcements in 1842 and Emma's confrontations with Joseph in the spring of 1843, the Smith household was unraveling" (237). On the contrary, May of 1843 may well have been Joseph's happiest month. Hyrum, who had been troubled by rumors of plural marriage and had been resistant to hearing more, accepted the principle as taught by Brigham Young by May 26, 1843.[35] Emma's opposition had been formidable; but in a (temporary) change of heart, she approved Joseph's sealings to four plural wives and was present for the ceremonies.[36] On May 28, after Emma had given her consent to these unions, she and Joseph were sealed in eternal marriage.

Sixth, "Rumors may have been circulating already as early as 1832 that Smith had been familiar with fifteen-year-old Marinda Johnson, a member of the family with which Smith lived in Ohio" (44). Though properly phrased as speculation ("may have been"), no footnote is provided for these allegations. In fact, this accusation was first made in 1884, forty years after the Prophet's death, by Clark Braden, a Church of Christ (Disciples) minister, who did not claim first-hand knowledge and did not identify a second-hand source.[37] Knowing these contextual details helps readers put such charges in proper perspective.

Seventh, a footnote is also missing for this claim: "After the Partridge sisters became emotionally involved with Smith, the period of courtship and marriage lasted three or four years, the longest for which we have evidence" (185). Emily herself explained: "The first intimation I had from Brother Joseph that there was a pure and holy order of plural marriage, was in the spring of 1842, but I was not married until 1843."[38]

Eighth, I am also uneasy about the pattern of frequently citing secondary sources rather than primary sources. *Nauvoo Polygamy* contains dozens of references to the *History of the Church*. It is true that the primary sources for citations from the *History of the Church* are not always easily identified, but generally scholars attempt to do so if possible. In addition, multiple notes cite a pri-

mary source, and then add that it is "quoting" or "quoted in" or "cited in" a secondary source (78 note 55, 85 note 73, 87 note 77, 93 note 93, 98 note 107, 132 note 201, 136 note 213, etc.). It is unclear whether Smith verified the primary source.

Nine, a number of footnotes have missing page numbers or are otherwise incomplete (46 note 104, 47 note 109, 99 note 108, 302 note 116, etc.).

To conclude then, I find *Nauvoo Polygamy* susceptible to criticism in two areas. The first is George D. Smith's near-exclusive naturalistic interpretation. A naturalistic stance is a valid approach; but by excluding possible non-naturalistic explanations, George Smith does not re-create the world of most Nauvoo polygamists, who often reported personal spiritual experiences that profoundly influenced their decisions to participate. Nor does a dedicated naturalistic view allow readers to consider the possibility that Joseph Smith introduced plural marriage in his role as a prophet-restorer, a view that many, if not all, Nauvoo pluralists embraced.

The second area of criticism is deficits in documentation that plague the text throughout. In my opinion, these problems diminish *Nauvoo Polygamy*'s overall authoritativeness, especially in comparison to Todd Compton's *In Sacred Loneliness*. In addition, *Nauvoo Polygamy* presents numerous issues as though they were conclusively supported by historical research when documentary evidence is, in fact, missing or inconclusive.

In short, scholars and researchers will be grateful for the remarkable detail found in the historical data in Appendix B identifying the numbers of polygamous men and women in Nauvoo and beyond. However, readers seeking an objective, well-documented exposition of Joseph Smith's polygamy may find *Nauvoo Polygamy* less useful.

Notes

1. George Smith's 2008 data also support the inclusion of three men for whom documentation is fragmentary. The first is Thomas Bateman whom Smith includes due to a listing of a (plural) marriage to Elizabeth Ravencroft on March 23, 1843, found in Lyndon Cook, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839–1845* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1994), 103. However, Cook cites the Nauvoo Marriage Record in the LDS Church History Library, but plural marriages were not usually recorded in the

Nauvoo Marriage Record, because of their secret nature. Beyond this single reference, I have been unable to verify that Bateman was married to Ravencroft. Andrew Jenson, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson Historical Co., 1901–36), 2:591, speaks of him only as a monogamist. A second uncorroborated sealing is George Miller to Julia Ann Chapman on July 20, 1843. I have found no confirming sources for this alleged sealing. The third is a plural marriage performed in New York between Ebenezer C. Richardson and Polly Ann Childs in November 1843 which also lacks other verification. The couple's first child was not born until 1848.

2. Two of Joseph Smith's manuscripts deal with plural marriage but in a way that connects to polygamy only in context. The first is the ceremonial prayer that the Prophet dictated by which Newel K. Whitney united him with his daughter, Sarah Ann Whitney. H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 315–16. The second is Joseph Smith, Letter to Nancy Rigdon, April 1842, "Happiness is the object and design of our existence" published in "Sixth Letter from John C. Bennett," *Sangamo Journal* (Springfield Illinois), August 19, 1842; rpt., in John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints: Or an Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), 243–44.

3. See George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995).

4. Among these are Willard Richards, Diary, 19 vols., and Brigham Young, Diary, both in LDS Church History Library. See also the Nauvoo Temple Record and Lisle Brown, ed., *Nauvoo Sealings, Adoptions, and Anointings: A Comprehensive Register of Persons Receiving LDS Temple Ordinances, 1841–1846* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006).

5. Letter to Claire Noall, quoted in Newell G. Bringhurst, *Fawn McKay Brodie: A Biographer's Life* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1999), 88–89; Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 2d rev. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), ix.

6. Brian C. Hales, "Fanny Alger and Joseph Smith's Pre-Nauvoo Reputation," *Journal of Mormon History* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 112–90.

7. Michael Marquardt, Letter to Gary J. Bergera, October 19, 1995, Michael Marquardt Collection, Marriott Library, University of Utah; photocopy in my possession; used by permission. See also H. Michael Marquardt, *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816–1844* (Longwood, Fla.: Xulon Press, 2005), 451.

8. Copy in my possession; used by permission.

9. The letter's text and signature are unquestionably Joseph's (photocopy of holograph in my possession) and was photographically repro-

duced in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 539–40; emphasis mine.

10. Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 17, 28, 90, 140, 141, 160, 192, 367, 369, 380; and Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 119.

11. Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 350.

12. Joseph Smith, Letter to "Brother O. Cowdery," *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 3 (December 1834): 40; emphasis mine.

13. Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, xii.

14. John Taylor, (n.d.) 1883, *Journal of Discourses*, 24:231.

15. This unique utilization also appears in George D. Smith, "Nau- voo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841–46: A Preliminary Demographic Report," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 10.

16. George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 94.

17. Bennett, *The History of the Saints*, 231, 238, 243.

18. Emily Partridge, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), pages 357–58, question nos. 148–54, 179–85, *In the [Ninth] Circuit Court of the United States, Western Division at Kansas City–The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Complainant vs. The Church of Christ at Independence . . ., Respondents.* The depositions were taken between January and November 1892; copies at the Community of Christ Archives and microfilm at the LDS Church History library (hereafter cited as Temple Lot transcript). Emily also testified that she never slept with Joseph Smith prior to her sealing. Ibid., p. 371, question nos. 481–84.

19. Lucy Walker, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), Ibid., Pt. 3, pp. 450, 470, question nos. 29, 528. William Smith's plural wife Mary Ann West also testified that there was no courtship prior to her polygamous marriage. Mary Ann West, Testimony, ibid., 506, question 333.

20. Lucy Walker quoted in "In Honor of Joseph Smith: Anniversary of His Birth Celebrated in the Sixteenth Ward," *Deseret Evening News*, December 25, 1899, 2.

21. Lucy Walker quoted in "Talks of Polygamy," *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 24, 1899.

22. Lucy Walker, quoted in Lyman Omer Littlefield, *Reminiscences of Latter-day Saints: Giving an Account of Much Individual Suffering Endured for Religious Conscience* (Logan: Utah Journal, 1888), 48.

23. Brian C. Hales, "The Joseph Smith–Sylvia Sessions Plural Sealing: Polyandry or Polygyny?" *Mormon Historical Studies* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 41–57.

24. George Smith cites "Affidavits on Celestial Marriage, 1869–1870, 62," as his source. These are four affidavit books compiled by Apostle Joseph F. Smith in 1869–1870, which contain two unfinished documents referring to "Cylvia Lyon" (Book 1, p. 60; Book 4, p. 62). The documents are not legal affidavits because they contain no signatures. The text in *Nauvoo Polygamy* uses the 1842 date found in Book 1, p. 60. However, the footnote is confusing because it does not specify which affidavit book is referenced and provides an incorrect page number, "62." However, Book 4, p. 62 contains the second Lyon document, which lists the 1843 date that Smith did not mention. The affidavit books have been digitized and are available at the LDS Church History Library, MS 3423, fd. 5.

25. Affidavit dated July 17, 1885, quoted in Charles A. Shook, *The True Origin of Mormon Polygamy* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing, 1914), 126.

26. George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 106; see also Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the Mormon Succession Question" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982), 56–60.

27. John C. Bennett, "Letter from General Bennett," October 28, 1843, *Hawk Eye* (Burlington, Iowa), December 7, 1843, 1; emphasis in original.

28. Parley P. Pratt Jr., ed., *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt: One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985 printing), 259–60. The context of Pratt's report mentions only monogamy.

29. Catherine Fuller, Testimony before the Nauvoo High Council, May 25, 1842; photocopy of holograph in Valeen Tippetts Avery Collection, Merrill Library Special Collections, MSS 316, Box 24, fd. 14, Utah State University, Logan.

30. "Helen Mar Kimball Whitney 1881 Autobiography," LDS Church History Library; typescript and copy of holograph reproduced in Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, eds., *A Woman's View: Helen Mar Whitney's Reminiscences of Early Church History* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1997), 482–87.

31. Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 98.

32. This error also appears in Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 4:346; and Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 178.

33. Whether the original quotations were taken from an interview

or affidavit is unclear. No affidavits as described have been located. Excerpts quoted in "Mormonism," *Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian* (Montrose, Pennsylvania) 9 (May 1, 1834): 1; quoted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:346.

34. Emily Dow Partridge Young, deposition, Temple Lot transcript, respondent's testimony (part 3), pp. 371, 384, question nos. 480–84, 747, 751–62. George Smith also mistakenly wrote: "Emily Dow Partridge left home in 1846 with her son, who was fathered by Amasa Lyman" (228). This statement confuses the two Partridge sisters. After Joseph Smith's death, Emily married Brigham Young; it was her sister Eliza, also one of Joseph's plural wives, who married Amasa Lyman.

35. George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 106; see also Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances," 56–60.

36. Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl," holograph, n.d., 186, Ms 5220, LDS Church History Library.

37. E. L. Kelley and Clark Braden, *Public Discussion of the Issues between the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Church of Christ (Disciples) Held in Kirtland, Ohio, Beginning February 12, and Closing March 8, 1884 between E. L. Kelley, of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and Clark Braden, of the Church of Christ* (St. Louis: Clark Braden, 1884), 202. See also Wayne A. Ham, "Truth Affirmed, Error Denied: The Great Debates of the Early Reorganization," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 7 (1987): 8.

38. Emily D. Partridge, "Autobiography of Emily D. P. Young," *Woman's Exponent* 14, no. 5 (August 1, 1885): 37–38.

The Beginnings of Latter-day Plurality

George D. Smith. *Nauvoo Polygamy: ". . . but we called it celestial marriage."* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008. xix, 705 pp. $39.95. ISBN: 978-1-56085-201-8

Reviewed by Todd M. Compton

George D. Smith's *Nauvoo Polygamy: " . . . but we called it celestial marriage"* is an extremely important contribution to the history of polygamy and to Mormon history. Carefully written and the result of exhaustive research, it provides many significant insights into the beginnings of Mormon polygamy.

Nauvoo Polygamy has been compared to my *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature

Books, 1997) but in some ways it is broader in scope, covering Nauvoo polygamists from Joseph Smith to the last Mormon who married plurally in the Nauvoo Temple before the Mormons left for the West. In addition, my book was consciously written to tell the stories of Smith's plural wives, to write from the viewpoint of women. *Nauvoo Polygamy* tends to look at early Mormon polygamy from the viewpoint of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other early Mormon male leaders. This focus is not a matter of right or wrong; both perspectives are entirely valid. We should look at early polygamy from a variety of angles.

George Smith, then, follows Fawn Brodie, Donna Hill, and Richard Bushman in looking at the earliest Mormon polygamy largely from the viewpoint of Joseph Smith. But the comparison of Bushman's treatment of Joseph Smith's polygamy and George D. Smith's is enlightening. Bushman spends about eighteen pages on the subject;[1] George Smith spends approximately 200 pages on it. Clearly, Joseph's polygamy was not a main focus of interest for Bushman. In what I think is clearly a serious lacuna in Bushman's otherwise superb biography, he doesn't even mention many of Joseph Smith's plural wives, one of whom, Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, left an important memoir describing her marriage to the Mormon prophet. Helen Mar was Joseph's youngest wife and the daughter of Apostle Heber C. Kimball; her marriage to Smith constitutes an important example of dynastic linking in his polygamy.

Therefore, if one is seriously interested in Joseph Smith's polygamy in the context of his life and doctrine, or in Joseph Smith's Nauvoo years, after reading Bushman's few pages, one must turn to George Smith and to my *In Sacred Loneliness*. However, although Joseph Smith is a major figure in my book, I see him only through the lens of his thirty-three plural wives, which leaves much of his life out of the picture. *Nauvoo Polygamy* provides much more of the broader context of Joseph's life when he was practicing plural marriage.

Reading this book often left me with an overwhelming impression of how busy Joseph Smith was—the sheer multifaceted nature of his life, including the demands of sacred leadership of a people and church, of "secular" and military leadership of Nauvoo, of evading legal harassment and imprisonment, of caring for his public family, including a strong-willed first wife who disliked

polygamy intensely, despite moments when she reluctantly gave her husband permission to practice it. Yet despite all of the projects he was juggling in the Nauvoo years, he constantly took time to court and marry plural wives—sometimes two or three per month. (In May 1843, he married four plural wives.) Clearly, polygamy was extremely important to him.

George D. Smith, in *Nauvoo Polygamy*, examines each plural marriage date for Joseph Smith carefully and often simply quotes the official *History of the Church* for that date. I found this juxtaposition of the public versus the private record extremely enlightening at times, aside from the support it gave for the validity of the marriage date. Doing this allows one to see how Joseph Smith's marriages fit into the context of his daily life.

In addition, Joseph Smith was not just marrying his own plural wives; he was also introducing other people to "the Principle." Much of this material simply wasn't applicable to my book, but it's central to George D. Smith's book. And it's fascinating material. I especially enjoyed Chapter 6, "How Plural Marriage Worked," which gives many of the human interest stories behind a number of these early Nauvoo polygamists.

As George D. Smith turns from Joseph Smith to the rest of the Nauvoo polygamists, he makes a major contribution by demonstrating conclusively that the argument that Nauvoo polygamy (at least, later Nauvoo polygamy) was a limited phenomenon is wrong. Many Mormons wanted to form and seal their plural families in the Nauvoo Temple before the trek west. As a result, late Nauvoo is really the foundation of what I call practical polygamy in Mormonism. Plural marriage became a virtually open secret in the Mormon community in late Nauvoo, as opposed to its general *sub rosa* nature while Joseph Smith lived. One tends to think of polygamy's entrance into the mainstream of Mormonism occurring in Utah, but this book shows that it was solidly launched in the late Nauvoo period.

I was impressed, as I read *Nauvoo Polygamy*, with the importance of Brigham Young in providing polygamy with a solid practical foundation in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith never lived openly with any of his plural wives; Brigham Young, as leading apostle of the Church, did—setting up households and openly providing for his plural wives in Nauvoo. As in so many other areas, Brigham Young

continued what Joseph did and raised it to another level. Depending on how one views polygamy, Young's actions may be entirely praiseworthy or a major wrong turn in religious praxis, but Young's historical impact and influence in this area are undeniable.

Contrast how nineteenth-century Mormon history might have unfolded if the anti-polygamous William Marks (who had a strong legal claim to lead the Church after Joseph's death) had succeeded to the presidency, rather than Brigham Young with his eventual fifty-six wives.[2] Plural marriage might have died in Nauvoo (with perhaps some break-off polygamous groups); the major cultural conflict between Mormonism and America might have been averted; and many Mormon genealogies would have been infinitely simplified.

But clearly Brigham Young (and other key apostles, such as Heber C. Kimball, eventual husband to forty-five wives)[3] had been thoroughly converted to plurality by Joseph Smith—and not just to the idea of polygamy, but to the concept that the more wives one married, the greater one's exaltation in the hereafter. This doctrine continued to have major impact throughout the Utah period of Mormon polygamy.

Nauvoo Polygamy includes a magnificent, extensive, wonderfully detailed, appendix of Nauvoo polygamists, listing the full marriage history of each male polygamist who started his plural family in Nauvoo, but also including wives added after Nauvoo. It is even footnoted. It has already been of great use to me in research I have been doing on age at marriage in Mormon polygamy and will be a valuable resource for Mormon historians for generations to come.

No book is perfect, and this book certainly has limitations. I accept Fanny Alger as a well-documented plural wife of Joseph Smith, based on the autobiography of Alger's cousin, Mosiah Hancock, as well as on other supporting evidence, but George D. Smith does not include her in his list. Also, in the case of Helen Mar Kimball, Joseph's youngest wife, I believe that there is no evidence, pro or con, that she and Joseph physically consummated their sealing. Given the lack of evidence either way, I believe that, based on plural marriage patterns involving younger wives in Utah, it is unlikely that Helen Mar had marital relations with Joseph. George Smith offers no additional evidence but portrays

the marriage of Helen Mar and Joseph Smith as including physical relations. This book would have been improved if Smith had included a fuller discussion of these two issues, including an analysis of the Mosiah Hancock document.

I number thirty-three plural wives for Joseph Smith, while George D. Smith counts thirty-seven. George D. Smith actually has a strong case for including those additional wives. I may have erred on the side of caution when I did not include them as "well-documented wives" in *In Sacred Loneliness*, though I did include most of them in my "possible wife" category.

One could argue that Chapters 7 (dealing with secrecy in Nauvoo polygamy and in the subsequent Mormon historical record), 8 (on Mormons looking back at Nauvoo polygamy), and 9 (discussing antecedents to Mormon polygamy in the Reformation) of *Nauvoo Polygamy*, about 140 pages, have some passages that extend beyond the chronological compass of this book's central theme, and that might have been summarized or compressed. Chapter 9 on "Protestant polygamy" especially detracts from the unity of a book about Nauvoo polygamy. On the other hand, it is a useful and interesting chapter. It's an important subject that has not been written about sufficiently. Much work remains to be done on the close and distant non-Mormon ancestors of Mormon polygamy in "mainstream" Christianity in Europe and in early American culture.

As some reviewers have already noticed, Smith does not write this book from the perspective of conservative or traditional Mormon histories.[4] But I believe that Mormon history is enriched when responsible non-Mormons or liberal Mormons (as well as moderate Mormons or conservative Mormons) are involved in it. I think the best way for conservative Mormons to respond is not by attacking the motives or character of the historian with whom they disagree or by demanding that non-Mormons or liberal Mormons write conservative history. Rather, I would urge such historians to research and write in the same field, producing an account of Nauvoo polygamy written from a conservative perspective that embodies the highest ideals of scholarship—thoroughness, honesty, balance, respect for primary sources, and relevant modern scholarship, just to name a few—as they do so.

As in any major work of scholarship, many details and interpretations in *Nauvoo Polygamy* will be debated and perhaps modified in the future. A book about a secret practice that later became a taboo subject in Mormon culture will necessarily deal with many under-documented and debatable facts. But there is no denying the enormous contribution this book has made to our understanding of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Nauvoo polygamy.

Notes

1. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 323–27, 437–46, 490–96, 498–99.

2. Jeffery Ogden Johnson, "Determining and Defining 'Wife': The Brigham Young Households," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (Fall 1987): 70. The article identifies fifty-five wives, but Johnson has confirmed by email that Amanda Barnes Smith, the fifty-sixth wife, was also sealed to Brigham Young in Utah.

3. Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), Appendix A, 307–16.

4. I realize that one could write at length on the many gradations of "conservative," "moderate," "centrist," "liberal," and "radical" within Mormonism. I use the term "conservative" as descriptive, not negative. In fact, any historian is by nature a conservative in one important sense, as he or she seeks to conserve knowledge of and the experience of the past. However, the process of choosing what to conserve as most important and what to regard as less important in any tradition is a matter of moral insight, not a mechanistic process. The twentieth century has seen a gigantic shift in official statements about what constitutes the "traditional" view of Mormon polygamy—including denials that it ever involved more than 2 or 3 percent and insistence that the 1890 Manifesto stopped authorized plural marriages—to a less defensive and more nuanced view. No doubt this process will continue. I tend to disagree with conservatives who look on religious texts, principles, persons, events as absolute—as all good or all bad. This perspective leads to what Leonard J. Arrington has called the "theological marionette" bias in LDS history. "The Search for Truth and Meaning in Mormon History," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3 (Summer 1968): 61.

Reaping Where We Have Not Sown

Douglas Hunter

Note: *Douglas Hunter delivered this address in the East Pasadena Ward, on December 14, 2008.*

Moments after hearing the bishop's voice ask if I could speak on the importance of developing talents, another voice spoke the phrase "you reap where you do not sow" into my awareness. As we all know, these words come from the parable of the talents. The phrase is part of the address of the last slave to give account of his dealings to his master. He says: "Master, I knew you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed. So I was afraid and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours" (Matt 25:24–25, New Standard Revised Version). These words are used to indict the character who speaks them as fearful, perhaps lazy, and definitely unwilling to give his best efforts for the sake of the one he serves. But if we read his words within the context of the linguistic accident from which we take the meaning and purpose of the story, then they have a different use.

The linguistic accident is, of course, the dual meaning of the word "talent." "Talent" denotes both the monetary unit equaling 5,000 denari,[1] and also the skills, attributes, and abilities we possess and can develop for the benefit of the community and in service to God. This linguistic accident and the idea of talents as something concrete and quantifiable is appealing to us because it gives us a job, something pragmatic to work on. It suggests that we have a duty to identify, nourish, and then use our own unique abilities for the sake of the kingdom. And that is an empowering message.

So, how should we understand the slave's words, "You reap

where you do not sow"? In the context of our understanding of talents, the phrase can be seen as a description of a master who sought to gain abilities and skills without searching himself to discover them, without nurturing them, or developing them. In other words, the master desires to gain talents without making the effort that we understand as essential to the very idea of talents.

Thus, the question: Is it possible to develop talents without being pragmatic, without searching, without making the effort? Are there abilities and skills within us that we gain without consciously fostering them? That by luck, or accident we grow in ways we do not anticipate or even know that growth is possible? For me, the answer is yes. I have to acknowledge that the talents I value most, as inchoate as they may be, are fostered in unexpected and unpredictable ways. I realize that people who know me well do not consider me a very empathetic person; nonetheless, I have a great deal more empathy now than I used to. And the process of developing empathy has been less a process of conscious effort than it has been a reaction to life's various experiences. Some examples:

The first is pretty common. It is being a witness to the birth of my children. I mean this in terms of the whole experience, not just the longed-for arrival of a child. In all three births, my wife, Michele, underwent immense physical suffering and emotional trauma. It's difficult to see someone you love go through that, knowing you can't really do anything about it, other than be a witness to it. As a witness I can testify to how far giving birth pushed her, how it disfigured her body, took her well beyond the point of total exhaustion, and beyond the imaginable realm of emotional stamina. I can testify to her boldness in the face of all of it. I can also honestly say that my own fear in witnessing her suffering took me to a place I had never been before. I heard it observed some time ago that all first-time fathers are terrified in the delivery room because they believe their wives are going to die. Here in Pasadena, with our access to excellent medical care, such a fear may not be well founded, yet I have to admit it was real for me. I didn't think it possible to go through twenty hours of difficult and painful labor and be all right at the end of it.

So in the births, I witnessed Michele's tremendous strength and her fragility. And when I got to hold my newborn children, I witnessed their delicate beauty, their fragility, and their total de-

pendence. I also was thrust into the circle of unconditional love. In witnessing and empathizing, in being exposed to human fragility, my spiritual talents were challenged and even expanded without the nobility of a concentrated effort on my part. I reaped where I did not sow.

Another experience: My father has had cancer for about fifteen years. During this time, he has remained quite healthy; he is active, athletic, and has maintained a thriving professional life. Even so, in the background is the presence of a muted dread, a presence of something awful and threatening that could burst to the forefront at any time. Two years ago he was on aggressive medications that took a worse toll on him than the disease. We were vacationing on the coast of Maine, and my six-year-old daughter Addison was enthralled with the idea of going fishing, something she had never done before. So for days she had been pestering my father, asking when we could go fishing, and did we have bait, and could she hold her own rod? Finally, on an absolutely stunning afternoon, with a high tide pushing up against the rocky shore and a cool, humid breeze off the North Atlantic, my then-eighty-year-old father gathered the fishing rods and headed down the path with my mother to meet Addison and me on a granite ledge by the water.

As they approached, I witnessed the difficulty he had stepping over a small fallen log and a few rocks that marked the division between the trail and the craggy shore. It was with embarrassment and impatience that he accepted my mother's hand to help navigate these minor obstacles. Once on our ledge, he sat down and attempted to put a lure on the line. It was another task that he could not complete on his own. After I put the lure on the line for him, he stood up, brought the rod over his head, then yanked it forward toward the ocean. In making that small movement, he lost his balance; and as he stumbled forward, the lure smacked the rocks immediately in front of him. Sitting back down with humiliation burning inside him, he lashed out, saying what a stupid idea this was. My mother helped him up and led him back to the cabin, while I explained to Addison that we would try fishing another day. Then I rushed off to hide in the trees alongside our cabin where I could not be seen crying.

It's not that I didn't get it—that I didn't understand aging or the long-term effects of disease. It was just that I don't see my parents very often, so that day was something of a Rip Van Winkle experience. While I was absent in my slumber, my father had been diminished. He had become fragile and ashamed. And I was taken by surprise by a moment I was not ready for, a moment so clearly marked by the presence of his mortality.

Here again, when the fragility of human existence confronted me, I found myself utterly changed. By being thrown into the agony of my father's complex blend of physical weakness, sorrow and shame, my capacity for love and empathy, my appreciation for the arc of life, was expanded simply by witnessing dramatic weakness in a man whose life was, until that point, defined by strength. I reaped where I did not sow.

One final example: The most significant way in which I have reaped an increase in spiritual talents where I have not sown arises out of something that has been present my entire life but about which I have been too much of a coward to speak.

For more than a decade, I've been engaged in an effort to understand and deal with the aftermath of being repeatedly sexually abused as a child. During the years that I've been engaged in the healing process, I have always done the work, believing that at some point I would get better, that I could be healed and restored to wholeness. But last summer I realized, for the first time that it's more honest to say I probably won't ever be fully healed or restored.

Recognizing this fact was not an act of giving up. It was an act of acceptance, of reconciliation, and it brought me freedom. It freed me from the exhausting emotional and spiritual struggle of trying to regain something beyond my reach. The reason this matters is that no human should ever have to suffer at the hands of another like that, and yet we live in a world where such suffering is commonplace. And if your life has been shaped by such an experience, you must do something with it, find a way to take possession of it, to embrace it and its consequences, to own it. These experiences must be integrated into the story of the self.

One way of doing this is to understand that the suffering we go through is shared by many others and that if we carefully examine the world, peering through the cracks in the walls of social

convention, we gain a witness of the unlimited suffering present in the lives of others.

Being broken and incomplete, having been subject to acts of violence and physical manipulation—these things used to isolate me and push me away from others. But over time they have become a source of empathy for the alienation, shame, agony, and outrages faced by others. It's this kind of empathy that allows one to transition from being an isolated victim to being a member of a community in spiritual relationship with others and responsible for their well-being. In coming to this point, I recognize that this entire process, this knowledge, this form of coming into community was initiated by events that never should have happened, events over which I had no control; and yet, in a strange way, by reconciling with my brokenness and in becoming aware of the possibility of not being healed, I have found a small way to move forward. In short, I reaped where I did not sow.

These three experiences are important because each constitutes a radical decentering and disorientation. They tore me away from old expectations, hopes, and desires, teaching me something new and totally unexpected about the fragility of life, the pain of existence, our dependency, and the way in which suffering is a gateway to empathy. Each experience pushed me farther down the path of empathy and compassion, allowing greater access to both and better ways to express them. So these abilities—these talents—were developed without a plan or directed effort. It was a matter of simply bearing honest witness.

By being a witness, I've come to the conclusion that the only talents, abilities, or human capacities that have much meaning or purpose are those we associate with Jesus: compassion, empathy, healing, generosity, patience, love. These are the human talents that give us power.

We often hear the phrase "speaking truth to power" in a political context, but we can use this phrase in the spiritual context if the truth being spoken is the local truth of individual experience, confession, and aspiration and if the power is the talents, abilities, and skills of those willing to listen to such truths.

When Jesus told his followers that in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and taking in the stranger, they were directly

serving him (Matt. 25:35–40), he was speaking the truth of the endless needs of the world in which we live to the power of his followers to meet those needs.

In 2006 an Amish community forgave the man who murdered their children and then gave love and support to that man's family. They spoke their truth of forgiving the unforgivable and spoke it to our ability to love and forgive in any way that is required in our own lives.

When Joseph Smith said that embracing Mormonism leads to "the shackles of superstition, bigotry, ignorance and priestcraft" falling from our necks,[2] he was not talking about something automatic. He was speaking the truth of our power to eradicate these things in ourselves if we are brave enough, if we are willing enough, visionary enough, and if we trust in God enough to let it happen.

When Old Testament theologian Walter Brueggemann writes: "We have been reduced to docile speech, to noncommittal chatter. We have been intimidated to speak only what is safe,"[3] then he is speaking the truth of what happens when our words no longer express authentic experience and instead seek approval and social acceptance from our faith community. This is a truth he speaks to the power found in our ability to speak honestly about our lives, the anguish in our hearts, and the way the Spirit moves our souls. He is speaking of our power to address what really matters to us if we are brave enough to break out of old patterns and expectations.

When a young LDS woman wrote on her blog in December 2008 that the Church's involvement in California politics left her spiritually exhausted and she didn't know if she could stay in the Church, then she was speaking the truth of her emptiness and of her position at the margin of the Mormon community to our power to embrace her and to be reasons for her, and many others like her, to stay among us.

When poet June Jordan writes:

> . . . .and the ones who stood without sweet company
> will sing and sing
> back into the mountains and
> if necessary even under the sea:
> *we are the ones we have been waiting for*[4]

then she is speaking the truth of what it means to be a people who wait. She is speaking the truth that, each day when we go out into the world and realize that Jesus isn't here yet, it is still a day when we have the power to act on behalf of the One we wait for: to take love, healing, kindness, the priesthood, His gospel, and all the rest into the world that day, because that is our calling. We cannot expect anyone else to do it for us.

And that is the importance of developing the talents that matter, those we associate with Jesus, and our Heavenly Mother and Heavenly Father: empathy, compassion, healing, responsibility for the well-being of others, a sensitivity to the experiences and needs of others, and devotion to God. These are the talents the world longs for.

These talents can be developed in different ways; but as I've learned, it is possible that the most significant development of these talents may come from experiences that we do not welcome or do not control and that are not anticipated in any sense—experiences that put us in a position to reap where we do not sow.

Notes

1. Michael D. Coogan ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 46 note f and note for v. 15.

2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007), 264.

3. Walter Brueggemann, *Finally Comes the Poet* (Minneapolis. Minn.: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1989), 44.

4. June Jordan, "Poem for South African Women," in her *Passion: New Poems, 1977–1980* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980), emphasis mine.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mark England

In my earlier drawings I focused on line and the wealth of information it could convey. Now I am working through the challenges of color and value in the context of issues I have continued to explore for the past twenty years. The American landscape is cloaked in cultural opacities and cluttered with human debris. I contend that no one with a twentieth-century eye can see through the layers of artificial meaning and histories we have imposed onto this finally impenetrable continent. So, rather than trying for that ever-elusive glimpse of a landscape or history in its purity, I choose to draw the perceptions and impositions between us and a place we cannot know.

In my paintings of America, I am far more concerned with representing and questioning cultural and visual expectations than with illustrating a scene. In a sense, my paintings and drawings are anthropological; in them, I often dwell on the values, activities, and events of ancient and contemporary cultures, "tracing" the traces they left behind. I am especially intrigued by the events through time that tie seemingly unrelated people and events together in broad cycles: ancient sea voyages, a people migrating to a refuge in the desert, epic battles, a promised land inhabited by many self-chosen peoples that either prosper or suffer because of their activities on the land.

All of my work, in some way or another, is about landscape and how we see ourselves through it and impose our values on it. My paintings are both referential and highly interpretive, depicting panoramic views of specific locations. They deal with our perceptions of time, social and environmental history, and tend to look like maps, but my "maps" are not accurate according to cartographic expectations. These are maps of time, culture, dreams, perceptions, the future, and how we wish to see ourselves and our history. They invite the viewer to become lost in them and then to make conscious and intuitive sense of the perceptual environment. I twist perspective, visually and historically. Because of the juxtaposing of unrelated buildings and events, each scene could be hundreds of years in the past, or in the process of being constructed, or in the future after everything has been torn down, destroyed, or worn away. All things—time, history, memory, and perceptions—are present in these paintings.

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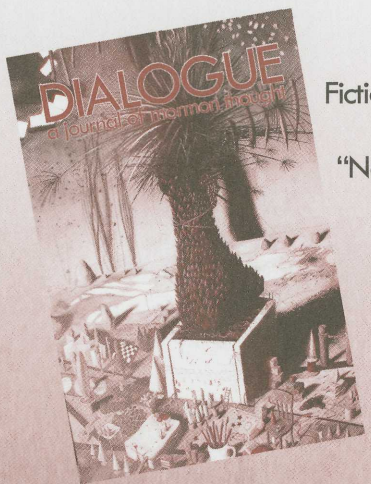

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