



# DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought

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# DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought

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“As Our Two Faiths  
Have Worked Together”—  
Catholicism and Mormonism  
on Human Life Ethics and  
Same-Sex Marriage

*Wilfried Decoo*<sup>1</sup>

Past joint efforts of the Mormon Church and the Catholic Church in the United States against the legalization of same-sex marriage have reinforced the impression that the Mormon and Catholic positions on marriage and human life ethics parallel each other. This article argues that the divide between the two churches on these issues is much wider than generally thought. I start by sketching two conditions under which Mormon and Catholic realms operate, namely, in the defining of doctrine and policy, and in leadership approach. It is a rough and short rendering of some characteristics and I acknowledge its incompleteness, but it helps explain the background for the divide. Next I compare respective positions on human life ethics. These pertain to the relation between sex and procreation, and to abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and euthanasia. In all of this, I consider only the official institutional positions, not the way individual Catholics and Mormons interpret and live these positions. The comparison shows that, on these issues, present-day Mormonism is more careful and compassionate than Catholicism, and more trusting of individual conscience. The Mormon approach, however, provides grounds for Catholics to denounce the Mormon Church as unreliable and even pernicious. These considerations lead to reflections on the

implications for same-sex marriage. I analyze a number of factors that could ease the way for the Mormon Church to withdraw its opposition to same-sex marriage, at least as it concerns civil society, while the Catholic Church is unlikely to budge. At the same time I realize the transience of some of my comments on such a current and constantly evolving topic.

### **Differences in Defining Doctrine and Policy**

The Catholic and Mormon processes that define doctrine and major policies are broadly different. Catholic dogmas, viewed as transmitted from the scriptures or by tradition, are by definition immutable. Though their historical genesis is complex,<sup>2</sup> the present perception of the sanctity of their origin, as well as their exposition over many centuries, in approved “magisterial documents” such as theological treatises, conciliar decrees, pastoral letters, papal declarations, or encyclicals, make any later nuancing of these doctrines, let alone change, nearly impossible. Modifications usually require the approval of large councils, rarely held, which often also necessitate the agreement of churches and ordinaries in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome. The last council, Vatican II, now already half a century ago, took three years (1962–65).<sup>3</sup> The process also requires long editing by the various participants to come to the final texts. After Vatican II, it took twenty years to issue the revised code of Roman Catholic Canon Law. Such intricate and protracted procedures, unlikely to be soon repeated, add to stagnation. Thus, the Catholic leadership derives its ethical viewpoints from what it claims to be unalterable religious premises and defends them with remarkable drive and detail, using its political power openly and vigorously in many countries.<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that no substantial changes in teaching and practice occur in Catholicism, but they are usually framed as “developments” for which the legitimizing requires subtle theological reconstructions, rephrasings, or quiet oblivion to save the semblance of continuity. Examples of past doctrines that were altered include usury (e.g., taking a profit on a loan), which in the Middle Ages was condemned by three ecumenical councils as a mortal sin; slavery, which since patristic times until the middle of the nineteenth century was upheld by popes and theologians on scriptural and moral grounds; and denial of reli-

gious freedom, which for centuries allowed the Catholic Church to persecute heretics. That last doctrine, which for 1,200 years had been fiercely upheld, was dismissed in 1965 as “a way of acting that was hardly in accord with the spirit of the Gospel” and imputed to “the vicissitudes of history” as Pope Paul VI noted in *Dignitatis Humanae*.<sup>5</sup> These changes in Catholic doctrines and policies generated many internal and external studies.<sup>6</sup>

The Mormon decision-making process on doctrines and on policies is quite different. Mormonism, a relatively young religion, budded within a realm of tremendous freedom of religious expression and doctrinal development. It did not grow in the rich intellectual soil that delivered the theological summum of Catholicism. Apart from core tenets as contained in the standard works, various unofficial Mormon doctrines and speculations have fluctuated through church history, but were often considered official in their period. Moreover, Mormonism claims that continuing revelation can justify additions, changes, and adaptations. History confirms it. Momentous changes can come abruptly, such as with withdrawing permission to perform new plural marriages in 1890 or lifting the racial priesthood ban in 1978. Note, however, that with time such changes tend to be explained as less groundbreaking than they were at the moment of their announcement; hence here, as in Catholicism, judicious rhetoric polishes the past. For example, the Mormon Church tries to minimize the polygamous episode and would rather it be forgotten. It reshapes the priesthood ban from a doctrine into a flawed policy of unclear origin. Still, even reduced in perception, these radical modifications are of an abruptness unknown in Catholicism. Other changes occur less conspicuously, prompted by circumstances of the period and determined by the personalities of General Authorities. Policies shift on the waves of assimilation or retrenchment in response to the surrounding culture, as Armand Mauss has analyzed.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, (strong) personal opinions of Mormon leaders sometimes dictate unofficial policies, but are not sanctioned as “revelation.” Then they quietly dwindle with the changing of the guard. Compared to the extensive Catholic texts, which take time to mature and require institutional vetting processes, most Mormon policy decisions, made by a small group at the top, occur rel-

actively swiftly and are announced succinctly. It is noteworthy that since the 1970s, correlation tends to limit Mormon doctrinal material to (often prosaic) essentials and discourages excursions outside the approved curriculum. The Church's *Handbook (of Instructions)*, judged against Catholic canon law and its related magisterial documents, is a model of simplicity and practicality and is regularly updated. Finally, more recently, Mormon leaders have seen wisdom in trusting various ethical decisions to the individual conscience of each member rather than providing guidelines prone to change over time. Such is the case with the ethical topics I will discuss.

These two different views on the definition of doctrine and policies are related to differences in leadership approach.

### **Differences in Leadership Approach**

The members of the highest leadership in Catholicism and Mormonism are, in many ways, poles apart as to their backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.

The Catholic Church is led by celibate clergymen whose adult lives have been exclusively spent in the ecclesiastical system. Their long academic preparation is essentially in theology, philosophy, Canon Law, exegesis, Latin, and education. These realms mold their language and their thinking. They seldom have professional background or experience in fields such as business, law, medicine, or science. Once in their priesthood track, they narrow their intimate familial and social networks, both by their priestly position and by celibacy. Their movement toward the top through the various episcopal ranks is a slow and complex semi-democratic process involving many individuals and councils, negotiations, agreements, and controls. As they rise in the hierarchy of prelates with its appropriate obligations and status vestments, they partake of the ambiance of centuries of power and ritual. In most cases, their rising position is also regionally or nationally bound as they represent their native area. Moreover, it is an error to think the Catholic structure is monolithic in type and in obedience. In certain countries the national conference of bishops is not always in full accord with the Holy See, which may lead to powerful clerical groups with their own Catholic identity, sometimes reinforced by peculiar state-church relations such as in Po-

land or in some Latin American countries.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, some prelates, virtually untouchable, may voice personal, more liberal opinions, which are then rebuffed by other, conservative prelates. Sometimes these differences play out in the media and are part of strategies of probing reactions and defining boundaries. It explains why it is always possible to find unorthodox viewpoints which are presented as “new directions” in Catholicism but which do not represent the Vatican’s position. Indeed, the conservative prelates on their way to the top engage in the never-ending struggle to “defend the faith” against attacks from the outside and against many internal centrifugal forces. The end result is guarding permanence and stability in doctrine and organization, whatever the world or many of their own faithful think. Also, as part of a tradition of centuries of international power, Catholic prelates assume the authority to speak out boldly on various public matters, such as war and peace, human rights, world poverty, the environment, the death penalty, or arms trade. Note how they can combine a social and progressive agenda with unbendable conservatism on other issues.

The Mormon highest leadership is composed of men with varied educational and professional backgrounds and, for most of them, extensive experience in their previous, non-religious careers, often related to management. None has studied for the ministry in the Catholic sense. None is a theologian or a philosopher. Their language is simple and practical. They have served in ever-changing church positions without a set hierarchical pattern. A long record of obedience and compliance is a prerequisite for callings to higher positions which come unexpectedly and undemocratically. Once at the highest level of apostleship, usually after age fifty, they serve for the rest of their lives. Each of them is married with children and grandchildren. Some are widowers who have remarried. Their broad social network resembles that of any man heavily engaged in society and church. Having been close to the rank and file and knowing from personal experience the challenges of marriage and parenthood, they remain, in general, sensitive to the incidents and feelings in families and wards. For most of them, these factors make their outlook more amenable to daily, external influences, peculiar cases, and to matter-

of-fact considerations, including momentary attention to items that seem trivial to outsiders, such as admonitions about tattoos or earrings. For many, if not most of them, a fair measure of flexibility permeates their work. Differences of opinion among them are vigilantly kept inside. Their concern for improving the Mormon image in the world against the lingering repute of weirdness makes public relations a main driving force in decisions. At the same time, their practicality and their weariness of public controversies, including among the Mormon faithful themselves, make them cautious, if not silent, on most of the loaded socio-political matters where the Catholic leadership dares to speak out.

Of course, there are also similarities between Catholic and Mormon leadership at the highest level. These are all older men, appointed for life, some in declining health. They have an overall conservative outlook and a nostalgic attachment to the past, typified by their love either for Latin or for the English of the King James Bible. No doubt seniority and strong personalities weigh likewise in the upper layers of both churches. For their respective flocks, the pope and the prophet embody supreme authority. For the past half century, the leadership in both churches has followed similar paths in their reactions to major developments. In the sixties they responded to the challenges of changed times and circumstances by a laborious overhaul—respectively, Vatican II and correlation.<sup>9</sup> In the last decades of the twentieth century, they reacted similarly to prominent inside critical voices, who were labeled dissenters and publicly treated as such—respectively, Catholic theologians such as Hans Küng or Edward Schillebeeckx and Mormons such as the September Six. More recently, the leadership from both churches has chosen to adopt a policy of more tolerance or at least of ignoring internal critics, mostly, it seems, in view of the negative publicity such controversies now easily elicit through the social media.

This brief comparison in the defining of doctrine and policy, and in leadership approach, should help in understanding the respective postures of both churches on the issues discussed in the following sections.

### **Sex and Procreation**

A central question in the position of each church is to what ex-

tent sexual intercourse is intrinsically meant for reproduction. Catholicism uses the terms “unitive” and “procreative” to distinguish between two functions of the sexual act but insists that the unitive function is inseparable from the procreative one, even if the latter does not lead to pregnancy. Pope Paul VI’s landmark 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, affirms the “inseparable connection” between the two functions and the “intrinsic relationship to procreation” of each sexual act. A long quotation is appropriate here, also to familiarize some of my readers with Catholic parlance (in the original Latin it sounds even more transcendent):

The sexual activity, in which husband and wife are intimately and chastely united with one another, through which human life is transmitted, is, as the recent Council [Vatican II] recalled, “noble and worthy.” It does not, moreover, cease to be legitimate even when, for reasons independent of their will, it is foreseen to be infertile. For its natural adaptation to the expression and strengthening of the union of husband and wife is not thereby suppressed. The fact is, as experience shows, that new life is not the result of each and every act of sexual intercourse. God has wisely ordered laws of nature and the incidence of fertility in such a way that successive births are already naturally spaced through the inherent operation of these laws. The Church, nevertheless, in urging men to the observance of the precepts of the natural law, which it interprets by its constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life.

This particular doctrine, often expounded by the magisterium of the Church, is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act. The reason is that the fundamental nature of the marriage act, while uniting husband and wife in the closest intimacy, also renders them capable of generating new life—and this as a result of laws written into the actual nature of man and of woman. And if each of these essential qualities, the unitive and the procreative, is preserved, the use of marriage fully retains its sense of true mutual love and its ordination to the supreme responsibility of parenthood to which man is called.<sup>10</sup>

The literature which expounds the history and dimension of this Catholic doctrine is extensive and useful to understand the deep theological tenets that make the Vatican unbendable on all related issues, including same-sex marriage.<sup>11</sup>

At first sight, present-day Mormonism, if one starts with the

*The Family: A Proclamation to the World*, adopts a similar stance as the Catholic Church, though expressed in much simpler and more direct terms:

The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

However, as to sexual expression within marriage, the Mormon Church does not seem to take the absolute Catholic stand. The relation between the procreative and unitive functions is expressed as "not only, but also" without the rhetoric of "inseparable connection" or "intrinsic relationship to procreation" of each sexual act. Under the already telling heading "Birth control," the Mormon *Handbook 2* states:

Married couples should also understand that sexual relations within marriage are divinely approved not only for the purpose of procreation, but also as a way of expressing love and strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife.<sup>12</sup>

This juxtaposition could still be interpreted as confirming an inseparable connection, but the preceding sentences in the *Handbook* significantly weaken such an interpretation:

It is the privilege of married couples who are able to bear children to provide mortal bodies for the spirit children of God, whom they are then responsible to nurture and rear. The decision as to how many children to have and when to have them is extremely intimate and private and should be left between the couple and the Lord. Church members should not judge one another in this matter.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, the prayer-based, justified personal decision of a couple to put the procreative function on hold allows one to view the unitive function separately, as a way "to express love and to strengthen emotional and spiritual bonds." The separation of the functions is explicit in the Church's publication *True to the Faith*:

While one purpose of these relations is to provide physical bodies for God's children, another purpose is to express love for one an-

other—to bind husband and wife together in loyalty, fidelity, consideration, and common purpose.<sup>14</sup>

The difference between unitive and procreative functions leads to the question of the use of contraception. Mormons understand the just-quoted paragraphs of the *Handbook* as not forbidding the use of contraception. This current Mormon position also illustrates the above-mentioned quiet shifts in unofficial policies. Indeed, while some Church leaders up to the 1970s unequivocally condemned birth control, the rhetoric changed with the culture, in particular when it appeared that, during the 1960s, the vast majority of the membership had already accepted the use of improved contraceptives.<sup>15</sup>

The Catholic standpoint is explicit in its different viewpoint:

Equally to be excluded, as the teaching authority of the Church has frequently declared, is direct sterilization, whether perpetual or temporary, whether of the man or of the woman. Similarly excluded is every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible.<sup>16</sup>

*Catholic Answers* explicates: “This includes sterilization, condoms and other barrier methods, spermicides, coitus interruptus (withdrawal method), the Pill, and all other such methods.”<sup>17</sup> This Catholic policy remains unchanged, in spite of widespread “disobedience” among the faithful, vocal internal opposition, and severe controversies over the Catholic “responsibility” in spreading HIV by not permitting the use of condoms, even in the case of married HIV-discordant couples.<sup>18</sup>

Some will argue that the Catholic Church allows periodic abstinence, “the rhythm method,” as a natural form of birth control. Indeed:

If therefore there are well-grounded reasons for spacing births, arising from the physical or psychological condition of husband or wife, or from external circumstances, the Church teaches that married people may then take advantage of the natural cycles immanent in the reproductive system and engage in marital intercourse only during those times that are infertile, thus controlling birth in a way which does not in the least offend the moral principles which we have just explained.<sup>19</sup>

Various Catholic organizations and institutions have therefore been working in favor of “Responsible Parenthood” or “Natural Family Planning,” helping couples understand and apply the principles of periodic abstinence. Apart from the restrictions that such an approach puts on the enjoyment of sexual relations, and apart from the higher chances of unwanted pregnancy, the strict Catholic interpretation of responsible parenthood does not even include the permission for fertile married couples to use it to postpone a first pregnancy, as it only applies to “additional children”:

With regard to physical, economic, psychological and social conditions, responsible parenthood is exercised by those who prudently and generously decide to have more children, and by those who, for serious reasons and with due respect to moral precepts, decide not to have additional children for either a certain or an indefinite period of time.<sup>20</sup>

So, all in all, the differences between the Mormon and Catholic positions on birth control are significant. While the Catholic position keeps insisting that contraception is “intrinsically evil,”<sup>21</sup> in Mormonism it became quietly allowed over time. This disparity explains why the Mormon Church did not join in the Catholic rejection of the birth control insurance coverage as part of President Obama’s health care overhaul.

However, it would be wrong to interpret the Mormon position as a sign that the Church has lessened its emphasis on fertility. Children remain an eminent part of the Mormon view on marriage, but the Mormon leadership has adopted a position that valorizes personal conscience and separates, or at least loosens, the relation between the function of procreation and the function of sexual enjoyment within marriage. Could that unbinding open the way to a more tolerant view on same-sex marriage, at least in civil life? I will come back to this point in the section titled “Same-Sex Marriage.”

### **Abortion, Embryonic Stem Cell Research, and Euthanasia**

Catholics and Mormons are often said to be on common ground on other ethical issues dealing with human life—abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and euthanasia. When looked at closely, this commonality is quite relative. The topic is of interest

in the broader perspective of different attitudes which may, ultimately, also have a bearing on the positions on same-sex marriage because the Mormon Church now tends to choose the path of reasonableness and compassion.

Both the Catholic Church and the Mormon Church condemn abortion in no uncertain terms. But a main difference rests, again, in Catholic inalterable absolutism versus Mormon nuancing due to humane considerations. Although, since its earliest history, the Catholic Church upheld differences in gravity according to stages of pregnancy, the present canon law makes no such distinction: any destruction of an embryo from the moment of conception is abortion and the person responsible incurs excommunication, as stated in a one-line rule: “A person who procures a completed abortion incurs a *latae sententiae* [automatic] excommunication.”<sup>22</sup> Such an automatic excommunication, incurred at the moment of committing the offense, means the person is excluded from the sacraments and from taking an active part in the liturgy. Thus no exceptions are made for pregnancies resulting from rape or for medical conditions endangering the mother’s life. This categorical condemnation imposed by the Catholic Church on any abortion can draw worldwide attention in high-profile cases, such as the 2009 excommunication of the mother and the doctors involved in the abortion for a nine-year-old girl who had been raped by her stepfather and whose life was judged at risk.<sup>23</sup>

The Mormon position, though confirming that abortion “is a most serious matter,” limits its denunciation to “elective abortion for personal or social convenience” and is open to exceptions:

The Church opposes elective abortion for personal or social convenience. Members must not submit to, perform, arrange for, pay for, consent to, or encourage an abortion. The only possible exceptions are when: 1. Pregnancy resulted from forcible rape or incest. 2. A competent physician determines that the life or health of the mother is in serious jeopardy. 3. A competent physician determines that the fetus has severe defects that will not allow the baby to survive beyond birth.<sup>24</sup>

Conversely, and also typical of a main difference between Catholicism and Mormonism, are the disciplinary consequences for those involved in an abortion. The Mormon Church points to the

eventuality of Church discipline—a painful process, involving a group of people, and implying a time frame—with a conditional remark as to forgiveness:

Church members who submit to, perform, arrange for, pay for, consent to, or encourage an abortion may be subject to Church discipline. As far as has been revealed, a person may repent and be forgiven for the sin of abortion.<sup>25</sup>

In Catholicism, though abortion implies automatic excommunication (which is seldom formally articulated but can be public in high-profile cases), forgiveness (and automatic reinstatement) is usually soon accessible. *Catholic Answers* makes it almost sound trivial or mechanical: “Fortunately, abortion, like all sins, is forgivable; and forgiveness is as close as the nearest confessional.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, in contrast to the Mormon realm, the confessional is anonymous and, provided there is due contrition, absolution is normally obtained at once.

The second issue in human life ethics concerns embryonic stem cell research. As was to be expected, the Catholic Church took an immediate stand against ESCR, in line with its condemnation of in vitro fertilization as this procedure discards embryonic cells.<sup>27</sup> Since then the Vatican has, in response to almost each new development in ESCR, strongly reacted against what it considers the manipulation and destruction of human life.<sup>28</sup> The Catholic position has been reiterated by Pope Benedict XVI and is expected to be followed by Pope Francis.<sup>29</sup>

The Mormon Church, in contrast, took a neutral position on ESCR. The original Church news release in 2001, when the discussion was vivid on the American political front, mentioned:

Because of increasing interest from members of the news media regarding the Church’s position on “Stem Cell Research,” the following statement is provided: While the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have not taken a position at this time on the newly emerging field of stem cell research, it merits cautious scrutiny. The proclaimed potential to provide cures or treatments for many serious diseases needs careful and continuing study by conscientious, qualified investigators. As with any emerging new technology, there are concerns that must be addressed. Scientific and religious viewpoints both demand that strict moral and ethical guidelines be followed.<sup>30</sup>

The Mormon standpoint seems an example of how non-religious professional backgrounds of Church leaders, including those from the medical field, as well as awareness of the support for ESCR of five Mormon U.S. senators, may have influenced the decision-making process.<sup>31</sup>

Because of the difference between adult stem cell research (which the Catholic Church does not oppose) and embryonic stem cell research, more recent statements from religious groups are careful to make that distinction. Also from the Mormon Church, as stated in an undated *Newsroom* topic:

The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has not taken a position regarding the use of embryonic stem cells for research purposes. The absence of a position should not be interpreted as support for or opposition to any other statement made by Church members, whether they are for or against embryonic stem cell research.<sup>32</sup>

It relates to another Mormon clarification in that regard: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no official position on the moment that human life begins.”<sup>33</sup> This admission allows the concept of possible delayed “ensoulment” after fertilization. This concept has been and still is a belief shared by faithful Mormons who can visualize it distinctly based on their understanding of the sphere of premortal existence from which a spirit, in human form, comes to join the body in order to be born. The Catholic position, in contrast, is radical: human life starts with conception. It leaves no room for the “cautious scrutiny” in ESCR that could save lives.

The third issue deals with euthanasia. The principle of the sanctity of life is similar in both churches. For both it is also a similar challenge to uphold the principle in the case of an incurable disease or condition, when suffering is long and intense and dying is inevitable. Each church clearly condemns active euthanasia. For the Mormon Church, “deliberately putting to death a person” or “assisting someone to commit suicide, violates the commandments of God.”<sup>34</sup> The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* posits: “Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable.”<sup>35</sup>

Even without active euthanasia, the remaining realities in palliative care are still complex. Each church gives counsel to that effect, but the sphere in each reflects different theological views. Typical for the Catholic Church is the reflective approach of the topic, in a theological framework, as worded in the long *Declaration on Euthanasia* by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1980. It states that for Catholicism, “suffering, especially suffering during the last moments of life, has a special place in God’s saving plan; it is in fact a sharing in Christ’s passion and a union with the redeeming sacrifice which He offered in obedience to the Father’s will.” It explains that some prefer “to moderate their use of painkillers, in order to accept voluntarily at least a part of their sufferings and thus associate themselves in a conscious way with the sufferings of Christ crucified.” This position is part of the Catholic notion of “the power of salvific suffering” in which each can participate: “Each one is also called to share in that suffering through which the Redemption was accomplished.”<sup>36</sup>

The Mormon counsel in the paragraph “Prolonging Life” is brief. Death is placed in a perspective of hope, as the expected passage to a next phase of existence, without adding any rationalization for continuous suffering, nor detailing peculiar cases:

When severe illness strikes, members should exercise faith in the Lord and seek competent medical assistance. However, when dying becomes inevitable, it should be seen as a blessing and a purposeful part of eternal existence. Members should not feel obligated to extend mortal life by means that are unreasonable. These judgments are best made by family members after receiving wise and competent medical advice and seeking divine guidance through fasting and prayer.<sup>37</sup>

The Mormon counsel recommends considering the inevitability of approaching death as a factor. Artificial prolonging of life, with added suffering, does not seem to be part of how Mormons see God’s plan for human beings. “Unreasonable” in the use of certain means to prolong life is not defined. With the advancement of medical technologies, what may have seemed unreasonable a few decades ago could now be standard practice to keep someone alive. But “unreasonable” can also be understood

as not accepting death when the normal course of life would expect it.

In concluding this discussion on human life ethics, considering the differing Catholic and Mormon positions on sex and reproduction, contraceptives, abortion, ESCR, and euthanasia, it would be tempting to say that the Catholic standpoints fit a coherent set of immutable doctrinal principles, while the Mormon leadership tends to develop policy based on pragmatic ethical judgments which adjust to the times and to social situations and are therefore less consistent. In some measure that conclusion is true as it pertains to the present, but such a view underestimates the interaction between doctrine and practice in a diachronic perspective. Indeed, in the development of a religion, practice shapes doctrine more than doctrine determines practice. Catholic doctrines such as eucharistic adoration, salvific suffering, Mary's assumption, or saints' intercession grew out of practices in devotion or folk belief. These doctrines took centuries to solidify to their present rigid form, including the notion of the absolute sanctity of life—a principle the Catholic Church adopted only after centuries of consenting to, and even urging execution for, all sorts of crimes, including heresy. A main difference between Catholicism and Mormonism is therefore their time frames. The proto-orthodox period of Christianity, up to the fourth century, during which nothing was theologically assured, was already much longer than Mormonism's whole existence up to now. Next, Catholicism took more than a millennium to come to its (almost) full definition during the Counter-Reformation. Some could conclude from that perspective that Mormonism is just starting to mature toward a more elaborate and permanent theology. But, as already noted, present-day Mormonism now tends to "correlate" its teaching to a minimum. Moreover, it claims continuing revelation as an "immutable" doctrine, which, paradoxically, makes changeability intrinsic and therefore consistent.

### **Catholics on Edge as Mormonism "Reinvents Itself"**

How does the Catholic Church react to the Mormon positions as identified in the previous section? It is true that both the Mormon Church and the Catholic Church remain unwavering on the *principle* of respect for human life. But on the Mormon side, nu-

ances, exceptions, and the shift to personal responsibility, as described above, can enter the framework rather easily and over relatively short periods due to flexible or changing leadership, humane concerns, a succinct decision-making process, and a tradition of adaptable policies. Such instability is anathema to the Catholic Church, hence its distrust of this approach, as in this reaction in *Catholic Answers*, responding to an interview given by President Gordon B. Hinckley in 1997:

Discussing abortion, Hinckley said his church permits it in several circumstances, including for the mother's health. This is a change to a more liberal, politically correct position than what Mormonism has held to this point. When asked about euthanasia, Hinckley declared that "no, *at this point at least*, we haven't favored that" (emphasis added). Mormons may well wonder if this leaves the door cracked open to future divine permission to kill their sick and elderly. Ultimately, the past doctrinal transformations of Mormonism give no confidence that there will not be equally drastic revisions to Mormon doctrine in the future. There may be more stages yet to come as Mormonism reinvents itself to fit the culture around it.<sup>38</sup>

Or this:

Mormon pro-life sentiment might perdure at the individual level, but their religious leadership has quietly altered Mormonism's abortion stance into one almost indistinguishable from that of mainstream anti-life America.<sup>39</sup>

Such disparaging statements toward Mormonism may also reflect that the Catholic Church views the Mormon Church as an ally only when it meets Catholicism's defense needs. The Catholic-Mormon alliance to sustain Proposition 8 illustrates this "partnership" all too well. As far as has been reported, Mormon involvement came in response to the personal invitation of George H. Niederauer, archbishop of San Francisco at the time and former bishop of Salt Lake City, where he had established a good relation with Mormon leadership. It is difficult to deny that the Prop 8 campaign turned into a PR disaster for the Mormon Church and resulted in much internal division. Moreover, there are no indications that the massive Mormon contribution in California earned the Mormons any lasting respect from the Vatican. The situation in the American West, where institutional contact and mutual respect between Catholics and Mormons is based on

shared local history and a reciprocal critical mass of members, with relatively few converts in either direction, fails to translate to any comparable relationship in the world perspective.

Indeed, since the 1970s the Catholic Church has been losing millions of its members to new religious movements, in particular to the many forms of Pentecostalism or Evangelicalism in Latin America.<sup>40</sup> It is true that since Vatican II the Catholic Church has been an outspoken defender of religious freedom and rights, but that attitude must be seen in the original context of its own pressured position in Islamic and Eastern European countries and in China. Since then, things have changed. As Paul Freston mentions, “In the face of the Pentecostal challenge, a tension has emerged between the Catholic Church’s support for religious freedom and its desire to hold on to its privileged position in traditionally Catholic areas of the world.”<sup>41</sup> Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, and Mormons erode Catholic hegemony as well. In 1992 Pope John Paul II asked the Latin American Episcopal Conference to defend the flock from “rapacious wolves,” clearly alluding to the “sects” to which millions of Catholics had converted.<sup>42</sup> No Catholic parish priest, in any country, can watch acquiescently when Mormon missionaries are teaching his sheep, in particular because the teaching includes, at least implicitly, a devastating critique of Catholic claims to divine authority. On the internet, individual Catholics maintain anti-Mormon sites and blogs as their answer to Mormon proselytizing. The recent announcement that Mormon missionaries would work through social media to find potential converts will only irritate some Catholics even more.<sup>43</sup>

### **Same-Sex Marriage**

Could the preceding discussion somehow predict how the respective Mormon and Catholic positions on same-sex marriage might evolve? Both churches displayed equal determination and used similar arguments at the height of California’s Prop 8 campaign in 2008. Where has it gone from there and where could it go further?

From the viewpoint of human life ethics, it does not seem the Catholic Church can budge because of its fundamental view on the “inseparable connection” between the unitive and procre-

ative functions or the “intrinsic relationship to procreation” of each sexual act. The argument is explicitly part of its rejection of same-sex marriage since homosexual relations “close the sexual act to the gift of life.”<sup>44</sup> Or, as stated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2003:

Homosexual unions are totally lacking in the biological and anthropological elements of marriage and family which would be the basis, on the level of reason, for granting them legal recognition. Such unions are not able to contribute in a proper way to the procreation and survival of the human race. The possibility of using recently discovered methods of artificial reproduction, beyond involving a grave lack of respect for human dignity, does nothing to alter this inadequacy.<sup>45</sup>

It should be noted, however, that the Catholic Church, for even longer than the Mormon Church, has been urging that “unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.”<sup>46</sup> Pope Francis’s recent statement as to “not judging” homosexuals for their orientation is therefore identical to previous policy. Some media presented it as signaling a change in attitude, but *Catholic Online* was quick to respond:

Some in the media chose to turn the compassionate comments of Francis into an insinuation that he somehow veered from the teaching of the Church. Of course, it is simply not true. For Catholics, one of the treasures of being a Catholic Christian is that there is a magisterium, a teaching office. Even the Pope cannot change revealed truth.<sup>47</sup>

As discussed earlier, dogmatic rigidity and institutional stagnation dictate the reiteration of Catholic policies and statements, even if a large section of the Catholic faithful worldwide, including many parish priests and theologians, openly disagree with the official Catholic position on homosexuality and same-sex marriage. At the same time, conservative prelates and scores of dutiful Catholics refer to the inalterable magisterium, thus easily obstructing any suggestions of change in policy.

The Mormon leadership, on the other hand, has already shown, in the relatively short period since 2008, shifts in attitude and action. They discontinued direct support to anti-gay-marriage campaigns, backed initiatives to ensure more understanding and protection of LGBT people, entered into dialogue with

the LGBT community, and launched the site [mormonsandgays.org](http://mormonsandgays.org) to help people reconcile their gender identities with their religion.<sup>48</sup> However, up to now, they have remained resolute in their position that acting upon homosexual feelings is a sin and that marriage is only for a man and a woman. Still, the history of change in Mormon doctrine and policies allows one to conjecture that this position could be a transitional phase and that further developments could follow. What factors could influence the future?

I readily admit that most of the following items have been thoroughly discussed in numerous books, articles, and blog posts, often with more and better-developed arguments. My approach is to try to add something from the international perspective. I start with factors more external to the Church, then I move to possible internal accommodations.

### *1. Growing Acceptance of LGBT People*

The growing acceptance of what was once perceived as a bizarre lifestyle, mostly hidden, is inescapable. The recognition that homosexual orientation is not a choice, but the result of a complex interplay of factors, joins a growing conviction that LGBT people should be regarded as fully accepted members of society. A budding young generation, part of a broad informative social network, displays more tolerant views than previous generations and has more personal experiences with LGBT friends. The much-touted “danger to the family” that has been used as a conservative warcry has given way to incredulity that the small minority of same-sex couples has any such ability. This same tolerant view has also been adopted by various Christian churches, including American Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Evangelical Lutherans. There is little doubt that more and more congregations around the world will come to accept people in same-sex marriages as welcome and contributing parts of their communities. From that perspective it is also noteworthy that the countries that already legalized same-sex marriage are among the most democratic and developed countries in the world, while regimes known for their undemocratic and repressive policies are those denying such equality to (or even persecuting) gays and lesbians.

At present, the official Mormon counsel is:

While opposing homosexual behavior, the Church reaches out with understanding and respect to individuals who are attracted to those of the same gender. If members feel same-gender attraction but do not engage in any homosexual behavior, leaders should support and encourage them in their resolve to live the law of chastity and to control unrighteous thoughts.<sup>49</sup>

This counsel contains a severe predicament. For more and more Mormons (as well as for members of other churches with a similar approach), the tension in this directive leads to a moral conflict when dealing with real people—family members and friends. Former opponents of gay marriage change sides once they are confronted with the tangible authenticity of a human soul they care for. They learn to overcome the perception of evil in his or her longing for a loving relation and its subsequent fulfillment. And what is “any homosexual behavior?” Sex, for sure, since religion is often exceedingly preoccupied with “illicit” sex as grievous sin. But, as in hetero relations, there are other forms of acting upon feelings, such as deep friendship, collaborating, helping the other, or sacrificing for him or her. And even giving sexual form to such attractions can be done in moral ways too, involving respect, patience, commitment, and fidelity. Focusing on those aspects allows seeing LGBT people in a broader and heart-warming light. As time goes by, LGBT individuals and the same-sex couples they form become a small but natural part in the landscape of diversity.

These developments could have some impact, directly or indirectly, on how Mormon Church leaders, on various levels, become more amenable to further adjustments.

## *2. Easing the Fear over Government Coercion*

Over the past years, as the aggressive arguments against homosexual relations became viewed as inappropriate and merciless, and as the momentum in favor of same-sex marriage grew, religious leaders shifted to more defensive arguments. They take the form that the legalization of such marriages would compel churches and religiously affiliated services, as well as businesses, to accommodate the requirements of same-sex couples and penalize those who object as a matter of conscience. Public schools would have to apply non-discrimination programs and policies,

which would confuse children from conservative homes about their families' values. Examples, sometimes distorted, of such demands and situations substantiate the fears. However, more analysis and constructive dialogue between the various factions are helping to dispel scare tactics and to clarify misunderstandings. That churches could ever be compelled to marry same-sex couples is highly improbable. As far as I have read, religious-liberty experts, legislatures, and courts agree on that point, because churches, as independent institutions, can operate on the basis of their own internal regulations. The law cannot compel a church to marry even a hetero couple. Nowhere in the world has the Mormon Church ever been compelled to solemnize the marriage of a man and a woman when it deemed one or both as not compliant with its criteria for temple marriage. The Catholic Church has never been compelled to wed a man and a woman when canon law forbade it, for example, because one of them had divorced only civilly or because the bride or groom suffers from "antecedent and perpetual impotence to have intercourse."<sup>50</sup>

In the case of conscientious objectors in civil marriage procedures and in religiously affiliated services, it seems that proper exemptions can be established in most cases.<sup>51</sup> However, an important facet here is that growing acceptance of sexual orientation also leads to the defusing of many of the situations that people fear. Same-sex marriage is about the positive commitment between two people and cannot be put on par with other ethical issues, such as compelled cooperation in abortion or euthanasia. The normalization of LGBT individuals' involvement in society illustrates this evolution in countries where same-sex marriage has been legal for more than a decade and has become a nonissue. As adoption agencies discover that stable and well-adjusted same-sex partners can be excellent parents and can raise children equally well as heterosexuals, the fear of working with such a couple wanes.<sup>52</sup> As marriage registrars, wedding photographers, florists, or cake bakers learn to focus on love rather than on gender, initial feelings of principled refusal can fade away. As children get involved with a friend who has two dads or two moms, and as their heterosexual and homosexual parents get to know each other, the experience opens doors.<sup>53</sup> In time, all of such developments can

make persons of good will understand that non-discrimination programs and policies aim at a more charitable society.

These considerations are not meant to minimize the complexity or the validity of the debate on religious freedom.<sup>54</sup> First, the concern about coercion is also reciprocal: "The real threat to religious liberty rests not in the ability of citizens to marry in contravention of one or more sects' doctrines, but in seeking to 'protect' those religious doctrines by imposing them as law controlling all."<sup>55</sup> Second, the debate encompasses other, more global and far-reaching issues than the LGBT topic alone. The risk of a religion imposing broad restrictive norms on the whole of society, far beyond what universal ethics can accept, is as real as a government's eliminating religious displays and activities which it considers incompatible with a civil society. Is the former or the latter worse? It depends on each case and on a wide array of factors.<sup>56</sup>

### *3. Improving the Image of the Church*

As part of its ambitious missionary effort, the Mormon Church has been trying for decades to improve its standing against frequent misrepresentations in the media and in literature. Its success has been limited, as surveys confirm. The Prop 8 debacle showed how the present power of social media can amplify the backlash. In 2012, during the U.S. presidential election, the numerous worldwide media reports about Mormonism frequently portrayed the Mormon Church as ultra-conservative, with discriminatory policies that persisted in its present homophobia. Prop 8 was often cited as illustration. On the other hand, Mormons Building Bridges' participation in the Salt Lake Gay Pride Parade was picked up by various media around the world and hailed as a ray of hope and change. Such difference in media impact cannot go unnoticed at Church headquarters. Equally telling are the incessant waves of public criticism leveled at the Catholic Church for some of its unswerving positions, both from the outside as massively from the inside. Whereas the Catholic leadership, from its peculiar powerful structure, continues to shrug off such attacks, it is more awkward for an active missionary church if negative publicity continues and even grows.

Outside the United States, it has been painful to see how members of area presidencies, mostly American or under Ameri-

can pressure, thought it necessary to make the voice of the Church known in countries where the legalization of same-sex marriage was being debated or had already been approved. Some of these seventies asked local Mormon stake presidents and bishops to get involved in campaigning against same-sex marriage. As far as I have heard, such requests mostly fell on deaf or bewildered ears. Mormons in tiny minority situations, as they are in most countries in the world, have other concerns than taking on their host society, attracting negative attention from human rights defenders, and isolating themselves even more than before for an already lost cause. Many of these local Mormons could also not understand why they should try to interfere in non-Mormon lives. Moreover, even if the proposed legalization of same-sex marriage triggered quite some debate in a few countries, overall it shriveled to a non-existent issue once same-sex marriage was approved. But had the local Mormon Church acted, the stigma of its already intolerant image would have been reinforced.

Though the Mormon Church insists on “understanding and respect to individuals who are attracted to those of the same gender,” rejecting same-sex marriage in civil society will be increasingly interpreted as a disgraceful attitude, if not plain discrimination. Some can argue that maintaining the rejection would win the sympathy of conservative citizens in nations around the world. To hope for such positive consideration toward the Church is to grossly miscalculate where such unbendable conservatism still prevails. Most countries that have already legalized same-sex marriage have done so with fairly wide support, often including support from more conservative parties—with the understanding that “conservative” outside the United States usually means “moderate” to American ears. The staunch opponents to same-sex marriage usually belong to uncompromising Christian churches from which little sympathy toward Mormonism is to be expected. And the Mormon Church would not want the praise of “conservative” countries, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, or Uganda, that criminalize homosexual acts and persecute or even execute gays and lesbians. At some point, to continue the battle against same-sex marriage will not be worth the stigma of intolerance, the

adversity from the media, the barrier to missionary work, the loss of members, or the internal tensions it creates.

#### 4. *Distinguishing Guidelines for Members and for Non-Members*

Religions have the tendency to generalize their doctrines and norms as valid for the whole world. That aspiration is beneficial in the promotion of universal values such as justice, peace, or respect for human life. At some point, however, churches detail the scope of some of these values. For example, respect for human life, as we saw, differs in the respective Catholic and Mormon directions when it comes to abortion. Still, both churches formulate their principles as if meant for the whole world—hence, the Catholic repudiation of the Mormon standpoint.

The Mormon *Handbook 2* is “a guide for members of ward and stake councils” and applies to Latter-day Saints. Though many of the moral principles in the *Handbook* can be considered as having universal value, many others do not. The paragraph on “Same-Gender Marriages” states:

As a doctrinal principle, based on the scriptures, the Church affirms that marriage between a man and a woman is essential to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

Sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife. Any other sexual relations, including those between persons of the same gender, are sinful and undermine the divinely created institution of the family. The Church accordingly affirms defining marriage as the legal and lawful union between a man and a woman.<sup>57</sup>

How valid can this be for the non-Mormon world? If valid, the first sentence already asserts a form of exclusion for the whole Roman Catholic clergy, from the pope to every parish priest, as well as monks and nuns, for whom celibacy is the rule. The irony is that the Catholic Church bases that rule also on the scriptures—renouncing marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:12), abiding by Paul’s counsel that it is morally superior not to marry (1 Cor. 7:8, 38) and following the example of the unmarried Jesus. It is also easy to counter the Mormon viewpoint that marriage is essential for the “eternal destiny” of God’s children, as it is not a biblical concept (Matt. 22:23–30).

As to the rest of the *Handbook* paragraph on same-sex mar-

riage, the Mormon Church has the right to consider sexual relations proper only between a “legally and lawfully” wedded husband and wife and to discipline those who transgress only as far as it concerns its members. It may condemn those relations as “sinful” for the millions of non-Mormon couples who for social, economic, or administrative reasons cannot marry “legally and lawfully” or simply choose not to marry, though one can wonder what divisive effect such public condemnation of “the others” has, both inside and outside the Church. The same applies to same-sex couples who are not members. The Church has no jurisdiction over them.

Of course, inasmuch as the *Handbook* paragraph considers under “any other sexual relations” forms of irresponsible, selfish, cruel, or inhuman sexual behavior, the condemnation of such destructive behavior has universal value. But the statement makes no such distinction. As to non-hurtful relations between consenting adults, if Church leaders become willing to clarify that the Mormon view on marriage and sexual relations only applies to its own membership, without judging others, it would help decrease the pressure among Latter-day Saints to meddle with the lives of others, in particular of those who aspire to bring stability and security to their form of marriage.

##### *5. Separating Civil Marriage and the Religious Wedding Ceremony*

In worldwide perspective, a fundamental difference exists between civil marriage and the religious dimension for church members. It seems the Mormon Church, mainly due to its U.S. perspective, is not used to disentangling the two, since in the United States a recognized Church minister has the legal authority to marry two persons. The result is a conviction that marriage belongs to the religious realm and that Church authorities have the overall moral authority to pronounce who can marry.

However, most countries belonging to the Christian realm, which includes Europe, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Australasia, and Oceania, recognize only civil marriage as legally valid. The same is true in a number of Asian countries, such as Japan. The civil registration of marriage must precede any religious wedding, which is seen as an optional ceremony to solemnize the event, not a legal marriage. Such a civil regulation of marriage ap-

plies the same norms to all, guarantees uniform registration, avoids interfaith issues, and ensures equality—hence the relative ease with which these countries can legalize same-sex marriages, since gender, just like race or religion, cannot be a discriminating factor. Note that in a few countries, the religious representative of a recognized church, who has formally obtained the authority of a civil servant, can combine the civil marriage with the religious part.

If the Mormon Church can come to accept civil marriage in its separate legal realm, as it has to do already in most countries where it operates, and the subsequent religious wedding in its sacramental sphere, it could more easily consider same-sex marriage as a purely civil matter, unrelated to the Church's religious perspective.<sup>58</sup>

#### *6. Valorizing the Distinct Unitive Function in Marriage*

This item moves my considerations to an internal step of moral interpretation. It is difficult to predict whether this adjustment would become the easiest or the most difficult. Logic could make it easy, principles difficult, and inflexibility impossible.

The Mormon Church has deeply invested itself in condemning homosexual relations with an emphasis on their unacceptable genital dimension. But the Church also justifies this condemnation because it does not consider same-sex marriage as a possibility; hence, any homosexual relations are bound to be sinful. In a 2006 interview with Elder Oaks and Elder Wickman on same-sex attraction, the situation of unmarried homosexuals is compared to that of any other unmarried person: "We expect celibacy of any person that is not married."<sup>59</sup>

The comparison, however, is uneven when heterosexuals can marry and homosexuals can't. Logic begs to correct the equation: If same-sex marriage is legally allowed in civil society, then sexual relations within such marriages are not sinful. For the Catholic Church, as we saw, that step is impossible because such a union is "inherently nonprocreative" and the condemnation is universal for humankind. The Mormon Church has, at least in theory, more leeway because, as explained above, it can view the unitive function of sexual relations separately, as a way "to express love and to strengthen emotional and spiritual bonds." But it can accept such

relations only within the bonds of marriage. On the basis of those two premises, it does not seem an impossible step to also accept that, at least in the civil realm, a legally married gay or lesbian couple is not acting improperly. Even more, according to Mormon sexual ethics, it would be preferable for them to marry rather than having sex outside the bonds of marriage.

### 7. *Reviewing Marriage in the Context of Eternal Destiny*

I hesitated to include this last factor. The preceding considerations, which could facilitate the Church's acceptance of same-sex marriage, are more factual and based on pragmatic arguments. Here I move into a speculative doctrinal area. But the topic is difficult to avoid because the Mormon rejection of same-sex marriage has fundamentally to do with beliefs regarding the afterlife. The very first sentence of the *Handbook* paragraph on same-sex marriage reads:

As a doctrinal principle, based on the scriptures, the Church affirms that marriage between a man and a woman is essential to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.<sup>60</sup>

Marriage is indeed a fundamental part of Mormon soteriology. *Gospel Fundamentals* states:

To live in the highest part of the celestial kingdom is called exaltation or eternal life. To be able to live in this part of the celestial kingdom, people must have been married in the temple and must have kept the sacred promises they made in the temple. They will receive everything our Father in Heaven has and will become like Him. They will even be able to have spirit children and make new worlds for them to live on, and do all the things our Father in Heaven has done. People who are not married in the temple may live in other parts of the celestial kingdom, but they will not be exalted.<sup>61</sup>

Essential to this view of "exaltation" is thus progression to godhood as a married couple, which includes the ability "to have spirit children"—hence, it seems, the implied need for a heterosexual dyad to procreate.

As already clear from the preceding discussion, that eternal perspective should not be a reason to deny the privilege of a civil marriage "until death do you part" to same-sex couples, in particular if they are not even members of the Church. In the context of legal debate, the use of theological arguments carries no weight,

and certainly not if the argument is, in the eyes of outsiders, of such a farfetched nature as sex in heaven to have spirit offspring.<sup>62</sup>

But there is more to it. How tenable, historically and theologically within Mormonism itself, is the argument of the ability “to have spirit children” in heaven as basis for a *doctrinal* rejection of same-sex marriage on earth? The following discussion is not meant to argue in favor of such a revision that same-sex marriage would become acceptable in a Mormon temple. Rather, its aim is to review some of the tenets of the afterlife argument.

The concept of eternal marriage was introduced in the context of plural marriage (D&C 132). The historical and theological developments around this concept have been widely studied. I recognize their complexity, but the general outlines seem to be commonly accepted. The early introduction of polygamy under Joseph Smith found a justification in the weaving of dynastical bonds that would add to eternal glory—hence the initial “spiritual” marriages, both polyandrous and polygynous, even crossing lines among already-married couples. In the same period, Joseph Smith announced his expansive views on the progressive nature of God and the potential godhood of human beings. To what extent he accepted an active sexual life as a divine attribute seems less clear, but may be assumed. The terms “a continuation of the seeds forever and ever” and “as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the world they should continue” in the revelation of plural marriage (D&C 132:19, 30) point to such understanding. Plural wives are given, not only “to multiply and replenish the earth,” but “for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men” (verse 63). The begetting of physical children on earth seems to continue as “having” spiritual children in heaven, but what the latter meant technically was left to interpretation and imagination.

In Utah, polygamy became structured polygyny, openly proclaimed, including sexual relations and offspring, with elaborate social, moral, and theological justifications. For the theological part, Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, and others sexualized God, gave substance to his divine wife or even wives, tied their union to the birth of myriads of spirit children in the preexistence, justified polygamy for helping the choicest of those spirits come to

earth in faithful families of chosen “Israelite” lines, and imagined the same divine procreative future for exalted gods and their goddesses on distant worlds in the universe. The speculations were uninhibited (and sometimes contradictory), the concretizations audacious, including the teaching that God the Father literally impregnated Mary. Plural marriage was defined as a prerequisite for exaltation.

With the end of official support for polygamy in 1890, the necessity of plural marriage for exaltation was abolished, but what remained was the plan of progression, from preexistent spirit children, through earth probation, to the exaltation a couple earns through eternal marriage. That attainment of godhood still included the divine function of “having” spirit children, so that each exalted couple could become heavenly parents. Though these doctrines were now expressed in more sober, sanitized terms, the nineteenth-century sources, as well as more recent, equally explicit texts by outspoken Church authorities, clearly confirm the procreative functions as part of exaltation. It is not surprising that outsiders who describe Mormon doctrine often focus on that peculiar perspective. Anti-Mormonism turned it into *The God Makers*. Vulgar derision turns it into sordid depictions. Moreover, all that polygamy could prompt in prurient fascination tainted the rest of Mormon theology. Even modern, neutrally meant treatises on Mormonism continue to focus on those bizarre sexual aspects, based on the sources written by Mormon authorities from the 1850s up to now.

But to what extent are sexual relations essential to “having” spirit children and therefore “essential to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children?” Mormon scriptures and leaders’ commentaries allow at least two interpretations of “having” spirit children. Next to literal sexual relations, pregnancy, and birth, there is the organization of “intelligence”—eternal matter—into “intelligences,” understood as individual spirit beings or the precursors thereof. Whether the two interpretations can intersect or not is unclear. But the tangible representation of divine sex and the birthing of billions of spirits raises awkward questions as to frequency, timing, and the lingering background of polygamy.<sup>63</sup> Eugene England remarked, “God has certainly found more

efficient ways to produce spirit children than by turning celestial partners into mere birth machines. To anticipate such a limited, unequal role for women in eternity insults and devalues them.”<sup>64</sup>

Could the Mormon concept of eternal destiny therefore not focus more on its broader message—the stirring vision of eternal togetherness? If chastely and lyrically expressed, the possibility of eternal togetherness is an ideal for a loving couple, for parents and children, or for dear friends, in particular in the face of death. Numerous poets have imagined it or lamented its absence. Eternal togetherness is one of the most poignant and tender doctrines of Mormonism. Joseph Smith’s vision of the eternities, where God’s children blend in a network of blissful generations—referring to the biblical promises to Abraham and to the “planting in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers”—has an unmistakable grandeur. That sacred emotion was probably closer to Joseph Smith’s glorious panorama of the eternities than what the cruder and often shocking assertions of later Church leaders included. Precisely that difference brings us to consider the place of same-sex partnership in the religious realm of Mormonism.

Is the “eternal destiny” of God’s children only and of necessity a literal continuation of marital relations, including sex and child-bearing as part of divine “love,” with the perpetuation of the procreative function because that is what heavenly parents do?

Or is “eternal destiny” the ultimate admission of God’s worthy children into a celestial world of family relations, intertwined through all those marriages over the course of human history—a majestic network which genealogical research tries to reconstitute even now as much as possible? That network also includes the unmarried, the infants, children who died young, and—who could exclude them?—gays and lesbians, because all of these are also part of families. The basis here is also love, but in a different meaning of the unitive function—the unification of humankind in familial relations.<sup>65</sup> This vision of the celestial world does not exclude the continuation of marital relations, but it does not require them. Eternal marriage can and should live on as a core tenet of

Mormon faith, but without being so crucial as to devalue all other forms of eternal joy.

Note that the history of the more detailed doctrine of divine sexual functions as part of preexistence and worlds to populate runs pretty much parallel with the doctrines that detail racial groups in the preexistence, fence-sitters, and the priesthood ban. Since these doctrines were apparently never emphasized by Joseph Smith but were subsequent developments, would not also in this case the conclusion apply, as with the explanations for the priesthood ban, that “the Church is not bound by speculation or opinions given with limited understanding”?<sup>66</sup>

### Conclusion

On the occasion of the election of Pope Francis in March 2013, the First Presidency of the Mormon Church released a statement of “warm wishes,” which included the sentence: “We have been honored and pleased as our two faiths have worked together on issues of faith, morality and service to the poor and needy.”<sup>67</sup>

Service to the poor and needy is evident. Humanitarian cooperation should meet no boundaries or restrictions. Catholics and Mormons, together with all people of good will, can combine forces in any situation of material need. And they do. But how well have the two churches worked together, or can they work together, on issues of faith and morality?

In comparing the Catholic and the Mormon churches, this article hardly touched on matters of faith, in the sense of theological tenets. The divide there is colossal, even if both churches use similar vocabulary for many concepts. Official and semi-official Catholic statements on Mormonism make clear that the latter does not belong to the Christian family and that its theology and added scriptures are blasphemous.<sup>68</sup> From its side, the Mormon Church, in spite of occasional diplomatic language, cannot hide that numerous passages in its founding texts reciprocate with similar characterizations.

As to morality, this article tried to show that, although the Catholic Church and the Mormon Church stand at first glance on common ground in human life ethics, even there the differences are substantial. Giving each other occasional support in publicly

debated matters of “morality,” such as with Proposition 8, turns out to be a perilous endeavor. As soon as the differences come into play, the one church cannot support the other anymore, such as with ESCR or with birth control insurance coverage. To what extent the positions on same-sex marriage may diverge in the future remains to be seen, but the various factors mentioned in this article indicate that the Mormon Church is prone to respond more flexibly to social change and human needs.

Indeed, a basic difference from the Catholic Church resides in the guarded openness of Mormon leaders to alter viewpoints and in the subsequent modifications that Mormon policies can undergo in favor of more equality and tolerance. That is the privilege of a living church where even one of its highest and famously doctrinaire leaders could say:

Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world. We get our truth and our light line upon line and precept upon precept.<sup>69</sup>

### Notes

1. I wish to thank Lavina Fielding Anderson, Craig Harline, and Armand L. Mauss for their valuable comments on the drafts of this article. Of course, the responsibility for the content is only mine.

2. See, for example, Richard P. McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008); Aidan Nichols, *The Shape of Catholic Theology: An Introduction to Its Sources, Principles, and History* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991).

3. Numerous books and articles have been written on Vatican II and continue to be written as to its long-term effects. See, e.g., Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2012); Mathew L. Lamb and Mathew Levering, eds., *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008); Melissa J. Wilde, *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007).

4. See, for example, Rachel Anne Fenton, “Catholic Doctrine versus Women’s Rights: The New Italian Law on Assisted Reproduction,” *Medical Law Review* 14, no. 1 (2006): 73–107; Rishona Fleishman, “The Battle

against Reproductive Rights: The Impact of the Catholic Church on Abortion Law in Both International and Domestic Arenas,” *Emory International Law Review* 14 (2000): 277–314; Anthony Gill, *Rendering unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Mala Htun, *Sex and the State: Abortion, Divorce, and the Family under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Carolyn M. Warner, *Confessions of an Interest Group: The Catholic Church and Political Parties in Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

5. I do not fully reference the basic Catholic magisterial documents I quote from, nor similar basic Mormon texts such as *Handbook 2* or *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*. These documents, provided by the respective official church sites, are readily found on the internet. The English texts of the Catholic documents I quote from come directly from the Vatican site <http://www.vatican.va>.

6. See, for example, Charles E. Curran, ed., *Change in Official Catholic Moral Teachings* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003); Cathleen M. Kaveny, “Development of Catholic Moral Doctrine: Probing the Subtext,” *University of St. Thomas Law Journal* 1, no. 1 (2003): 234–252; John T. Noonan Jr., *A Church That Can and Cannot Change: The Development of Catholic Moral Teaching* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); John Seidler, “Contested Accommodation: The Catholic Church as a Special Case of Social Change,” *Social Forces* 64, no. 4 (1986): 847–74.

7. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Mauss, “Rethinking Retrenchment: Course Corrections in the Ongoing Campaign for Respectability,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 4 (2011): 1–42.

8. It is noteworthy that, also among Catholic populations, there are vast differences between countries, between ethnic groups, and between urban or rural situations, as to religious identity, forms of devotion, liturgical preferences, and compliance to rules—a diversity unknown in the centralized, correlated Mormon Church. For example, considered in their average conduct, Dutch Catholics are quite different from their Polish or Irish coreligionists, who, in turn, would be surprised at Catholicism in some regions in Latin America or in Africa. Catholicism in the United States, even taking into account its internal diversity, has become more conservative and principled than in many West European countries. This worldwide diversity is often the result of retention strategies: local Catholic leaders allow Catholicism to adapt to the local religious market situation in order to keep or to regain adherents. The directions can be as varied as re-traditionalization, modernization, or pseudo-

indigenization. The literature on these “Catholicisms” is vast. A few examples: Karen Andersen, “Irish Secularization and Religious Identities: Evidence of an Emerging New Catholic Habitus,” *Social Compass* 57, no. 1 (2010): 15–39; R. Scott Appleby, “Diversity as a Source of Catholic Common Ground,” *New Theology Review* 13, no. 3 (2013): 15–25; John Caiazza, “American Conservatism and the Catholic Church,” *Modern Age* 52, no. 1 (2010): 14–24; Edward L. Cleary, *The Rise of Charismatic Catholicism in Latin America* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011); Kees de Groot, “Two Alienation Scenarios: Explaining the Distance between Catholics and Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands,” in *Religious Identity and National Heritage: Empirical-Theological Perspectives*, edited by Francis-Vincent Anthony and Hans-Georg Ziebertz (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 195–212; Nicholas Jay Demerath III, “The Rise of ‘Cultural Religion’ in European Christianity: Learning from Poland, Northern Ireland, and Sweden,” *Social Compass* 47, no. 1 (2000): 127–39; Steffen Dix, “Religious Plurality within a Catholic Tradition: A Study of the Portuguese Capital, Lisbon, and a Brief Comparison with Mainland Portugal,” *Religion* 39, no. 2 (2009): 182–93; Frances Hagopian, ed., *Religious Pluralism, Democracy, and the Catholic Church in Latin America* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009); Ludovic Lado, *Catholic Pentecostalism and the Paradoxes of Africanization: Processes of Localization in a Catholic Charismatic Movement in Cameroon* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Cristián Parker Gumucio, “Catholicismes Populaires Urbains et Globalisation: Étude de Cas au Chili,” *Social Compass* 45, no. 4 (1998): 595–618; Guillermo Trejo, “Religious Competition and Ethnic Mobilization in Latin America: Why the Catholic Church Promotes Indigenous Movements in Mexico,” *American Political Science Review* 103, no. 3 (2009): 323–42.

9. Note, however, that the aims of Vatican II and of correlation were quite different. In the terms of Armand Mauss’s distinction between assimilation and retrenchment, Vatican II was more an effort at assimilation, i.e., how to bring the Catholic Church into the modern world, closer to the people, away from Latin, with more democratic participation and dialogue, decentralization, and more adaptations to local cultures. The Mormon correlation movement aimed at more central control through worldwide standardization in organization and curriculum, including a formal attachment to the King James language in the standard works—hence, retrenchment.

10. Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* [Encyclical Letter on the Regularization of Birth], sec. 11–12.

11. See, for example, Donald P. Ascì, *The Conjugal Act as a Personal Act: A Study of the Catholic Concept of the Conjugal Act in the Light of Chris-*

*tian Anthropology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002); John Boyle, ed., *Creative Love: The Ethics of Human Reproduction* (Front Royal: Christendom Press, 1989); Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Catholic Sexual Ethics and the Dignity of the Person: A Double Message," *Theological Studies* 50 (1989): 120–50; Frank R. Flaspohler, "All Who Live in Love: The Law and Theology behind Same-Sex Marriage," *Loyola Journal of Public Interest Law* 11, no. 1 (2009): 87–130; Benedict M. Guevin, "Reproductive Technologies in Light of 'Dignitas Personae,'" *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (2010): 51–59; John Haas, "The Inseparability of the Two Meanings of the Marriage Act," in *Reproductive Technologies, Marriage, and the Church: Proceedings of 1988 Bishops' Workshop*, edited by Donald G. McCarthy (Braintree, Mass.: Pope John Center, 1988), 89–106; James P. Hanigan, "Unitive and Procreative Meaning: The Inseparable Link," in *Sexual Diversity and Catholicism: Toward the Development of Moral Theology*, edited by Patricia Beattie Jung (Collegeville: Liturgical Press), 22–38; Bernard Häring, "The Inseparability of the Unitive-Procreative Functions of the Marital Act," in *Contraception: Authority and Dissent*, edited by Charles E. Curran (New York: Herder, 1969), 176–85.

12. *Handbook* 2, 21.4.4.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *True to the Faith* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 26.

15. See Donald W. Hastings, Charles H. Reynolds, and Ray R. Canning, "Mormonism and Birth Planning: The Discrepancy between Church Authorities' Teachings and Lay Attitudes," *Population Studies* 26, no. 1 (1972): 19–28; Tim B. Heaton and Sandra Calkins, "Family Size and Contraceptive Use among Mormons: 1965–75," *Review of Religious Research* 25, no. 2 (1983): 102–14; Melissa Proctor, "Bodies, Babies, and Birth Control," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 3 (2003): 159–75.

16. *Humanae Vitae*, sec. 14.

17. "Birth Control," *Catholic Answers*, imprimatur August 10, 2004, <http://www.catholic.com/tracts/birth-control> (accessed April 21, 2013).

18. In an HIV-discordant couple, only one of the two partners is HIV-infected. See Luc Bovens, "Can the Catholic Church Agree to Condom Use by HIV-Discordant Couples?" *Journal of Medical Ethics* 35, no. 12 (2009): 743–46. For studies of contraception in Catholicism, see M. John Farrelly, "Contraception as a Test Case for the Development of Doctrine," *The Heythrop Journal* 49, no. 3 (2008): 453–72; Rachel K. Jones and Joerg Dreweke, *Countering Conventional Wisdom: New Evidence on Religion and Contraceptive Use* (New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2011);

John T. Noonan Jr. and John Thomas Noonan, *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists*, enlarged edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012).

19. *Humanae Vitae*, sec. 16.

20. *Humanae Vitae*, sec. 10.

21. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2370.

22. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1398.

23. The case drew worldwide attention. See details and media references in the Wikipedia entry [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009\\_Brazilian\\_girl\\_abortion\\_case](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009_Brazilian_girl_abortion_case) (accessed April 21, 2013).

24. *Handbook 2*, 21.4.1.

25. *Ibid.*

26. "Abortion," *Catholic Answers*, August 10, 2004, <http://www.catholic.com/tracts/abortion> (accessed April 21, 2013).

27. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* [Encyclical Letter on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life], sec. 14.

28. See, for example, the 2008 Instruction *Dignitas Personae* by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

29. See Cindy Wooden, "Embryos Cannot Be Destroyed Even for Important Research, Says Pope," *Catholic News Service*, November 14, 2011, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1104448.htm> (accessed April 20, 2013); Pat Perriello, "Stem Cell Research and the Francis Papacy," *National Catholic Reporter*, April 15, 2013, <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/stem-cell-research-and-francis-papacy> (accessed April 30, 2013).

30. "Statement Regarding Stem Cell Research," August 10, 2001, <http://www.ldstoday.com/archive/news/stemcellstmt.htm> (accessed April 20, 2013).

31. See Jan Cienski, "Mormons May Be Key in Stem-Cell Debate," *Worldwide Religious News*, August 4, 2001, <http://wwrn.org/articles/5900/?&place=united-states&section=cloning> (accessed April 20, 2013).

32. "Embryonic Stem-Cell Research," *Newsroom of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/official-statement/embryonic-stem-cell-research> (accessed April 20, 2013).

33. "Commentary—Embryonic Stem-Cell Research," *Newsroom of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, May 26, 2005, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/embryonic-stem-cell-research> (accessed April 20, 2013).

34. *Handbook 2*, 21.3.3.

35. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2277.

36. John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris* [Apostolic Letter on the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering], sec. 19. See also John Paul II, "Address to

the Participants in the International Congress on ‘Life-Sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State: Scientific Advances and Ethical Dilemmas,’ March 20, 2004, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/2004/march/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20040320\\_congress-fiamc\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2004/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20040320_congress-fiamc_en.html) (accessed April 20, 2013).

37. *Handbook 2*, 21.3.8.

38. Isaiah Bennett, “Did the Mormons’ President Downplay a Central Teaching of Mormonism?” *Catholic Answers*, <http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/did-the-mormons-president-downplay-a-central-teaching-of-mormonism> (accessed April 20, 2013).

39. Edward Peters, “Review of Isaiah Bennett, When Mormons Call,” *Canon Law Info*, updated January 10, 2013, [http://www.canonlaw.info/a\\_mormons.htm](http://www.canonlaw.info/a_mormons.htm) (accessed April 23, 2013).

40. Though Latin America remains overwhelmingly Catholic (with internal variations), Pentecostals grew from an estimated 12 million in the 1970s to an estimated 75 million in 2006. See Pew Research, “Overview: Pentecostalism in Latin America,” October 5, 2006, <http://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/overview-pentecostalism-in-latin-america> (accessed April 30, 2013). The phenomenon has been widely studied. See, for example, James W. Dow, “Protestantism in Mesoamerica: The Old within the New,” in *Holy Saints and Fiery Preachers: The Anthropology of Protestantism in Mexico and Central America*, edited by James W. Dow and Alan R. Sandstrom (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2001), 1–23; Toomas Gross, “Changing Faith: The Social Costs of Protestant Conversion in Rural Oaxaca,” *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 77, no. 3 (2012): 344–71; Bernardo Guerrero, “The Street Is Free: Identity and Politics among Evangelicals in Chile,” *Religion, State and Society* 40, no. 1 (2012): 11–23; Carlos Garma Navarro, “Religious Change in Mexico: Perspectives from Recent Data,” *Social Sciences and Missions* 24, no. 1 (2011): 75–100; David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

41. Paul Freston, “Religious Pluralism, Democracy, and Human Rights in Latin America,” in *Religion and the Global Politics of Human Rights*, edited by Thomas Banchoff and Robert Wuthnow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 102.

42. As quoted in Samuel Escobar, “Christianity in Latin America: Changing Churches in a Changing Continent,” in *Introducing World Christianity*, edited by Charles E. Farhadian (Chichester, West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 174.

43. “LDS church unveils plans to do less door-to-door proselytizing,” *Catholic Answers*, June 24, 2013, <http://forums.catholic.com/showthread.php?t=800298> (accessed July 8, 2013).

44. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2357.

45. In the magisterial document “Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons,” June 3, 2003.

46. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2358. In 1986 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith sent a letter to the Catholic bishops “on the pastoral care of homosexual persons” in which it deplors “that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech or in action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church’s pastors wherever it occurs.” However, most of the long letter is to reiterate that homosexuality is a “moral disorder” and to condemn those who within the church argue otherwise. See the magisterial document “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons,” October 1, 1986.

47. Keith Fourier, “On Plane Back to Rome: What Did the Pope Really Say about Homosexual Practice vs. Media Hype?” *Catholic Online*, July 30, 2013, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=51888](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=51888) (accessed July 31, 2013).

48. Matt Canham, Derek P. Jensen, and Rosemary Winters, “Salt Lake City Adopts Pro-Gay Statutes—with LDS Church Support,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 10, 2009, [http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci\\_13758070](http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_13758070) (accessed April 5, 2013); Erik Eckholm, “Mormons Endorse Plan to Admit Gay Scouts,” *New York Times*, April 26, 2013, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/27/us/mormon-church-backs-boy-scouts-plan-to-lift-ban-on-gay-youths.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/27/us/mormon-church-backs-boy-scouts-plan-to-lift-ban-on-gay-youths.html?_r=0) (accessed May 7, 2013); Stephanie Mencimer, “Mormon Church Abandons Its Crusade against Gay Marriage,” *Mother Jones*, April 12, 2013, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/04/prop-8-mormons-gay-marriage-shift> (accessed May 5, 2013); “Mormon Church Shift on Gay Marriage Brings Momentum to Pro-Equality Camp,” *Huffington Post*, March 13, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/26/conservatives-give-gay-marriage-momentum\\_n\\_2958314.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/26/conservatives-give-gay-marriage-momentum_n_2958314.html) (accessed April 27, 2013); Peggy Fletcher Stack, “New Mormon Church Website Has Softer Tone on Gays,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 7, 2012, <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/news/55407878-78/gay-church-says-lds.html.csp> (accessed April 17, 2013); Peggy Fletcher Stack, “Years of Tension Yield to Thaw between Gays, Mormons,” *Religion News Service*, January 3, 2013, <http://www.religionnews.com/2013/01/03/years-of-tension-yield-to-thaw-between-gays-mormons/> (accessed April 16, 2013).

49. *Handbook 2*, 21.4.6.

50. *Code of Canon Law*, canons 1084–5.

51. Jurisdictions to determine if such exemptions differ from coun-

try to country: see Bruce MacDougall, Elsje Bonthuys, Kenneth Norrie, and Marjolein van den Brink, "Conscientious Objection to Creating Same-Sex Unions: An International Analysis," *Canadian Journal of Human Rights* 1, no. 1 (2012): 127–64. Exemptions, it should be recognized, create their own set of challenges, but these can be overcome. See Michael Kent Curtis, "Unique Religious Exemption from Antidiscrimination Laws in the Case of Gays? Putting the Call for Exemptions for Those Who Discriminate against Married or Marrying Gays in Context," *Wake Forest Law Review* 47, no. 2 (2012): 173–209; Robin Fretwell Wilson, "Insubstantial Burdens: The Case for Government Employee Exemptions to Same-Sex Marriage Laws," *Northwestern Journal of Law and Social Policy* 5, no. 2 (2010): 318–68.

52. The well-being of children with same-sex parents is a legitimate concern. The issue has been used extensively to oppose same-sex marriage. See Courtney G. Joslin, "Searching for Harm: Same-Sex Marriage and the Well-Being of Children," *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* 46, no. 81 (2011): 81–102. Long-term, population-based sample analyses to measure the well-being of children with same-sex parents are still in the making, but existing studies give reassuring indications. See, e.g., Alicia Crowl, Soyeon Ahn, and Jean Baker, "A Meta-Analysis of Developmental Outcomes for Children of Same-Sex and Heterosexual Parents," *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 4, no. 3 (2008): 385–406; Jeremy R. Garrett and John D. Lantos, "Marriage and the Well-Being of Children," *Pediatrics* 131, no. 3 (2013): 559–63; Timothy F. Murphy, "Same-Sex Marriage: Not a Threat to Marriage or Children," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 42, no. 3 (2011): 288–304; Andrew J. Perrin, Philip N. Cohen, and Neal Caren, "Are Children of Parents Who Had Same-Sex Relationships Disadvantaged? A Scientific Evaluation of the No-Differences Hypothesis," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health* 17, no. 3 (2013): 327–36; Ellen C. Perrin, Benjamin S. Siegel, and the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, "Technical Report: Promoting the Well-Being of Children Whose Parents Are Gay or Lesbian," *Pediatrics* 131, no. 4 (2013): e1374–e1383; Daniel Potter, "Same-Sex Parent Families and Children's Academic Achievement," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74, no. 3 (2012): 556–71.

53. The process is mutually reinforcing: "Children in same-sex families are generally doing well but their situation could be improved if their parents' relationship were to be socially and legally recognized." Guido Pennings, "Evaluating the Welfare of the Child in Same-Sex Families," *Human Reproduction* 26, no. 7 (2011): 1609. Similarly, "studies suggest that there is an association between the stigma that same-sex parent families experience and child well-being." Simon Robert Crouch, Elizabeth

Waters, Ruth McNair, Jennifer Power, and Elise Davis, "ACHESS—The Australian Study of Child Health in Same-Sex Families: Background Research, Design and Methodology," *BMC Public Health* 12 (2012): 646. See also Juliet E. Hart, Jon E. Mourot, and Megan Aros, "Children of Same-Sex Parents: In and Out of the Closet," *Educational Studies* 38, no. 3 (2012): 277–81. In other words, comparative studies on child well-being will gain in validity if they can be conducted in environments where same-sex parents are as well accepted as others. Legalizing same-sex marriage also has vital implications for the basic legal rights of their children. See Catherine E. Smith, "Equal Protection for Children of Same-Sex Parents," *Washington University Law Review*, forthcoming; Tanya Washington, "What about the Children? Child-Centered Challenges to Same-Sex Marriage Bans," *Whittier Journal of Child and Family Advocacy* 12, no. 1 (2012): 1–22.

54. For an analysis of the Mormon position on religious freedom within shifting cultural backgrounds in the United States, see Mauro Properzi, "LDS Understandings of Religious Freedom: Responding to the Shifting Cultural Pendulum," *Journal of Mormon History* 38, no. 4 (2012): 128–47. Among the publications that discuss same-sex marriage and religious freedom, I found the following helpful: Eric Alan Isaacson, "Are Same-Sex Marriages Really a Threat to Religious Liberty?" *Stanford Journal of Civil Rights & Civil Liberties* 8, no. 1 (2012): 123–53; Steven Kettell, "I Do, Thou Shalt Not: Religious Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage in Britain," *The Political Quarterly* 84, no. 2 (2013): 247–55; Douglas Laycock and Thomas C. Berg, "Protecting Same-Sex Marriage and Religious Liberty," *Virginia Law Review in Brief* 99, no. 1 (2013): 1–9; Ira C. Lupu and Robert W. Tuttle, "Same-Sex Equality and Religious Freedom," *Northwestern Journal of Law & Social Policy* 5, no. 2 (2010): 274–306; Michael J. Perry, "The Right to Religious Freedom, with Particular Reference to Same-Sex Marriage," *Journal of Law, Religion and State*, 1, no. 2 (2012): 147–79.

55. Isaacson, "Are Same-Sex Marriages Really a Threat to Religious Liberty?" 151.

56. Also, the debate on religious freedom plays out differently in various countries. Arguments used by religious leaders in the United States can be misinterpreted and misused in other settings, while governmental limitations of religious freedom can be defended as needed to counter sectarian radicalization that can destabilize a country. More comparative insights are needed to understand these competing demands and concerns, both from religion and from government, in order to find appropriate balances between them in international perspective. For this discussion, see, for example, Rex Ahdar and Ian Leigh, *Religious Freedom in the Liberal State*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013);

Fred Dallmayr, "Whither Democracy? Religion, Politics and Islam," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 37, no. 4 (2011): 437–48; Francois Facchini, "Religion, Law and Development: Islam and Christianity—Why Is It in Occident and not in the Orient That Man Invented the Institutions of Freedom?" *European Journal of Law and Economics* 29, no. 1 (2010): 103–29; Brian J. Grim and Roger Finke, *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the 21st Century* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehar, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Samuel James Rascoff, "Establishing Official Islam? The Law and Strategy of Counter-Radicalization," *Stanford Law Review* 64, no. 1 (2012): 125–90; Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan, and Monica Duffy Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); John Witte Jr. and Nina-Louisa Arold, "Lift High the Cross: Contrasting the New European and American Cases on Religious Symbols on Government Property," *Emory International Law Review* 25, no. 5 (2011): 5–55.

57. *Handbook 2*, 21.4.10.

58. On a side note, generalizing the requirement of a preceding civil marriage to the whole church, also in the United States, and defining the temple ceremony as a "sealing," not as a marriage, could help alleviate the tragic situations where family members cannot attend the temple ceremony. I am a personal witness of what heartbreak and enmity toward the Church the present situation causes, in particular in the case of young converts who join the Church without their parents and subsequently marry in the Church. The civil marriage could become the festive event where all are invited, while the sealing, a few days or weeks later, could be a sober ceremony receiving its full religious attention from the couple and the initiated. It could be a uniform system for the whole Church worldwide.

59. Interview with Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Elder Lance B. Wickman: "Same-Gender Attraction," *Newsroom of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, December 12, 2012, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/interview-oaks-wickman-same-gender-attraction> (accessed April 21, 2013). The interview was given in 2006.

60. *Handbook 2*, 21.4.10.

61. *Gospel Fundamentals* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002), 201.

62. In their opposition to same-sex marriage, churches usually emphasize their theological arguments for their own membership, while stressing the more secular arguments in the public debate. See the article by Kettell, note 54. In that sense, the Mormon Church's argumenta-

tion against same-sex marriage is somewhat ambivalent as the core theological reason is avoided in the public debate.

63. Taylor G. Petrey raises such questions in his article “Toward a Post-Heterosexual Mormon Theology,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 4 (2011): 106–41. Weird calculations of pregnancy and birth rates of Mormon “goddesses” are also found in anti-Mormon material.

64. Eugene England, “On Fidelity, Polygamy, and Celestial Marriage,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 4 (1987): 148.

65. Is it possible that the Mormon Church is already in a process of de-emphasizing the doctrine of literal offspring in heaven in favor of a more graspable and less challenging imagery of eternal family life? “To have spirit children” in married afterlife is still part of the 1997 edition of *Gospel Principles*: “Heavenly Father has given us the law of eternal marriage so we can become like him. We must live this law to be able to have spirit children” (242), but the second sentence does not appear anymore in the printed version of 2009 (220). That sentence is still in chapter 38 of the online version, <http://www.lds.org/library/display/0,4945,11-1-13-48,00.html> (accessed August 3, 2013). The 2009 edition kept one earlier mention of the concept in presenting the plan in the preexistence: “We would become heavenly parents and have spirit children just as He does (11). In *True to the Faith* (2004) no reference is made to having spirit children as part of exaltation. The text defines exaltation as follows: “Eternal life, or exaltation, is to inherit a place in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, where we will live in God’s presence and continue as families” (52). That representation seems to accentuate a more classic eternal togetherness as an extension of family life rather than the procreative dynamics “to have spirit children and make new worlds for them to live on,” as stated in *Gospel Fundamentals* (201). One may wonder if these rephrasings are part of a deliberate effort to downplay similar daring Mormon doctrinal traditions such as the Lorenzo Snow couplet, which President Hinckley seemed to trivialize in his talking to the press. See Michael W. Fordham, “Does President Gordon B. Hinckley Understand LDS Doctrine?” *FAIR*, [http://www.fairlds.org/authors/fordham-michael/does\\_president\\_hinckley\\_understand\\_lds\\_doctrine](http://www.fairlds.org/authors/fordham-michael/does_president_hinckley_understand_lds_doctrine) (accessed August 4, 2013).

66. “Church Statement Regarding ‘Washington Post’ Article on Race and the Church,” *Newsroom of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, February 29, 2012, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/racial-remarks-in-washington-post-article> (accessed April 23, 2013).

67. “First Presidency Offers ‘Warmest Wishes’ to Newly-Elected Pope Francis,” *Newsroom of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*,

March 13, 2013, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/first-president-offers-warmest-wishes-pope-francis> (accessed April 20, 2013).

68. Again, the American West, with the historic coexistence of Mormons and Catholics, is not representative of the rest of the world. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, scores of Catholic authors have published scathing critiques of Mormonism. In the 1980s the denigration became part of the broader anti-cultist movement. The 2001 rejection by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of the validity of Mormon baptism is significant not only in a theological sense, but also in its time frame as President Gordon B. Hinckley had been actively seeking for more interfaith tolerance and cooperation in the preceding years. In 2008 the same congregation directed Catholic dioceses throughout the world to keep the Latter-day Saints from microfilming information contained in Catholic parish registers “so as not to cooperate with the erroneous practices of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Chaz Muth, “Vatican Letter Directs Bishops to Keep Parish Records from Mormons,” *Catholic News Service*, May 2, 2008, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0802443.htm> (accessed April 29, 2013). The abrupt move, ten days before Pope Benedict XVI’s visit to the United States with an ecumenical prayer service attended by Mormon apostles M. Russell Ballard and Quentin L. Cook, seemed a shot across the bow. The recent election of a pope from Argentina does not augur well for a Catholic-Mormon rapprochement, taking the inroads of the Mormon Church in Latin America into account. As noted previously, the present surge in Mormon missionary work and strategies is not prone to lead to better institutional relations on the highest level, though local initiatives of interfaith dialogue and cooperation will meet little obstruction. *Catholic Answers* offers the present assessment of Mormonism: “While the Catholic Church would reject nothing that is true or good in Mormonism or any other world religion, Catholic theology would have to note that there is a tremendous amount in Mormonism that is neither true nor good. Further, because Mormonism presents itself as a form of Christianity yet is incompatible with the historic Christian faith, sound pastoral practice would need to warn the Christian faithful: Mormon theology is blasphemous, polytheistic, and cannot be considered on par with the theology of other Christian groups,” mentioned in “What Does the Catholic Church Say about the Practices and Beliefs of Mormonism?” <http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/what-does-the-catholic-church-say-about-the-practices-and-beliefs-of-mormonism> (accessed May 17, 2013).

69. Bruce R. McConkie, “All Are Alike unto God,” Address, CES Religious Educators Symposium, *Brigham Young University Speeches*, August

18, 1978, <http://speeches.byu.edu/?act=viewitem&id=1570> (accessed April 20, 2013).

# Comparing Mormon and Adventist Growth Patterns in Latin America: The Chilean Case

*Henri Gooren*

## **Introduction**

Mormonism, Adventism, and Jehovah's Witnesses are the three great American religions of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Although they started out as radical groups led by charismatic prophets, each ultimately followed a different trajectory of opposition and accommodation to U.S. mainstream society.<sup>2</sup> One thing they had in common was their missionary zeal, which was strengthened by the fact that each was certain that it was the only true Christian church on Earth. This missionary zeal led to extensive proselytizing efforts, first in the United States and soon abroad. Adventist and Witness missionaries arrived in Latin American countries in the late 1890s, but Mormonism first had to redefine its core doctrine (the gathering of Zion), before President McKay defined international expansion as a key goal.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, Adventists and Witnesses currently have a far greater proportion of their total world membership living outside the United States than Mormonism.<sup>4</sup> All three churches have experienced, and to some extent are still experiencing, significant membership growth in Latin America. So far, however, no literature explicitly compares the three religions and their growth patterns in Latin America.<sup>5</sup>

This article summarizes the patterns of growth, first of all, for the Latter-day Saints (LDS) and then for the Seventh-day Adventists (SDA). For each denomination, the discussion begins with an

overview of growth in Latin America generally, followed by a focus on growth in Chile specifically. Historical developments in religion across Latin America generally provide an important context for understanding the religious scene in any specific location, but every country also has its own unique constellation of internal and external factors influencing the growth of new religions there. Possibly the greatest LDS success story in Latin America, Chile has had a long history of a Roman Catholic religious monopoly, a unique early Pentecostal boom (1930–60), the brutal Pinochet military dictatorship (1973–89), a fragile new democracy since 1990, and a booming macro-economy since 2000. This article offers the case study of Chile to demonstrate the usefulness of country-by-country analyses, especially when employing comparisons of two or more religious denominations.

As indicators of growth, whether in Latin America generally or in Chile particularly, I use year of arrival, the official absolute membership numbers, membership as a percentage of the country's population, and average annual growth rates for 2006–7. In analyzing membership growth within Chile particularly, I employ a model that distinguishes between factors that are internal and external to the Church and between factors of a religious and non-religious nature. This model is summarized in Figure 1.

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*Figure 1.* Analytical Framework for LDS and SDA Church Growth in Latin America

	1. Internal Factors	2. External Factors
Religious Factors a.	1a. Appeal of the doctrine	2a. Dissatisfaction with Catholicism
Religious Factors b.	1b. Evangelization activities; size of the missionary force	2b. Slow responses from Catholic hierarchy
Nonreligious Factors c.	1c. Appeal of the religious problems	2c. Social or economic organization
Nonreligious Factors d.	1d. Natural growth and retention	2d. Urbanization

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The church growth model analyzes church growth as the result of four religious and four nonreligious factors, which can be both internal and external to the church under study. The inter-

**Table 1**  
**Registered LDS Membership in Latin America, Year-End 2007**

<i>Country (year of arrival)</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>% Population*</i>	<i>AAGR 2006-07</i>	<i>HDI 2007</i>
Chile (1956)	548,743	3.30%	0.94%	0.878
Uruguay (1948)	90,292	2.70%	1.84%	0.865
Honduras (1952)	125,606	1.77%	4.45%	0.732
Bolivia (1964)	158,427	1.61%	3.09%	0.729
Peru (1956)	448,903	1.61%	3.78%	0.806
Guatemala (1947)	210,101	1.57%	2.38%	0.704
El Salvador (1948)	98,575	1.43%	2.76%	0.747
Ecuador (1965)	181,463	1.35%	2.89%	0.806
Panama (1941)	42,606	1.28%	2.32%	0.840
Paraguay (1939)	71,531	1.17%	7.64%	0.761
Dominican Republic (1978)	106,243	1.13%	4.01%	0.777
Nicaragua (1953)	59,886	1.07%	8.16%	0.699
Mexico (1876)	1,121,893	1.05%	3.65%	0.854
Argentina (1925)	363,990	0.92%	2.25%	0.866
Costa Rica (1946)	35,647	0.80%	2.50%	0.854
Brazil (1928)	1,019,153	0.54%	4.97%	0.813
Venezuela (1966)	141,563	0.52%	2.08%	0.844
Puerto Rico (1964)	19,808	0.50%	1.01%	0.942
Colombia (1966)	158,954	0.34%	2.85%	0.807
Total Latin America	5,003,384	1.29%	3.34%	0.807
Total Central America	572,421	1.30%	3.76%	0.763

AAGR: Average annual growth rate (in percent)

\*Percentage population based on population estimates from the Seventh-day Adventist Church (online: [www.adventistarchives.org/docs/ASR/ASR2007.pdf](http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/ASR/ASR2007.pdf))

Source: Deseret Morning News, *2009 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2008).

Source: HDI: United Nations Development Program (UNDP). 2011. *HDI Report 2011*. [Http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR\\_2011\\_EN\\_Table1.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2011_EN_Table1.pdf) (accessed February 13, 2012).

nal religious factors are (1a) appeal of the doctrine and (1b) evangelization activities; the internal nonreligious factors are (1c) appeal of the church organization and (1d) natural growth and membership retention. The external religious factors are (2a) dissatisfaction with Catholicism and (2b) responses from the Catholic hierarchy to non-Catholic growth; the external nonreligious factors are (2c) social, economic, and psychological *anomie*<sup>6</sup> as well as (2d) urbanization, which uproots people and makes them more susceptible to join a new church.<sup>7</sup>

### Mormon Growth in Latin America

The U.S. proportion of global LDS membership halved from 90 percent in 1960 to 45 percent by 2007. The second most important continent for Mormonism in 2007 was Latin America (38 percent), followed at great distance by Asia (7.25 percent), Europe (3.5 percent), Oceania (including Australia and New Zealand; 3.2 percent), and Africa (2 percent).<sup>8</sup> Latin America remains the main growth reservoir for Mormonism. If the current growth rates continue, the majority of Mormons will be Latin Americans by the year 2020.<sup>9</sup>

The Mormon mission in Mexico began in 1876; there were also early missions to Argentina (1925) and Brazil (1928).<sup>10</sup> Paraguay received its first LDS missionaries, coming from Argentina, in 1939. In the 1940s, LDS missionaries arrived in Panama (1941), Costa Rica (1946), Guatemala (1947), El Salvador (1948), and Uruguay (1948). The 1950s witnessed further LDS missionary expansion into Honduras (1952), Nicaragua (1953), Peru (1956), and Chile (1956). A third wave of missionaries took off in the 1960s in Puerto Rico (1964), Bolivia (1964), Ecuador (1965), Colombia (1966), and Venezuela (1966). The LDS mission in the Dominican Republic was the most recent, starting in 1978 (see Table 1).

The result of this gradual LDS missionary expansion into Latin America was a highly uneven growth distribution. The simplest indicator is the LDS membership on record as a percentage of the total population for each country. By this standard, Chile (3.3 percent), Uruguay (2.7 percent), Honduras (1.77 percent), Bolivia (1.61 percent), and Peru (also 1.61 percent) are the most heavily Mormon countries of Latin America, while Brazil (0.55 percent), Venezuela (0.53 percent), Puerto Rico (0.5 percent), and

especially Colombia (0.36 percent) are the *least* Mormon ones (see Table 1).

Another way to analyze the Mormon presence in Latin America is by looking at the average annual membership growth rate for each country, also reported in Table 1. In 2006–7, LDS membership growth stagnated at 1 to 3 percent annually—comparable to population growth—in Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and four countries in Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Panama).<sup>11</sup> After four decades of expansion, LDS growth in these twelve Latin American countries started to slow down after 2000 for three main reasons. First, most people who might be interested in joining the Church had probably heard the Mormon message by now (“saturation”). Second, the number of missionaries has gone down in some countries. Most importantly, however, “missionaries began to concentrate on reactivation and retention, and the number of baptisms fell.”<sup>12</sup>

However, LDS membership growth in 2006–7 was still strong in a second group of five Latin American countries: the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Brazil, Paraguay, and especially Nicaragua. The average annual growth rates for these five countries ranged from 4 percent in the Dominican Republic to over 8 percent in Nicaragua.<sup>13</sup> To explain why growth persists here would require a country-by-country analysis, along the lines of what I did for Nicaragua.<sup>14</sup>

The typical LDS convert in Latin America is a young (15–25) urban woman of upper lower class or lower middle class origins.<sup>15</sup> S/he is attracted to Mormonism because of its smooth organization radiating success and middle-class values, its strict code of conduct, its practical teachings (e.g., on raising children and household budgeting), LDS doctrines and spirituality, the LDS style of worship and hymns, and its lay priesthood for men.<sup>16</sup> Some new members explicitly reported being dissatisfied with Catholicism.<sup>17</sup> Most people are recruited through their own social networks (LDS friends and relatives) or through the huge missionary force.<sup>18</sup> When asked about main attraction factors, Guatemalan Mormons mentioned the strict code of conduct, learning

new things in church, feeling the joy of God's love, being blessed with miracles, and receiving support from fellow members.<sup>19</sup>

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that the official membership statistics only tell part of the story of Mormon growth. LDS retention rates were quite low, hovering at 20 to 30 percent, all over Latin America (and elsewhere.)<sup>20</sup> The aggregate data describe the typical LDS dropout as an urban man of upper lower-class or lower middle-class origins.<sup>21</sup> Studies by the LDS Church show that 80 percent of all inactivity begins in the first two months after baptism.<sup>22</sup> These studies also show that, for some new converts, receiving a calling helped them become quickly integrated into the ward organization, while for others, the pressure to perform in a calling seemed too intense and they dropped out.<sup>23</sup> If the testimony of the new member was (still) relatively weak, if outside pressure from nonmember relatives was strong, or if no good rapport was established with LDS leaders, the new converts would most likely drop out. Other important factors influencing retention were the time and money demands the Church made<sup>24</sup> and backsliding into alcohol problems.<sup>25</sup> Inactivity was often related to bad experiences with leaders<sup>26</sup> and members, who converts perceived as rarely devoting time to them and often ignoring them entirely.<sup>27</sup> All in all, at least half of all new Mormon members in Latin America became inactive within a year.<sup>28</sup> The percentage of those who become inactive may be even higher: the correlation between the official LDS membership figures on record and self-identified religious affiliation on national censuses was 27 percent in Brazil, 24 percent in Mexico, and only 20 percent in Chile.<sup>29</sup>

### **Mormon Growth Patterns in Chile**

On paper, growth in Chile is Mormonism's great success story of Latin America. According to official 2007 membership statistics, Chile had the highest LDS population percentage of the entire continent: 3.3 percent (see Table 1)—exceeding even the United States at 1.9 percent.<sup>30</sup> However, the Mormon inactivity rate in Chile is around 80 percent, which is higher than usual in Latin America.<sup>31</sup> The high inactivity rate is reflected in the decreasing number of stakes, which had fallen from a high of 116 in 1999 to seventy-four after 2005.<sup>32</sup> During the same decade, the

membership growth rate fell to 1.1, far below that of the SDAs and the lowest ever in the history of the LDS in Chile (Table 5). These were outcomes of a rather surprising intervention from LDS Church headquarters (an unusual example of factor 1b in Figure 1), when Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland was sent to live in Chile during 2002–4 on a special mission to shape up the affairs of the Church there. The drastic reduction in the number of stakes, and in the general growth rate, might be attributable in large part to numerous excommunications of disaffected members and local leaders (according to anecdotal reports). Yet Holland also implemented a number of new policies intended to slow down the baptism rate. For example, he insisted that potential converts attend church at least three successive weeks before baptism, and he began requiring missionaries to spend at least half their time reactivating lapsed members.<sup>33</sup>

The Mormon Church in Chile has a long history. Elder Parley P. Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve spent five months in Chile in 1851–52, but ultimately decided against establishing a permanent LDS mission there. So it was over a century later that the first LDS missionaries from the U.S. arrived in Chile in June 1956. They baptized the first Chilean citizens on November 25, 1956. In October 1959, Chile and Peru became part of the new LDS Andes Mission. The Chilean Mission was finally organized on October 8, 1961.<sup>34</sup> The average annual growth rate from 1960 to 2008 for the LDS Church was an astounding 17.2 percent.

Based on Table 2, we can distinguish five main LDS growth periods in Chile:

Period 1, 1960–71: boom years, AAGR 41.4 %.

Period 2, 1971–76: low growth, AAGR 6.3 %.

Period 3, 1976–85: high growth, AAGR 23.5 %.

Period 4, 1985–90: average growth, AAGR 12.2 %.

Period 5, 1990–2008: low growth, AAGR 3.5 %.

*Period 1, 1960–71: Boom Years.* Between 1960 and 1971, the number of members of record increased sharply from 614 to almost 20,000, reflecting an average annual growth rate of over 41 percent. In these early years, the people who converted to Mormon-

**Table 2**  
**Registered LDS Membership in Chile, 1956–2008**

<i>Year-End</i>	<i>Registered Membership</i>	<i>% Population*</i>	<i>AAGR in %</i>
1956	12	0%	ca. 200% (1956-60)
1960	614	0.01%	125.57%
1961	1,385	0.02%	114.22%
1962	2,967	0.04%	29.19%
1963	3,833	0.05%	49.99%
1964	5,749	0.07%	31.21%
1965	7,543	0.09%	27.19%
1966	9,594	0.11%	18.93%
1967	11,410	0.12%	13.50%
1968	12,950	0.14%	9.50%
1969	14,179	0.15%	10.92%
1970	15,728	0.16%	25.20%
1971	19,692	0.19%	2.77%
1972	20,238	0.20%	5.65%
1973	21,382	0.20%	4.21%
1974	22,282	0.21%	8.83%
1975	24,249	0.23%	9.73%
1976	26,609	0.26%	40.34%
1977	37,343	0.35%	12.56%
1978	42,033	0.38%	51.45%
1979	63,658	0.58%	29.80%
1980	82,625	0.74%	18.06%
1981	97,544	0.85%	19.95%
1982	117,006	0.98%	13.74%
1983	133,078	1.10%	8.89%
1984	144,904	1.14%	16.88%
1985	169,361	1.36%	8.71%
1986	184,108	N.A.	6.39%
1987	195,869	1.56%	5.93%
1988	207,481	N.A.	28.10%
1989	265,785	2.00%	12.10%
1990	297,936	2.24%	5.76%
1991	315,107	2.33%	4.52%

**Table 2 (cont.)**  
**Registered LDS Membership in Chile, 1956–2008**

<i>Year-End</i>	<i>Registered Membership</i>	<i>%Population*</i>	<i>AAGR in %</i>
1992	329,344	N.A.	4.79%
1993	345,128	2.56%*	6.47 %
1994	367,472	N.A.	7.27 %
1995	394,198	2.78 %*	9.37 %
1996	431,133	N.A.	7.18 %
1997	462,088	3.12 %	3.71 %
1998	479,214	N.A.	4.79 %
1999	502,153	3.34 %*	1.48 %
2000	509,592	3.36 %*	2.08 %
2001	520,202	3.40 %*	1.49 %
2002	527,972	3.37 %	0.52 %
2003	530,739	3.35 %	0.76 %
2004	534,754	3.35 %	0.83 %
2005	539,193	3.37 %	0.82 %
2006	543,628	3.40 %	0.94 %
2007	548,743	3.30 %*	1.09 %
2008	554,749	N.A.	N.A.
1960–2008 48-year average annual growth rate			17.2 %

AAGR: Average annual growth rate (in percent)

N.A.: Not available

\*Percentage population for 1956–95, 1999–2000, 2007 based on population estimates from the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/ASR/ASR2007.pdf>.)

*Sources:* LDS Management Information Center, Salt Lake City, and several editions of the Deseret Morning News *Church Almanac*.

ism in Chile had a particular socioeconomic profile: “Among the early LDS converts, many were members of Chile’s professional and business upper middle classes.”<sup>35</sup> They felt attracted to the novelty of the religious innovation of Mormonism (factor 1a in Figure 1), which appealed especially to people already dissatisfied with Catholicism (2a). The number of LDS missionaries steadily increased and they were much better prepared for their proselytizing (1b).<sup>36</sup> The LDS Church thoroughly revised its worldwide missionary program, requiring missionaries to use six standardized lessons (nowadays called discussions) to teach investigators all over the world the same basic principles of Mormonism.<sup>37</sup> There was more emphasis on the unique elements of Mormon theology and on the rejection of the status quo in other churches (Catholic and Protestant). Meanwhile, urbanization (factor 2d) continued in full swing. The population of Santiago’s urban agglomeration grew from 1.3 million in 1950 to 2.8 million in 1970 and 4.7 million in 1990. By then, Santiago contained one-third of the total population of Chile.<sup>38</sup> For the Mormons and the Pentecostals, the new city dwellers formed an easily accessible reservoir for recruitment.<sup>39</sup> It is likely that many converted to Mormonism after being disappointed in Protestantism or Pentecostalism, as happened in Central America in the 1980s.<sup>40</sup>

*Period 2, 1971–76: Low Growth.* In November 1972, the first stake was organized in Santiago de Chile. Yet the average annual growth rate for 1971–76 was only 6.3 percent, compared to over 41 percent for 1960–71. LDS membership growth was low during the years of the reform-oriented government of Salvador Allende (1970–73) and the first three years after the bloody military coup by General Augusto Pinochet in September 1973. Pentecostal churches boomed during the 1970s, in part because their leaders were all Chileans, whereas in the LDS Church all important leadership positions were occupied by North Americans. A minor economic boom might have decreased the demand for religion, the urban growth rate slowed down, and LDS missionaries were withdrawn for security reasons during the first years of the Pinochet military dictatorship—also affecting growth negatively.

*Period 3, 1976–85: High Growth.* From 1976 to 1980, the average annual growth rate was an amazing 33.5 percent. The top LDS growth years in Chile were 1976 (40 percent), 1978 (51 percent), and 1979 (30 percent). Chileans were facing a severe economic crisis, rising poverty, an intensification of political violence (the “dirty war” of the armed forces against anyone deemed progressive; factor 2c), political instability, and general turmoil. In 1983, “two important guerrilla groups were formed which would soon begin attacking the Mormons” as representatives of U.S. imperialism.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, more Chileans than ever before came into contact with the LDS Church. The full-time LDS missionary force had increased enormously to about 300 in 1985. They were well-prepared, well-organized, and guided by efficient U.S. mission presidents. A great many investigators were baptized within two to six weeks after their first meeting with the missionaries. Competition for members with (charismatic) Catholicism and Pentecostalism was very intense in this period. However, Pentecostal growth had begun to slow before the LDS Church experienced its membership boom in 1976–80.<sup>42</sup> Other significant growth factors were the impact of growth momentum<sup>43</sup> and the global economic crisis that intensified in the early 1980s.

*Period 4, 1985–90: Average Growth.* From 1985 to 1990, the average annual growth rate was a little lower than the 1960–2008 average: 12.2 percent. What was the profile of LDS converts in Chile in the 1980s? Rodolfo Acevedo conducted a survey among 700 male converts aged eighteen and older. Almost half (45 percent) “came from the ranks of laborers and unemployed.” But David C. Knowlton found it “equally significant that 15 percent are professionals and 26 percent petite bourgeoisie.”<sup>44</sup> These Chileans were facing the final years of the Pinochet regime, a severe economic crisis, and rising poverty. Meanwhile the fulltime LDS missionary force kept growing, but at a slower pace. Competition for members with Catholicism and Pentecostalism remained intense in the late 1980s. After losing a popular plebiscite, General Pinochet finally allowed democracy to return in 1989, when Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin won the first free elections in almost twenty years on December 14.

*Period 5, 1990–2008: Low Growth.* After the 1980s, growth rates decreased sharply and rapidly. The average annual growth rate for the entire 1990–2008 period was 3.5 percent: a little higher than population growth, but not representing a sizeable net expansion in membership. What happened? The LDS missionary effort had only expanded. This again suggests that the missionary force does not determine LDS growth.<sup>45</sup> One can think of other factors that are relevant as well. Membership growth in the Pentecostal churches also stalled after 1990. The reservoir of dissatisfied Catholics was probably running empty by now. The Chilean economy was recovering strongly from the earlier economic crisis. Democracy in Chile was gradually strengthened and political stability steadily improved.

Why did Chileans turn specifically to Mormonism instead of Pentecostalism or (charismatic) Catholicism? Chileans had converted massively to Pentecostalism in 1930–60, and to counter these defections, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal was eventually sanctioned by the Catholic hierarchy (factor 2b), growing strongly in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>46</sup> I mentioned earlier that Guatemalans were attracted to Mormonism for six main factors: its organization and lay priesthood, its style of worship, being blessed with miracles, its strict code of conduct, its practical teachings, and receiving support from fellow members. The last four factors are not unique to Mormonism: Pentecostalism and Adventism (and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal) also stress a strict code of conduct, practical teachings, miracles, and support from members.<sup>47</sup>

We need to study in-depth through ethnographic methods how and why the two uniquely Mormon attraction factors work for people in Latin America (factors 1a and 1c). What are the unique features of the LDS organization and its lay priesthood? What specific miracles and blessings do active Mormons report? How do the strong ties of the LDS Church to the United States affect its growth? And how do Mormons receive concrete support from their fellow Mormons? When new members do not receive the support they need, many drop out, which helps explain the low LDS retention rates all over Latin America.

### **Seventh-day Adventist Growth in Latin America**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, organized in 1863, traces

its origin to the “Great Disappointment” of 1844, when Jesus Christ did not return to Earth as was predicted by William Miller. Ronald Lawson argues that until the beginning of the twentieth century, and possibly until World War II, “Adventism was highly sectarian and in considerable tension with its [American] environment,” especially in its observance of Saturday, its expectation of the imminent return of Christ, its diet restrictions (vegetarianism, no alcohol, coffee, or tea), prohibitions on dancing, theater and gambling, and refusal to take up arms. Its view of itself as the one true church and of other groups as apostate “tended to create bitter, mutually held, antagonisms.”<sup>48</sup>

However, the level of tension between Adventists and American mainstream society lowered sharply after the Second World War. Lawson concluded that “the growth and accreditation of their educational and medical institutions has required participation in society and provided opportunities for upward [social] mobility; the five-day work week removed many of the major problems surrounding Sabbath observance; and Adventist dietary and smoking prohibitions have won increasing credibility as a result of medical research.”<sup>49</sup>

SDA leaders after World War II consciously sought to decrease tension with mainstream society, eventually leading to a “marked relaxation of tension with governments, other churches, and societies” all over the world—including Latin America.<sup>50</sup> Lawson concluded that “Seventh-Day Adventists have shown considerable willingness to compromise their positions whenever external threat or opportunities to gain acceptance have made this auspicious. . . . These flowed from their experience of upward social mobility, which led them to relax the urgency of their apocalyptic[ism] and to claim an increasing stake in society.”<sup>51</sup>

The international expansion of the SDA Church started in the late nineteenth century and continued into the early twentieth century. Growth in Latin America first exploded in the 1960s and later again in the 1980s.<sup>52</sup> As a result of this growth, the U.S. proportion of global SDA membership decreased from 26.7 percent in 1960 to 6.4 percent by 2007.<sup>53</sup> The present-day Seventh-day Adventist Church can properly be called an international church, because 94 percent of its worldwide membership was concentrated

outside the United States in 2007. It could also be called a Third World church, as 91.8 percent of its global membership was located in less-developed countries. The most important landmass for Seventh-day Adventism in early 2008 was Latin America and the Caribbean (34.7 percent), closely followed by Africa (30.7 percent) and Asia (19.44 percent), and at a much greater distance by the United States (6.4 percent), Oceania (including Australia and New Zealand: 2.55 percent) and Europe (1.8 percent).<sup>54</sup>

Together with Africa, Latin America is the main membership growth area for Adventism. The contribution of Latin American countries to the worldwide membership increased from 20.3 percent in 1960 to 34.7 percent in 2008, while the U.S. membership proportion declined from 26.7 percent in 1960 to 6.4 percent by 2007.<sup>55</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has already been present in most Latin American countries for at least a century now, although the earliest SDA missionaries arrived in Honduras (1887), Argentina (1890), Uruguay (1892), Nicaragua (1892), Mexico (1893), Brazil (1893), Chile (1894), Panama (1897), Bolivia (1897), and Peru (1898). The earliest SDA mission in Latin America officially opened in Argentina in 1894.<sup>56</sup> In the early twentieth century, Adventist missionaries started working in Paraguay (1900), Puerto Rico (1901), Costa Rica (1903), Ecuador (1904), Venezuela (1907), and Guatemala (1908). A third wave of SDA missionaries took off in the 1920s in Colombia, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic (see Table 3).

The result of this early gradual SDA missionary expansion into Latin America was a highly uneven growth distribution. The simplest indicator is to look at the officially registered SDA membership as a percentage of the total population for each country. By this standard, Peru (2.76 percent), Honduras (2.67 percent), the Dominican Republic (2.58 percent), El Salvador (2.46 percent), Panama (2.44 percent), and Bolivia (2.02 percent) are the most heavily Adventist countries of Latin America, while Mexico (0.56 percent), Ecuador (0.55 percent), Colombia (0.54 percent), Argentina (0.25 percent), Paraguay (0.22 percent), and especially Uruguay (0.21 percent) are the *least* Adventist ones (see Table 3).

Another way to analyze the Seventh-day Adventist presence in

Latin America is by looking at the most recent SDA annual membership growth rate for each country, which is also reported in Table 3. After four decades of (high) growth, SDA growth in Latin America seems to be slowing down in only a few countries. An actual SDA membership *decrease* occurred in four countries in 2006–07: Peru (-0.21 percent), Uruguay (-0.96 percent), Chile (-2.68 percent), and Brazil (-3.66 percent). SDA membership growth stagnated at 1 to 3 percent annually—comparable to population growth—in two countries: Costa Rica (1.74 percent) and Puerto Rico (2.57 percent).

However, SDA membership growth in 2006–7 was still going strong in the third and largest group of Latin American countries: Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Panama, Guatemala, Bolivia, Honduras, Ecuador, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and especially El Salvador. The average annual growth rates for these thirteen countries ranged from almost 4 percent in Mexico to almost 14 percent in El Salvador.<sup>57</sup> All six Central American countries are represented in this group.

For 2006, the SDA Church reported a general worldwide retention rate of 76 percent in the first year of membership.<sup>58</sup> In the United States, 73 percent of Americans raised as Adventists remained in that church as adults in 2001; by 2008 this percentage had decreased to 60 percent.<sup>59</sup> No information is available for SDA retention rates in Latin America countries.

### **Seventh-day Adventist Growth Patterns in Chile**

The Seventh-day Adventist church arrived in Chile in 1901 and formally organized its mission work there in the late 1920s. Adventism in Chile has been only moderately successful in terms of membership growth. According to the membership on record, about 0.74 percent of the Chilean population had been baptized into the SDA Church in 2007, which is slightly under the Latin American average of 0.87 percent (see Table 3).

*SDA Growth Periods in Chile.* Based on Table 4, we can distinguish six main SDA growth periods in Chile:

Period 1, 1956–60: low growth, AAGR 3.4%.

Period 2, 1960–68: high growth, AAGR 10.1%.

**Table 3**  
**Registered SDA Membership in Latin America, Year-End 2007**

<i>Country (arrival; mission)</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>% population</i>	<i>AAGR 2006–07</i>
Peru (1898; 1905)	769,980	2.76%	-0.21%
Honduras (1887; 1918)	189,670	2.67%	8.86%
Dominican Republic (1924)	242,084	2.58%	4.47%
El Salvador (1915; 1918)	168,933	2.46%	13.83%
Panama (1897; 1903)	81,481	2.44%	6.16%
Bolivia (1897; 1996?)	198,259	2.02%	7.41%
Nicaragua (1892; 1927)	92,474	1.65%	11.28%
Guatemala (1908; 1913)	198,238	1.48%	6.62%
Costa Rica (1903; 1927)	56,647	1.29%	1.74%
Puerto Rico (1901; 1928?)	36,443	0.92%	2.57%
Chile (1894; 1895)	123,412	0.74%	-2.68%
Brazil (1893; 1902)	1,331,282	0.70%	-3.66%
Venezuela (1907; 1919)	177,530	0.66%	9.86%
Mexico (1893; 1903)	597,540	0.56%	3.88%
Ecuador (1904; 1905)	74,096	0.55%	8.92%
Colombia (1921; 1922)	251,290	0.54%	4.26%
Argentina (1890; 1894)	99,255	0.25%	4.29%
Paraguay (1900; 1948)	14,545	0.22%	6.09%
Uruguay (1892; 1896)	6,877	0.21%	-0.96%
Total Latin America	4,767,022	0.87 %	2.49 %
Total Central America	787,443	1.93 %	8.08 %

AAGR: Average annual growth rate (in percent)

*Sources:* Land, *Historical Dictionary*, 23–24, 42, 44–45, 57, 66, 72, 83, 84, 91, 121, 136, 190–91, 212, 225–56, 309, 311; Seventh-day Adventist Statistics.  
[Http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/ASR/ASR2007.pdf](http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/ASR/ASR2007.pdf).

- Period 3, 1968–73: average growth, AAGR 5.7%.
- Period 4, 1973–80: high growth, AAGR 9.1%.
- Period 5, 1980–90: average growth, AAGR 6.3%.
- Period 6, 1990–2007: low growth, AAGR 3.6%.

SDA membership growth in Chile was remarkably constant, registering an average annual growth rate for the entire 1956–2007 period of 6.1 percent. SDA growth was low from 1956 to 1960 and again after 1990. The high SDA growth periods were 1960–68 and 1973–80. By 2003, there were 490 SDA churches in Chile with a combined membership of 111,759.<sup>60</sup> In 2007, Adventist membership in Chile stood at 123,412 (see Table 4).

*Early Adventism in Chile.* The new 1871 constitution in Chile recognized secular marriage, abolished church courts, and declared freedom of worship for the first time in Chilean history.<sup>61</sup> As political stability increased, early industrialization took off and fostered urbanization and the formation of a worker class. The first Adventist canvassers from the United States, F. W. Bishop and T. H. Davis, arrived in Chile in October 1894: “To their disadvantage, neither spoke Spanish. Their sales were meager at first, enabling them only to eke out a living, but they hung on.”<sup>62</sup> The first ordained Adventist minister, G. H. Baber, arrived in Valparaiso in July 1895, supervising the modest growth in the number of SDA converts.<sup>63</sup> Greenleaf wrote: “By 1904 membership was still fewer than 200, sprinkled from Iquique in the north to Temuco and Concepción in the south. . . . Workers were few and added to their burdens was the responsibility of promoting Adventism in Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador.”<sup>64</sup> The first Adventist school in Chile opened its doors in April 1906.<sup>65</sup> Chile became a separate conference in 1907.<sup>66</sup> “By 1930, the conference had 29 churches and over 1,700 members and was operating eight schools. A hospital opened in 1958 and a secondary school in 1963.”<sup>67</sup> The stage was set.

*Adventist Growth after 1960.* All over the world, in the 1960s and 1970s, “Adventists sought liberties (freedom to evangelize, freedom to observe the Sabbath, protection of their institutions) and

**Table 4**  
**Registered SDA Membership in Chile, 1956–2007**

<i>Year-End</i>	<i>Registered Membership</i>	<i>% Population AAGR in %</i>	
1956	6,248	0.09 %	5.20 %
1957	6,573	0.09 %	5.72 %
1958	6,949	0.10 %	6.12 %
1959	7,374	0.10 %	-3.44 %
1960	7,120	0.09 %	9.26 %
1961	7,779	0.10 %	11.52 %
1962	8,675	0.11 %	4.44 %
1963	9,060	0.12 %	8.83 %
1964	9,860	0.12 %	7.34 %
1965	10,584	0.12 %	14.99 %
1966	12,171	0.14 %	10.56 %
1967	13,456	0.14 %	13.76 %
1968	15,307	0.16 %	7.51 %
1969	16,456	0.17 %	6.71 %
1970	17,560	0.18 %	5.18 %
1971	18,469	0.19 %	4.18 %
1972	19,241	0.19 %	4.75 %
1973	20,155	0.19 %	14.45 %
1974	23,067	0.22 %	10.97 %
1975	25,597	0.24 %	8.89 %
1976	27,872	0.27 %	7.79 %
1977	30,043	0.28 %	5.82 %
1978	31,792	0.29 %	7.91 %
1979	34,306	0.31 %	7.99 %
1980	37,048	0.33 %	4.45 %
1981	38,696	0.34 %	6.22 %
1982	41,103	0.35 %	8.60 %
1983	44,638	0.37 %	9.96 %
1984	49,084	0.40 %	3.72 %
1985	50,909	0.41 %	7.09 %
1986	54,519	0.44 %	8.00 %
1987	58,881	0.47 %	4.39 %
1988	61,468	0.48 %	6.20 %
1989	65,281	0.49 %	4.15 %

**Table 4 (cont.)**  
**Registered SDA Membership in Chile, 1956–2007**

<i>Year-End</i>	<i>Registered Membership</i>	<i>% Population AAGR in %</i>	
1990	67,990	0.51 %	3.42 %
1991	70,314	0.52 %	5.81 %
1992	74,396	0.55 %	6.67 %
1993	79,360	0.59 %	5.84 %
1994	83,992	0.60 %	2.11 %
1995	85,761	0.60 %	1.58 %
1996	87,119	0.60 %	3.93 %
1997	90,544	0.61 %	3.77 %
1998	93,959	0.63 %	4.05 %
1999	97,763	0.65 %	3.86 %
2000	101,534	0.67 %	-0.53 %
2001	100,996	0.66 %	4.14 %
2002	105,174	0.67 %	6.26 %
2003	111,759	0.71 %	5.34 %
2004	117,730	0.74 %	4.03 %
2005	122,469	0.76 %	3.55 %
2006	126,814	0.77 %	-2.68 %
2007	123,412	0.74 %	N.A.
1956–2007	51-year average annual growth rate		6.09 %

AAGR: Average annual growth rate (in percent)

Sources: Seventh-day Adventist Church Statistical Reports, 1956 to 2007,  
<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/ASR/ASR2007.pdf>.

favors (for example, accreditation of schools, facilitation of projects through duty-free import of equipment) and, in return, were willing to help legitimate or otherwise assist regimes. Such relationships were especially numerous among the military regimes of Latin America. For example, in Pinochet's Chile, "Adventists were known as friends of the president, providing him with legitimation from a religious source when he was under attack from

the Catholic Cardinal for torture and disappearances.”<sup>68</sup> This rapprochement with the military regime did not have negative consequences for Adventist growth in Chile in the 1980s, although it may have become a factor in the slowing down of SDA membership growth after the return to civilian democracy in 1990. The average annual SDA membership growth fluctuated between a high of 10 percent in 1960–68 to 5.7 percent in 1968–73, 9.1 percent in 1973–90, 6.3 percent in the 1980s, and a low of 3.6 percent after 1990.

The 1960s Adventist boom period in Chile obviously cannot be explained by its novelty, since the church had already been present for over sixty-five years. Urbanization (2d), early industrialization, growth momentum, and sociopolitical upheaval (2c) all coincided and combined with dissatisfaction with Catholicism (2a). After the 1973 oil crisis led to an economic crisis and a sharp rise in poverty, SDA growth rates went up again in the 1970s. After the end of the Pinochet military dictatorship and the return to democracy in 1990, SDA growth went down sharply to 3.6 percent per year.

### Conclusion

Seventh-day Adventism expanded internationally half a century before Mormonism and can now properly be called a Third World church, whereas Mormonism is (still) predominantly a U.S. church.<sup>69</sup> Adventism currently has a much stronger presence in Africa (31 percent of its global membership) and Latin America (35 percent) than Mormonism (with only 2 percent in Africa and 38 percent in Latin America). Adventism is still growing strongly in thirteen Latin American countries, but SDA membership growth stagnated in Costa Rica and Puerto Rico and decreased in Peru, Uruguay, and Chile. Mormon growth peaked in the 1980s but is nowadays high in only five countries: the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Brazil, Paraguay, and Nicaragua. The 2006–7 LDS growth rate was barely 1 percent in Chile or less than population growth. The average growth rate for the Adventists in Chile that same year was minus 2.7 percent.

Since the early twentieth century, Chile was a representative democracy. This was abruptly ended by the violent 1973 military coup against the reform-oriented government of President Allen-

de. General Pinochet headed a highly repressive military regime, waging a “dirty war” against anybody deemed leftist from 1973 until 1989. The main Pentecostal boom periods in Chile were 1909–15 and 1930–60, with modest growth in the 1970s. As a result, Chile had a Protestant population proportion of about 15 percent in 2002,<sup>70</sup> making it one of the most Protestant countries of Latin America.

Table 5 juxtaposes the LDS and SDA growth periods in Chile and reveals interesting trends. How to explain the low SDA and LDS growth in Chile after 1990? Cragun and Lawson suggest a strong possible explanation for non-Catholic growth stagnation with their theory of the “secular transition.” Using aggregate data for nearly every country around the world, Cragun and Lawson showed that Mormon, Witness, and Adventist growth eventually slows down due to saturation (factor 1d) and reduced demand for religion. Reduced demand typically happens when countries reach a “high level of economic development,” as evidenced by a United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.8 or higher.<sup>71</sup> After that point is reached, all three religions eventually experience very little to no growth.<sup>72</sup> Chile was number forty-four on the world list with a “very high” HDI of 0.805 in 2011.<sup>73</sup> The Chilean economy is strong since the 1990s, creating many new jobs and pushing poverty levels down. Chile now has one of the highest per-capita incomes of Latin America and follows the secular transition theory perfectly: All non-Catholic churches have experienced growth stagnation since the 1990s. The LDS Church in Latin America is currently growing, especially in countries with a Human Development Index under 0.8, such as Nicaragua, Honduras, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic (see Table 1).<sup>74</sup>

The similarities in growth patterns for both Mormons and Adventists in Chile before and after 1990 could be seen as a confirmation of modernization theory and deprivation theory. Deprivation theory assumes that people will turn more to religion when they face stress and political persecution or when coping with poverty and economic uncertainty (factor 2c).<sup>75</sup> In the period of early industrialization and high urbanization (2d), the 1950s and 1960s, both Mormons and Adventists grew strongly all

**Table 5**  
**Comparing LDS and SDA Growth Periods in Chile, 1956–2007**

<i>Main LDS Growth Periods in Chile</i>	<i>Main SDA Growth Periods in Chile:</i>
1. 1960–71: boom years AAGR 41.4 %	1. 1956–60: low growth AAGR 3.4 %
2. 1971–76: low growth AAGR 6.3 %	2. 1960–68: high growth AAGR 10.1 %
3. 1976–85: high growth AAGR 23.5 %	3. 1968–73: average growth AAGR 5.7 %
4. 1985–90: average growth AAGR 12.2 %	4. 1973–80: high growth AAGR 9.1 %
5. 1990–2008: low growth AAGR 3.5 %	5. 1980–90: average growth AAGR 6.3 %
	6. 1990–2007: low growth AAGR 3.6 %
1960–2008 48-year AAGR 17.2 %	1956–2007 51-year AAGR 6.1 %
Decade LDS growth periods in Chile:	Decade SDA growth periods in Chile:
1. 1960–69: AAGR 43.0 % (boom)	1. 1960–69: AAGR 9.5 % (high)
2. 1970–79: AAGR 19.1 % (average)	2. 1970–79: AAGR 7.8 % (high)
3. 1980–89: AAGR 13.9 % (below average)	3. 1980–89: AAGR 6.3 % (average)
4. 1990–99: AAGR 5.5 % (low)	4. 1990–99: AAGR 4.1 % (low)
5. 2000–8: AAGR 1.1 % (very low)	5. 2000–7: AAGR 2.9 % (low)
1960–2008 48-year AAGR 17.2 %	1956–2007 51-year AAGR 6.1 %

over Latin America. After the 1973 oil crisis, Mormon growth in Chile first went down and then exploded, while Adventist growth remained high until 1980. SDA growth in Chile continued at a moderate rate afterward, while Mormon growth peaked in 1976–85. The main factor here was the growth of the fulltime LDS missionary force (1b), which is an important factor to explain LDS expansion in Latin America.<sup>76</sup> Mormon growth periods in Central America occurred about a decade after the Pentecostal boom, whereas in Paraguay and Chile, Mormon and Pentecostal booms neatly coincided in the 1980s.<sup>77</sup> Adventist growth in Chile likewise coincided with Pentecostal membership expansion in the 1960s and 1970s. LDS missionaries after 1999 focused more on retention than on recruitment (factor 1d), which contributed to the lower Mormon growth rates all over Latin America in recent years. Mormonism has retention rates of only 20 to 30 percent in

Latin America, whereas Adventism has a global retention rate of 76 percent<sup>78</sup> and U.S. retention rates of 60 to 73 percent.<sup>79</sup> What accounts for this huge difference? Further study of these and other differences is required to better analyze and understand both the differences and the similarities between LDS and SDA growth patterns—whether in Latin America or elsewhere.

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5. Lawson and Cragun, "Comparing the Geographic Distributions" and Ryan T. Cragun and Ronald Lawson, "The Secular Transition: The Worldwide Growth of Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Adventists," *Sociology of Religion* 71, no. 3 (2010): 349–73 both analyze LDS, SDA, and JW growth worldwide.

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9. Mark L. Grover, "The Maturing of the Oak: The Dynamics of LDS Growth in Latin America," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 85.

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11. Henri Gooren, "Latter-day Saints under Siege: The Unique Experience of Nicaraguan Mormons," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 40, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 136; Grover, "The Maturing of the Oak," 88.

12. Grover, "The Maturing of the Oak," 88.

13. Henri Gooren, "The Mormons of the World: The Meaning of LDS Membership in Central America." In *Revisiting Thomas F. O'Dea's*

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14. Gooren, "Latter-day Saints under Siege."

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16. Gooren, "The Mormons of the World," 366; Mark L. Grover, *Mormonism in Brazil: Religion and Dependency in Latin America* (PhD. diss., Indiana University, 1985); Grover, "The Maturing of the Oak"; Knowlton, "Mormonism in Latin America"; David C. Knowlton, "How Many Members Are There Really? Two Censuses and the Meaning of LDS Membership in Chile and Mexico," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 53–78; Rodney Stark, "The Basis of Mormon Success: A Theoretical Application," in *Latter-day Saint Social Life: Social Research on the LDS Church and Its Members*, edited by James T. Duke (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1998), 29–70.

17. Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 154; Shepherd and Shepherd, *Mormon Passage*, 110–11.

18. Shepherd and Shepherd, *Mormon Passage*, 111; Stewart, "Growth, Retention, and Internationalization," 347.

19. Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 2, 153, 155–56, 160–62, 166–69, 186.

20. Bryant et al., "Conversion and Retention in Mormonism"; Gooren, "The Mormons of the World," 371; Stewart, "Growth, Retention, and Internationalization," 333–38; Rick Phillips, "Rethinking the International Expansion of Mormonism," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 10, no. 1 (2006): 54–56.

21. Gooren, "The Mormons of the World," 371–72.

22. Stewart, "Growth, Retention, and Internationalization," 355.
23. Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 170.
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27. Gooren, "The Mormons of the World," 377. See also Rick Phillips, "'De Facto Congregationalism' and Mormon Missionary Outreach: An Ethnographic Case Study," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 4 (2008): 638–39.
28. Stan L. Albrecht, "The Consequential Dimension of Mormon Religiosity," in *Latter-day Saint Social Life: Social Research on the LDS Church and Its Members*, edited by James T. Duke (Provo: Brigham Young University Press), 266; Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 66; Grover, *Mormonism in Brazil*, 137–39; Knowlton, "How Many Members," 54; David G. Stewart, *The Law of the Harvest: Practical Principles of Effective Missionary Work* (Henderson, Nev.: Cumorah Foundation, 2007), 37.
29. Stewart, "Growth, Retention, and Internationalization," 334–35. I encountered only 25 percent *active* Mormons in the low-income wards I studied in Guatemala City, reflecting an inactivity rate of 75 percent. Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 66, 77.
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31. Gooren, "The Mormons of the World," 363; Patricia Fortuny and Henri Gooren, "Neither Catholics nor Protestants: Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Adventists, and 'La Luz del Mundo,'" in *The Cambridge History of Religions in Latin America*, edited by Paul Freston and Virginia Garrard-Burnett (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2014), 22.
32. Deseret News, *1999–2000 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2000), 303; Deseret News, *2007 Church Almanac*: 329.
33. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Building Faith: The LDS Church in Chile," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 1, 2006, 4.
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36. See Grover, *Mormonism in Brazil*, 129, for a similar process in Brazil.

37. Bryant et al., "Conversion and Retention in Mormonism."
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39. Lalive, *Haven of the Masses*; Hans Tennekes, *El movimiento pentecostal en la sociedad chilena* (Amsterdam/Iquique: Free University Amsterdam/Centro de Investigación de la Realidad del Norte CIREN, 1985); Frans Kamsteeg, "Prophetic Pentecostalism in Chile: A Case Study on Religion and Development Policy" (Amsterdam: Ph.D. diss., Free University, 1995).
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43. Cragun and Lawson, "The Secular Transition," 355, 370.
44. Knowlton, "Mormonism in Chile," 71.
45. Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, "Membership Growth, Church Activity, and Missionary Recruitment," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 38–39.
46. Henri Gooren, "The Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Latin America," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 34, no. 2 (2012): 185–207.
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48. Ronald Lawson, "Broadening the Boundaries of Church-Sect Theory: Insights from the Evolution of the Nonschismatic Mission Churches of Seventh-day Adventism," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no. 4 (1998): 654–55.
49. *Ibid.*, 655.
50. *Ibid.*, 362.
51. *Ibid.*, 375.
52. *Ibid.*, 373.
53. *Seventh-day Adventist Statistics: 1960*, <http://www.adventistarchives.com>.

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54. *Seventh-day Adventist Statistics: 2008*, <http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/Stats/ACRep2008.pdf> (accessed September 9, 2009).

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56. Gary Land, *Historical Dictionary of Seventh-day Adventists* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2005), 23; *SDA Statistics* (2008).

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58. *Christian Century*, "Worldwide Membership in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Has Increased to 15.4 Million," November 13, 2007.

59. Mark A. Kellner, "Study: Adventists Score High in Membership Retention," *Adventist Review* (Upper Columbia Conference), March 5, 2008, <http://www.uccsda.org/News/Membership-Retention> (accessed September 13, 2009).

60. Land, *Historical Dictionary*, 57.

61. Floyd Greenleaf, *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America and the Caribbean, Volume I: Let the Earth Hear His Voice* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1992), 3.

62. *Ibid.*, 18.

63. *Ibid.*, 21, 83.

64. *Ibid.*, 35.

65. *Ibid.*, 53.

66. *Ibid.*, 95.

67. Land, *Historical Dictionary*, 57.

68. Lawson, "Sect-State Relations," 360.

69. By the year 2020, Mormonism might have a majority of Latin American members (Grover, "The Maturing of the Oak," 85), but its highest leadership will remain firmly based in Salt Lake City, Utah.

70. United States Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report 2008: Chile*, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108518.htm> (accessed August 5, 2009).

71. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic of life expectancy, school enrollment, literacy, and income indices. United Nations Development Program, *HDI Report 2011*, p. 60, [http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR\\_2011\\_EN\\_Table1.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2011_EN_Table1.pdf) (accessed February 13, 2012).

72. Cragun and Lawson, "The Secular Transition" and Lawson and Cragun, "Comparing the Geographic Distributions."

73. United Nations Development Program, *HDI Report 2011*, 127.

74. Brazil is the only exception to the secular transition theory, with

an HDI of 0.813 (somewhat higher than Chile) yet almost 5 percent LDS membership growth in 2006-7.

75. Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

76. Shepherd and Shepherd, "Membership Growth," 38-39.

77. Gooren, "Comparing Protestant and Mormon Growth Patterns," forthcoming.

78. *Christian Century*, "Worldwide Membership."

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# Joseph Smith, Captain Kidd Lore, and Treasure-Seeking in New York and New England during the Early Republic

*Noel A. Carmack*

In his 2003 *Dialogue* article, Ronald V. Huggins discussed the possibility that Joseph Smith's ostensible encounter with the angel Moroni was the invocation of a long-held folk tradition of treasure guardians in a milieu of treasure seeking and folk magic in the northeast.<sup>1</sup> Huggins concluded that "Smith must have learned of the [treasure-guardian] motif while helping his father dig for Kidd's treasure and while studying Kidd's life and lore as a boy."<sup>2</sup> Some Latter-day Saint scholars, however, maintain that the figure Moroni was a visiting angel, as has been represented in official LDS accounts.<sup>3</sup>

Whether or not Moroni was an angel or treasure guardian may be important in determining the derivation of Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon character and otherworldly messenger, but perhaps more provocative is whether Smith's two-decades-long encounter with the treasure-seeking worldview had any influence on his role as translator. What did Joseph Smith know about Captain William "Robert" Kidd and other pirates operating in the East Indian Ocean? How would he have obtained such information? This article examines the transmission of tales and published accounts of Captain Kidd (some of which may have been accessible to Joseph Smith) and the possibility that he appropriated place names that appear in the Book of Mormon and pre-1830 maps, atlases, and geographical texts. Does the Book of

Mormon contain language that might reflect Smith's youthful preoccupation with Captain Kidd and his hidden treasure?

Scholars have well established that the prevalent use of folk magic and divining practices in New York and the New England states for the search of buried treasure was motivated by Captain Kidd's legend and other pirate lore. Folklorist Wayland Hand and historian Alan Taylor have written of both the pirate lore and the widespread, indefatigable pursuit of buried treasure as part of the prevailing supernatural economy in the Northeast—a pursuit that promised quick wealth and power over a supernatural world.<sup>4</sup> Men and women of the poorer classes embraced treasure-seeking to counter the uncertainty and privation that accompanied the struggling new republic. Farmers and merchants living in the rural hinterlands resorted to using occult magic, necromancy, and divination to locate hidden pirate treasure. As historian W. R. Jones observed, "What the ubiquitous Captain Kidd did for the northern coasts, Morgan and Lafitte did for the south; and provocative place-names such as 'The Gold Fields' near Stratford, Connecticut, and 'Money Hill' on the beach at Providencetown pointed to places to dig."<sup>5</sup>

Following the discovery of a portion of Kidd's treasure on Gardiner's Island, New York, in 1699, treasure seekers began to scour the coastline and inlets of New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Long Island Sound.<sup>6</sup> So dogged was the search for Captain Kidd's buried loot during the early decades of the nineteenth century that many unburied, unfilled holes riddled the New England countryside as remnants of unsuccessful digs. The *New York Constellation* reported that, in the quest for Kidd's elusive treasure, "acres of ground have been dug, three fathom deep, for its discovery. In various places may be seen large pits still yawning as proof of the prevalent belief in this buried treasure, and as mementos of the credulity and the avarice of mankind."<sup>7</sup> An 1817 *New York Daily Advertiser* article described the widespread pursuit of Kidd's treasure thus:

The belief in the existence of treasures secreted in different parts of the coast, is to this day prevalent in a great part of the southern shores of New England, and many adventures have attempted to discover his secret hoards. Magical practices are attributed to him for their preservation, and Beelzebub himself is confidently declared to

be leagued with the famous pirate, and to keep watch on the lid of his iron chest to deter the attempts of daring avarice.<sup>8</sup>

One traditional account asserted that Kidd's vessel was chased up the Hudson River by some English men-of-war. In order to elude capture, those on board set fire to the ship and escaped with what they could carry, leaving behind the largest portion of the gold and silver on board the wreck, which sank at the entrance to the Highlands.<sup>9</sup> An Albany newspaper reported in 1823 that Kidd found a prominent landmark to hide his loot:

During his piratical career, he visited Coeymans and Albany, and had a secret place of retirement on or near a hill about two miles south of Albany, (and which still bears his name, viz. *Kiddenhooghten*, or, as it is improperly called, *Kittenhooghten*.) That hill, according to tradition, he adopted as a place of rendezvous for those infernal spirits, to whose care he entrusted the enormous sums of money, which he buried in the earth.<sup>10</sup>

These stories resulted in countless treasure digs in the hills and shorelines along the Hudson River and in the Catskills south of Albany. For many years, superstitious mountain dwellers of the Catskills often spoke of imps, ghosts, and the "'spook' that guards the money-chest of Captain Kidd."<sup>11</sup>

One short, adventurous story of a treasure dig, published in 1832, stated that "there was a belief prevalent at that time, among many of the good people of New-England, that the noted Kidd had in one of his cruises ascended the Connecticut, and buried, on its numerous islands, immense treasures of his hoarded booty."<sup>12</sup> A Windsor, Vermont, newspaper article, reprinted in the *Palmyra Register* in 1825, told of many locals pursuing Captain Kidd's treasure in the Upper Connecticut River Valley (sometimes known as the Upper Valley): "We are sorry to observe, even in this enlightened age, so prevalent a disposition to credit the accounts of the marvelous. Even the frightful stories of money being hid under the surface of the earth, and enchanted by the Devil or Robert (Captain Kidd), are received by many of our respectable fellow citizens as truths."<sup>13</sup> The article continued, "A respectable gentleman in Tunbridge, in that state, was informed, by means of a dream, that a chest of money was buried on a small island in Agar's brook, in Randolph. No sooner was he in possession of

this valuable information, than he started off to enrich himself with treasure. After having been directed by the mineral rod where to search for the money, he excavated to the depth of 7 or 8; and all the while it was necessary to keep six pumps running to keep out the water." According to this published account, his companions arrived to assist him in uncovering the chest. When one of the company drove an old file through the rotted lid of the chest and perceiving it to be nearly empty, exclaimed with a gripe, "There's not ten dollars apiece!' No sooner were the words out of his mouth, than the chest moved off through the mud, and has not been seen or heard of since."<sup>14</sup> As was illustrated by this story, it was believed that pirate treasures, under guard of a ghost or goblin, were sometimes elusive, or "slippery" when disrespectfully handled.<sup>15</sup>

Of this group of treasure hunters in Randolph and Tunbridge, Vermont, Joseph Smith Sr. (also said to have been affected by vivid dreams) may well have been a member prior to his arrival in Palmyra in 1816. Historians D. Michael Quinn and John L. Brooke have suggested that, during his years living in Tunbridge, Royalton, and Sharon (and possibly during a brief residency in Poultney), the elder Smith and William Cowdery, father of Book of Mormon witness Oliver Cowdery, were involved with a religious sect, founded in the 1790s by Nathaniel Wood and called the New Israelites, whose members also engaged in dowsing and other forms of divination to locate treasure. Members of the New Israelites began dowsing to look for buried treasure in Middletown and Rutland, Vermont, after the group was joined by a counterfeiter and treasure seer named "Winchell" (believed to be Justus Winchell) in the spring or early summer of 1800. Although it is difficult to place Smith in Rutland County, Vermont, during that particular time, Quinn and Brooke cite evidence that he was a member of this circle of treasure hunters and was one of its "leading rodsmen."<sup>16</sup> A letter inserted into the 1870 volume of *Historical Magazine* by Daniel Woodard, former judge of the Windsor County Court and relative of Beniah Woodard, stated that "Joseph Smith, Sr. was, at times, engaged in hunting for Captain Kidd's buried treasure; and he also became implicated with

one, Jack Downing, in counterfeiting money, but turned State's evidence and escaped the penalty."<sup>17</sup>

In 1857, historian Charles Elliot reported that

No unimportant man has caused more fear, speculation, and gold-digging, than Captain William Kidd. Along the shores of New England and Long Island, from his day to this, men have dug in the dead of night, directed, as they thought, by the witch-hazel, or the divining-rod, to find his buried Gold: and none have found it.<sup>18</sup>

Tales of searching for Kidd's gold booty included not only the use of divining rods and pacts with the devil, but also the guidance of treasure dreams, incantations, mesmeric trances, and professional treasure seekers to assist in finding the buried loot using a magic parchment, stone, or hazel rod.<sup>19</sup> In one documented incident, Abraham Gardiner Thompson, a leading New York merchant, recalled using a divining rod and conjuring incantations from Barrett's *Magus, or Celestial Intelligencer* (1801) to search for Captain Kidd's treasure.<sup>20</sup>

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, stories containing literary motifs of buried treasure, pirate ghost ships, and old buccaneer curses entered the corpus of American fictional writing with such tales as Washington Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker" (1824), James Fenimore Cooper's *The Water Witch* (1830), and Edgar Alan Poe's "The Gold-Bug" (1843), all conceived in the atmosphere of the Kidd legend that pervaded New York and the New England states.<sup>21</sup>

### Treasure Seekers in Palmyra

One published treasure-digging story tells of "An Old Rodsman" who was born in Westport, Massachusetts, and had grown up in a seafaring family. He eventually developed his own life on the water as commander of various boats, spending the better part of his time on dry land searching for buried treasure with a divining rod. Identified only as "the Commodore," the subject of the story spent his youth accompanying fisherman in their small coasters off the shores of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.

The region which gave him birth was prolific in witch stories, and all along the coast abounded in legends of pots and chests of money secreted by the pirates, who once infested these seas, amongst which the names of Captain Kidd and Captain Low were pre-eminent. His

maternal grandfather had in his possession a musty old manuscript, describing the location where some of these pots of treasure were hid, given him by Captain Low, who died at his house, and finally fell into the hands of “the Commodore,” kindling in his youthful mind an insatiable desire for the discovery of hidden wealth, that time could never extinguish.<sup>22</sup>

After several trading expeditions to the West Indies as a young man, the Commodore moved to Sidney, Maine, on the Kennebec River, where he followed his favorite pursuits: fishing for salmon, shad, and herring during the spring months, while making occasional fishing voyages the rest of the season to St. John’s Island (now Prince Edward Island) and the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, and selling his catches at fish markets in Boston. It was on the Kennebec that he made his first attempts at digging for Kidd’s pirate treasure in the sands along the bays, inlets, and islands near the mouth of the river. After many years unsuccessfully searching for buried treasure at spots in Portland Harbor and Casco Bay, such as Jewel Island and the shores from the mouth of the Connecticut to Penobscot, he decided to move inland. “In the year 1813, he transported his wife and children across the State of New-Hampshire and Vermont, to the town of Palmyra, in New York. Here he passed a year in cultivating the earth.”<sup>23</sup> Although he moved to Marietta, Ohio, in 1816, the Commodore undoubtedly left his treasure-seeking influence on the area’s Kidd devotees.<sup>24</sup> Mormon genealogist Thomas L. Revere and historian John L. Brooke concluded that the man known as “the Commodore” was probably Stephen Davis, born in Westport in 1777.<sup>25</sup>

Other Kidd treasure seekers in the Manchester/Palmyra area were known to associate closely with the Smith family. Dr. Luman Walters of Sodus Township was a close friend of Joseph Smith Sr. and was linked to the Palmyra circle of treasure hunters. Walters, known as “the magician” and “a juggling fortune teller,” reportedly possessed “strange books” and is believed to have spent time in France to be trained in Mesmerism and the occult.<sup>26</sup> According to a later reminiscence, Walters was adept at “reading the mind and being able to tell people where they could find lost articles, friends and the future.”<sup>27</sup> Like Walters, Smith family friend Samuel Tyler Lawrence also used folk magic to find hidden treasure.

Lawrence assisted Joseph Smith Sr. and his son in identifying dig sites in Ontario County, including a hill near Manchester (later known as the Hill Cumorah). According to Joseph Knight, a close friend of the Smiths in Palmyra, Lawrence “was a “Seear [seer] and he had Bin to the hill and knew about the things in the hill and he was trying to obtain them.”<sup>28</sup> Lorenzo Saunders, another Smith family friend and former resident of Palmyra, remembered that Smith Jr. took Lawrence to Harmony, Pennsylvania, in 1826 to look for treasure on the banks of the Susquehanna River and was first introduced to Emma Hale by Lawrence while there.<sup>29</sup> William R. Hine, a resident of Windsor, New York, recalled hearing from the younger Smith that “he [Smith] saw Captain Kidd sailing on the Susquehanna River during a freshet, and that he buried two pots of gold and silver. He claimed he saw writing cut on the rocks in an unknown language telling where Kidd buried it, and he translated it through his peepstone.” Hine also remembered that Smith had dug for silver ore, under the employ of Asa Stowell, on Monument Hill, “over a year without success.” Then, presumably with Lawrence, “he dug for Kidd’s money, on the west bank of the Susquehanna, half a mile from the river.”<sup>30</sup>

Could someone like Stephen Davis, the ascribed seer Samuel T. Lawrence, or the professed conjurer and treasure-seeker Luman Walters have planted in the minds of Palmyra residents the legendary tales of Captain William Kidd and his exploits in the Mozambique Channel, near Madagascar and the Comoro Islands?

If Joseph Smith Sr. wasn’t the first to bring enthusiasm and knowledge of Kidd treasure lore to the Manchester/Palmyra neighborhood, then these individuals may well have informed and fueled the telling and retelling of the Kidd tales. Historians know very little about Walters and Lawrence except for their pursuit of Captain Kidd’s treasure and their use of folk magic and divination to find it. According to Abner Cole, editor of the *Palmyra Register*, “The mania of money digging soon began rapidly to diffuse itself through many parts of this country; men and women without distinction of age or sex became marvellous wise in the occult sciences, many dreamed, and others saw visions disclosing to them, deep in the bowels of the earth, rich and shining treasures.”<sup>31</sup> Cole’s series of newspaper articles were written in jest,

but they were as revealing as they might have been had they been written as informative local news briefs. His satirical mockery of the area's treasure seekers disclosed Walters's methods of divination and occult magic for locating buried treasure:

Mineral rods and balls, (as they were called by the imposter who made use of them,) were supposed to be infallible guides to these sources of wealth—"peep stones" or pebbles, taken promiscuously from the brook or field, were placed in a hat or other situation excluded from the light, when some *wizzard* or *witch* (for these performances were not confined to either sex) applied their eyes, and nearly starting their balls from their sockets, declared they saw all the wonders of nature, including of course, ample stores of silver and gold.<sup>32</sup>

Walters eventually moved to Gorham and opened a medical practice in a former tavern on Main Street. He became a trusted doctor in that area and was known to employ Thomsonian medicine, using roots and herbs "which he compounded into medicine at his laboratory."<sup>33</sup> According to Abner Cole, once Walters left the Manchester/Palmyra neighborhood, "his *mantle* fell upon the *prophet* Jo. Smith Jun."<sup>34</sup>

Beginning sometime around the year 1820, Joseph Smith Jr. and his father reportedly spent some of their efforts looking for "hidden treasures" on and in the vicinity of "Miner's Hill" and "Robinson's Hill" near Palmyra, at "Bend Mountain" near Harmony, Pennsylvania, and at "Monument Hill" in Windsor, New York.<sup>35</sup> Robinson's Hill, known to present-day Latter-day Saints as the "Hill Cumorah," is situated on what used to be the property of Randall Robinson, about two miles south of the Wayne/Ontario County line, on the east side of the Canandaigua Road.<sup>36</sup> John Hyde reported in 1857 that "it was quite common in the western part of New York, about thirty years ago, for men to dig for treasure which they supposed had been hidden by Captain Kidd and others. Many plans were tried and much imposition practiced by means of divining-rods, dreams, and seeing-stones. It was not at all a new thing for Smith, therefore, to pretend to the power of seeing where gold was by the use of a 'peep-stone,' nor did it surprise the inhabitants of that locality."<sup>37</sup> Orrin Porter Rockwell, the Smiths' Manchester neighbor and longtime friend of Joseph Smith Jr., told Elizabeth Kane in the 1870s that "not only was

there religious excitement [near Palmyra], but the phantom treasure of Captain Kidd were sought for far and near, and even in places like Cumorah.”<sup>38</sup> Another contemporary of Joseph Smith named Daniel Hendrix stated in an 1899 interview that “Joe had dug and dug there for gold for four years, and from that time the hill has been known as Gold Hill.”<sup>39</sup>

By the time Robinson’s Hill became known as “Gold Hill” (and later Cumorah), the hills and countryside near the Smiths’ Manchester farm bore scars of Joseph Smith-inspired treasure digs. As late as 1867, Manchester and Palmyra residents reported seeing unfilled pits, indicating that Smith or other members of the Palmyra circle of treasure seekers had been there. In the 1830s, open and empty pits could still be seen on properties owned by Josiah Stowell and Abner Cole. Other neighborhood residents remembered that Smith and his father had dug for treasure on the properties owned by Peter Ingersoll, Joshua Stafford, and Joseph Capron. It was also reported that Joseph Smith Jr. searched for treasure on land owned by Joseph McKune Jr. in Harmony, Pennsylvania.<sup>40</sup>

In light of Joseph Smith’s idolization of Captain Kidd and pursuit of pirate treasure, some scholars have thought that his use of a name similar to that of the Indian Ocean’s Comoro Archipelago (a favorite pirate haunt) in his translation of the Book of Mormon is evidence that he borrowed it from an early map or geographical text. Even more strikingly coincidental to these scholars is Smith’s use of the name “Moroni,” which is also the governing town of the island of Grande Comore (or Grand Comoro), the largest of the Comoro Island group.

### **The Comoro Islands and Camorah**

The Comoro Islands, located northwest of Madagascar in the Mozambique Channel, were convenient places of anchorage for merchant vessels on their way to India from Europe.<sup>41</sup> Comprising four islands—Ngazidja (Grande Comore or Grand Comoro), Mahoré (Mayotte), Mwali (Mohéli or Mohilla), and Nzwani (Anjouan or Johanna)—the island group was frequently visited by Dutch, Portuguese, French, and English traders in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>42</sup> By the mid-seventeenth century, the Comoro Islands were considered a pirate stronghold, a



Fig. 1. "Comora Isles," from Southern Africa. In *A Modern Atlas* (1809) by John Pinkerton. Courtesy David Rumsey Collection.

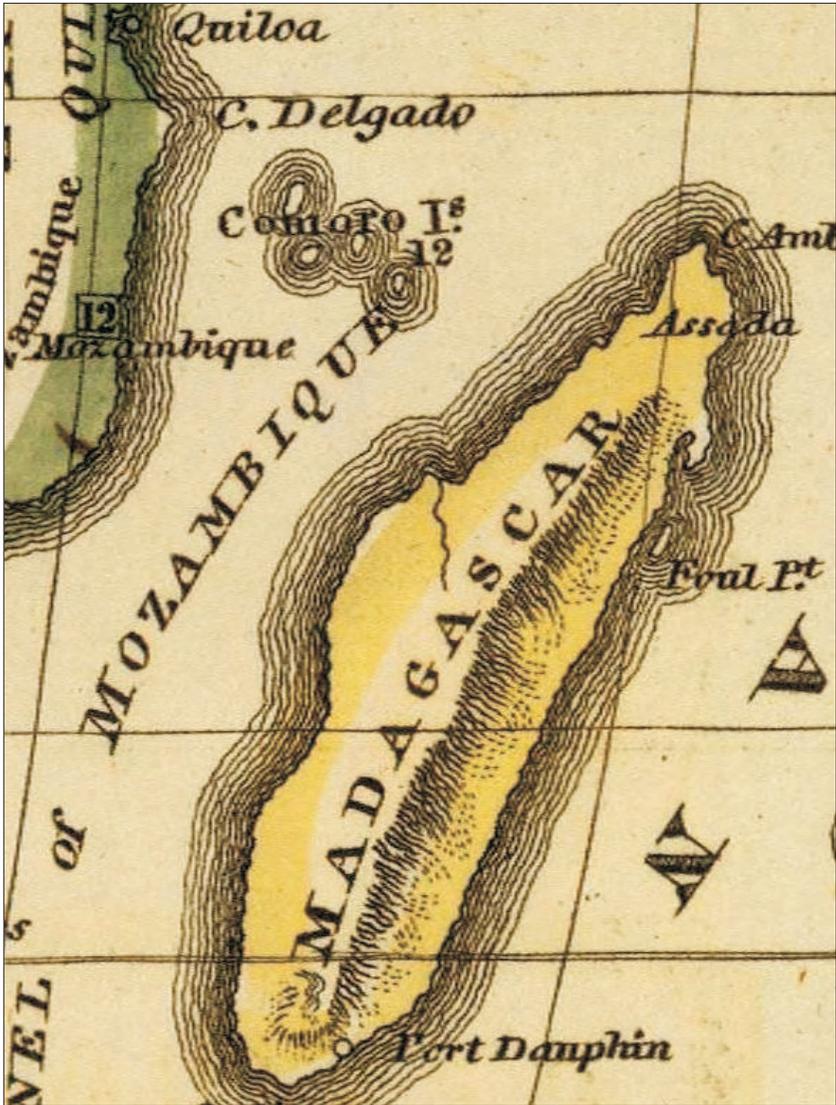


Fig. 2. Detail of "Channel of Mozambique," from Africa. In School Atlas (entered 1821, pub. in 1824) by William C. Woodbridge. Courtesy David Rumsey Collection.



Fig. 3. Detail of "Mozambique Channel" from Africa. In Carey's School Atlas (1825) by Mathew Carey. Courtesy David Rumsey Collection.

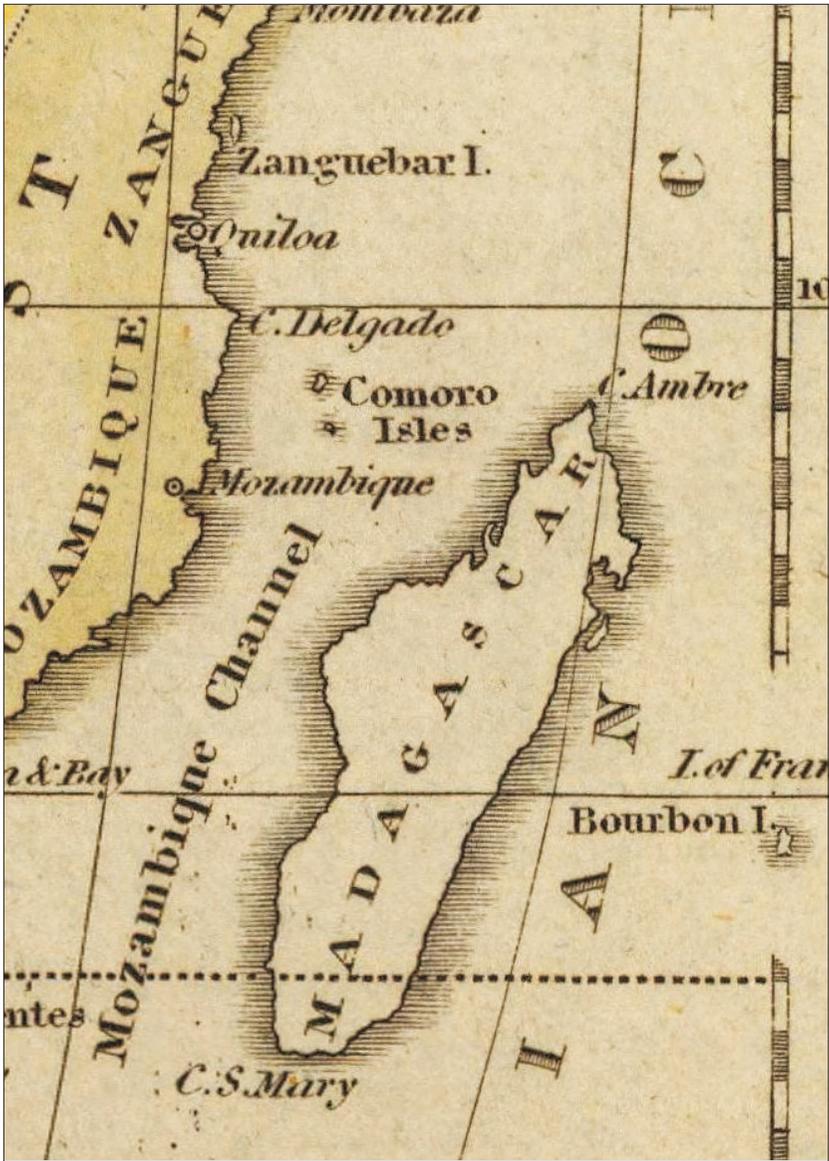


Fig. 4. Detail of "Mozambique Channel" from Africa. In School Atlas (1828) by Jedidiah Morse. Courtesy David Rumsey Collection.

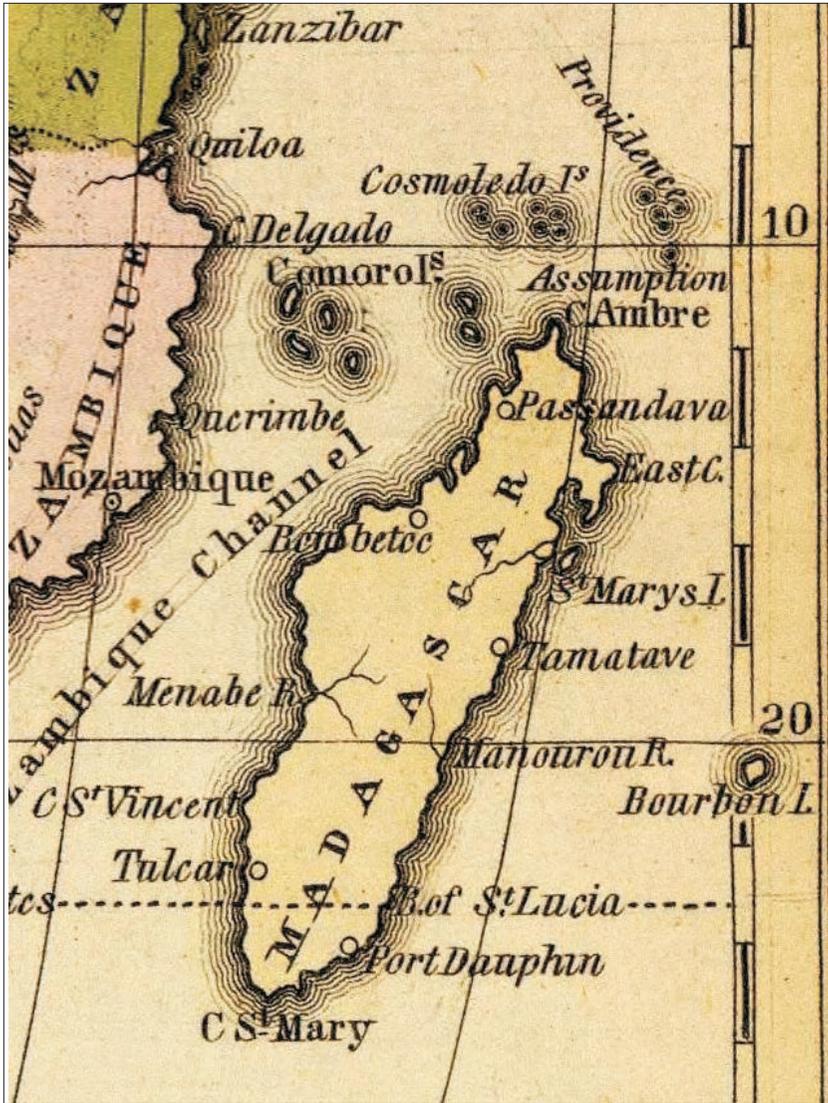
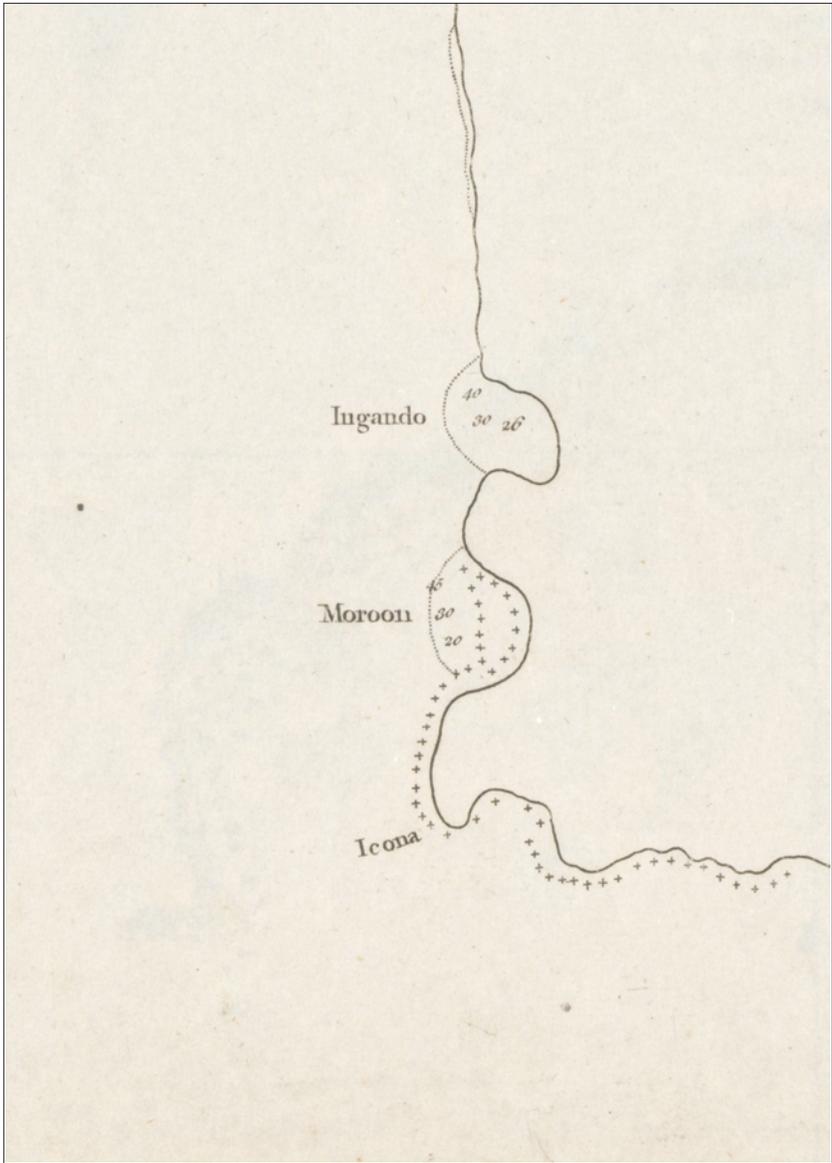
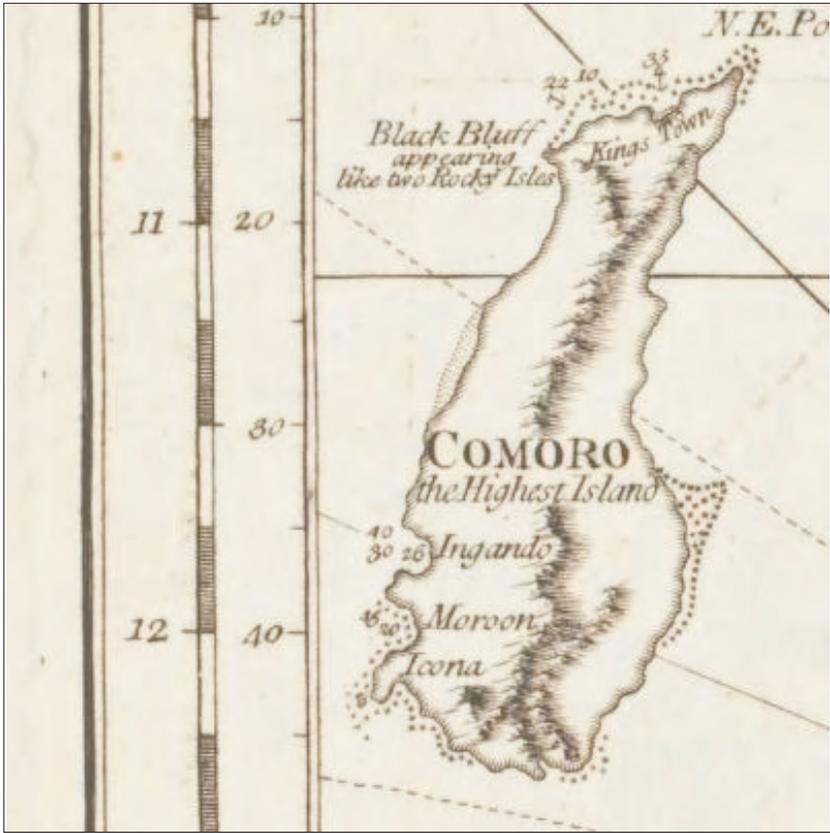


Fig. 5. Detail of "Mozambique Channel" from Africa. In Atlas (entered in 1830, pub. in 1832) by Samuel Griswold Goodrich for Malte-Brun's A System of School Geography (1830). Courtesy David Rumsey Collection.



*Fig. 6. Detail of "Plan of the w. side of Comoro or Anga-Zecha," showing "Ingando" (Itzanda), and "Moroon" (Moroni), Alexander Sibbald, 1774, from Dalrymple's Charts (1807?). Courtesy the Map Section at the National Library of Australia, Canberra, Australia.*



*Fig. 7. Detail of inset map, "Comoro the Highest Island," from A Chart of the Inner Passage between the Coast of Africa and the Isle of Madagascar, from Mr. D'Anville with Several Additions. In The Oriental Pilot (1778) by R. Sayer and J. Bennett. Courtesy the Map Section at the National Library of Australia, Canberra, Australia.*

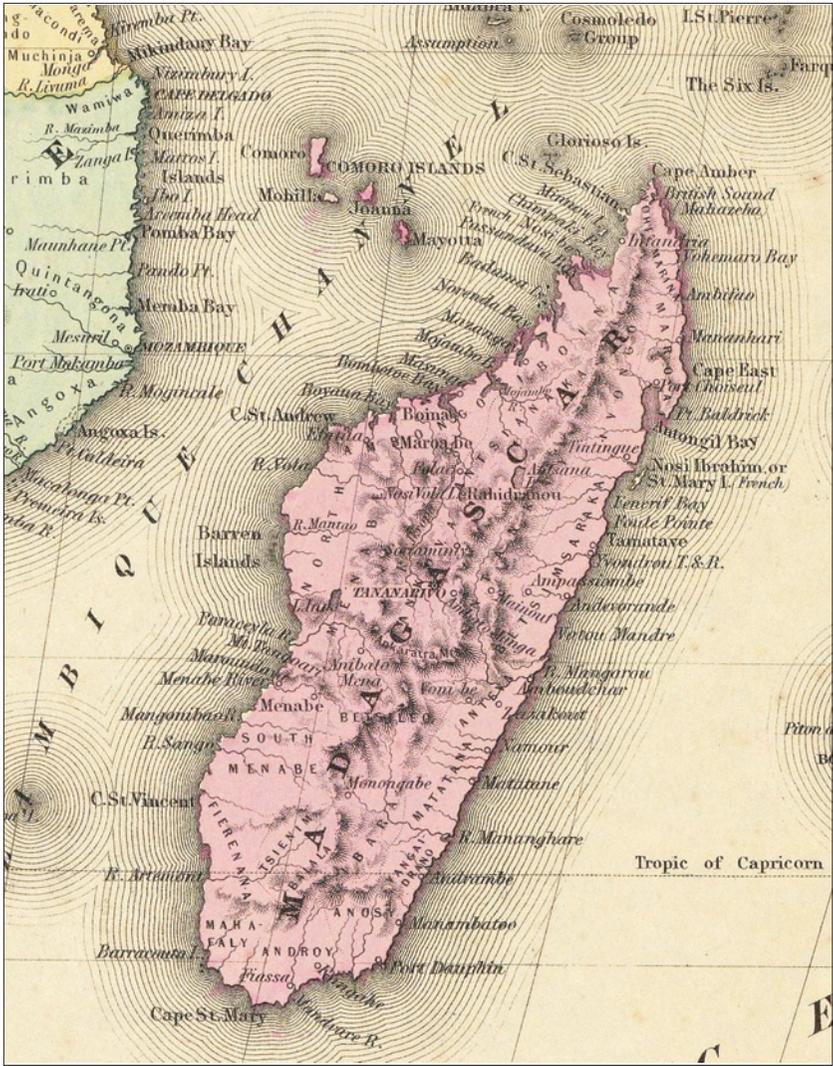


Fig. 8. Detail of “Mozambique Channel” from Africa, Southern Sheet, in World Atlas (1856) by G. W. Colton. Courtesy David Rumsey Collection.



Fig. 9. Detail of "Iles Comore" from *Afrique Meridionale*. In *Atlas Spheroidal et Universel de Geographie* (1862) by F. A. Garnier. Courtesy David Rumsey Collection.

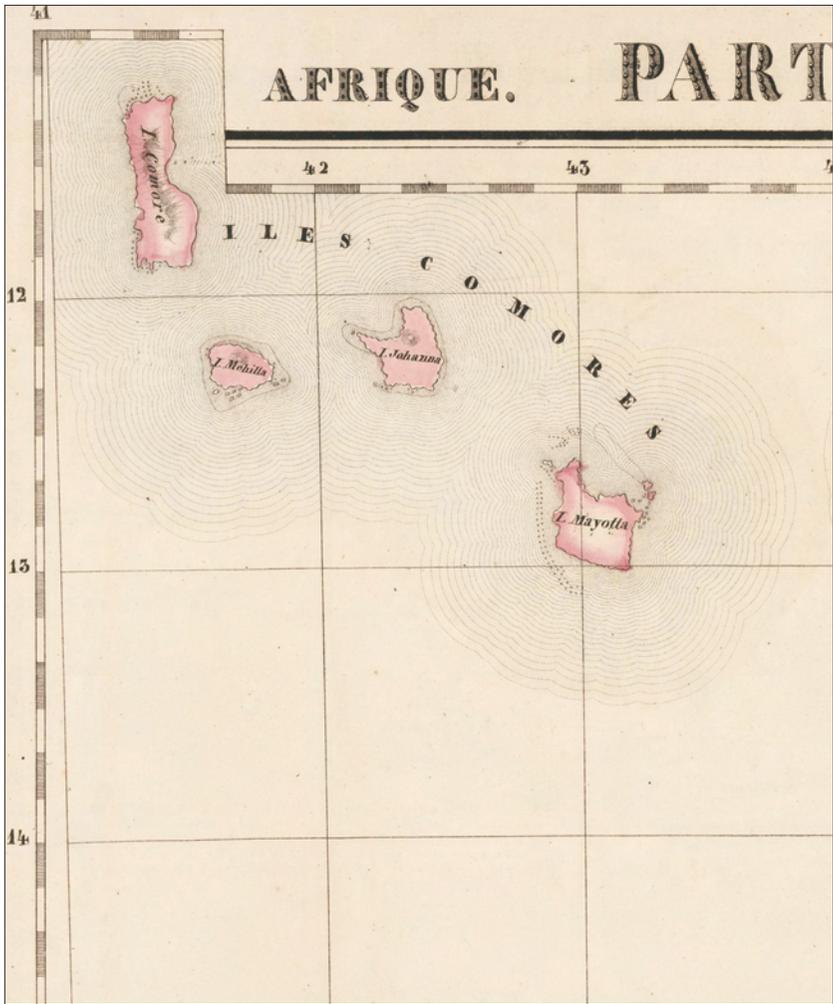


Fig. 10. Detail of "Isles Comores" from *Afrique, Partie de Madagascar*, No. 55. In *Atlas Universel* (1827) by Philippe Vandermaelen. Courtesy David Rumsey Collection.

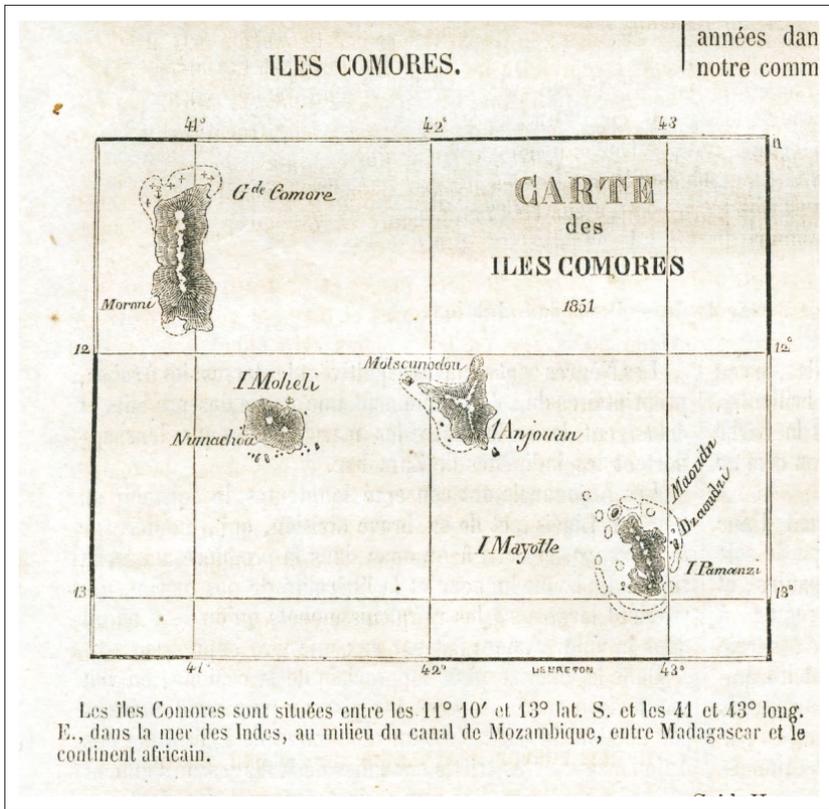


Fig. 11. Detail of inset map, "Iles Comores," 1851, from *Magasin Pittoresque* (1855) by Louis Lebreton. Courtesy the author's collection.



Grande-Comore. — Vue de Moroni.

*Fig. 12. "Grande-Comore.—Vue de Moroni," from Magasin Pittoresque (1855) by Louis Lebreton. Courtesy the author's collection.*





Fig. 14. Detail of “Canal de Mozambique” from Carte d’Afrique (1742) by Covens et Motier and Guillaume Delisle. Courtesy David Rumsey Collection.

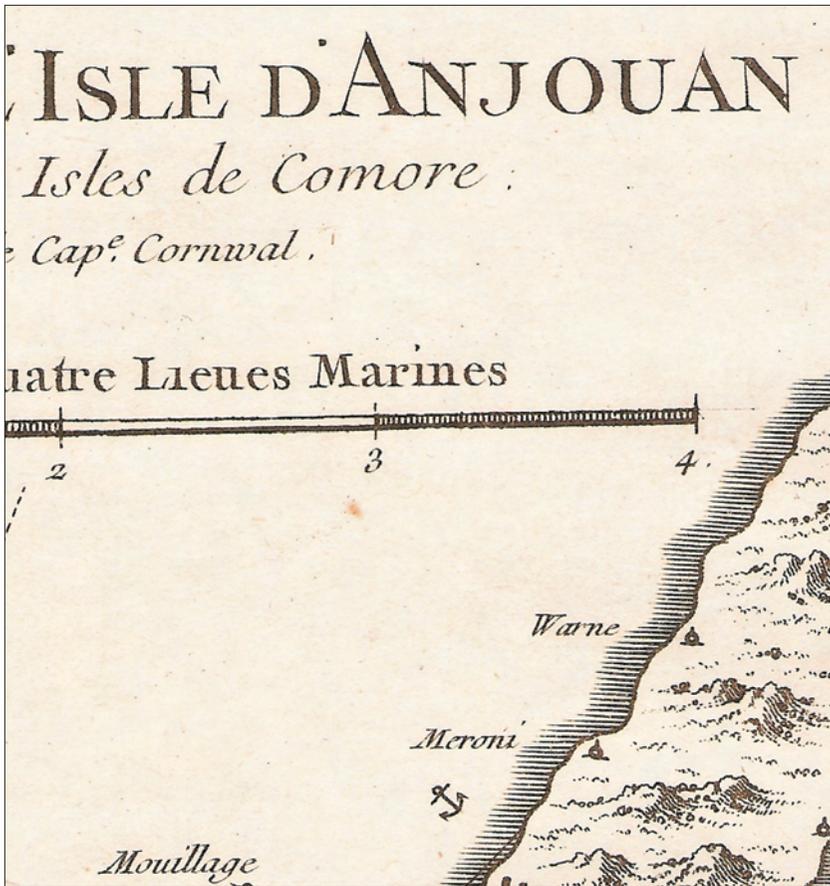


Fig. 15. Detail of map, Carte de l'Isle d'Anjouan, Une des Isles de Comore par le Cape Cornwall, from Abbé Prévost's sixteen-volume *Histoire Générale des Voyages* (1748) by Jacques-Nicolas Bellin. Courtesy the author's collection.

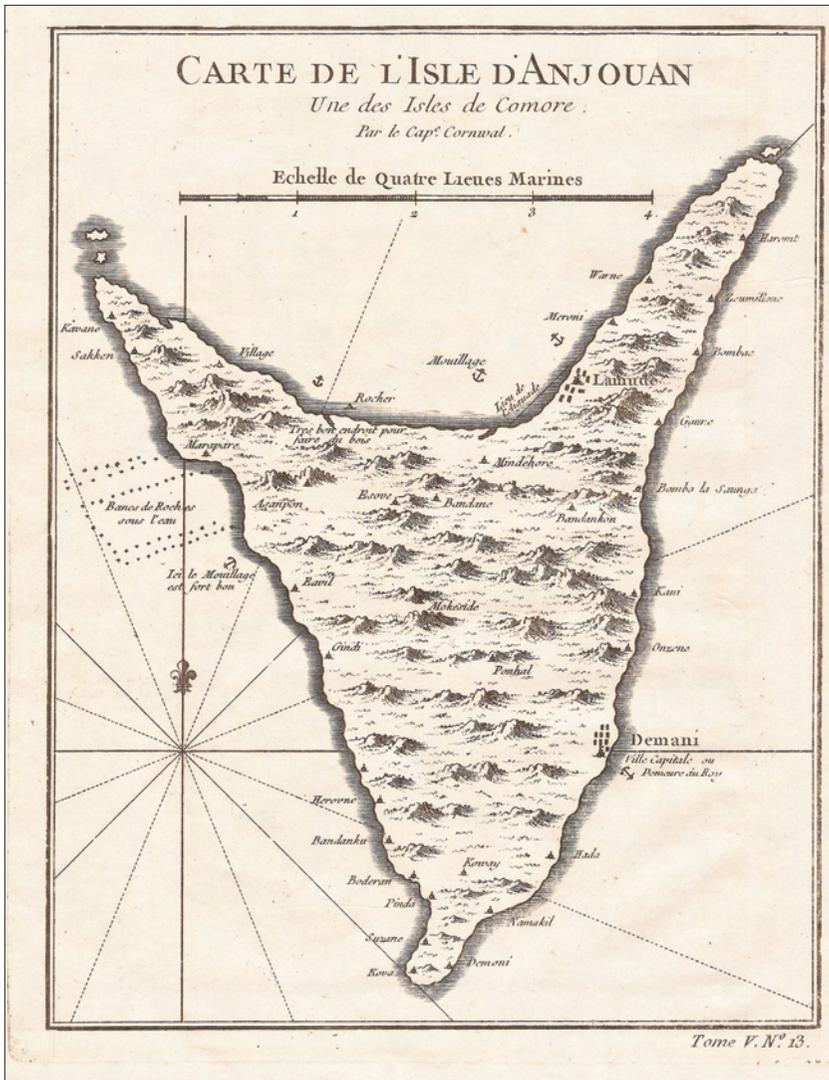


Fig. 15a. Full map, Carte de l'Isle d'Anjouan, by Jacques-Nicolas Bellin. Courtesy the author's collection.



*Fig. 16. Detail of map, Johanna, or Anjuan, One of the Komoro Islands by Cap. Cornwall, from Green and Astley's A New Collection of Voyages and Travels (1745–47). Courtesy the Map Section at the National Library of Australia, Canberra, Australia.*

place where marauding sea bandits would hide their booty. In 1660, the world traveler Vincent Le Blanc referred to the four-island group as “the Isles of Theives [sic].”<sup>43</sup>

According to pirate chronicler Charles Johnson, Captain William Kidd and his crew of the *Adventure Galley* cruised the Comoro waters in the summer of 1696, “touching sometimes at the island of Mohilla, and sometimes at that of Johanna, between Malabar and Madagascar.”<sup>44</sup> After a short time, Kidd careened the *Galley* at Johanna to obtain provisions and repair the ship.<sup>45</sup> During this time, he did not exhibit any intention of turning pirate, for “near *Mohalla* and *Joanna* both, he met with several *Indian* ships richly laden, to which he did not offer the least violence, tho he was strong enough to have done what he pleas’d with them.”<sup>46</sup> However, fearing that he would be out of work for his failure to capture pirates, Kidd went looking for merchant ships to take. Within a few months, however, Kidd was indicted for murdering one of his ship’s crew and overtaking a 350-ton Indian merchant vessel, the *Quedagh Merchant*, which was navigating twenty-five leagues off the shores of Cochin (present-day Kochi) in the Arabian Sea. Under order of the Earl of Bellmont, governor of the provinces of New York, Massachusetts Bay, and New Hampshire, Captain William Kidd was apprehended, tried, and ultimately hanged on May 23, 1701.<sup>47</sup>

In Joseph Smith’s account of the retrieval of the gold plates, Moroni, the Book of Mormon prophet, appeared to him as an angel or heavenly messenger and directed him to the place where the ancient Nephite record was buried.<sup>48</sup> The plates were buried in a stone box in a prominent hill near the Smith family home—later identified as Cumorah. In the Book of Mormon narrative account, the plates were deposited into a stone box somewhere on the western brow of this hill.<sup>49</sup>

The first instance in which the word Cumorah or “Camorah” is used in the Book of Mormon is in Mormon 6:2: “And I, Mormon, wrote an epistle unto the king of the Lamanites, and desired of him that he would grant unto us that we might gather together our people unto the land Camorah, by a hill which was called Camorah, and there we would give them battle” (1830 edition, p. 529).<sup>50</sup> According to the narrative account, the final Nephite/Lamanite battle would take place at the hill: “And it came to pass

that we did march forth to the land of Camorah, and we did pitch our tents round about the hill Camorah; and it was in a land of many waters, rivers and fountains.” Thus, some 384 years after the coming of Christ to America, the Nephites gathered the remainder of their people “unto the land Camorah” to face the Lamanites in a battle of extermination.<sup>51</sup>

Given Joseph Smith’s well-known and documented digs for Captain Kidd’s treasure, it gives one cause to wonder if the Book of Mormon names are derived from his treasure-seeking worldview. If they are not, then the association of Grand Comoro and its capital town Moroni with William Kidd and other pirates is a striking coincidence. If they are, then Joseph Smith’s use of the names *Camorah* and *Moroni* in the Book of Mormon was, quite possibly, his boldest anachronistic use of words—a cryptic nod to his favorite seventeenth-century pirate.

### **Print Sources for Captain Kidd and His Piracy on the Indian Ocean**

With all the talk of wealth and hidden stores of silver and gold, it is little wonder that excitable men and women of Palmyra indulged in recounting tales of ancient riches and buried pirate treasure and resorting to folk magic in order to find the bounty. Much of what was transmitted verbally may well have been read in newspapers or chapbooks, or shared by travelers and neighbors. Pomeroy Tucker and other Palmyra neighbors remembered that young Joseph Smith read adventure stories and the lives of rogues and criminals, including the legendary Captain Kidd.<sup>52</sup> Palmyra resident Philetus Spear wrote that Smith “had for a library a copy of the ‘Arabian Nights,’ stories of Captain Kidd, and a few novels.”<sup>53</sup> In an 1881 interview on the origins of Mormonism, Anna Ruth Eaton, another of Smith’s Palmyra neighbors, counted “the redoubtable Captain Kidd” as Smith’s “hero,” saying that he had “the autobiography of Capt. Kidd, the pirate. This latter work was eagerly and often perused.”<sup>54</sup>

Even though these recollections exist, it is widely believed that Joseph Smith was unbookish or illiterate. Smith’s mother wrote that her son “had never read the Bible through his life,” and though he exhibited considerable insight for a boy eighteen years of age, “he seemed much less inclined to the perusal of books

than any of the rest of the children, but far more given to meditation and deep study.”<sup>55</sup> Smith could have traveled less than five miles to the Farmington (Manchester after 1823) library to use its collection of more than 270 books, but scholars have dismissed this as a source of printed information for the Book of Mormon because Smith did not have a library subscription or membership.<sup>56</sup> The young man was known to regularly purchase the *Palmira Register* for his father and later the *Wayne Sentinel*, but many historians are unwilling to speculate as to whether he actually read them.<sup>57</sup> Some maintain that Smith simply did not have access or means to purchase books for a personal reference library. For example, John W. Welch contends that “those who have considered western New York as the information environment for the Book of Mormon may be 120 miles or more off target. One should think of Joseph translating in the Harmony [Pennsylvania] area and, as far as that goes, in a resource vacuum.”<sup>58</sup>

It is not surprising that Mormon scholars dismiss the idea that their founding prophet-leader was literate. Painting the image of the “Boy Prophet” as an unlearned and simple plowboy mythifies him and places him on equal status as Old Testament youthful prophets Samuel, Daniel, and David. Even Smith’s biographer Richard Bushman has perpetuated the widely held notion that Smith’s more erudite associates such as Sidney Rigdon were “more likely to have read widely than poorly educated and unbookish Joseph Smith.”<sup>59</sup>

Still, as economically deprived as the Smith family may have been, there is no reason to believe that Joseph Smith was so destitute that he could not afford a handful of books and pamphlets to read and carry with him. Scholars of private libraries and book ownership have discovered that even families in the lowest economic ranks kept a modest selection of books in their homes.<sup>60</sup> When news was not transmitted by word of mouth, members of rural New England and New York communities obtained information from newspapers and chapbooks purchased in local bookstores.<sup>61</sup> Publishers and printers used subscription agents, traveling peddlers, and chapmen to sell their books in more isolated reaches of the country. The dissemination of knowledge in the

early republic was primitive but not inhibited by the various modes of pre-industrial transport.<sup>62</sup>

Before the coming of a comprehensive railway system, canal transportation improved book distribution in New York's pre-industrial economy. By 1825, when the newly completed Erie Canal passed through the villages of Palmyra and Macedon, the waterway was already proving an economic boon to Rochester and other cities near its course.<sup>63</sup> Within a year of the canal's inauguration, Rochester, a mill town known for its flour production, was home to scores of mercantile and dry goods stores supplied by canal boats and packets from New York and Boston. At least three bookstores were supported by shipments of books from printers in New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, Cooperstown, and Albany.<sup>64</sup> It could not have been more fortuitous that the Smith home in Palmyra was less than three miles from the canal, which put young Joseph Smith well within reach of a wide selection of books, maps, and pamphlets. The Cooperstown publishing partnership of brothers Henry and Elihu Phinney, for example, carried an assortment of books—"a variety beyond that found in ordinary village bookstores"—from New York and Philadelphia and distributed them with their own publications through towns and villages from large wagons with moveable tops and counters, even providing a floating bookstore on the canal.<sup>65</sup> In 1824, another canal boat named *The Encyclopedia of Albany*, owned by Elisha Wilcox of Albany, embarked upon the waterway, featuring a bookstore and lottery office. According to a published announcement in the *Palmyra Register*, the boat would "move up and down the canal, bearing the riches of science as well as the gifts of fortune, to their respective favorites."<sup>66</sup> A subsequent article described the unique enterprise:

It is used as a bookstore and lottery office, and contains about two thousand well selected volumes, and a quantity of stationary. It is accompanied by two wagons, for the purpose of extending their trade to those villages, which are a short distance from the canals. The owners sell for money where they can find purchasers, but they calculate that a barter for rags will be the principal part of their trade.<sup>67</sup>

An announcement in Palmyra's *Wayne Sentinel* boasted, "Traveling Stores have already passed this place on the canal, and from

accounts in eastern papers, we may expect soon to be visited by a *Floating Museum*, which is now on its way to the west.”<sup>68</sup> As described in the Cooperstown *Watch-Tower*, the canal boat *Superior*, also owned by Wilcox, promoted a bookstore as well as a museum:

The Bookstore apartment is furnished with a general and well selected assortment of books, maps, engravings, plays, &c. &c. The Museum contains a great variety of minerals, birds, sea shells, wax figures of celebrated characters, quadrupeds, together with many ancient relics of warfare, both from the aborigines of America, and of the orientals.”<sup>69</sup>

If one of the floating bookstores didn’t have what a discriminate reader wanted, the village printer might have a selection of charts and bound volumes for sale. From the summer of 1818 through 1820, the Palmyra bookstore and print shop—then owned by Timothy C. Strong—boasted no fewer than two hundred books for sale, including biographies, travel narratives, and geographies that would have noted the islands of the East Indian Ocean, including Nathaniel Dwight’s *A Short but Comprehensive System of the Geography of the World* (1795), Jacob Cummings’s *Introduction to Ancient and Modern Geography* and its accompanying atlas (1813), and Jacob Willetts’s *An Easy Grammar of Geography* and atlas (1814).<sup>70</sup>

The long-held perception that Smith was “unlearned” or “unbookish” cannot be supported by the notion that printed material was unavailable to him. Despite Lucy’s statement downplaying young Joseph’s reading habits, it is possible that he was more attuned to reading materials than Mormon scholars have long believed. Dr. John Stafford, a Palmyra resident who lived a mile from the Smiths, remembered Joseph as being “quite illiterate,” but he also remembered that Lucy had aspirations for her children and began to home school the children. “After they began to have a school at their house, he improved greatly,” said Stafford.<sup>71</sup>

Bushman has written that, although books were available to Joseph Smith, “we must question the assumption that availability means access or dependence.”<sup>72</sup> However, Joseph Smith’s donation of thirty-eight imprints to the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute in 1844 shows that he was interested in the subjects of theology, philosophy, literature, and travel narratives. A donation

of this number of imprints is reason to consider the size of Smith's larger collection, what it included, and when it was begun. Interestingly, in addition to Volume 1 of Orville Dewey's *Old World and the New* (1836) and Captain John Dennett's *Voyages and Travels of Captains Ross, Parry, Franklin, and Mr. Belzoni* (1835), Smith donated a volume of the noted Danish geographer Conrad Malte-Brun's *Annales des Voyages* (1808–14), which contained descriptions and travel accounts from all over the world.<sup>73</sup>

If, in fact, Joseph Smith had an “autobiography of Captain Kidd” in his possession and read it, then what would have been the title of that volume? What other sources on Kidd and other pirates would have been available to him? The first and perhaps the most in-depth biographical work on Kidd appeared in print after the pirate's trial and execution in 1701. The eight-page pamphlet, entitled *An Account of the Birth, Parentage, Education, Life and Conversation, of Captain William Kidd, the Late Famous English Pirate*, was published by R. Owen in London that same year.<sup>74</sup> Five other imprints giving an account of the proceedings of Kidd's trial and execution were written in 1701 as well. This included one booklet published in Dublin by an anonymous author and entitled *A Full Account of the Actions of the Late Famous Pyrate, Capt. Kidd* (1701).<sup>75</sup> A fifty-nine-page booklet, entitled *The Arraignment, Tryal, and Condemnation of Captain William Kidd, for Murther and Piracy upon Six Several Indictments* (1701), was published in London, along with a fifty-one-page account of the proceedings, sometimes attributed to Dr. John Mitchell, entitled *A Full Account of the Proceedings in Relation to Capt. Kidd. In Two Letters* (1701).<sup>76</sup> Two abbreviated versions of the trial proceedings, each printed on a two-page broadsheet, were published in London; one was authored by the High Court of Admiralty, and the other, authored by Paul Lorrain, was the official Ordinary of Newgate account of Kidd's execution.<sup>77</sup>

One of the five trial accounts, *The Arraignment, Tryal, and Condemnation of Captain William Kidd*, contained a transcript of the court proceedings, including the testimony of one of the crew of the *Adventure Galley*, Robert Bradinham, the ship's surgeon, who testified that Kidd and a crew of 155 men left New York in September 1696 and set sail for “the *Madera's* from thence to *Bonavis*,

from thence to *St. Jago*, from thence to *Madagascar*, from thence to *Joanna*, from thence to *Mahala*, from *Mahala* to *Joanna* again, and from thence to the *Red-Sea*; and there we waited for the *Mocca Fleet*." Bradinham's testimony was particularly illuminating, since, although he did not mention the Comoros as a group, he named Mohilla and Johanna as Kidd's places of anchorage, before heading out to the Arabian Sea to lie in wait for the Mocca fleet (Moorish ships) of which the ill-fated *Quedagh Merchant* was a member.<sup>78</sup>

A more likely biographical book in Smith's possession was Charles Johnson's *General History of the Pyrates*, published in 1724, considered the most thorough treatment of the lives of rogues and pirates to date. However, a biographical treatment of William Kidd did not appear as part of Johnson's compilation until 1728, when Johnson published a second volume entitled *The History of the Pyrates*.<sup>79</sup> This follow-up to his *General History of the Pyrates* soon became one of the most widely read and most influential published works on Captain Kidd and his pirate counterparts of the Golden Age of Piracy (ca. 1650–1730). If Joseph Smith had a copy of this 1728 second volume of Johnson's *General History of the Pyrates* (or the American edition, published in Haverhill, Massachusetts, in 1825 by Thomas Carey), he would have read of the exploits of all the major pirates of the Atlantic, East Indian, and Arabian oceans, including Captain Nathaniel North who, as a crewman in a band of privateers, captured the eighteen-gun brigantine called *Pelican* off the shores of Newfoundland. While the privateer obtained a commission to attack French holdings in West Africa, he instead traveled to Madagascar where he searched for Moorish ships to capture.

From *Augustine* they went to *Johanna*, and the provisions they had salted at Madagascar not being well done, it began to spoil; this, and their clothes wanting Repair, made them desperately resolve to take the king of *Johanna* and make him ransom himself, but the Master wou'd not take charge of the ship, being unacquainted with the coast. They cruised among the islands, landed at *Comaro*, and took the Town, but found no Booty, excepting some Silver Chains, and check'd Linen. From hence they went to *Mayotta*, where they took in a *Frenchman* who had been marooned there, and maintain'd by the King.<sup>80</sup>

Johnson's compilation of biographical narratives of Kidd and other pirates who stalked the waters of the East Indian Ocean was the most comprehensive available in the 1820s. Though the other biographical treatments name Madagascar, Johanna, and Mayotta as pirate haunts, this was the first mention of a pirate being in the vicinity of Comoro ("Comaro"), the larger island. Other than Johnson's *History of the Pyrates*, only a handful of newspaper articles published in New York and the New England states helped spread the tales of Kidd and his exploits on the eastern seaboard and the East Indian Ocean. A variously published and widely distributed ballad printed in form of a broadside, *The Dying Words of Captain Kidd*, did as much to heroicize Kidd, as did Johnson's *History of the Pyrates*, but a number of short biographical sketches in newspapers introduced William Kidd to New England states and New York.<sup>81</sup> For example, in 1822, a two-part biographical sketch, published by Sampson Braughton in the *New England Galaxy*, told of Kidd traveling "to the Indian ocean and establishing himself somewhere upon the Island of Madagascar" where he "lay like a shark in those remote seas, pillaging and plundering with impunity the commerce of all nations at his pleasure."<sup>82</sup> Several other biographies followed, but they appeared long after Joseph Smith's departure from Harmony, Pennsylvania, where most of the translation of the Book of Mormon was said to have taken place.<sup>83</sup>

### **Geography Texts, Charts, Maps, and Atlases as Sources of Knowledge of East Indian Ocean Pirates and the Comoro Islands**

Published tales of roguery and buried pirate treasure would not have been Smith's only sources of information for Captain Kidd and the Indian Ocean. As historians Dennis and Geoffrey Wright have pointed out, Joseph Smith's "early public schooling may have played a more important part in preparing him for his prophetic role than previously supposed."<sup>84</sup> Smith would have been taught customary lessons in world history and geography as part of his common school education in Vermont's Upper Valley and western New York. In addition to instruction in languages, mathematics, philosophy, reading, rhetoric, astronomy, and arithmetic, select schools and academies in Palmyra and surrounding

villages offered classes in geography and mapping.<sup>85</sup> One Samuel Danforth of Rochester, for instance, offered instruction in drawing maps “of the several countries, together with the Globe,” for the small sum of three dollars, saying:

It is to be lamented that so many people of our country are impressed with an idea that a knowledge of Maps, and the relative situations of countries, (which ought to be the primary study of every student in Geography,) is of small importance. Many people take upon themselves much trouble in collecting Historical books of every description, and will peruse them for years; but unless they are acquainted with Geography, history will remain a confused mass of uninterested matter.<sup>86</sup>

Citizens of the young American republic were quickly aligning themselves with a burgeoning sense of nationalism. In his essay “On the Education of Youth in America” (1787), Noah Webster called for better geographical texts to show America’s place in the world and to foster in young minds a feeling of pride in the newly formed republic.<sup>87</sup> Professor of English and material culture historian Martin Brückner observed:

Geography textbooks, a genre that conditioned the literary sensibilities of early American readers, answered Webster’s call most closely. Aiming to educate as well as entertain, the first generation of United States school geographies exploited textual strategies that infused geography with ideas of setting and character; just as the traveler’s and natural historian’s own prose, self-consciously or not, mingled utilitarian, narrative, and affective priorities, so did geography books.<sup>88</sup>

The proliferation of atlases and geography texts showing the national map served to popularize and exalt the image of the new republic in the global landscape.<sup>89</sup> In keeping with this widespread feeling of nationalism, Albany author and publisher Amos Law serially advertised maps of the state of New York, the New England states, and Upper and Lower Canada in the *Palmyra Register*, saying that these and others “have met with very liberal patronage and encouragement.”<sup>90</sup> A sudden, steady increase in the production and sale of new geographical texts not only resulted in a feeling of nationalism but also a growing preoccupation with owning and studying geographies, maps, and atlases.<sup>91</sup>

Standard geography text books and dictionaries often con-

tained catechizing questions and answers or descriptions of obscure countries, states, and cities, including Africa, Asia, and small island kingdoms. This interrogatory and sometimes informational approach was not only meant to inform the young reader, but provide texts for memorization and oral recitation.<sup>92</sup> Other texts, designed simply for imparting knowledge to the student, came in the form of a geographic writing manual or geographic encyclopedia. For example, John Pinkerton's *Modern Geography* (1804) gave an in-depth description of the land and people of Madagascar, and then described the smaller African islands of Comoro thus: "The islands of Comoro are four in number, of considerable size, particularly Angaziza, or the greater Comoro. That of Anzoan has a convenient harbour, sometimes visited by ships passing to India."<sup>93</sup> This description was nearly identical to that found in Benjamin Davies's *A New System of Modern Geography* (1805).<sup>94</sup> Jedidiah Morse's *The American Universal Geography* (1805) offered a slightly more expanded description, stating that the Comora Islands

are a cluster of islands in the Indian Ocean, between the coast of Zanguebar and the north part of the island of Madagascar. They are four in number, viz. Johanna, Mayotta, Mohilla and Comora, which last is six leagues long and three wide, and gives its name to the group. It has no safe harbours. Its high mountains are richly covered with verdure and fruit trees, and give rise to numerous fertilizing streams, on which are many beautiful cascades. The vallies between the mountains are extensive, and in richness and beauty are exceeded by none in the world.<sup>95</sup>

Three years later, Morse published his *New Gazetteer of the Eastern Continent* (1808), which gave brief descriptions of European, Asian, and African states and kingdoms, including a description of the "Comora Islands" identical to the one in the *American Universal Geography*. It contained a detailed sketch of the island of Johanna and its principal town, which was based on the accounts of Captains Hamilton, Walker, and Grose.<sup>96</sup> Elijah Parish's *A New System of Modern Geography* (1814) gave another nearly identical description to those of Pinkerton and Parish, indicating that they were all working from the same sources.<sup>97</sup> Interestingly, Pinkerton's *A Modern Atlas* (1815) included a detailed map of Southern Africa and Madagascar. The Comoro Islands were labeled "Com-

ora Isles” and the greater island was labeled “I. Gasidza or Angazesio” (see fig. 1).<sup>98</sup> A geography text by J. Bain, entitled *Brookes’ General Gazetteer Improved* (1815) gave a brief description of Comoro:

ANGAZIZA, ANGAZYA, ANGAREJA, or GREAT COMORO, the largest of the Comoro islands, is situated in the channel of Mozambique, between the northern extremity of Madagascar and the African coast, from which it is 210 miles distant. It is inhabited by Moors, and is governed with the other islands, by Pagan or Mahometan chieftans, who are tributary to the Portuguese. E lon. 43 58, S lat. 11 44.<sup>99</sup>

Two school texts by Nathaniel Dwight, *A Short but Comprehensive System of the Geography of the World* (1813) and *A New System of Universal Geography for Common Schools* (1817), offered catechizing questions and answers to the geographical locations of smaller African Islands, including the Comoro group.<sup>100</sup> Another geography text, *Travels at Home* (1816), contained directions and descriptions of the exotic African islands, as if the imaginative young student reader were taking a virtual tour across the Mozambique Channel, from Madagascar to Melinda, and then on to the Arabian Gulf:

The coast of Africa, which it washes, has the same term applied to it.—As we sail, the Comoro Isles are on our right hand, and cannot be noticed further than by saying that one of them, Johanna, has an excellent harbour, visited by ships that frequent the Indian Ocean. It is governed by a sovereign, who is friendly to the English, and the inhabitants, or some of them, speak a little of our language after a broken fashion.<sup>101</sup>

The atlas published for Woodbridge’s *Rudiments of Geography* (1824) showed the Comoro Islands without delineating the names of the four in the group (fig. 2). A common reference work, *Carey’s School Atlas* (1820, reprinted in 1825), showed Comoro in the Mozambique Channel with the other islands in the archipelago, but did not give town or place names on the largest island (fig. 3). The maps of Southern Africa in Jedidiah and Sidney Morse’s *Modern Atlas* (1828) and Samuel Griswold Goodrich’s *Atlas* (first published in 1830) meant to accompany Malte-Brun’s *A System of School Geography* (1830) showed the islands in the channel without place names as well (see figs. 4 and 5).<sup>102</sup>

Many of these geography texts and atlases would have been readily available in school reference libraries or for sale (after 1822) at Palmyra's Wayne County Bookstore. The proprietors, Pomeroy Tucker and John H. Gilbert, were even known to lend books to trusted patrons.<sup>103</sup> The Dwight and Morse texts were two of several geography texts listed among the books available in Palmyra from 1823 to 1824.<sup>104</sup> One recurring bookstore advertisement listed maps as an item for sale along with its general literature and school texts.<sup>105</sup> Morse's *The American Universal Geography* (6th ed., 1812) was also available in the Manchester Library within five miles of the Smith farm, although it is unlikely that Joseph used the collection.<sup>106</sup>

Another source for geographical descriptions of the Comoros would have been published voyage accounts, travel logs, and diaries. Unfortunately, their usefulness in informing New England and New York treasure seekers of the exploits of East Indian Ocean pirates was extremely limited. While some of them described the geography, native culture, and prospects for trade, many travel narratives gave accounts of inter-island hostilities, South African incursions for the slave trade, and depredating Malagasy invasions.<sup>107</sup> European travel accounts were largely published in French and Dutch, so they would not have satisfied the curiosity of the young Joseph Smith. However, there were a handful of these travel narratives that were published in London and New England, translated from the French and Dutch accounts.<sup>108</sup>

One of the earliest eighteenth-century English travel narratives gave an observant account of the geography and inhabitants of the Comoro Islands. Scottish sea captain, privateer, and merchant Alexander Hamilton (not to be confused with the author of the *Federalist Papers*), while serving as commander of the *Bombay Marine*, traveled widely to the Barbary Coast, East Indian Ocean, and Arabian Sea to suppress piracy. In 1727, Hamilton published one of the earliest and most informative descriptions of the East Indies and Southeast Asia. Of his trip to the Comoro island group, Hamilton wrote:

*Comora* is the Westmost of the inhabited Islands, and affords nothing but a scrimp Maintenance for a Parcel of poor miserable Creatures. Johanna is within Sight of *Comora*, and is a plentiful Island in

Cattle, Goats, Fowls and Fish, with good Lemons and Oranges, so that most Part of the English Shipping bound to Mocha, Persia and Surat, usually call'd there for Refreshments, till the Pirates began to frequent it.<sup>109</sup>

This unfavorable description of the larger island appears to be a common perception of those who visited it, or heard of its unapproachable shoreline and inhospitable natives. For instance, Captain John Henry Grose, who visited the Comoro Islands in 1750, attributed the hostility of island inhabitants to the Portuguese who had mistreated them on their first visits:

COMRO, the largest island, is not at all frequented by the Europeans; because it has no safe harbor, or roadstead to it: besides, the natives have the character of a barbarous, untractable people, that will suffer no commerce with strangers. Perhaps too, not without reason: as it was common for the Portugueze especially, in the early times of their navigating those seas, to take the advantage of the simplicity of the inhabitants, unacquainted with arms, and incapable of defence, and land parties out of their vessels, to rob, and commit all manner of outrages on the natives, not unfrequently carrying them away as slaves; a procedure, which may have given them a traditional aversion to, and jealousy of all strangers in general: and very probably the revenge they might thereon take on the next comers, without distinction of the innocent, may have gained them that inhospitable character, which is to this day continued to them.<sup>110</sup>

An 1813 English edition of Abbé Raynal's history of trade to the West and East Indies described the Comoro Islands and disclosed the ill temperament of the natives. Like Grose, Raynal thoughtfully stated that the reason for the inhospitality of the natives was due to the maltreatment by the Portuguese who were the first to visit the island:

These islands, that lie in the Mozambique channel, between the coast of Zanguebar and Madagascar, are four in number; Comora, the principal one, from which the small archipelago takes its name, is little known. The Portuguese, who discovered it in the course of their first expeditions, brought the name of Europeans into such detestation by their cruelties, that all who have since ventured to go on the shore there have either been massacred or very ill treated. It has accordingly been quite forsaken.<sup>111</sup>

Raynal's account of the natives' treachery was supported by Henry May's visit to the islands in 1591 on the *Edward Bonaven-*

ture, one of three tall ships sailing to the East Indies. After anchoring for a time at Quitangone on the mainland of Africa, the ship's crew sailed into the Mozambique Channel and

went for an island called Comoro, upon the coast of Melinde, which standeth about 11 degrees to the South of the equinoctical: in which island we stayed all November, finding the people blacke and very comly, but very treacherous and cruell: for the day before we departed from thence they killed thirty of our men on shore, among whom was William Mace our master, and two of his mates.<sup>112</sup>

As the years passed, British academicians and naval explorers stopped short of describing the larger island because of its abrupt and sometime treacherous shoreline. Orientalist Sir William Jones visited the Comoro Islands in 1799, giving extensive observations on the customs and manners of the inhabitants of Johanna, but did not offer a description of Grand Comoro.<sup>113</sup> An extract from the 1809 journal of Captain Thomlinson, although it gave another splendid description of Johanna, did not mention the larger island, other than to tell of the Malagasy incursions to procure slaves by longboat:

The other islands, Comoro, Mohilla and Mayhotta, are nearly depopulated from the attacks of these marauders, and at this time Johanna from twelve towns is reduced to two. These pirates come over at the latter part of the south-west monsoon, build huts round the towns, which are walled, and remain blockading them until the latter end of the north-east monsoon, which occupies a period of eight months, as they never attempt the passage but with a fair wind.<sup>114</sup>

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, more travelers visited the Comoros archipelago to describe the geography and native culture. A lengthy essay in French on the Comoro Islands by Messrs. Capmartin and Epidariste Colin was published in Conrad Malte-Brun's *Annales des Voyages* in 1811 but only focused its description of the favorite island at which to stop for supplies—Johanna.<sup>115</sup> Several years earlier, however, during his assignment at Madagascar, Count Benyowski of Poland spent a considerable amount of time describing the influence of the Sakalava on the islands. His discussion of Malagasy contact with Comoro included a description of the goods and services available at Maronvai, on the western coast of Madagascar:

The Arabians of the islands of Johanna, Comoro, and Mayotto, have established a factory at Maronvai, the capital of the Seclaves, which is at all times supplied with effects and merchandizes, consisting of Surat cloth, combs, silver bracelets, gold buckles, razors, knives, glass beads, &c. in exchange for which they receive skins, incense, benjamin, amber, wax, and wood in planks.<sup>116</sup>

Although Benyowski described the king's aversion to direct trade with the French, he did not mention the Comorian villages that supplied the materials for the Maronvai factory.

In 1819, Sir James Prior published an account of his travels to the east coast of Africa, the Mozambique Channel, and Comoro Islands in 1812, while in the capacity of surgeon on the Royal Navy frigate *Nisus*, under the command of Captain Beaver. His description of the largest island is illuminating in regard to the terrain and accessibility by boat, but offered nothing about the inhabitants or the names of its major villages:

Comoro, which gives its name to the group, is the largest and most mountainous, but not so fertile, it is said, as the others. The interior is very little known to Europeans, and, fortunately, as little to its enemies; and, probably, by its rugged surface, as well by the abrupt nature of the coast, has been preserved from the Madegasse invasions. About sixty years ago it was usually visited by English shipping, in the manner Johanna now is, but possessing no safe anchorage, became deserted for the latter, and at the same time the seat of government, which had always been there, was also changed.<sup>117</sup>

The eighteen-volume collection, *A General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1824), compiled and edited by Robert Kerr, contained four accounts by Alexander Sharpey of the East India Company's fourth voyage to the islands off the East African coast in the fall of 1608. The two ships employed for the voyage, the *Ascension* and the *Union*, separated at the Cape of Good Hope due to darkness and storm; the *Ascension* continued a course through the Mozambique Channel, "encountering two or three small islands on the 22d November in the morning, and that afternoon came to another off a very high land called Comoro."

Sending our boat ashore on the 24<sup>th</sup>, the people met five or six of the natives, from whom they bought plantains. The 25<sup>th</sup>, by the aid of our boat towing the ship between two islands, as the wind would

not serve, we came to anchor in the evening near the shore of Comoro, in between 17 and 20 fathoms water.

The subsequent narrative detailed the interactions of the ship's crew with the king and trading gifts and courtesies with the natives. Although the inhabitants of the island village were described, the place name was never offered:

When at the town, the natives brought us cocoa-nuts for sale, of various sizes, some big as a man's head, each having within a quantity of liquor proportioned to its size, and as much kernel as would suffice for a man's dinner. They brought us also goats, hens, chickens, lemons, rice, milk, fish, and the like, which we bought very cheap for commodities; as two hens for a penny knife; lemons, cocoa-nuts, and oranges for nails, broken pikes, and pieces of old iron. Fresh water is scarce, being procured from holes made in the sands, which they lade out in cocoa-nut shells as fast as it springs, and so drink.<sup>118</sup>

Later voyages of the English East India Company were published in the ninth volume of Kerr's *General History*. The commander of the tenth voyage, Thomas Best, described the crew's visit to the Comoro Islands in August of 1612, but only mentioned coming into sight of Mohilla and Mayotte. The company's twelfth voyage was under the command of Captain Christopher Newport, and the journal was kept by Walter Peyton, who logged their anchorage at Mohilla and their sight of Johanna in the distance. Captain Peyton visited Mohilla again on his way to India in 1615, and gave a brief observation regarding the largest of the island group: "Angazesia [Comoro] bears N. by W. west from Mohelia, and is the highest land I ever saw. It is inhabited by Moors trading with the main and the other three eastern islands, bartering their cattle and fruits for calicos and other cloths for garments. It is governed by ten petty kings, and has abundance of cattle, goats, oranges, and lemons. The people are reckoned false and treacherous."<sup>119</sup> Richard Swan's account of a voyage to Surat and Jasques in 1620 mentioned the company's passing "between Johanna and Mayotta" on the return trip in January 1622, but gave no description of Grand Comoro.<sup>120</sup>

Malte-Brun's *Universal Geography* (1826) contained a very short but enlightening description of Comoro but still no mention of Moroni, its principal town:

*Angazija*, or great *Comora*, situated twenty-five leagues to the north-west of Anjouan, is a vast assemblage of mountains, the different groups of which have their bases very near the sea-coast, and all re-unite in a common summit, of from twelve to thirteen toises in height. It has no road, but many villages.<sup>121</sup>

The twelfth volume of Brewster's *Edinburgh Encyclopaedia* (1830) gave a thorough description of Johanna, but did not touch upon the historical or geographical highlights of nearby Comoro, other than to say that several Frenchmen had sought refuge on the island after assisting in the defense of Johanna in 1802.<sup>122</sup> The Reverend William Elliot also gave an account of Johanna in 1830, but made no mention of Comoro or its villages.<sup>123</sup> Captain W. F. W. Owen's published account of navigating the waters northwest of Madagascar in the ships *Leven* and *Barracouta* in 1823 gives a full description of the geography and inhabitants of Johanna, but indicates that they "passed between Great Comoro and Mohilla," on their way to Mozambique harbor.<sup>124</sup> Captain Philip Beaver's visit to the Comoros in 1812 is fully recounted in Smyth's biography of Beaver, though it only describes his party's welcome reception on the island of Johanna, the island's pleasant climate, and the abundant produce and fertile soil there.<sup>125</sup>

The paucity of travel narratives translated into English from French or Dutch meant that very few published descriptions of Grand Comoro and Moroni would have been available—much less intelligible—to young Joseph Smith Jr. Most of the aforementioned English descriptions of the Comoro Islands persisted into the mid-nineteenth century. For instance, James Bell's *A System of Geography* (1832) contained a description of the "Comoras," but was still dismissive of the accessibility of the largest island in the group:

*Grand Comora*, the principal of the group, is a primitive mountain of great elevation, rising abruptly from the sea. Comora has been abandoned by shipping, of late years, in favor of *Johanna*, or *Hinguan*, the anchorage at the latter place being more eligible, the watering more convenient, produce more plentiful, and, upon the whole, the people more civilized.<sup>126</sup>

Aside from travel accounts, the various admiralty charts and seamen's guides which were published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries contained directions for navigating the

waters of the East and West Indies. Many of them not only included coordinates for reaching obscure island ports, but also contained illustrative charts, maps, and descriptions for making anchorage in these primitive island kingdoms. Perhaps one of the most comprehensive pilot guides to that date, *The Oriental Navigator* (1801), described the archipelago with unprecedented detail:

The Comoro Islands are four in number, *viz.* Comoro, which gives its name to the rest, Mohilla, Mayotta, and Johanna; they are all very high, and seen at a great distance in clear weather; the length of each of them is between 6 and 8 leagues; the breadth from 4 to 5; their inhabitants, who are Mahometans, are the descendants of Arabs, and a courteous and civil people. COMORO, called also *Angazicha*, is the largest and highest of these islands; as you come near its westernmost point, you will descry a small round island, not unlike that at Johanna, which you must round, and steer along shore to the northernmost end of the island, to which you give a birth of 2 miles; when round the point haul in for the land, steering N. E. and N. E. by N. and when you bring a black bluff point S. by W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. and the easternmost land in sight E. by N. you may then anchor in 16 fathoms, sandy ground; here are reefs to the eastward and westward of you; lie your best bower to the westward for the fresh gales at S. W. you will lie about 1 mile at high water, and half a mile at low water from the shore.

When you are getting around the north point of the island, it is necessary you should hoist out all your boats in readiness for towing, as the high land totally excludes you from the Monsoon, and you are subject to nothing but calms and light airs, added to which there is a tide here which ebbs and flows to a prodigious degree.

Whereby, (says Captain C. W. Webber, Jun. of the *Oxford*, 1759) I found it extremely difficult to get in near enough to lay hold of anchor ground; for it is steep to, till you come upon the bank, which does not descend with an even or gradual declivity from the shore, but goes off almost perpendicularly at once; and close to it, before you get foundings with 30 fathoms, you will not be able to find ground with 70 or 80, which I believe is the case all around the island at the distance of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile, or 2 miles from the shore. The place of anchoring would be very dangerous was it liable to any gales of wind, but it is entirely sheltered from the Monsoon; and I believe there very seldom happens any gale of wind from other quarters strong enough to endanger a ship.

The island has plenty of very good bullocks, sheep, goats, oranges and lemons, plantains, &c. but there is a great scarcity of water, and near the King's town; insomuch that I was obliged to send water from the ship for the use of my people on shore.

The following particulars concerning this island are taken from the log of the *Suffolk* captain C. Lewin who was there also in 1759.

Bearings at anchor in 24 fathoms, sandy ground off Comoro; King's Town about two small miles E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. a black bluff point like two rocky islands, S. S. W. the easternmost land E. by N.

The town is large and full of cocoa-nut trees, with a fine smooth sandy beach before it; it is the only place where we could land; shoal water runs off about three quarters of a mile, and at low tide you cannot come off with your boat. Whenever you see this town send boats a-head, for as the shore is bold in all other places, you would have no thoughts of foul ground off such a fine sandy beach.

The first soundings we had were 35, then 25 fathoms when anchored. Latitude observed in the road,  $11^{\circ} 18'$  S. When you have 12 fathoms, you are close to the reef. We lay about a cable's length too near the King's Town, and had we continued longer at the island would have moved.

The people at Comoro are very civil; the price of bullocks, settled with the King, is from 4 to 6 dollars; there are here sheep, goats, &c. but no water to be had. The King offered cowries, rice, &c.

Of all the islands, Johanna, Comoro, and Mohilla, I give the preference to the latter.<sup>127</sup>

Another guide, John Malham's *Naval Gazetteer* (1812), described many obscure islands including the Comoro group: "COMORO, the same as COMORA which see. The island particularly called *Comora*, is in lat. 11 deg. 25 min. S, and the nearest of any of the islands so named to the coast of Mozambique. It is 14 leagues N W from Mohilla, and 20 W by N from Joanna."<sup>128</sup> In addition to Malham's *Naval Gazetteer*, Robert Laurie and James Whittle published their *East India Pilot* in 1795 and John William Norie published his *Complete East India Pilot* in 1816.<sup>129</sup> The most celebrated and influential nautical guide, however, was Captain James Horsburgh's *India Directory*.<sup>130</sup> The first part of Horsburgh's *Directory* was published in 1809, he being paid one hundred Guineas by the Court of Directors; the second part was issued in 1811.<sup>131</sup> The guide was followed by a collection of charts bound in a large two-volume folio entitled the *East India Pilot*, first published by Black, Penny & Co. in London in 1815 and released in several editions thereafter. Horsburgh's nautical directory and charts were available in the United States in the 1820s in most ma-

for city bookstores and was also sold in smaller book and stationary stores.<sup>132</sup> The description of Grand Comoro reads:

COMORO, the largest and highest of these four Islands, gives its name to the others, which are Mohilla, Mayotta, and Johanna: they are all very high, and may be seen at the distance of from 14 to 20 leagues in clear weather. The inhabitants are Mahometans, descendants of Arabs incorporated with Africans, and at present, they are generally found to be courteous and hospitable.

Comoro, called also Angazecha, is about 12 leagues in length north and south, and about 5 or 6 leagues broad. The anchorage at this Island is inconvenient, and water not easily procured; European ships, therefore, do not now visit it, though formerly they sometimes touched here for supplies.

The anchorage is at the N. W. part of the Island, said to be in lat. 11° 18' S., about 1¼ or 1½ mile to the westward of Muchama-hola, the King's Town, opposite to a small sandy beach, but it is not advisable for a ship to anchor under 30 or 35 fathoms water, for in this depth, she will be only distant from the breakers about 2 cable's lengths.

This remark was given by Captain Webber, who was there in the Oxford, in 1759, and the bearings recommended for anchorage are, the easternmost point of land in sight East King's Town, E. S. E., and the black rocky point S. by W. The Suffolk at anchor in 24 fathoms sandy ground, had the King's Town, E ½ S. distant near 2 miles, the easternmost land E. by N., and a black bluff point, like two rocky islands, S. S. W. Captain Mitcham says, a ship may anchor with the easternmost land in sight E. by N., and the black bluff point S. by W. ½ W., but these and the Suffolk's bearings are probably too close for a large ship.

Excepting the anchorage at the N. W. end, the Island is generally steep, having no soundings at a small distance from the shore; there are, indeed, two bays called Ingando and Moroon, to the northward of the S. W. point, where the bottom is coral, and the depth 35 fathoms within a cable's length of the breakers, but no vessel should anchor there.

If a ship intend to anchor at this Island, she ought to have the boats prepared to tow when the shore is approached, for she will be liable to baffling light airs and calms, the high land obstructing the regular monsoon, and the tides, which are strong, may be liable to drift her past the anchorage, if precaution is not taken to counteract their impulse.

The town is large, with many cocoa-nut trees, and a sandy beach before it; at low water a boat cannot land, as shoal water extends ¾ of a mile from the town, which is the only landing place. Steering for the anchorage, a boat should be sent a-head to sound, for the bank is

steep, and the distance small, from 35 fathoms on its outer edge to 12 fathoms close to the breakers. Ships may be sheltered here from the southerly monsoon, but it would be dangerous were the winds to blow strong at any time from the north-westward; this, however, seldom happens, particularly during summer, when the southerly monsoon predominates. Bullocks, sheep, goats, and tropical fruits are plentiful, but no water to be procured.

In 1759, the price of bullocks was settled with the king, from 4 to 6 dollars each; and it is prudent to give him a present, when a supply is wanted.

It is high water at 4¾ hours, and the tide rises about 12 feet on the springs. The body of Comoro is in lat. 11° 32' S. about lon. 43° 25' E.<sup>133</sup>

In the foregoing description, Horsburgh mentions two bays, “Ingando and Moroon.” The etymological origins of the word *moroon* or *maroon* could undoubtedly fill a lengthy volume. Though it is probably a derivative spelling of the Swahili words *Itzanda* and *Mroni* or *Maroni*, “Moroon” would have to be Horsburgh’s identification of what came to be known as Moroni Bay. The place name was evidently known to the founding settlers of Ngazidja and did not originate with Horsburgh. Horsburgh’s spelling may well have been based on phoneticized spellings or pronunciations from mariner diarists and visitors to the island whom he surveyed for his directory. While it may be that Horsburgh was using the term denoting desertion or isolation on an island shore—a term with which many of us are familiar and which was used by Johnson in his *History of the Pyrates*—this explanation is unlikely, as chroniclers who documented the settlement and French colonization of the island referred to the sultan’s village (or king’s town) first as “Mouroni,” or “Mourouni,” then as “M’roni.”<sup>134</sup> In Comorian, the village name means “In the Heart of the Fire,” for its proximity to Mt. Karthala, a notoriously active volcano. In any case, however, “Moroon,” would not have been a source name for Smith’s “Moroni.”

A more logical source, if any, for Joseph Smith’s knowledge of Grand Comoro and its sultan town, Moroni, would have come from Alexander Dalrymple’s cartographic work for the East India Company. Dalrymple preceded Horsburgh as the official hydrographer to the East India Company and published a collection of marine charts between 1774 and 1775. His first published collec-

tion comprised 83 plates with plans of ports spanning from South Africa to China and the Malabar Coast. This collection, chiefly created for the company and its pilots, also included charts illustrating the four islands in the Comoro Archipelago.<sup>135</sup> One chart, entitled “Plan of the w. side of Comoro or Anga-Zecha,” showed the west coast of Comoro with the place names of “Muchamahola,” “Ingando” (Itzanda), and “Moroon” (Moroni), with depths and obstacles near their anchorages (fig. 6). The map is dated 1774 and was derived from the manuscript notes of one Alexander Sibbald, who wrote that he and the ship’s crew “found the People civilized and got 2 measures of cowries for a dollar.”<sup>136</sup> A published explanation of the plans by Dalrymple further indicated that

This plan of part of *Comoro* was made in 1753, by *Alexander Sibbald*, mate of the *St. Cecilia* a country ship belonging to Bengal. Several of the Indiamen have visited this Island since then; 1759 the *Suffolk*, C. Lewin, and *Oxford*, C. Webber.<sup>137</sup>

Dalrymple then included the account given by Lewin but did not provide any additional descriptions of the island.

Sayer and Bennet’s *Oriental Pilot* (1778), which was succeeded by Laurie and Whittle’s *East India Pilot* mentioned earlier, included a chart featuring Madagascar and the Comoro Archipelago in the Mozambique Channel. An inset map, “A Chart of the Comoro Islands,” showed the inlets “Ingando” and “Maroon” on the west side of Comoro, “the Highest Island” (see fig. 7).<sup>138</sup> Credit for the chart was given to the geographer and cartographer, Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d’Anville, who relied heavily on previous cartographers and voyagers to create a new reliable map of Africa in 1749.<sup>139</sup>

Aside from nautical charts like those by Dalrymple and d’Anville, school atlases would have been more accessible to the young Smith in Palmyra, but the virtual absence of any place names on plates showing Grand Comoro and its sultan village eliminates them as possible sources for Book of Mormon place names. Even the common atlases such as Colton’s *Atlas of the World* (1856) showed the Comoro Islands, but did not identify Moroni (fig. 8).

The name of the village did appear, perhaps for the first time in an atlas, in Garnier’s 1860 map of southern Africa in his *Atlas*

*Sphéroïdal et Universel de Géographie* (1862).<sup>140</sup> Garnier's plate attested to the fact that the sultan town, Moroni, was well known by Dutch and French traders many years before the publication of the Book of Mormon (see fig. 9). Belgian geographer Philippe Vandermaelen, for example, produced a six-volume atlas, *Atlas Universel de Géographie* (1827), which was the first and most comprehensive of its kind in the world.<sup>141</sup> Vandermaelen, founder of the Brussels Geographical Institute, garnered high praise for his atlases and globes, not the least of which was the *Atlas Universel*. It included a plate showing Northern Madagascar and the Comoro Islands, including physical topography showing unprecedented detail of the Grand Comoro coastline and interior in relief (see fig. 10).

French travelers brought great knowledge of the East Indian islands to the West. Lequével de Lacombe's visit to Grand Comoro in 1828 was published in a compilation of his travel accounts, *Voyage à Madagascar et aux Iles Comores* (1840). Although he did not disclose the name of the sultan town of Comore, de Lacombe described the physical features of the island, and then wrote: "Les habitants de la grande Comore ont des mœurs extrêmement féroces, et tuent ou font esclaves les étrangers qui osent aborder dans leur île ou que la tempête jette sur leurs côtes."<sup>142</sup> Eight years later, Oscar MacCarthy gave one of the most detailed descriptions of the archipelago to that date, and introduced the governing island town by writing: "un peu plus loin, à l'est, comme à Moroni, sur la côte occidentale, la terre est parsemée de pierres calcinées." As part of the geographical description of Angazija (Grande Comore), MacCarthy included Auguste Bosse's account of his visit to Moroni in 1844 and a meeting with the town's sultan, Achmet.<sup>143</sup>

In April 1855, Édouard Charton published a series of illustrated vignettes on the Comoro Islands and its peoples in his *Magasin Pittoresque*.<sup>144</sup> The first entry in the series includes an inset map, dated 1851, showing the "Îles Comores" and Moroni on the southwestern coast of Grande Comore (fig. 11). Moreover, the article on Grande Comore includes two engraved views of Moroni: a scene of Moroni Bay with careened boats, inhabitants walking on the shore, and village structures in the distance; and a

scene showing a boat aground and island inhabitants standing nearby (fig. 12). The description of Moroni is also illustrated with a portrait of Sultan Achmet; these illustrations and the map are attributed to the naval surgeon, lithographer, and mapmaker Louis Lebreton.<sup>145</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, writers and novelists were romanticizing the pirates of the East Indian Ocean and Kidd's presence in the waters of the Mozambique Channel—most notably, William Ellis's widely published account of his trips to Madagascar in 1853, 1854, and 1856.<sup>146</sup> For example, an article in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* of 1858–59 mentioned the fact that “Johanna, one of the Comoro Isles, just to the north of Madagascar, was the port of the famous Captain Kyd, the ruins of whose fort still crown a hill commanding the harbor.”<sup>147</sup>

British geographers began to systematically report their travels to learned societies. In June 1848, T. S. Leigh reported his findings on Mayotta and the Comoro Islands, but did not give any information about the largest neighboring island Angazija.<sup>148</sup> It wasn't until Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis Pelly briefly described the greater island in 1862 that its sultan village began to appear in British geographical journals. His description of the archipelago consisted of the locations and geographic features of the four islands, “of which Comoro proper is the northernmost, the rudest, and the largest, having a length of about thirty, and an average breadth of about ten miles.” After giving his observations on the geography of Johanna, Mayotta, and Mohilla, Pelly noted that “of all the Comoro group, Comoro proper is most remarkable in the vastness and the height of its desolate grandeur.” He wrote, “The principal town is Maroni. But the island is partitioned among many chieftains, who are jealous of their several land and water holdings.”<sup>149</sup> Two years later, British Admiral Algernon de Horsey described the island in even greater detail:

There are several towns on the coasts of Comoro, of which the principal are Maroni and Itzanda, on the west side of the island, and Mouchamouli at the N.W. extremity. Maroni Bay is in lat. 11° 40' 44" S. The town of Maroni is situated at the head of the bay; it is large, and surrounded by a wall; the huts are generally detached, and the streets narrow and dirty. Besides the huts there are several substantial stone buildings. The Sultan of Maroni is the chief of the most in-

fluence in Comoro, although I believe the district subject to his authority is not large.<sup>150</sup>

Then de Horsey further described the island's landmarks, saying:

Comoro Mountain is situated at the south part of the island, its highest part being about 8 miles from the southern extremity. The mean of my observations gave its height to be 8526 feet. The summit of this mountain is smooth and dome-shaped, rising so evenly from the sea on its south side as to give a deceptive idea of its altitude when close.<sup>151</sup>

But even as late as 1873, few geographers had written about Ngazidja (Grand Comoro) and its villages in great detail. In 1873, H. Bartle E. Frere, president of the Royal Geographical Society of London, reported: "Of Great Comoro we only know enough to excite our curiosity; and the extraordinary bulk and activity of the volcano indicate it is well deserving more careful examination."<sup>152</sup> Finally, in January 1887, Léon Humblot briefly described the island group in a presentation to the Geographical Society in Paris, saying "La Grande-Comore est divisée en dix départements commandés par des princes qui obéissent au sultan principal Saïd-Ali. Il y a 30 villes et 238 villages. La capital de cette île est Mourouni."<sup>153</sup>

Notwithstanding all combined Book of Mormon references pointing to the larger island, perhaps a focus on Grand Comoro is misguided. Ngazidja (Grand Comoro) and its governing village were hardly visited or described prior to 1840, due to the difficulty of anchoring along the island's steep western shoreline. Captain William Kidd and his pirate counterparts were said to have most frequently anchored at Johanna and Île Sainte-Marie (present-day Nosy Boraha), off the eastern shore of Madagascar.<sup>154</sup>

French exploration of the island group began in the mid-eighteenth century. French cartographers such as d'Anville, his predecessor Guillaume Delisle, Jacques-Nicolas Bellin, and Rigobert Bonne produced some of the most reliable maps of the South African coastline and East Indian Ocean islands (see figs. 13 and 14).<sup>155</sup> Bellin, for example, was one of the most prolific of the hydrographers under Charles-Hercule d'Albert de Luynes, the *garde* (director) of the newly established "Dépot des Cartes et

Plans de la Marine” (French Hydrographic Service) housed at the Petit Pères at the Place des Victoires, where the *Archives de la Marine* were kept. He worked over fifty years for the dépôt where he was appointed the first “Ingenieur hydrographe de la Marine” (Hydrographic Engineer of the Navy). During his term of office, he was commissioned by the Minister of the Marine to carry out major surveys, beginning with the French coastline and later of all the known coasts of the world. These ambitious undertakings resulted in the production of a very large number of sea charts of the highest quality, which appeared in many editions with varying numbers of charts to the end of the eighteenth century. Later he became “Hydrographe du Roi” (Hydrographer of the King) and a member of the Royal Society in London. He died at Versailles in 1772.<sup>156</sup>

Bellin’s charts of the Zanzibar coast, Mozambique Channel, Madagascar, and the Comoro Archipelago were included in Abbé Prévost’s sixteen-volume *Histoire Générale des Voyages* (1748) as plates and fold-out maps. His fold-out map entitled “Carte des Isles de Comore Johanna ou Anjouan Mohila ou Moaly et Mayote” showed all four islands together, but did not enumerate the villages and places of anchorage. Another map, entitled “Carte de l’Isle d’Anjouan, Une des Isles de Comore par le Cape Cornwall,” (figs. 15 and 15a), featured a place name, “Meroni,” on the western shore of Johanna’s northeastern horn (at present-day Mirontsi).<sup>157</sup> The chart from which Bellin derived his was apparently produced by Captain Henry Cornwall, who had included his map, “Johanna, or Anjuan, One of the Komoro Islands by Cap. Cornwall,” as part of his narrative of travels to East India, described in John Green and Thomas Astley’s *A New Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1745–47).<sup>158</sup> Although “Meroni” was clearly meant to be an early spelling of the village Mirontsi, the physical orientation of Cornwall’s Anjouan was inverted and, of course, the name of the island group was “Komoro,” instead of “Comoro,” as in Bellin’s chart (see fig.16). An extremely rare map, dated 1689, by Captain Jonathan Kempthorne confirms that the pirate anchorage (where Kidd anchored the *Adventure Galley*) was located near Meroni.<sup>159</sup> Of all the maps, charts, and atlases showing the Comoros produced prior to 1827, Bellin’s chart is the

most plausible inspiration for Joseph Smith's use of the names in the Book of Mormon.

### Conclusion

Joseph Smith's knowledge of and participation in treasure seeking during the early years of the nineteenth century will continue to be questioned and disputed. From the time he was very young to the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830, Smith was nurtured amid a whirlwind of treasure-seeking activity that had swept across the eastern seaboard into New England and New York. Smith was part of the pervasive quests for buried treasure that reached the hills and farms of western New York. It has long been known that he assisted his father in treasure quests while in the employ of Josiah Stowell and others in the 1820s. Many of these treasure digs were aided by the use of folk magic, peep stones, and ceremonial circles. The motivation behind these digs was, of course, the hope of finding Captain William Kidd's buried treasure. What's more, Smith reportedly had in his possession an autobiography or biography of Kidd that was "eagerly and often perused." That Joseph Smith Jr. had pre-1830 knowledge of the East Indian Ocean pirate haunt—the Comoro Island group and its sultan town, Moroni—is difficult to conclusively determine. No extant pre-1830 chart or map shows Moroni as a place name on the larger island.

Smith's youthful idolization of Captain William Kidd certainly would have been a motivation for him to seek out published biographies and legendary accounts of Kidd's piracy in the Indian Ocean. If such was the case, Smith would have undoubtedly discovered that Kidd and the crew of his ship, *Adventure Galley*, policed the waters of the Mozambique Channel, the northern coast of Madagascar, and the Comoros archipelago, near Anjouan (Johanna). If Smith had in fact read Captain Charles Johnson's *History of the Pyrates* (1728), he would have learned that notorious pirates such as Kidd and his counterparts Robert Culliford, Henry Avery, Thomas Tew, Olivier Levasseur, Nathaniel North, and Abraham Samuel stalked the merchant ships passing in the vicinity of Madagascar, the Comoro Islands, and St. Marie's Island, their home base. More specifically, he would have known that Kidd careened his ship for repairs at Johanna in 1696.<sup>160</sup> It is com-

elling to think that Smith read of the island group, or heard of them while listening to old treasure-seeking seamen retell the legends of Kidd and roguish pirates of the Indian Ocean. In light of Jacque-Nicolas Bellin's widely available chart of Anjouan, the idea is arresting—if not a probability—that Joseph Smith saw the island place names on this chart, as it featured the place names “Comore” and “Meroni” together for the first time.

### Notes

1. Ronald V. Huggins, “From Captain Kidd’s Treasure Ghost to the Angel Moroni: Changing Dramatis Personae in Early Mormonism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36 (Winter 2003): 17–42.

2. *Ibid.*, 41.

3. Huggins’s conclusions are disputed in Larry E. Morris, “I Should Have an Eye Single to the Glory of God’: Joseph Smith’s Account of the Angel and the Plates,” *FARMS Review* 17/1 (2005): 11–81, and Mark Ashurst-McGee, “Moroni: Angel or Treasure Guardian?” *Mormon Historical Studies* 2 (2001): 39–75; updated and reprinted as “Moroni as Angel and as Treasure Guardian,” *FARMS Review* 18, no. 6 (2006): 35–100.

4. Wayland Hand, “The Quest for Buried Treasure: A Chapter in American Folk Legendry,” in *Folklore on Two Continents: Essays in Honor of Linda Dégh*, edited by Nikolai Burlakoff and Carl Lindahl (Bloomington, Ind.: Trickster, 1980), 112–19, and Alan Taylor, “The Early Republic’s Supernatural Economy: Treasure Seeking in the American Northeast, 1780–1830,” *American Quarterly* 38 (Spring 1986): 6–34.

5. W. R. Jones, “‘Hill-Diggers’ and ‘Hell-Raisers’: Treasure Hunting and the Supernatural in Old and New England,” in *Wonders of the Invisible World: 1600–1900; The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Annual Proceedings* 17 (1992): 97–106; quotation on 106.

6. See William Dunlap, *History of the New Netherlands, Province of New York, and State of New York.*, 2 vols. (New York: Carter & Thorp, 1839), 1:231–32, and John F. Watson, *Annals and Occurrences of New York City and State* (Philadelphia: Henry F. Anners, 1846), 36, 227–28, 313–15. See also Hans Van Sloughter, “The Last of the Money-Diggers,” *The Knickerbocker* 34 (December 1849): 471–82, esp. 473–75.

7. “Miscellany. From the New York Constellation. Money-Diggers,” *Haverhill Gazette* (Haverhill, Mass.), April 17, 1830, 1.

8. “For the New-York Daily Advertiser,” *New York Daily Advertiser*, July 9, 1817, 2. See also “From the New-York Daily Advertiser,” *Plattsburgh [N.Y.] Republican*, July 26, 1817, 2; “Captain Kid, the Pirate,” *Ostego*

[*N.Y.*] *Herald*, July 30, 1817, 1; “From the New-York Daily Advertiser. Captain Kid,” *Watch-Tower* (Cooperstown, N.Y.), July 31, 1817, 1.

9. Anonymous, *An Account of Some of the Traditions and Experiments Respecting Captain Kidd’s Piratical Vessel*. (New York: Sargent & Co., 1844). See also “Money Digging,” *Providence Patriot* (Providence, R.I.), February 2, 1825, 2; “Money Hunting,” *Daily National Journal* (Washington, D.C.), December 29, 1826, 2; and “Thursday Morning, September 20,” *New-York Daily Advertiser* (New York), 3.

10. “Captain Kidd,” *Salem [Mass.] Gazette*, August 15, 1823, 1. See also “Miscellany. Captain Kidd,” *Haverhill [Mass.] Gazette*, August 23, 1823, 1, and “Captain Kidd,” *Hewburyport [Mass.] Herald*, September 5, 1823, 1.

11. Rev. David Murdoch, *The Dutch Dominie of the Catskills; or, The Times of the “Bloody Brandt”* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1861), 181–200; quotation from p. 200.

12. Z., “A Legend of Christmas Eve,” *The New England Magazine* 2 (January–June 1832): 61–64.

13. “Money Diggers,” *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, N.Y.), February 16, 1825, 1. See also “Money Digging,” *Portsmouth [N.H.] Journal of Literature and Politics*, January 29, 1825, 2; “Money Digging,” *Salem [Mass.] Gazette*, February 1, 1825, 1.

14. *Ibid.*

15. This is strikingly similar to what the Book of Mormon prophet Samuel described in Helaman 13:34–37. See also Mormon 1:18. One anonymous writer who sought to expose the folk magic and occult methods of an alleged secret treasure-digging fraternity in Massachusetts, the “Deer Island Money-Digging Society,” outlined a few practices including the halting of moving treasure. The writer indicated that he had collected “an exact account of their origin, laws, pe[r]petual and temporary, rules for admission of officers and members, ceremonies previous to breaking ground, necessary watching, implements, magical incantations, prohibitory demonical circles, method of securing the treasure, art of stopping chests of silver and pots of gold on full march to the lower regions, &c. &c.” From “For the Herald of Freedom. The Art of Digging Money. An Original Essay. Introduction,” *The Herald of Freedom, and the Federal Advertiser* 1 (November 13, 1788): 69. See also “For the Herald of Freedom. The Art of Digging Money. An Original Essay. Chapter I,” *The Herald of Freedom, and the Federal Advertiser* 1 (November 17, 1788): 73; and “The Art of Digging Money. An Original Essay. Chapter II,” *The Herald of Freedom, and the Federal Advertiser* 1 (December 1, 1788): 89.

16. Although it is disputable, the Vermont 1800 census supports

mid-nineteenth-century statements that Smith lived in or visited Poulteney sometime during the Wood movement from 1800 to 1802. See D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 25–26, 121–24, and 449, and John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 57, 133–34. See also Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 617–20.

17. Vermont in Cambridge, “Birthplace and Early Residence of Joseph Smith, Jr.,” *Historical Magazine* 8, 2nd Ser. (November 1870): 315–316; quotation from p. 316. Although the statement supports the notion that Joseph Smith Sr. was engaged in hunting for Kidd treasure, this incident cannot be confirmed by Windsor County Court records. See Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire*, 102–3, and 348 note 38.

18. Charles Elliott, *The New England History*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1857), 57–63; quotation from p. 57. For more on the search for Captain Kidd's treasure in New England, see Huggins, “From Captain Kidd's Treasure Ghost to the Angel Moroni,” 31–41; William Hallam Bonner, “‘Clamors and False Stories’: The Reputation of Captain Kidd,” *The New England Quarterly* 17 (June 1944): 179–208, esp. pp. 203–8; William Hallam Bonner, *Pirate Laureate*, esp. chaps. 7 and 8, pp. 113–65; and Gerard T. Hurley, “Buried Treasure Tales in America,” *Western Folklore* 10 (July 1951): 197–216. Long Island was a favorite place to search for Kidd's treasure early in the nineteenth century. See, for example, “Robert Kid and the Money Diggers,” *Maryland Gazette and Political Intelligencer* (Annapolis, Md.), July 4, 1822, 1; “History of Sachem's Head,” *New-York Spectator*, August 6, 1835, 3; “Money Digging on Long Island,” *New York Herald*, August 1, 1836, 2; and “Capt. Kidd Secreting Treasures,” *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, June 29, 1867, 236. See also Jeanette E. Rattray, “Some Pirates in Long Island Waters,” *Journal of Long Island History* 3 (1963): 40–49, and Rattray, “Some Pirates,” 4 (1964): 28–38.

19. See for example, “The Recess. Money Digging,” *Boston [Mass.] Patriot*, September 21, 1811, p. 4; “Money Digging,” [*Concord*] *New-Hampshire Patriot*, October 1, 1811, p. 4; “Money Digging,” *The Balance, and State Journal* (Albany, N.Y.), November 26, 1811, p. 384. A later anecdote of a Kidd treasure dig involved a man who was “directed in his operations by spiritual influence, his daughter being the medium.” See “After Capt. Kidd's Buried Treasure,” *The Farmer's Cabinet* (Amherst, N.H.), August 19, 1869, 2.

20. Robert A. Emery, “The Magic of Pirate Gold: A New York Mer-

chant and Captain Kyd's Treasure," *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore* 27 (2001): 34–36.

21. Richard M. Dorson, *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946), 50, 168, 174–78, 181, 192, 201, 214–15; Merritt Sanford and Martha R. Chester, *Is It True?: A Wonderful Mesmeric Revelation, Giving an Authentic Account of the Discovery and Description of a Sunken Vessel near Caldwell's Landing, Supposed to Be That of the Pirate Kidd, Including an Account of His Character and Death, at a Distance of Nearly Three Hundred Miles from the Place* (Lynn, Mass.: Kimball & Butterfield, 1845). See also Homer H. Cooper, "William Kidd, Gentleman," *American Mercury* 3 (November 1924): 337–46; Frank Monaghan, "An Examination of the Reputation of Captain Kidd," *New York History* 14 (July 1933): 250–57; Willard Hallam Bonner, "'Clamors and False Stories': The Reputation of Captain Kidd," *New England Quarterly* 17 (June 1944): 179–208; and Willard Hallam Bonner, "The Flying Dutchman of the Western World," *The Journal of American Folklore* 59 (July–September 1946): 282–88.

22. [Stephen Davis], "A History of the Divining Rod; with the Adventures of an Old Rodsman," *The United States Democratic Review* 26 (March 1850): 218–226; quotation from p. 221.

23. *Ibid.*, 223. According to this account, "the Commodore," in later years, learned to make a mineral rod of his own under the direction of an "old German Hessian": "Under his direction, one was fabricated about the year 1824. The tip of a young heifer's horn was filled with quicksilver, oil of amber, and dragon's blood. Two slender branches of whalebone, about eighteen inches long, were securely fastened into the small end of the horn; the free extremities of which being scientifically held in the hands of the rodsman, was now ready for use. This rod 'The Commodore' carried with him in his voyages; and by frequent practice in the adjacent hills, in search of mines, became a great adept in this mysterious art" (p. 225). The Commodore was one of many treasure seekers on the Kennebec River during the early decades of the nineteenth century. One newspaper reported on a party of about fourteen men who were digging for money on the Kennebec: "The money for which they are digging they suppose to have been deposited by the Buccaneers who formerly infested our coast, probably Captain Kidd and his band." See untitled article in the *Woodstock [Vt.] Observer*, April 2, 1822, 3, and S., "Money Diggers," *Salem [Mass.] Gazette*, March 29, 1822, 1. For more on the popularity of treasure hunting in the Kennebec River Valley, see Alan Taylor, "The Early Republic's Supernatural Economy," esp. 6–8.

24. Marvin S. Hill assures us that the Commodore's story "in no way

influenced Joseph Smith, but it does reflect the tone and style of the money-digging lore, and also much of the content. One can see in the story certain common themes which appear in traditional Mormon accounts—Indians, gold, flat stones, magic instruments for discovery, deciphering of hieroglyphics, pre-Columbian Americans, and treasures that get away because the guardian spirit was displeased that the procedures were not followed.” See Marvin S. Hill, “Money-Digging Folklore and the Beginnings of Mormonism: An Interpretive Suggestion,” *BYU Studies* 24 (Fall 1984): 473–88; quotation from p. 477.

25. See John L. Brooke, *The Refiner’s Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 53, 333n75. Brooke also concluded that the author of “A History of the Divining Rod” was a man named Stephen Davis, a prominent historian of early Ohio. See Brooke, 53, 333n75. The name Stephen Davis does not show up in Palmyra’s highway tax lists for 1812, 1813, or 1814, however.

26. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 104–20, and 131–32, and Brooke, *The Refiner’s Fire*, 103–04, 152, and 362 note 2.

27. O. Dogberry [Abner Cole], “The Book of Pukei.—Chap. 1,” *Reflector* (Palmyra, N.Y.), June 12, 1830, 36–37; [“We have received the following letter”], *Painesville [Ohio] Telegraph*, March 22, 1831, 2; and “Doctor of Olden Days Used Herb Remedies; Reminiscences of Dr. Luman Walters Who Was Noted for His Cures which Were Accomplished by Peculiar Personal Methods,” *Geneva Daily Times*, July 26, 1929, 6.

28. Joseph Knight Sr., Reminiscence, in Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003), 4: 14–15. For more on Lawrence, see Rich Troll, “Samuel Tyler Lawrence: A Significant Figure in Joseph Smith’s Palmyra Past,” *Journal of Mormon History* 32 (Summer 2006): 38–86. For more on Lawrence’s activities as a seer, see Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic Word View*, 40–41, 123–24.

29. Willard Chase Statement, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:68–69.

30. W[illiam]. R. Hine Statement, in Arthur B. Deming, ed., *Naked Truths about Mormonism* 1 (January 1888): 2; also quoted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:153–54.

31. O. Dogberry [Abner Cole], “Gold Bible, No. 3,” *Reflector* (Palmyra, N.Y.), February 1, 1831, 92.

32. *Ibid.*, 93.

33. “Doctor of Olden Days Used Herb Remedies” *Geneva Daily Times*, July 26, 1929, 6.

34. Dogberry [Abner Cole], “The Book of Pukei.—Chap. 1,” 37. See

also Vogel, "The Locations of Joseph Smith's Early Treasure Quests," 20 and note 33.

35. Vogel, "The Locations of Joseph Smith's Early Treasure Quests," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (Fall 1994): 209–12, 227, and Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*, 43, 80–81, and 95–96. See also Alan Taylor, "The Early Republic's Supernatural Economy," esp. pp. 11–12, 23–25; Ronald W. Walker, "The Persisting Idea of American Treasure Hunting," *Brigham Young University Studies* 24 (Fall 1984): 429–459; and Clay L. Chandler, "Scrying for the Lord: Magic, Mysticism, and the Origins of the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36 (Winter 2003): 43–78.

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37. John Hyde, *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs*, 2d ed. (New York: W. P. Fetridge & Company, 1857), 263.

38. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:406–07.

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41. Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 90.

42. See Mayln Newitt, "The Comoros Islands in Indian Ocean Trade Before the 19th Century," *Cahiers d'Études africaines* vol. 23, Cahier 89/90 (1983): 139–65, and Jean Martin, *Les Comores: Quatre îles entre pirates et planteurs*, vol. 2 (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000). See also, Charles Grey, *Pirates of the Eastern Seas (1618–1723): A Lurid Page of History* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1933). For general historical information on the Comoro Islands, see Martin Ottenheimer and Harriet Ottenheimer, *Historical Dictionary of the Comoro Islands*, African Historical Dictionaries No. 59 (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1994). For an excellent historical treatment of European contact in the Comoro Islands early in the nineteenth century, see Dorothy Dubins, "A Political

History of the Comoro Islands, 1795–1886” (PhD dissertation, Boston University, 1972).

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44. Captain Charles Johnson, *The History of the Pyrates, Containing the Lives of Captain Misson. Captain Bowen. Captain Kidd. Captain Tew. Captain Halsey . . . and their Several Crews, Vol. 2* (London: T. Woodward, 1728), 69. This is the second volume of Johnson’s *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates*, which was first published in 1724. Charles Johnson is widely believed to be the pseudonym of the early English writer and novelist Daniel Defoe (1661–1731). Although his conclusion is now disputed, John Robert Moore convincingly identified the unknown Captain Charles Johnson as a pseudonym of Daniel Defoe (1660–1731), the seventeenth-century British novelist. See John Robert Moore, *Defoe in the Pillory and Other Studies*, Indiana University Publications, Humanities Series No. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1939), chap. 8, 126–88. See also Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates*, 80–86, 89–92, maps of Johanna following p. 94, and “Le Pirate William Kid à Madagascar et aux Comores (1696–1701),” in A. Grandidier et al., *Collection des Ouvrages anciens concernant Madagascar*, 9 vols. (Paris: Comité de Madagascar, 1903–20), 3:543–46.

45. See Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates*, 86, 90, and 92, and Willard Hallam Bonner, *Pirate Laureate: The Life & Legends of Captain Kidd* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1947), 10.

46. Johnson [Daniel Defoe], *The History of the Pyrates*, 2:70.

47. See Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates*, 171–182, 206–27, and Richard Zacks, *The Pirate Hunter: The True Story of Captain Kidd* (New York: Hyperion, 2002), 223–51, and 355–93.

48. Smith’s 1832 history, an autobiographical narrative written in his own hand, identified the angel as “Maroni.” See Dean C. Jesse, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith, Volume 1: Autobiographical and Historical Writings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 8.

49. Joseph Smith History, 1: 51–52; Mormon 6:6, and 8:4, 13–14.

50. Royal Skousen believes that the unknown second scribe’s spelling of Cumorah as “Camorah” in the printer’s manuscript shows that Oliver Cowdery’s *u* in the original manuscript (Moroni portion not extant) looked like an *a*. The spelling “Camorah” was retained in the 1830 edi-

tion. See Royal Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Entire Text in Two Parts*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2001), 2: 892.

51. 1830 edition, p. 529; in this instance (vs. 5), the spelling is "Comorah" in the printer's manuscript. See Skousen, *The Printer's Manuscript*, 2:892.

52. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, 17. See Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:93–94.

53. Philetus B. Spear Reminiscence, ca. 1873 in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:129. Smith's admiration for Kidd may have extended beyond teenage hero worship and into his early years as Church leader. Curiously, one of the hymns in the first LDS hymnal, "Through All the World Below," is traditionally sung to the tune, "Captain Kidd." It is unknown, however, if Smith had any bearing on Emma's selection of this hymn for the hymnal. See Emma Smith, ed., *A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of the Latter-day Saints* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams & Co., 1835), Hymn 27, p. 34. See also Willard Hallam Bonner, "The Ballad of Captain Kidd," *American Literature* 15 (January 1944): 362–80; Bonner, *Pirate Laureate*, 86–112, esp. pp. 105–6. I am grateful to Ron Priddis for making me aware of the tune of this hymn.

54. Anna Ruth Eaton, *The Origin of Mormonism* (New York: Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions, 1881), p.1; quoted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:148.

55. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 84.

56. See M. Wilford Poulson, "Library Resources for the Scientific Study of Mormonism," *Proceedings, Utah Academy of Sciences* 7 (July 15, 1930): 37–38; "Manchester (New York) Library, 1812–1830," *Utah Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters* 19–20 (1941–42): 13; and Robert Paul, "Joseph Smith and the Manchester (New York) Library," *Brigham Young University Studies* 22 (Summer 1982): 333–56.

57. According to Palmyra newspaper publisher Orsamus Turner, "once a week [Joseph] would stroll into the office of the old Palmyra Register, for his father's paper." Orsamus Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase, and Morris' Reserve* (Rochester, N.Y.: William Alling, 1851), 214. See also "List of Letters," *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, N.Y.), October 11, 1825, 3, and "Village Record," *Wayne Sentinel*, October 6, 1826, 3.

58. John W. Welch, "Was There a Library in Harmony, Pennsylvania?" *Insights: An Ancient Window* (January 1994): 2.

59. Quotation from Richard L. Bushman's review essay, "The Mysteries of Mormonism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15 (Autumn 1995): 506. In a preliminary sketch for his biography of Joseph Smith, Bushman wrote: "Manchester did have a lending library, but the Smiths are not known to have patronized it. He is more likely to have read newspapers and almanacs than any other kind of writing." Richard Lyman Bushman, "The 'Little Narrow Prison' of Language: The Rhetoric of Revelation," in his *Believing History: Latter-day Saint Essays*, edited by Reid L. Neilson and Jed Woodworth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 248–61; quotation from p. 250.

60. For excellent studies on private libraries and book ownership among farmers and working classes in the early republic and antebellum New England states, see Sarah Jane Cutler, "The Coonskin Library," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* 26 (January 1917): 58–77; Robert H. Irrman, "The Library of an Early Ohio Farmer," *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* 57 (April 1948): 185–93; Michael H. Harris, "Books on the Frontier: The Extent and Nature of Book Ownership in Southern Indiana, 1800–1850," *Library Quarterly* 42 (October 1972): 416–30; Agnes Haigh Widder, "The John Askin Family Library: A Fur-Trading Family's Books," *Michigan Historical Review* (March 2007): 27–57; Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, "Home Libraries and the Institutionalization of Everyday Practices among Antebellum New Englanders," *American Studies* 42 (Fall 2001): 63–86; and Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780–1830* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 247–53, and 264–82.

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103. "Books Lent," *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, N.Y.), September 8,

1824, 3. Apparently it was not unusual—as it is not today—for private individuals to lend books to neighbors. See “Books! Books!,” *Wayne Sentinel*, January 28, 1824, 3; “Books Missing!,” *Wayne Sentinel*, January 28, 1824, 3; and “Books Missing,” *Wayne Sentinel*, March 10, 1824, 4.

104. See, for example, Advertisement, “School Books,” *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, N.Y.), October 15, 1823, 1; Advertisement, “J. D. Evernghim & Co.,” *Wayne Sentinel*, October 29, 1823, 3; Advertisement, “Palmyra Book Store,” *Wayne Sentinel*, May 5, 1824, 3; “Palmyra Book Store,” *Wayne Sentinel*, June 16, 1824, 4; “The English Reader,” *Wayne Sentinel*, December 22, 1824, 4; and Advertisement, “Just Published, Universal Geography,” *Wayne Sentinel*, December 29, 1824, p. 3. Morse’s *Universal Geography* was also available in Rochester, at E. Peck & Co. Booksellers and Stationers. See Advertisement, “For Sale by E. Peck & Co.,” *Rochester [N.Y.] Telegraph*, December 12, 1820, 4.

105. “New Bookstore,” *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, N.Y.), April 28, 1824, 3.

106. Robert Paul, “Joseph Smith and the Manchester (New York) Library,” *BYU Studies* 22 (Summer 1982): 344, entries 42–43.

107. See Eugène de Froberville, “Des invasions madecasses aux îles Comores, et à la côte orientale d’Afrique,” *Annuaire des voyages et de la géographie* 2 (1845): 194–208; Andre Manicacci, “Les Incursions Malgaches aux Comores,” *La Revue de Madagascar* 26 (1939): 73–101. Paule Viallard, “Les antiquités de la Grande Comore,” *Taloha* 4 (1971): 169–84; Said Bakari Bin Sultani Ahmed, *The Swahili Chronicle of Ngazija*, translated and edited by Lyndon Harries (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1977), 52–54, 94–102; Jean-Louis Guébourg, *La Grande Comore, des sultans aux mercenaires* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1994); Pierre Vérin, *The History of Civilization in North Madagascar*, translated by David Smith (Rotterdam, Netherlands: A. A. Balkema, 1986), 120–29, and Arne Bialuschewski, “Pirates, Slavers, and the Indigenous Population in Madagascar, ca. 1690–1715,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 38 (2005): 401–25. For information on Sultan Ahmad, see B. G. Martin, “Notes on Some Members of the Learned Classes of Zansibar and East Africa in the Nineteenth Century,” *African Historical Studies* 4 (1971): 525–45, esp. 528. For announcements of travel accounts in New York newspapers, see “From the East Indies,” *New-York [New York City] Courier*, September 5, 1816, 2; “Extracts from Late English Papers. Madagascar Princes,” *New-York Courier*, March 27, 1817, 2.

108. Barabara Dubins, “Nineteenth-Century Travel Literature on the Comoro Islands: A Bibliographic Essay,” *African Studies Bulletin* 12

(September 1969): 138–46. Also, Ottenheimer and Ottenheimer, *Historical Dictionary*, 116–20.

109. Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, edited by Sir William Foster, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1727; rpt., London: The Argonaut Press, 1930), 1:22.

110. John Henry Grose, *A Voyage to the East Indies: Begun in 1750 with Observations Continued till 1764*, 2 vols, 2nd ed. (London: Printed for the author; sold by S. Hooper, 1766), 1:14. Grose's description of Grand Comoro was paraphrased in William Mavor's *An Historical Account of the Most Celebrated Voyages, Travels, and Discoveries, from the Time of Columbus to the Present Period*, 14 vols. (Philadelphia: Samuel F. Bradford, 1802), 5:1–5.

111. Abbé [Guillaume Thomas François] Raynal, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, translated from the French by J. Justamond, 6 vols. (London: Printed for W. Baynes by W. Heney, 1813), 1:346.

112. Hakluyt's *Collection of the Early Voyages, Travels, and Discoveries, of the English Nation*, 5 vols, new ed. (London: Printed for R. H. Evans, 1811): 4:53.

113. Sir William Jones, "Remarks on the Island of Hinzuana, or Johanna," *Asiatic Researches* 2 (1807): 77–107.

114. Henry Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia, and Travels into the Interior of that Country* (Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1816), 69–70; quotation from p. 69.

115. MM. Capmartin and Épidariste Colin, "Essai sur les îles Comores," *Annales des Voyages, de la Géographie et de L'Histoire* 13 (1811): 129–70.

116. [Mauritius Augustus], *Memoirs and Travels of Mauritius Augustus Count de Benyowsky*, 2 vols. (Dublin: Printed by Zachariah Jackson for P. Wogan, L. White, P. Byrne, et al., 1790), 2:205. See also Samuel Copeland, *A History of the Island of Madagascar* (London: Burton and Smith, 1822), 18.

117. James Prior, *Voyage along the Eastern Coast of Africa to Mosambique, Johanna, and Quiloa* (London: Printed for Sir Richard Phillips, 1819), 56. Prior's account was reprinted in [Sir Richard Phillips], *New Voyages and Travels: Consisting of Originals and Translations*, 9 vols. (London: Sir Richard Philips, 1819–23), 2:56.

118. Robert Kerr, *A General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels, Arranged in Systematic Order*, 18 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1824), 8: 319–321.

119. *Ibid.*, 9:28–29, 140, 223–224; quote from p. 224.

120. *Ibid.*, 9:515.

121. Conrad Malte-Brun, *Universal Geography, or a Description of All the Parts of the World*, 8 vols. (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1826–1831), 4:421–425; quotation from p. 422.

122. David Brewster, *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, 18 vols. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and others, 1830), 12:197–98, sv. “Johanna.” The story of the Frenchmen banished to Johanna was published in “Extract of a Letter Received at Salem, Dated at Joanna, (one of the Cormoro [sic] Islands,) August 10th, 1802,” *New-York Herald*, January 29, 1803, 2.

123. [William Elliot], “A Visit to the Island of Johanna,” *United Service Journal* 1 (1830): 144–52.

124. W[illiam]. F. W[Fitzwilliam]. Owen, *Narrative of Voyages to Explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia, and Madagascar*, 2 vols. (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1833), 1:118–20. See also Capt. Thomas Boteler, *Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery to Africa and Arabia, Performed in His Majesty’s Ships Leven and Barracouta from 1821 to 1826*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1835), 1:159–72, 366.

125. W. H. Smyth, *The Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver* (London: John Murray, 1829), 252–53, 263–66.

126. James Bell, *A System of Geography, Popular and Scientific, or a Physical, Political, and Statistical Account of the World and Its Various Divisions*, 6 vols. (Glasgow: Archibald Fullarton and Co., 1832), 3:554–56; quotation from p. 555. For more on geographies of this period, see Alan Downes, “The Bibliographic Dinosaurs of Georgian Geography (1714–1830),” *The Geographical Journal* 137 (September 1971): 379–87.

127. [Joseph Huddart], *The Oriental Navigator, or New Directions for Sailing to and from the East Indies* (Philadelphia: James Humphreys, 1801), 97–98.

128. John Malham, *The Naval Gazetteer; or, Seaman’s Complete Guide. Containing a Full and Accurate Account, Alphabetically Arranged of the Several Coasts of all the Countries and Islands in the Known World*, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Edward J. Coale; Philadelphia: John F. Watson, 1812), 1:224–25, s.v. “Comora Islands” and “Comoro.”

129. For more on the East India Pilot, see Andrew S. Cook, “Establishing the Sea Routes to India and China: Stages in the Development of Hydrographical Knowledge,” in *The Worlds of the East India Company*, edited by H. V. Bowen, Margarett Lincoln, and Nigel Rigby (Woodbridge, England: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 119–36, esp. 132–34, and Susanna Fisher, *The Makers of the Blueback Charts: A History of Imray, Laurie, Norie & Wilson Ltd* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Regatta Press, 2001).

130. Cook, “Establishing the Sea Routes to India and China,” 135.

131. L[ewelyn]. S[tyles]. Dawson, *Memoirs of Hydrography Including Brief Biographies of the Principal Officers Who Have Served in H. M. Naval Surveying Service between the Years 1750 and 1885* (Eastbourne, England: Henry W. Keay, 1883–85), 1:33. See also Andrew S. Cook, “Surveying the Seas: Establishing the Sea Routes to the East Indies,” in *Cartographies of Travel and Navigation*, edited by James R. Ackerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 69–96, esp. pp. 94–95.

132. See, for example, “Coast of Brasils, &c.,” *Mercantile Advertiser* (New York), February 4, 1819, 3; “London Stationary, Charts, &c.,” *Boston [Mass.] Commercial Gazette*, June 15, 1826, p. 3; “Horsburgh’s India Directory,” *Salem [Mass.] Gazette*, September 1, 1829, 3.

133. James Horsburgh, *India Directory, or Directions for Sailing to and from the East Indies, China, New Holland, Cape of Good Hope, Brazil, and Interjacent Ports: Compiled Chiefly from Original Journals at the East India House, and from Observations and Remarks, Made During Twenty-one Years Experience Navigating in Those Seas*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (London: Printed for the author and sold by Kingsbury, Parbury, and Allen, 1826–27), 1:185–86. Navigational directions are given for all four Comoro Islands in Horsburgh, “Comoro Islands, and Adjacent Dangers; Directions for Sailing to the Anchorage of Comoro, Mohilla, Mayotta, and Johanna,” pp. 185–91.

134. See, for example, “Notes sur Madagascar et Les Comores,” *Revue et Maritime et Coloniale* 20 (1867): 963–85, esp. pp. 976–79; Pierre Larousse, *Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIXe Siècle: Français, Historique, Géographique, Mythologique, Bibliographique. . . .*, Vol. 17 Suppl., 2 (Paris: Administration du Grand Dictionnaire Universel, 1866–77), 881–82; and Nicolas Du Plantier, *La Grande Comore: Sa Colonisation* (Paris: Augustin Challamel; Librairie Maritime et Coloniale, 1904), 7–8.

135. See Andrew S. Cook, “Alexander Dalrymple’s ‘A Collection of Plans of Ports in the East Indies’ (1774–1775): A Preliminary Examination,” *Imago Mundi* 33 (1981): 46–64. The Comoro Archipelago is represented by plates 7–10. Although a number of Dalrymple’s charts still circulate among antiquarian collectors, very few copies of the complete work still survive. See Andrew S. Cook, “Alexander Dalrymple (1737–1808), Hydrographer to the East India Company and the Admiralty, as Publisher: A Catalogue of Books and Charts,” 3 vols. (PhD. thesis, University of St. Andrews, 1993), Vol. 3, pt. 3: 1843. Dalrymple’s plans and charts could be found, however, in New England bookstores and private collections in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. See, for example, “Johnston and Justice,” *The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia*

Daily Advertiser, July 23, 1793, 2; "Auctions. This Day.," *Columbian Centinel* (Boston), August 21, 1822, 1.

136. "Plan of the w. Side of Comoro or Anga-Zecha from a M. S. by Alexander Sibbald; S. Pyle sculp.," 1774, in Alexander Dalrymple, comp., *Dalrymple's Charts: A Collection in 3 Volumes of Charts, Maps and Plans for Navigation*, 3 vols. (London: A. Dalrymple, ca. 1807), 1: Plate 63. See also [Alexander Dalrymple], *A Collection of Charts and Memoirs. Published by Alexander Dalrymple, Esq.* (n.p., n.d.), xiv, and [Alexander] Dalrymple, *List of Classes into Which Are Distributed the Plans of Ports, &c.* (London: George Bigg, 1786), 8, and Andrew S. Cook, "Alexander Dalrymple (1737-1808), Hydrographer to the East India Company and the Admiralty as Publisher," Vol. 3, pt. 1:778. A digital scan of this very scarce chart was kindly provided to me by the staff of the Map Section at the National Library of Australia, Canberra, Australia (MAP Ra 29 Vol. 1, Plate 63).

137. [Alexander Dalrymple], *Explanation of the Plans* (London: ca. 1787), 4-5; quotation from p. 4.

138. "A Chart of the Inner Passage between the Coast of Africa and the Isle of Madagascar, from Mr. D'Anville with several additions," in *The Oriental Pilot; or, A Select Collection of Charts and Plans, Both General and Particular; Calculated for the Navigation of the Country Trade in the Seas Beyond the Cape of Good Hope* (London: R. Sayer and J. Bennett, 1778), plate 7. A digital scan of this chart was provided to me by the staff of the Map Section at the National Library of Australia (MAP Ra 52, part 10).

139. D'Anville's original undated manuscript chart, preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, does not show Ingando or Maroon on the island's western coastline. The chart is located in the Département Cartes et Plans, CPL GE DD-2987 (8320).

140. George W. Colton, *Colton's Atlas of the World, Illustrating Physical and Political Geography* (New York: J. H. Colton and Company, 1856), Africa, plate 36, and F. A. Garnier, *Atlas Sphéroïdal et Universel de Géographie* (Paris: Veuve Jules Renouard, Libraire, 1862), p. 45.

141. See E. Gilbert de Cauwer, "Philippe Vander Maelen (1795-1859), Belgian Map-maker," *Imago Mundi* 24 (1970): 11-20, Peter van der Krogt, *Globi Neerlandici: The Production of Globes in the Low Countries* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1993), 372-74, and Walter Goffart, *Historical Atlases: The First Three Hundred Years, 1570-1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 348, 360.

142. "The people of the grand Comore have extremely ferocious manners, and kill or make slaves foreigners who dare to challenge their island or the storm that casts a shadow over their shores." From Legué-

vel de Lacombe, *Voyage à Madagascar et aux Îles Comores (1823 à 1830)*, 2 Vols. (Paris: Louis Desessart, Éditeur, 1840), 2:343–45; quotation from p. 345.

143. “A little farther, to the east, as at Moroni, on the west coast, the land is dotted with burnt stones.” From Oscar MacCarthy, “Les Îles Comores,” in *L’Univers, ou Histoire et Description de Tous les Peuples de Leurs Religions, Moeurs, Industrie, Coutumes, Etc.; Îles de L’Afrique*, par M. D’Avezac (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, Éditeurs, 1848) Pt. III.3., Îles Africaines de La Mer des Indes, 116–23; quotation from p. 116. See also Oscar MacCarthy, “Les Îles Comores,” *Revue de l’Orient : Bulletin de la Société Orientale* Vol. 3 (January 1848): 61–69, and Auguste Bosse and Pajot, “La Grande-Comore,” *Annales Maritimes: Sciences et Arts*, 2e Part 3 (1848): 119–26.

144. “Isles Comores,” *Le Magasin Pittoresque* 23 (April 1855): 99–101, 105–06, 131–33, 196–97, 259–61; the entry “La Grande Comore ou Angazija” is on pp. 259–61.

145. Louis Le Breton (1818–66), naval surgeon, draftsman, lithographer, and map maker, was assistant surgeon during the voyage of the *Astrolabe* from 1839–40. His abilities as an artist came to the attention of the commander of the expedition, Dumont d’Urville, bringing him additional responsibilities of making paintings and drawings of observed marine subjects after the death of Goupil, the expedition’s official artist. From 1844 to 1845, Le Breton was surgeon on the *Berceau* during its voyage to the Indian Ocean. Le Breton resigned his post as surgeon in 1848 and transferred to the Department of Maps and Charts in Paris where he remained until his death in 1866. See Yves Tanneau, “Louis Le Breton dessinateur (1818–66),” *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique du Finistère* 95 (1969): 85–89, and Roger D. J. Collins, “Louis Le Breton et l’Océanie,” *Journal de la Société de Océanistes*, Vol. 39, no. 76 (June 1983): 93–101.

146. Rev. William Ellis, *Three Trips to Madagascar during the Years 1853–1854–1856* (London: John Murray, 1859).

147. “The Christian Martyrs of Madagascar,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 18 (April 1859): 586–602; quotation on p. 588.

148. T. S. Leigh, “II.—Mayotta and the Comoro Islands,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 19 (1849): 7–17.

149. Lewis Pelly, “Art. XIII.—Miscellaneous Observations upon the Comoro Islands,” *The Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society* XVI (Bombay: Education Society’s Press, Byculla, 1863): 88–98. Pelly’s reconnoitering of the Seychelle Islands, the Persian Gulf and Arabia, and the Comoro Islands was reported again in 1865 to the British Association for the Advancement of Science. It echoed his report of 1862 nearly ver-

batim. See Lieut.-Col. L. Pelly, "On the Comoro Islands," *Report of the Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; Held at Birmingham in September 1865* (London: John Murray, 1866), 127–28.

150. Algernon de Horsey, "On the Comoro Islands," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 34 (1864): 259.

151. *Ibid.*

152. "A Few Remarks on Zanzibar and the East Coast of Africa," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographic Society of London* 17 (July 7, 1873): 343–54; quote from p. 350.

153. "Grande Comore is divided into ten departments commanded by princes who obey the main Sultan Said Ali. There are 30 cities and 238 villages. The capital of this island is Mourouni." See Léon Humblot, "Les Comores," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie Commerciale de Paris* 9 (October 1886–October 1887): 386–90; quotation from p. 387.

154. See "Le Pirate William Kid à Madagascar et aux Comores (1696–1701)," cited in note 40; Raymond Decary, "La Piraterie à Madagascar aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècles," *Bulletin de l'Académie Malgache* 18 (1935): 5–7; and Hubert Jules Deschamps, *Les Pirates à Madagascar aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècles* (Paris: Éditions Berger-Levrault, 1949), 103–12.

155. See Josef Kovitz, *Cartography in France, 1660–1848: Science, Engineering, and Statecraft* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), esp. 33–35, and 70–72, Olivier Chapuis, *À la Mer comme au Ciel, Beaux-temps-Beaupré et la Naissance de l'Hydrographie Moderne (1700–1850)* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1999), 223–25, 258–60, 276–80.

156. "Lettre de M. Bellin, Ingenieur de la Marine, a M. L' Abbé Prevost," in *Histoire Générale des Voyages, ou Nouvelle Collection de Toutes les Relations de Voyages*, edited by Antoine Francois Prévost d'Exile, Nouvelle Édition, 16 Vols. (La Haye: Pierre de Hondt, 1749), Vol 9:i–iv; Gabriel Gravier, "La Cartographie de Madagascar," Société Normandy de Géographie, *Bulletin de l'Année* 16 (1994): 333–36, reprinted in Gabriel Gravier, *La Cartographie de Madagascar* (Rouen: E. Cagniard, 1896), 191–95; Mireille Pastoureau, "Jacques Nicholas Bellin, French Hydrographer, and the Royal Society in the Eighteenth Century," *Yale University Library Gazette* 68 (October 1993): 65–69; Christine Marie Petto, *When France Was King of Cartography: The Patronage and Production of Maps in Early Modern France* (Laham: Lexington Books, 2007), 69–75.

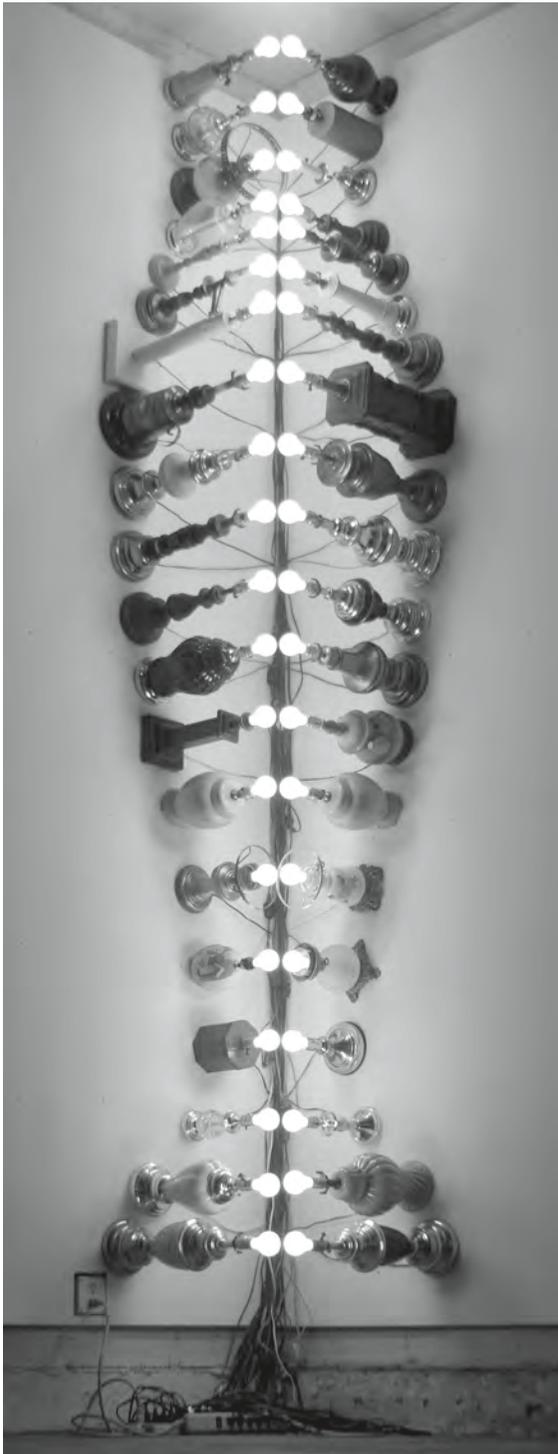
157. *Histoire Générale des Voyages, ou Nouvelle Collection de Toutes les Relations de Voyages*, edited by Antoine Francois Prévost d'Exile, Nouvelle

Édition, 16 vols. (Paris: Chez Didot, 1748), Vol. 5, no. 13, facing p. 217. The fold-out, “Carte des Îles de Comore,” faces p. 216.

158. John Green and Thomas Astley, comps., *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels; Consisting of the Most Esteemed Relations, Which Have Hitherto Been Published in Any Language; Comprehending Everything Remarkable in Its Kind in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*, 4 vols. (London: Printed for Thomas Astley, 1745–47), 3: Facing page 392. This plate was also included as part of Alexander Dalrymple, *Dalrymple’s Charts: A Collection in 3 Volumes of Charts, Maps and Plans for Navigation* (London: A. Dalrymple, ca. 1807), 3: Plate 39.

159. “Plan of the Bay on the North Side of Johanna: in 12°.10’ S.Lat.,” by C. Peter Bigou; drawn by Capt. John Kempthorne 1689 and engraved by P. Bigbie 1774, in *Dalrymple’s Charts: A Collection in 3 Volumes of Charts, Maps and Plans for Navigation*, 1: Plate 65. This chart is shown in Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates*, plate facing p. 94. A digital scan of this chart was provided to me by the staff of the Map Section at the National Library of Australia (MAP RM 2002).

160. Johnson [Defoe], *The History of the Pyrates*, Vol. 2:33–42, 44, 46, 60–61, 68–69, 89–91, 113, 128, 132, 142, 260, 267, 372, 380, and 411. The repair of Kidd’s boat was mentioned on p. 69.



Chris Purdie  
*Spine*, lamps, power strip,  
variable size



Chris Purdie  
*Alarming Clock*, clock radio,  
10" x 5" x 2"

## POETRY

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### evidence of things not seen

*Clifton Holt Jolley*

Through an igneous erosion of stone has grown  
a single Ponderosa, straight as an unthreaded lace  
and tall against this clarity of Sierra Nevada sky.

We're not in Nevada but west, near Yosemite,  
east of the Sierra Madres at Shaver Lake  
where this tree has blown into the gnomon of a dial

too big to easily tell time, except by the age  
of a tree, solitary, redolence defined by insistence  
in a ground too unforgiving for others to survive.

Silver granite and gray is broken by the musk  
trunk and up to the brilliant needle-tufted climax  
and seed cones of each branching of the Blackjack,

the Bull, the Yellow, the Ponderosa Pine

until high above the weathered bark and white heartwood,  
an extinguished match of charcoal, last trunk trails into cloud,  
branches nude of seeds, of needles, a treble evidence of tree

and lightning strike. Too tall is unsafe (as is too anything)  
in a nature that diminishes even this stone mountain,  
and nature's God throws down holy fire to teach

humility to a tree.

## About Half

*Shawn P. Bailey*

### I.

“How much time do you spend gardening?”

I say—

My back fence neighbor’s eyes are placid, patient

Riddled with cataracts, half blind

They count the neat rows again

His backyard is an Eden but with clothing

An open-air produce department:

Tomatoes, peppers, squash, carrots, and sugar peas;

An apricot and two peach trees;

And the grapevine climbing our common fence

Which is a chain link line too porous

To hold back my personal collection

Crabgrass, clover, and a million gaudy dandelions

Stinging nettle

Nightshade

Morning glory

Pigweed, gumweed, stinkgrass.

Natives I suppose—plants

That need no chemical encouragement

No irrigation

No pruning or stakes

Weed is a word for a strategy without flowers or fruit

Without human approval

They just want to grow here and can

My neighbor kills them root and branch

Gathers their flaccid carcasses with a rake

The handle is toil-oiled and smooth and

It’s missing a few rust-eaten teeth

It stops

He unfolds a leather-bound hand

Extracts a white handkerchief from

The bib-pocket of his dark blue overalls

He blows his nose.

“About half,” he finally answers my question.

## II.

About half.

I picture the implacable circular sweep  
Of clock hands everywhere  
And calendars packed with pipe wrenches and pin-ups  
And Stonehenge  
La Piedra del Sol  
Sundials and waterclocks

A baboon fibula scored exactly twenty-nine times  
And a dagger of sunlight marking the summer solstice  
Passing through a neat line of windows  
Formed in ancient stacked-stone walls  
Piercing the inner chamber

About half.

I contemplate the influence or entity  
—I'm not quite sure what or how—  
That synchronizes the time-pieces embedded in our phones  
Propelling us forward  
Urging us on to the next thing  
Pouring on the guilt  
For not being there earlier  
For not staying longer  
For not getting more done  
Because my children's childhood is fleeting  
And rosebuds won't gather themselves  
And the human brain shrinks as it ages  
Because I buy books I will never read and record shows  
I will never watch  
And my elderly neighbor  
Has invented a new time-reckoning system  
He spends half of his time eating and sleeping  
Watching daytime TV; applying sunscreen and  
Walking his jet black cocker spaniel  
Visiting and being visited  
Ingesting a rainbow array of pills from a seven-chambered  
Plastic dispenser bearing the names of the days of the week  
And how much time does he spend gardening?  
About half.

## III.

Another harvest and fall  
We never saw him after the hard frost  
Year after year  
He reemerged in the early spring  
Tulips and daffodils and him in heavy overalls  
A full-body coat, red flannel  
Until this year  
He fell ill in October; by January he was gone  
I knew something was wrong months before we found out  
Deer—blundering car-dodgers down from the mountains—  
Winter hungry, the original occupants of our block,  
Had eaten his arbor vitae  
From the ground to as high as they could reach  
Nobody wrapped them in his absence  
And the snow melted to reveal two great piles of leaves  
No sign of his trusty rake  
His family didn't invite us to the funeral  
They didn't know about us  
They didn't know he had fed us bushels of  
Tomatoes, peppers, squash, carrots, and sugar peas  
Apricots and peaches and grapes  
From the vine climbing our common fence  
Eden is weed fallen  
And the realtors and house-hunters never  
Stay long in the backyard  
They take pictures with their phones  
Their lips move, but I can't make out the words  
It's always something about *work*  
I see them through my departed neighbor's eyes  
I wave and give them a look that means  
This garden place is not for you  
I can tell they are busy;  
Stretched thin; stress harried; time enslaved  
Distracted by goals and obligations and things  
Too much like us.

## For Margene

*Shawn P. Bailey*

(Margene Morris Knowlton, 1934–2013)

### I.

The intensive care unit had never seen such a hostess  
 How was the show? *And what did they serve?*  
 We brought her primary stew  
 A fresh fruit bouquet  
 Chicken salad, croissants, and raspberry scones  
 She tried to feed every nurse and janitor on the floor  
 We plastered the antiseptic walls with sticky great grandchildren  
 We should play some cards, we reminisced  
 Beset by wires and tubes and a haze of medication,  
 She still seemed game  
 How much pain do you feel on a scale of one to ten?  
 She struggled, mind running away from her mouth,  
 Ten she got it out, *ten—*  
 Then she changed the subject gracefully  
 Is it impolite to dominate a conversation from one's deathbed?  
 —she could be trusted on questions of etiquette—  
 She remembered my recent promotion  
 That's a big deal, she smiled behind the cannula on her lip  
 I mean wow!

### II.

I don't want congestive heart failure, lung disease, diabetes,  
 wounds or infection  
 I don't want dementia or even bouts of mild discombobulation  
 I don't want incisions or sutures that won't heal this side of the  
 resurrection  
 I don't want to burn out in a crescendo of emergency intervention  
 Fill me not up with translucent bags of sugar water one drip at a  
 time  
 Stop from my nose the imponderable used-bandage dankness of  
 infirmary air

Shut out the interminable beeps and whirl of medical technology  
 Bring low the color-coded mountains dancing mirthlessly across  
 the screen  
 Hide from my face the television mounted on a two-elbowed black  
 metal arm  
 Lead me not among the blue pajama people too accustomed to fa-  
 tality  
 I don't want to die in a hospital.

### III.

You play it again  
 The Brahms Intermezzo in E flat major Opus 117 No. 1  
 Years ago she asked you to play it at her funeral  
 Start practicing, my dear, I can hear her voice  
 What's your rush? you said  
 And don't get any ideas  
 The Brahms is a lullaby  
 A procession of gentle swells  
 A horizon incandescent with fading light  
 And the undercurrent, the dark water, is not a complaint  
 It does not lament  
 It is the truth  
 A story about betrayal *and* forgiveness;  
 Illness *and* endurance  
 Suffering *and* grace  
 You play it again, my love, and  
 Your sobs fill in the spaces between the notes

### IV.

I miss the late-night phone calls  
 How many slices do you think I can get out of a Marie Callendar's  
 pie?  
 The recycled jokes and riddles and inspirational quotes  
 The self-help books I couldn't return because she inscribed them  
 so prominently  
 I miss the abrupt hang ups—no goodbyes—when she deemed calls  
 complete  
 I miss catching her bending the rules of games

The disappointed smiles that meant *gentlemen should look the other way*

I miss the drinking fountain in her kitchen

The candy drawer

The decorations; figurines, table-runners, and tapestries for every occasion

I miss her ears and her eyes and her pallet

How was the show? And *what did they serve?*

The pleasure she took in good things done right

I miss how she called everybody *my dear friend*

How she defended underdogs

Her endless supply of *benefits of the doubt*, no matter how tortured or elaborate

I miss the radio, the classical station, keeping her company day and night

I miss her with her family

With my wife, her granddaughter, my love

## V.

Life generally doesn't ask permission or apologize

It is and it is good and it does not doubt

It is relentless; insatiable; it wants more life

And the fear of mortality—call it a blessing; a favorable adaptation—grips us

It whispers in our ears:

Things that smell like that are not food

The plunge is thrilling but the ground is hard

Cockroaches are filthy and most snakes bite

It urges us to make love and make peace while we still can

To use up this miracle matter, **a body**, before it expires

And—in the end—

It can make us late to our own parties

We go kicking and scratching, fingernails clinching the veil

Just anything not to pass through

Ancestors sigh, checking their watches, shuffling ethereal feet

They long to say: *it's O.K. to die*

They embrace her at last; there are tears and introductions  
Maybe some paperwork; an orientation seminar  
Angels sing songs she knows by heart:  
*Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore!*  
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!  
And she hardly notices the lightness of her spirit  
The feeling of beatitudes taking effect; reversing every mortal  
trouble  
A daughter come home. A release. A birth!

## IRRELEVANT—RELEVANT

*M. Shayne Bell*

PROPHETS PONTIFICATE;  
APOSTLES BLUSTER—

BUT A CERTAIN WIDOW:  
HOW TOLERANT,  
HOW FORGIVING;  
HOW, IN THE NIGHT,  
ONE HESITANT KNOCK  
ON HER DOOR  
AND SHE IS UP  
TO SHARE  
WITH THE HUNGRY  
WHAT LITTLE FOOD  
SHE HAS; SHE  
BRINGS IN THE HOMELESS  
AND, WANTING BLANKETS,  
COVERS SOME  
WITH TABLECLOTHS  
AND RUGS TO KEEP THEM  
WARM.

## Trying to Keep Quiet: A Poem Constructed around Fragments of Leslie Norris's "Borders"

*Simon Peter Eggertsen*

*I could give all to Time except—except  
What I myself have held. But why declare  
The things forbidden that while Customs slept  
I have crossed to Safety with? For I am There  
And what I would not part with I have kept.  
—Robert Frost, "I Could Give All to Time"*

*The border I knew best as a child was halfway over  
the swinging bridge in Provo Canyon, between the shade  
of Wildwood and the Sundance road, just opposite  
Dr. Weight's place. Beneath it, white-cold waters from  
the diminishing glacial edges of Mt. Timpanogos fell,  
jumbled along the North Fork, then moved on to mark  
other boundaries further down stream.*

Still do.

I hopped across that bridge at least once most days in  
summer. Never tried to stop and guess its measure.  
Never thought about who put it there for us or what we  
were supposed to learn midstream, midair. Rather, I  
*lived each crossing in adventurous leap* toward some kind  
of nervy limbo, rising, as the unsteady bridge pushed back,  
lofted me up, away, whenever another child jumped on  
the tread I was walking on—like riding the ruffle in a sheet  
tossed to fit a bed. I swear I *stood on air then*. Imagined I  
was taken across borders to parts of the world unknown to me,  
some other nowhere, seeking things to remember far from  
that small canyon's walls.

*Where was I then?*

*I was whole there, but felt an unseen line divide me,*  
send my strong half forward, out and away, curious, to  
the twisting brown-cobbled lanes, the spice sense,  
the bui bui-clothed women, the sliding afternoon shadows  
of Gizenga Street in Old Stone Town, Zanzibar, or  
the shredding and crushing, the angry ripping apart,

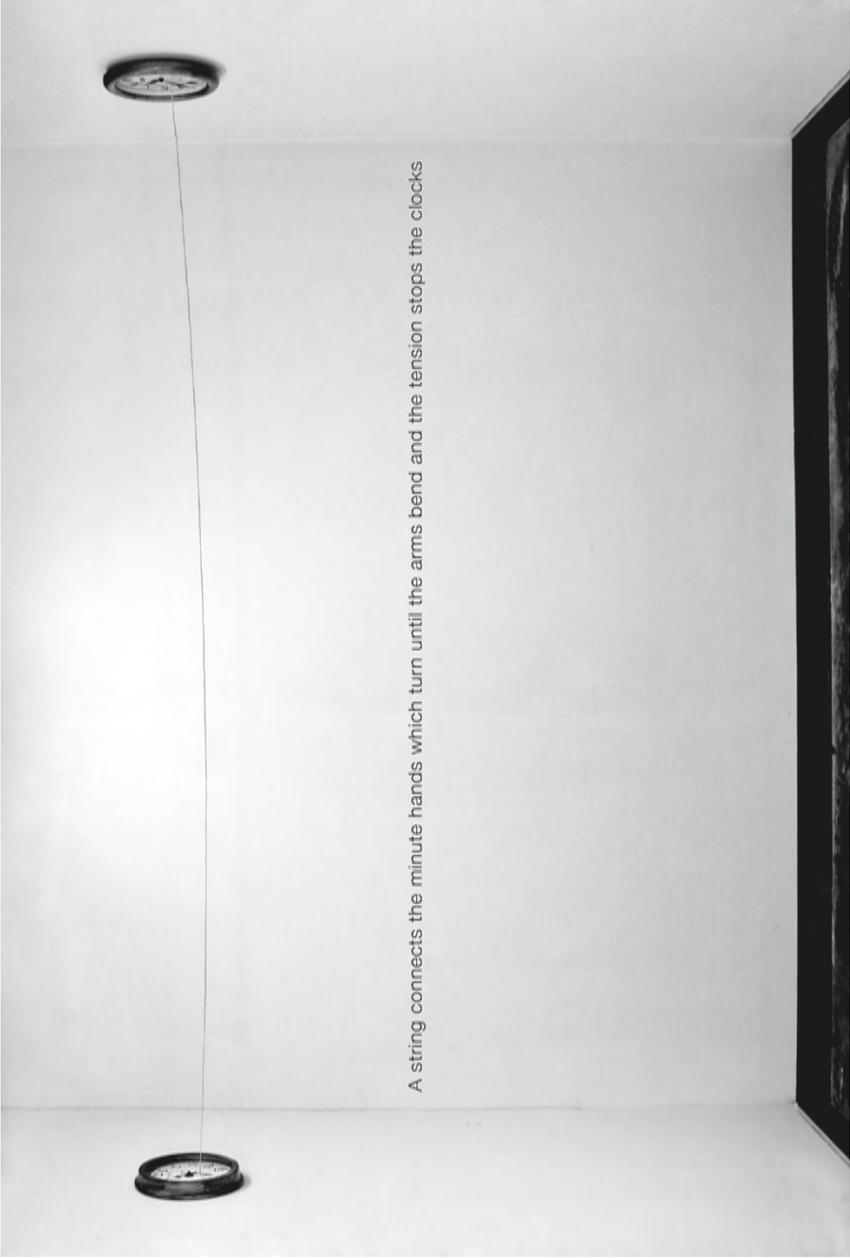
ten Chinese words for death etched in the night air  
air by arced tracers spat errant about Tiananmen Square,  
or the medieval chalk figures, the peace of green,  
beech-covered hills at Wandlebury near Cambridge.

My other half was held timid, *nearer home, family,*  
delighting at the rapid “pop, pop, pop” of the firecrackers  
we’d buy after we visited the frog pond, or savoring  
a mid-day sun that softened, then melted a drop at a time,  
the five-cent Popsicles we bought from Mrs. Offret at her  
rustic country store on Highway 189, or the moist warmth  
of our breath as we sat close together, three at a time, in  
the caboose of the Little Red Wing Train at Wildwood,  
rueing the day we would grow too big to ride there.

*I have always tried to live this way, crossed borders*  
resolutely, looking back over my shoulder, then forward  
again, nurturing each time two views from the same place,  
all the while trying to keep quiet about the memories I carried

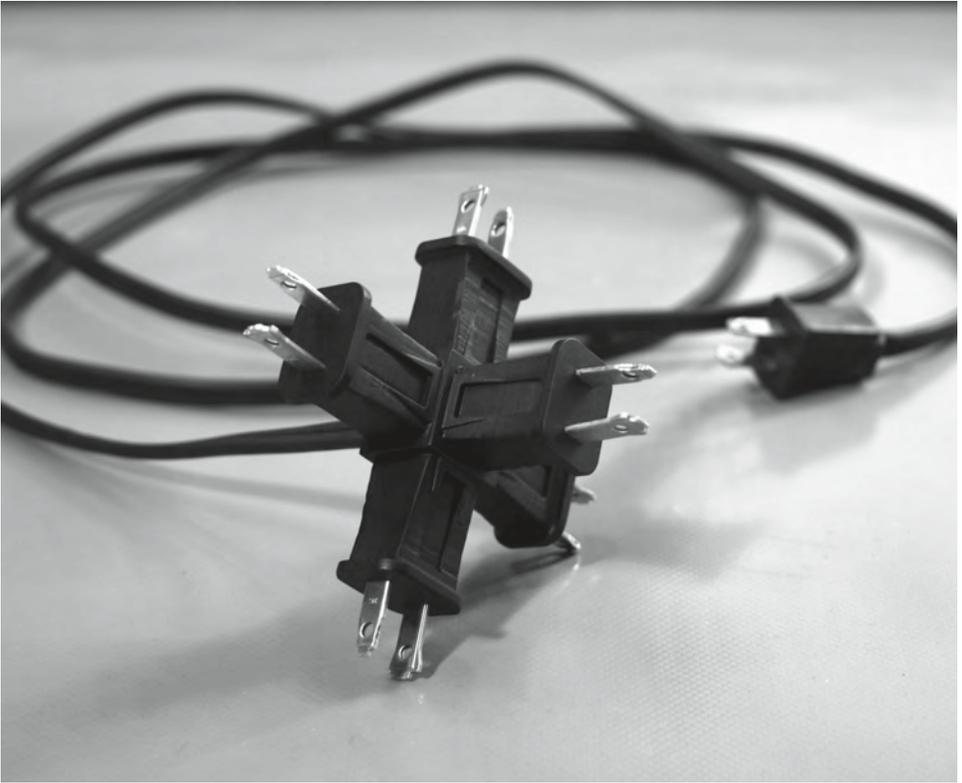
with me as I crossed back to safety, even if someone with  
authority insisted on knowing where I had been, what I  
had brought, even if what I remembered was thought  
to be contraband, something forbidden or something  
entrusted to me that I could not part with.

–Wildwood, July 2011



A string connects the minute hands which turn until the arms bend and the tension stops the clocks

Chris Purdie  
*Time of War*, clocks, string,  
variable size



Chris Purdie  
*Plugs, electrical cord,*  
variable size

## REVIEWS

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### **The Past and Future Boundaries of Mormon Studies**

Quincy D. Newell and Eric F. Mason, eds. *New Perspectives in Mormon Studies: Creating and Crossing Boundaries*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. xii + 320 pp. Paper: \$24.95. ISBN: 978-0806143132.

*Reviewed by Benjamin E. Park*

This is a book about boundaries: boundaries of belief, boundaries of discipline, and boundaries of methodology are all explored in various ways. How did Mormons challenge, create, and transgress boundaries of religion and culture? How do scholars of Mormonism encounter, perpetuate, and tear down boundaries of confession and discipline? The field of Mormon studies is rife with these artificial separations: believers from non-believers, historians from theologians, and hagiographers from revisionists. These frameworks and arguments are shaped by circumstances and environments, and must be revisited from time to time. That, indeed, is one of the purposes of this volume.

The multifaceted and multivocal academic movement loosely contained under the eclectic umbrella of “Mormon studies” has been reinterpreting itself even as it has reemerged as a credible academic field. The coalescing of various religious, academic, and institutional factors can be seen in the 2005 seminar on Joseph Smith that resulted in these essays: There needed to be recognized and established scholars who held enough academic credibility to put the seminar together (Richard Bushman and Grant Underwood), a national organization that understood the importance of such a seminar enough to provide funding (the National Endowment for the Humanities), a Mormon institution willing to host a critical and sophisticated look at the religion’s founding (Brigham Young University), and a host of non-Mormon scholars willing to engage the topic (the contributors to this volume). Such a convergence would not have been possible in the recent past and is indicative of the new period in which we live and in which Mormon studies can finally flourish.

Richard Bushman's essay, "The Commencement of Mormon Studies," rightly notes that the seminar and this resulting collection of essays is both "an outgrowth of the New Mormon History" as well as a gesture "toward a still-undefined future" (210). It is important, then, to examine what is indeed "new" with this collection. First, the names associated with these essays, save a few, are probably new to most readers. This is good. Both editors, and nearly all of the contributors, are not members of any Mormon faith, and their previous work has not dealt with Mormonism as a topic. The future of the field, indeed, depends on the involvement beyond the constrained circles of historians who have dominated the arena in the past; fresh perspectives are necessary. Second, the disciplines and methodologies employed in this volume demonstrate the new questions and approaches needed to transcend the previously circular and limited ceiling against which Mormon history often collides. As Jan Shipps wrote in the preface, the "key" to the field's future is not archival "access" or perpetuating dated debates, but "a willingness to study the methods of more than a single discipline" (xii). And finally, these essays point to Mormon studies being used to answer broader questions, to address larger issues, and to become relevant to scholars in other fields.

Quincy Newell offers an introductory essay that is as much a manifesto for the field as it is an overview of the volume. Developing the field from "an academic 'ghetto' of sorts," where the primary audience was Mormons or those only interested in Mormons, requires us to "erode the boundaries that divide scholars from one another religiously and disciplinarily." This includes entering into "conversations broader than Mormon studies," better incorporating "Mormon history in its wider historical context," and the introduction of more "theoretical sophistication" (6-7). Just as Mormons themselves have been notorious for both crossing and fortifying boundaries, scholars of Mormonism must also be both cognizant of and critical toward the boundaries that have previously hindered academic progress.

Newell's own article is a sophisticated project that breaks down several barriers. She rightly notes that most scholarship on blacks in the LDS church has been "policy oriented," and her

work breaches this historiographical wall by instead looking at a woman's lived and written experience. She also works across disciplinary barriers, by utilizing intricate tools from literary theory in her historical analysis. In "Is There No Blessing for Me?": Jane James's Construction of Space in Latter-day Saint History and Practice," Newell gives James's dictated autobiography a close reading in order to see how she, a black woman restricted from LDS temple ordinances, created a niche for her own righteousness within the larger church.

Just as the Utah Saints were "in the process of ritualizing [their pioneer] history," Newell explains how James inserted herself within that narrative by emphasizing her experiences in a specific way (48). Whether it was emphasizing her own suffering caused by gathering, or her position as a "quasi-child" (rather than servant) of Joseph Smith, or her handling of the Urim and Thummim (albeit wrapped in a sheet), James used her memoir as a means to establish a past in which she was a full member despite her race. "Coming as it did toward the end of James's campaign to receive her endowments and be sealed in the temple," Newell explains, "James's autobiography was perhaps the fullest expression of her idea that proximity to the first Mormon prophet and conformity to the Mormon gospel should be the measure of one's worthiness" (58). James herself was prone to trespassing boundaries, and Newell skillfully shows that, in order to capture the larger story, the historian must similarly be willing to be an academic iconoclast.

This scholarly iconoclasm often means taking on one's own disciplinary field. Take, for instance, David Charles Gore's excellent article, "Profits of a Prophet: Toward Joseph Smith's Political Economy." Gore, a professor of rhetoric and an expert in the intersections of religion, rhetoric, and economics, moves beyond the past, and limited, boundaries of studies of Joseph Smith's economic dealings—which have usually focused on early Mormonism's failed communalistic and bank endeavors—and raises some provocative issues: Even if his consecration experiment failed, there is still much to analyze in Smith's "prophetic rhetoric regarding matter and social and class distinction," which in turn "illuminates his political economy by way of his political theology"

(19). Gore provides deft analysis of things ranging from Smith's presidential platform's statements on economics, his elastic understanding of the term "economy," and the notions of "rich" and "poor" in his revealed scripture. The main lesson, and one that has evaded past economic analysis, is the extent to which Smith domesticated the economic world: "Smith's emphasis is on *household* rather than *management*, which is why it looks like he is not giving us much by way of political economy" (34).

This fresh perspective could have ended there, but Gore, like the newest generation of Mormon studies practitioners, goes further by broadening his analytical sights. This is not just a useful project to understand Smith and early Mormonism, he notes, but also a case study in demonstrating how economic analysis can be more fruitfully applied when encompassing theological claims. "The secular science of economics does too little to address the interrelations between the human necessities of belief, creation, and material provision," he tells us, chiding his own profession. "It acts obliviously to the fact that spirituality has always constituted a significant element of human economies" (35). Smith's history reminds economists and economic historians that the merging of religion and the economy work in more subtle, complex, and dynamic ways.

Sara M. Patterson's "The Ex Factor: Constructing a Religious Mission in the Ex-Mormons for Jesus/Saints Alive in Jesus, 1975–1990" provides another important example of this approach. Though its primary thesis is to explore the evolution of one dissenting organization—from a decentralized post-Mormon community to an Ed Decker-centric organization that "defends 'orthodox Christianity' from all other religious perspectives" (135)—Patterson's apt article also makes an important methodological point for religious studies: The implications and assumptions behind terms like "career apostates," she explains, "fail to allow for a spectrum of responses from those who leave religious traditions and actively choose to maintain an identity in response to those traditions" (132). Moving beyond central figures like Decker and the never-Mormon Evangelicals who fund Decker's activities, Patterson shows that once-Mormons associated with the dissenting group display a hybrid identity that embodies both continui-

ties and ruptures from their past religious affiliation. Such a lesson not only enhances the broad umbrella of Mormon studies, but also religious studies in general.

But religious studies is more than close examination of case examples to prove a broader point: The discipline largely centers on the method of comparison. Grant Underwood, in his “The Prophetic Legacy in Islam and Mormonism: Some Comparative Observations,” makes the persuasive argument that what the Mormon studies field needs “is a sustained and systematic engagement with comparative religious studies.” Yet such engagement should be both “aggressively interdisciplinary” as well as “international in orientation” in order to escape the previously parochial boundaries of past generations (115). In doing so, however, there must be several “methodological convictions” kept in mind: first, “similarity is not identity”; second, “parallels do not prove provenance”; and finally, “uniqueness does not prove divine origin” (102–03). Underwood skillfully shows how, when these boundaries are established, fruitful results will follow. In this instance, his article compares the Hadith literature to Lucy Mack Smith’s *Biographical Sketches* and B. H. Roberts’s *History of the Church* and demonstrates how followers of Mohammad and Joseph Smith inherited, adapted, and sacralized their legacies.

Of course, comparative studies don’t have to be studied in a theoretical vacuum, as John Matzko (“The Young Joseph Smith and Presbyterianism”) and D. William Faupel (“What Has Pentecostalism to Do with Mormonism?: The Case of John Alexander Dowie”) demonstrate. In Matzko’s case, Presbyterianism had a negative impact on Joseph Smith and provided a “fully developed [Calvinist] theological system against which Smith could react” (77). In Faupel’s article, a reversal of influence takes place: Dowie, who came to become a prominent figure in laying the foundation for global Pentecostalism, was directly influenced in many ways by LDS doctrines in his quest to establish a new Zion through communalistic and temple experiences. The porous relationship between Mormonism and other religions is clearly apparent, and the lessons tell much not only of the LDS faith and those who influenced or were influenced by it, but also of religious development and experience in America as a whole.

Fruitful models for disciplinary crossing are found in the final two essays. In “But I Say unto You, Who Is Elias?” Stevan Davies, an agnostic who studies the New Testament, performs a work of Mormon theology as if he believed its truth claims. In examining the angel Joseph Smith named Elias, whom Smith encountered in Kirtland, Davies approaches Joseph Smith’s corpus of scriptures and teachings as if they were “true, systematic, and profound.” A provocative example of and contribution to the methodology of phenomenological hermeneutics, his results, while interesting and enlightening, take a back seat to the importance of the *process* he invokes. And finally, in “The Saints and the Scrolls: LDS Engagement with Mainstream Dead Sea Scrolls Scholarship and Its Implications,” Eric Mason tells the fascinating story of how BYU became a prominent location for a major international academic project during the 1990s. This was mostly because, Mason tells us, “BYU scholars on the international scrolls translation team consistently *downplay* the role of apologetics in their work. Instead, their cited motivations for scrolls work tend to be much more academic and intellectual than apologetic” (186). By bracketing truth claims, then, Mormon academics were able to enter the big stage and make substantive contributions to an important project.

Like most compilations, the volume is, at times, uneven. Some of the essays may receive, and perhaps deserve, little attention due to tepid conclusions and a limited range of analysis when compared to others in the book. But the whole is much larger than the sum of its parts. Most especially, this volume embodies the multidisciplinary nature the field must take in order to gain credibility and a lasting presence at the academic table. Richard Bushman closes the volume by gesturing toward the future of Mormon studies—a future that is no longer dominated solely by history. “In the future,” he writes, “Mormon studies will be understood as the product of many disciplines and will include many expressive forms. Work on Mormonism will come from all the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts. Together they will constitute a new wave of Mormon studies” (210).

## Mauss's Travels

Armand L. Mauss. *Shifting Borders and a Tattered Passport: Intellectual Journeys of a Mormon Academic*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2012. 280 pp. Hardcover: \$23.76. ISBN: 978-1-60781-204-3.

*Reviewed by Brayden King*

Sociologist Karl Mannheim believed that knowledge is relational. Our social positions, like community affiliations or the roles we take in a group, shape and constrain what we know and how we know it. As members of a religion, for example, we absorb certain types of knowledge and see the world through a particular lens. It is this same position that makes it difficult for us to analyze our own history or to see our community as others see it. We cannot easily separate ourselves from the obligations and preconceived notions of the religious community that influences our view of reality. Sometimes people feel that the only way they can obtain an unbiased perspective is to break free from those groups that anchor their understanding. For this reason, Mannheim argued that intellectuals ought to be outsiders and remain unaffiliated with the social groups they analyze and criticize.

Mannheim is a useful starting point for understanding Armand Mauss's personal memoir, *Shifting Borders and a Tattered Passport: Intellectual Journeys of a Mormon Academic*. Mauss's memoir is in part a straightforward account of his professional development. After a chapter that briefly introduces his main personal and career accomplishments, the rest of the chapters detail specific episodes in Mauss's career that shaped his evolution as a "Mormon academic." He presents his own life for analysis of what it means to become a Mormon public intellectual. Not surprisingly, Mannheim was one of Mauss's early influences as a sociologist. Like Mannheim, Mauss sees the intellectual as a product of social position. However, Mauss uses the metaphor of a passport to illustrate how the intellectual can never be truly outside the community he or she studies. The intellectual, then, is someone who moves *between* knowledge communities. The passport metaphor invokes not only the distance (cultural or otherwise) travel-

ers cover but also the scrutiny they inevitably face as they encounter “customs agents” and other “enforcers” of local norms. The conflicting pressures Mormon academics deal with result not only from strong community norms but also from the distinct ways that each community conceives of knowledge and how to obtain it. What passes for truth in one community might be contested or at least met with skepticism in another.

Mauss’s reflections raise a number of interesting questions. Does belonging to different knowledge communities—being a religious devotee and a social scientist, for example—make one a better intellectual? Will a faithful Mormon’s scientific views of the Church be seen as credible by mainstream members of either community? What are the personal costs of being a Mormon academic?

Although many Mormon academics choose to travel undercover, this was not the path Mauss took. Over the course of his life he was able to integrate these two knowledge communities, putting himself in a position where he could engage with both sociology and Mormonism simultaneously. Mauss brought with him to the study of Mormons the methodological tools of data analysis and a sociological perspective that helped him to view the Church as a social and formal organization. This perspective allowed Mauss to compare the Mormon world to other social phenomena, such as social movements, and offer broad generalizations. He could write *The Angel and the Beehive* and *All Abraham’s Children* and come across as both a true believer and as someone with a unique assessment of the Church’s relationship to society and race. His position as believer and analyst distinguished him from the Mormon apologists of his time as well as from their counterparts, the anti-Mormon critics. Mauss’s position was also separated from that of other sociologists of religion who examined the Church in purely secular ways. Unfortunately, he also notes that crossing such borders was not without cost. His position distanced him from scholars in his home field of sociology who did not always give his Mormon studies research the credit it deserved or who may have occasionally been skeptical about his intellectual independence. And even though Mauss escaped serious run-ins with ecclesiastical authorities, local Church leaders at

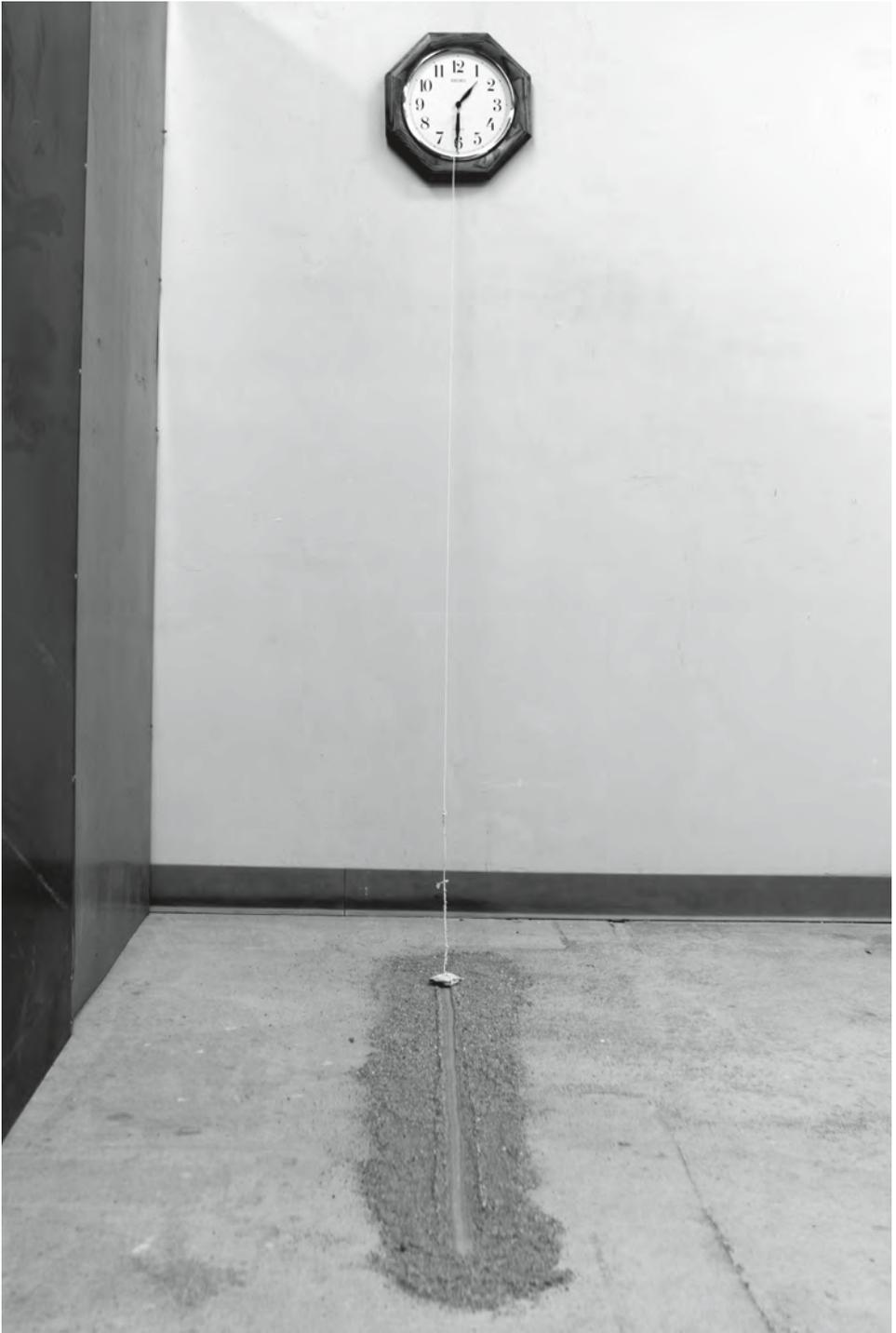
times questioned him with regard to his academic research—inquiries he referred to as “periodic passport checks.” He describes how astounded he was when other scholars, who were not so lucky as to have empathetic Church leaders, faced Church discipline over their scholarly positions on Mormonism.

These costs are apparent to many younger scholars, who see in Mauss and the scholars of his generation examples of both what to do and what not to do when building an academic career. As a sociologist myself, I wonder if Mauss’s influence in his original discipline might have been greater had he not taken up Mormon studies. Even though he made an early contribution to the study of social problems by showing how problems like deviance or alcoholism are constructed by social movements, without his continued presence in the field to further develop and refine his theories, his ideas are much less influential in the field of social movement scholarship today than they might have been. And Mauss himself also worries that his ground-breaking Mormon scholarship is still not treated with the same level of respect or seriousness as the work of his non-Mormon contemporaries, such as Rodney Stark. Even Stark, with whom Mauss shared the same advisor at Berkeley, does not fully acknowledge Mauss’s work on assimilation and retrenchment in the Mormon Church. It is disappointing that Mauss’s work has not shown signs of providing a lasting impact on his home discipline.

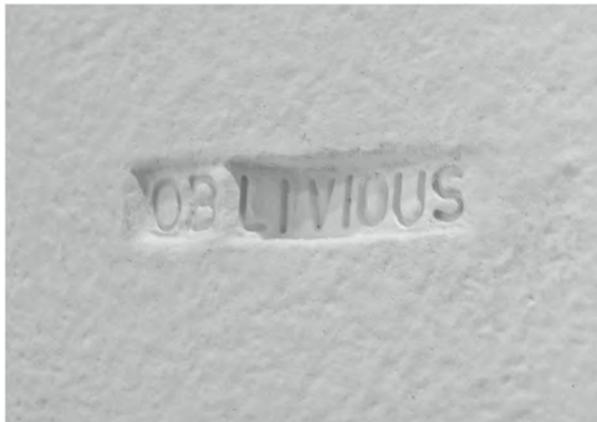
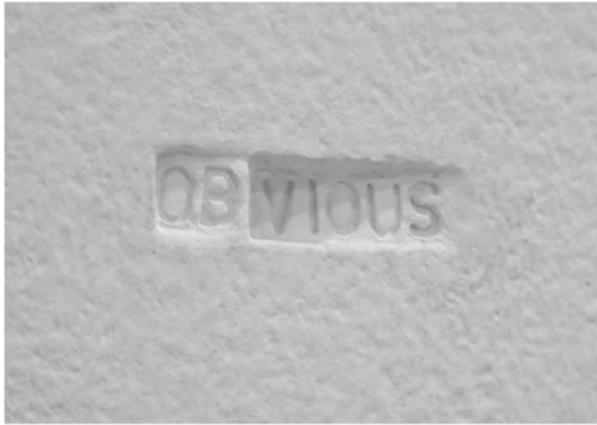
Given these difficulties, it is important to give Mauss and other Mormon studies scholars credit for the work they did to create a welcoming institutional space for the scholarship of Mormon academics. Mauss was not only a founding member of the Mormon History Association and Mormon Social Science Association, but he was also a regular contributor to and board member of *Dialogue*. He was involved in the creation of a Mormon studies program and chair at Claremont Graduate University. Mauss and his colleagues knew that Mormon scholars working along the “borderlands” needed to find a home where they were free to investigate and express themselves independently, protected from the other communities that might otherwise overly regulate or dismiss their research. Institution-building of this type helped establish Mormon studies as a field of inquiry, protected from over-

zealous border guards. It is inspiring to know that new generations of Mormon academics interested in studying the Church have a thriving community that understands their work.

Near the end of the book Mauss speculates that the Mormon Church is currently going through a phase of assimilation and that the Church's leadership is becoming more tolerant of Mormon scholarship. Of course, Mormon academics still face skepticism from many of their academic colleagues and from "grassroots Mormons" who do not see the value of academic study. His memoir illustrates the value that comes from being an intellectual who bridges the boundaries between distinct knowledge communities, but it is also a reminder of the precarious position such intellectuals occupy. Readers of his memoir will likely find themselves wondering, as did I, if the trade-offs are worth it. Mauss, of course, believes that they were. Had he and his peers not made the investments that they did in Mormon studies, it is plausible that serious academic scholarship on Mormonism might still fail to be well-received by the institutional leadership of the Church. The current phase of assimilation would hardly be as rewarding if the only intellectual voices making noise were apologists or critics—representatives of their respective knowledge communities who lack the credentials and cultural skills needed to translate knowledge across those communities. Mormons are ultimately better understood both inside and outside academia in part due to a thriving community of boundary-spanning Mormon scholars.



Chris Purdie  
*Time Line*, clock, string, rock, sand,  
variable size



Chris Purdie  
*obLlvious (detail)*, drywall,  
paint,  
variable size

# Dark Watch

*William Morris*

*“And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.” –Isaiah 34:13*

*“I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls.” –Micah 1:8*

## THE OWL

I'll take the dark watch, if you'll sleep the fitful sleep and thirst in your dreams.

The desert is cold at night. The clouds gather across the broken plateau and race to our bedroom window as I brood over banks of monitors, shoulders hunched and wrapped in a blanket. A trio of alerts begin flashing. Three old ones are awake and terrified, heart rates spiking, breathing quick and shallow. Medical is already on notice, but a quick check of the pattern suggests a breach, and I wave them off. The holographic attack is a rather crude one and only effective on one specific, ancient chipset.

The coders quickly have an update ready for me, and I patch it in to the old ones' halos, broadcasting soothing sounds and images into their heads from my personal, cobbled-together digital storehouse. I switch to camera and watch them until they fall asleep. Their breathing remains shallow. They do not have long, some of these old ones, so we fight for every moment of life, every minute of peace we can offer. They deserve it. They, in their over-optimism, created a world so indulgent and interconnected that it couldn't help but break when resources ran out, but they also broke the most when it broke. So we give them what peace we can. The battle for it is constant and tires me.

I wish I had your vitality. I see how your young talents renew you. But I'm not suited for your work, to drive them, to hone

them. I have a different kind of patience. I mourn with the aged, let them drift in their memories and live in what was. That world they created. That world that circled their skulls with circuits—an implanted crown—and then bombarded them with sensations until everything went mad and shattered into pieces.

I would use what energy I have for something else, but that blessing refuses to come. Turns horribly wrong every time we try. I clutch at my blanket, suddenly cold.

You startle yourself awake, and I am there, holding out a glass of water to you, wishing you could unravel the tangled cries that pulse behind my aching eyes.

You drink and ask if it's your turn. It is.

\* \* \*

### THE DRAGON

You call it the dark watch. That makes it sound noble. The reality is hours of tedium. But I love your poetry. So I call it that too.

It has begun to storm. I like the rain. It scours the sky. I like the lightning. It disrupts.

But I don't like the days after the rain when the desert blooms, and the air flies thick with pollen and data. The data we can block if we're good enough and quick enough, but my body cannot tolerate all this teeming new life, and my face, my eyes and nose, become red and weepy. My throat constricts and my sinuses throb with a dull, pressing pain as the earth tries to drown me.

And sometimes the data gets through as easy as the pollen. So yeah, I'll take the dark watch.

The rain pours heavy in the desert. I stand and watch it stream down the glass. There's a strange beauty to this place. This place that we, well, you aren't amused when I call it God's country or Zion. You always say, "Not anymore." I never know how to respond to that, but I still can't seem to stop making that joke.

I review your notes and check in with the talent to make sure the patch will secure the old ones' halos for a while. I let them dive into the technical details of their coding. I let them drone on. They love to show off. And well they should. They're top talent. Sometimes you forget that. Sometimes you take them for granted, reserve your patience and time only for the old ones, forgetting

that, as good as our tribe's talents are, they too are broken and fragile.

And that's the whole point, right?

The only way to make things work these days is through force of personality. And so the personal and the political combine in us and create a space for our relationship, but also demand of us a constant emanation of power and connection to the members of our tribe. Damn. Look at me. I'm getting philosophical again. I feel a sudden urge to wake you and tell you all this. But I don't. You need the rest.

Instead I indulge myself and watch you sleep for several minutes. Your long hair tangled across your face and neck. Your fingers and arms cradling a pillow, like a b . . . —I can't say it. Can't even think it.

Then the swing shift manager buzzes my datacuff. And I'm saved, yet again, by work.

"What's up?"

"We had arrivals during the night. Eleven from the Pacific Northwest."

"Any that have talent we need?"

"Maybe. But . . ."

"What?"

"They're all Peculiars."

I sigh. You will be pleased with this news. The remaining bits of Zion, the Mormons who still want to be a peculiar people finding us again. I thought the great migration south was over and done with by now. It's been months since the last stragglers passed through. I briefly consider keeping this news from you.

"Any corp-rats?"

"Not any that'll admit to it."

"Give them the neutrality lecture and make sure they understand that if any of them are indentured and their masters come looking for them, we'll turn them over in a heartbeat. Any goofs?"

"They're Peculiars."

"Any goofs?"

"Not any that'll admit to it."

"Have the meds checked them out yet?"

"Yep. They all check out."

“Any old ones?”

“Two. They have no problem staying.”

“Tell me about the potential talents.”

“Not much to say. Possibly three or four of them. They’re playing things close.”

“I need to talk to them then. Make sure they are kept confined and out of the way. What kind of gear did they show up with?”

“A pair of four-wheelers with trailers. In good shape with a decent amount of gas. Plenty of rations. A crappy deer rifle.”

“Any hardware?”

“A couple of old-school handhelds. The GPS systems they have are pretty old, but the chips are good enough.”

“Good. Have tech bring the handhelds up to date, but don’t return them until we ferret out the talent.”

“What should I load on them?”

“Caches through the Yucatan. GPS capability through Guatemala. Things are probably weird down there so they’re going to have to work out the rest themselves.”

A pause.

“How’d they find us?”

“They aren’t saying, but I bet it’s your old man, again.”

I sigh. “Yeah. I’m going to have do something about that.”

“You keep saying that, Chief, but it never seems to happen. Not that I blame you. We all get weird when it comes to family. Maybe you should talk to him face-to-face instead of sending him messages.”

“And maybe you should shut up. Keep harping on this, and I’ll send you out to track him down and talk some sense into him.”

“No offense meant, Chief.”

“None taken. I’m going to take a quick nap. Make sure the Peculiaris are contained. Polygamous Dan is flying in with a shipment in a few hours.”

“Sure thing, Chief. Sweet dreams.”

I crawl into bed next to you and you wake up and reach out your arms for me. We steal a few hazy minutes of fatigued talk, both of us drifting in and out of sleep. I tell you about the Peculiaris. You act nonchalant. I tell you that I’m going to need to do something about the old man. You smile, nod, remind me that he is my father and that he isn’t crazy. I shrug and say that, to the

Confederation, peculiar is worse than crazy. That we can't risk him running wild around Utah anymore trying to salvage whatever it is he is trying to salvage. That he needs to either stay with us full-time or head south. You say nothing. You kiss me. And then you get up and start getting ready for Dan.

\* \* \*

### THE OWL

I will let you sleep a little later than you wanted me to. I know in what manner you like to receive Polygamous Dan and will have everything ready. You will insist on a formality that probably isn't necessary, that I can no longer tell if you do because you want to keep your Confederation-facing persona consistent or because you actually enjoy playing the role.

I worry that as your reputation as a Chief grows you get too swallowed up in Confederation politics. It's a game you are good at—even though you claim to hate it. I think at heart you really do. It's just that I want you to hate it not only as much as I do, but also in the exact same ways and for the exact same reasons.

But I still put on a dress and brew the Brigham tea and wonder if you'll give me time with the night arrivals.

\* \* \*

### THE DRAGON

The radar shows two blips three miles away. They're coming in fast.

"Security, this is the Chief."

"Yes, Chief."

"Anti-aircraft is engaged?"

"Anti-aircraft is engaged."

"Codes are in place?"

"Codes in place, sir."

"Good. Wait until they're a mile and a half away before asking for credentials and make sure your hail mentions that they will be shot down if they come inside the mile perimeter before receiving authorization. I want to force them to slow down fast."

"Will do, Chief."

I know you dislike these little games. But we have only three things protecting us: our coding expertise thanks to our amazing tribe of talents. Our isolated location. And our kick-ass air defenses. Our friends—and our enemies—often need to be reminded of all three.

I'm touched you let me sleep late even though I didn't actually sleep. You know how hard it is for me to get up for this type of thing. I need to work myself into a frenzy of anxiety in order to reach the numb calm that seems to intimidate these fools. My fellow Chiefs. My Confederates. Luckily, this is something I can do in an empty bed with just my blistered mind for company.

\* \* \*

### THE OWL

Once everything is ready up top, I head to the stairway and climb down the bluff to meet the other chopper and oversee the QA of the shipment of electronic components Dan is bringing in. A security detail waits me at the bottom. As usual, you go overboard with the numbers. I don't need a full squad of eight for an operation like this, my dear. We walk along the concrete pathway, which is still damp with last night's rain and strewn with pink worms.

The landing area sparkles under the desert sun. Someone has already put down tarps for the shipment. Such details are evidence of the unity and focus of our tribe. I'll have to remember to mention it to you.

I wonder, though, if one of these days one of our own will turn on us. Or—much more likely—one of the other Chiefs will move to depose us. Of course, if we reach that point, we'll probably have grown so weary of administrative details that we'll welcome the chance to leave this existence for our eternal reward. There is that small matter of faith wavered, of directives to migrate ignored, of temple covenants publicly forsworn, but if Heavenly Father doesn't understand the accommodations we've made to help his fallen, broken children, then we'll storm off and live on some other celestial planet, dragging all of our talents and old ones—our only posterity—with us in our wake.

\* \* \*

### THE DRAGON

The other chopper is directed to meet you in the valley, but I allow Polygamous Dan to land his personal one on the pad on the bluff. It's a show of respect and trust. Of course, he and I both know that the pad is rigged with explosives and that with a nod I could either fry his aircraft's electronics or blow him and his crew to pieces.

Dan must kind of trust us, though. He bounds out of the chopper in front of his bodyguards/wives and strides toward me his arms spread wide for a hug. He kisses me on both cheeks and squishes me into his girth. I push him away with a chuckle. I hate this part. But somehow I always find the energy for it. I know you think that deep down I enjoy all the playacting. I probably do, but I don't think you truly understand what it costs me. One of these days I'm going to either snap and make some grand, rash statement or withdraw mentally, close-up emotionally and appear weak and halfheartedly supportive of this crazy collection of minor despots and two-bit dictators we call the Confederation.

But today, as tired as I am, I am able to switch on what some of our talents, thanks to you, calls CJ-mode. My dear, I am tired of the Chief Judge thing. Do you have to turn everything into Peculiar speak? I suppose it's my own fault. These little jokes are your only outlet now. Other than what happens in your own mind. And heart.

I speak first as is my right, but I temper it by going informal.

"Polygamous Dan, you fat polygamous bastard! How's polygamy treating you?"

He laughs heartily. "Very well. I'm now up to thirty-three wives. One of these days, I pass your Brigham Young, eh?"

"He's not my Brigham Young. You know I left all that behind when I swore the oath."

"So you say. So you say. And yet what's this here that you're offering me as a token of hospitality?"

"Same thing it always is, Polygamous Dan. Brigham tea. Very suitable for you. And also indigenous to the area."

Dan grimaces.

"So those prefab greenhouses I sold you are sitting empty?"

“Maybe. The beautiful thing is that Brigham tea doesn’t need a greenhouse to grow. And I have nothing else in my stores worth serving. Or at least nothing I’m going to waste on a boorish, polygamous bastard like you.”

Dan laughs heartily and submits to the show of hospitality and as we talk tech and politics, I visualize you checking the shipment. The awkward, no-nonsense manner you take with Dan’s wives. The fully briefed members of the security detail checking each circuit board in silence. Some of them would like to flirt a bit no doubt, but your presence leaves them no room and no time. And it’s just as well. Dan is the jealous type.

Twenty minutes in, I begin to get restless even though we’ve talked so much we’ve barely touched the refreshments you laid out. Nice touch with the gooseberry jelly. It’s one of Dan’s favorites. Did I tell you that? I can’t remember. The specter of my crazy—sorry, love—my *peculiar* father roaming what was Utah begins to haunt the back of my mind. I suddenly feel compelled to deal with the arrivals. I don’t want to pawn Dan off on you, but, then again, he likes you a lot more than he likes me.

“It’s great catching up with you, Dan. But I don’t have thirty-three wives to take care of my every need and whim. Some of us have to use conventional managerial techniques to deal with our talent.”

“I’ll come with you. You know I love to see you in all your bureaucratic glory.”

“No thanks, Dan. You and your lumbering body just get in the way. Why don’t you take your fat self and your pretty little bodyguards and go flirt with my wife. I’m sure she’d love to show you the latest improvements to the greenhouses.”

“Now you’re talking. You know, I’d give you ten of mine for your one, but one of these days, she’ll see the light, and I’ll get her for free.”

I force myself to chuckle, tell the security detail to warn the shift manager I’m on my way, and message you a head’s up.

\* \* \*

### THE OWL

We’re not quite done when Dan arrives in the second chop-

per. One of these days you should make him take the stairs. He emerges and greets each wife with kisses and squeezes that are a shade too extravagant. My, how he does smack his lips when he kisses. I try not to shudder, especially when he paws the really young ones. Intellectually, I realize that he is not that much older than us. No one without a halo is. So only two decades' difference. But it's still creepy. You'd tell me that it's a residual discomfort passed on to me from my parents' parents—the true-blue Mormons squirm over overt reminders of ethnic shame; the assimilated Mormons shrinking away from the hard truths of our founding.

But whatever, Mormon boy.

The assimilation is a long time past. It's all tribal now, babe. And Dan's tribe troubles me. And, you know, you could have entertained him longer, especially after I put out such a nice spread. He's just going to get into trouble down here. Gamesmanship? Cowardice? Simply fatigue? I'll cover for you, honey. But you better hope that Dan doesn't push too hard. I'm not in the mood.

\* \* \*

### THE DRAGON

The swing shift manager meets me at the entrance to the main building.

"Greetings, CJ. I knew you'd be down sooner or later."

"What're you doing still up? And don't call me CJ."

"Oh, come on, Chief. You gotta let us have our little jokes. Besides, *she* was the one who started it."

"I know who started it. You didn't answer my question."

"Yes, sir. I'm still awake because I knew Fat Dan was coming in this morning and what with the Peculiars arriving last night I figured that I should maintain managerial continuity in order to avoid any intelligence breaches, sir!"

"Well done, my good and faithful servant. Take me to the Peculiars."

You'd be disappointed in that tasteless joke, but blasphemy is part of what keeps me sane. Especially when dealing with Peculiars.

\* \* \*

### THE OWL

As we finish checking the shipment, I find myself making a connection with one of Dan's wives. We don't say much, but her darting, liquid eyes search for something in mine. Her fatigues blouse around her boots too much, and her jacket is very loose around the waist. That's strange. She doesn't seem pregnant.

The tech talents finish checking the components. We reject only three. Dan gets bored and wanders back to his choppers, pinching bottoms along the way. Not for the first time I wonder what kind of woman would be willing to take up with him, and not for the first time, I laugh at my flashes of naiveté, and we turn to the dry goods.

The wife with whom I have been connecting is having trouble opening a box so I go to help her. Our fingers touch. Her eyes melt at mine. And all of a sudden I know her story. She was pregnant. She lost the baby. She knows about my losses. Losses known Confederation-wide because of the importance of reproduction and succession planning. She lets the touch linger. She believes we share a certain sorrow. She is correct.

Once, back when you still let me read scripture out loud to you, I read verses from Micah, and you told me that you were the dragon and that I was the owl. But if that is the case, then how come, here in our fortress of brambles, I've been the one wailing and you the one in silent mourning?

The box open and checked, I go to stand up, and as I do I steady myself on her arm and give it a subtle squeeze. She struggles not to react, but I can tell she wants to dissolve in tears and throw herself into my arms. Dan would not react well to such obvious female bonding outside of his harem, and I can't be completely sure that she isn't one of his attempts at subterfuge. He loves to use his wives as emotional or sexual traps. For all that he mistreats them, they can be ruthless on his behalf and as you have tried to drill into me, even though it runs counter to my nature, the one major unwritten rule of inter-Confederation relations is to never tamper with the absolute sovereignty a Chief holds over his tribe. Or at least never get caught doing so.

I wonder how many babies Dan allows per year. You have told

me that his total tribe numbers sixty-eighty. With thirty-three wives, that leaves about fifty adults who aren't part of his succession pool. Most of those are probably sterile or have been sterilized. Accounting for other functions, that probably leaves three or four people for childcare duty and so at most eight to ten children from the entire pool of thirty-three. Add in the strong possibility that Dan selects for gender, and it's possible that her losses are more horrifying than mine.

I want to help this woman.

I can't. I love you too much.

\* \* \*

### THE DRAGON

I strap on a firearm and walk into the holding cell.

"Who speaks for your group?" My voice is louder than it needs to be. Damn, I hate dealing with Peculiaris. They throw me off my game. You'll be pleased to know that that's still the case.

"I do."

"*You?* You are thin and puny. You are dirty and poorly dressed. You are unarmed. The Confederation does not recognize chiefs who present themselves in such a state."

I turn to the rest of the group. "I am your new Chief. I may or may not execute your old Chief as is my right under the terms of the Charter of the Confederation Article II, Section XIV: Acquisition of Talent."

His eyes widen.

"But the Church Historian said . . ."

I put my hand on my holster.

"Be careful how you finish that sentence, Peculiar."

He shuts his mouth and purses his lips. His hands are trembling. You hate that I'm so harsh with them when they straggle in. But this is not some power trip or show. They need to know the reality of what they're dealing with. And they need plausible deniability and how to frame that deniability if they are going to make it to Guaymas and catch the boat to Peru. I wonder if any of them actually do. You seem to think so. You seem to think that we're still the first stop in some LDS Underground Railroad. It's been three years since we've heard anything definite. For all we know, the

bones of every Peculiar that the old man sends our way are bleaching under the Sonoran sun.

I turn back to the group.

“I see you have two old ones. They will stay with us. Confederation policy is that since old ones are not equipped to deal with the new order of the world, they are to be pitied rather than blamed for what they wrought. They are to be cared for and die natural deaths. Say your goodbyes now. The old ones are about to be transported to our dormitory.”

I want to leave before the tears and hugging, but I stop and say one more thing: “If any of you are talent, it’s in your best interest to make that known before I decide what to do with you.”

\* \* \*

### THE OWL

Polygamous Dan whispers something to one of his wives and then walks over to us. I’ve completed the check of his delivery, and it’s time for his team to review the goods we’re exchanging in return. “Stacy, go help Missy inventory the payment,” he says. Stacy, who is the recently-in-a-state-of-pregnancy wife I had been working alongside, jumps at the sound of his voice and flushes slightly. Dan looks at me oddly.

“Everything checks out so far,” I say. “Another fine shipment, Dan.”

He nods and scratches his beard. I start to say something else but before I can, he raises a hand and says: “I’m sorry to do this, Mrs. Esplin, but I’m afraid that I’m going to have to invoke Article III, Section IX of the Charter of the Confederacy.”

I nod. You will not be happy about this. Peer inspections are a necessary part of the Confederation, and even surprise ones aren’t likely to turn up much, but you hate Polygamous Dan poking around things. And with the Peculiars here there is a slight chance he could work out enough to file an Assertion of Breach of Charter.

As we’re walking toward the main compound, one of the security detail whispers in my ear that there’s been a message from you that I’m to help situate a new group of old ones in the dormitory. I’m not sure what you would want me to do here. If I ignore this, it

could lead to some suspicious confusion. If I don't, Dan knows we've added to our tribe recently. I stop walking and turn to him.

"Dan, it occurs to me that you haven't yet paid your respect to the old ones. In fact, I believe you haven't carried out that protocol for several visits now. I'd hate for you to be out of compliance with Article I, Section VIII."

Dan grimaces. I try to hide a wry smile. Most companies only maintain a handful of old ones, usually relatives of the top talent. You and I collect them like Dan collects wives.

"Fine. Let's go get this over with. But if you're hiding something, I will find it."

"I'm sure you will. Although, of course, we have nothing to hide. In fact, I should tell you that the reason I suggested this is that I've got to process a new group of old ones we're taking on."

Dan smiles but says nothing. He knows that you will know about the inspection soon. Not that these surprise inspections ever tend to be anything other than posturing, but I think he thinks that one of these days he's going to get something on you. On us.

\* \* \*

### THE DRAGON

The message comes in that Dan went with you to visit the old ones. You made a good decision to stall. I could have hid the Peculiars easily enough. But that would have given them time to have second thoughts and present a united front. To choose martyrdom over splintering. I don't make martyrs out of anybody. They just need to think that I do. So I issue a few instructions to the shift manager in anticipation of Dan's visit and head back in to talk to the Peculiars. You won't like this gamble. If things go wrong, there's a strong possibility that I'll have to indenture the lot of them and some of them will probably be eligible for claims by other Confederation companies. Dan's an idiot, but he's not stupid.

"So. You've had five minutes to talk. Who among you is talent?"

Silence. But I can't tell if this silence is fear, weak reluctance,

or unity. You are better at reading people like this: desperate people of strong belief.

“I’m going to ask once more: who among you is talent?”

The young skinny one who spoke before looks like he wants to say something, but the other men are giving him warning looks. And now I know what you’d say. You’d tell me that I came off much too strong before. That now they think that there’s absolutely no possibility that I’ll help them with what the old man said I’d help them with. They’re partly right. There’s no way I’m not going to exact my price.

\* \* \*

### THE OWL

I only take two from the security team into the old ones’ dormitory with me so that Dan can bring four of his wives with him. More and there’s too much chance of incidental contact among details as we walk the narrow halls and crowd into each room.

I tell the supervisor that we’ll meet the two new ones after Dan pays his respects to top floor residents. Dan puffs up the stairs. Surprisingly, he doesn’t seem too put out by this diversion. I make him enter every room on the floor. You should have seen it. He does it right and does it right every time. Takes each old one by the hand and says, “Greetings old one. The Confederation is pleased to have you in our midst. Yes, you and your generation did us much wrong. You over-consumed, over-connected, over-loaded. You gobbled up our birthright and then squabbled over what little remained. But we forgive you, and we will keep you safe. You will die a natural death as is your due as a member of the human race. And until that time, you live as a reminder of a world that we have left behind and will never rebuild. This I swear to you. May God or Darwin rest your soul.”

As we head back down to the ground floor, he says: “I forget how many you have, Mrs. Esplin. They must consume a lot of resources.”

“They don’t eat much. They’re old.”

Dan bursts out in laughter, but laughs a little too hard.

“Very funny, Mrs. Esplin. I do have some concerns that your tribe is taking on too much resource drain. And here you are add-

ing two more today! And it would appear that these two don't even come with any talent attached. Or at least your husband wasn't bragging about any new acquisitions. That's a bit puzzling, in fact."

Polygamous Dan is using the married name too much. Usually he calls me Kate or Future Wife. I'd like to message you, but that would seem too suspicious so instead I'll try to keep him stalled for a few more minutes, or better yet get him to call off this whole farce. I wish I could be more confident about what you were doing with the Peculiars. For several reasons.

\* \* \*

### THE DRAGON

I can feel Dan's eyes on you. I can smell the antiseptic funk of the old ones' dormitory. I knew he'd been here too long for things to be going normally and sent the new old ones to you as a tantalizing decoy. Now I can only hope you use them. Because I need to finish this. Because we need more talent. We always need more talent, and we need some sort of payment for the risks we take.

I say nothing to the Peculiars for several minutes. Then I pull the handgun from my holster and gesture for the women to step to one side of the room. One of the men clenches his fists. I stare him down. He looks away. The women are slow about it, but they clear out of the way so now I'm facing the five men. They're looking at the women. Someone starts crying. I begin laughing. I laugh for a long time.

"Really?" I whisper shout.

And now all of them are staring wide-eyed at me like I'm crazy. I wonder, not for the first time, if the old man gets the same kind of stares when he appears out of nowhere like some kind of Fourth Nephite—telling them who knows what wild tales, filling them with who knows what wild hopes. The Church Historian indeed. I wonder if I could get their eyes to pop all the way out of their sockets if I told them he's just my dad running around with a hacked halo and an Isaiah complex.

"Really? Do you really think I'm going to shoot one of you? I mean, hell, it's well within my rights to do so. But do you seriously think that that's what is going to happen here? What kind of mon-

ster do you think I am? Do you think I rule my people with fear? Do you think I'm so stupid, so powerless, so small of a Chief that I need to resort to violence? Oh sure, these trappings are sometimes necessary, and they aren't solely for show. You better believe that when someone messes with my people, I shoot them. I have shot them. But right now all I need from you is to help me out here."

And by the end I'm yelling and waving the gun erratically. You've never seen me yell like this. I hope you never will. I don't know if that's a sign of weakness or of strength or of sexism or marital responsibility. I may think about it later on the dark watch as I listen to you sleep. I go quiet. And then just as their eyes begin to relax, I spit out quietly, hoarsely: "Identify the talent and the rest of you get some help on your way."

A man and a woman step forward. This looks like a score. Coupled talents have extra incentives to work hard around here. But then it turns out that the man is indeed married—but not to the woman who stepped forward. His wife isn't talent. Not for the first time I show mercy and take on all three, even though one is dead weight. Not to mention the fact that I have already relieved them of the burden of their two old ones. This leaves them with six. It barely seems fair to me. I walk out of the room and message the shift manager to have the two new talents tested.

\* \* \*

### THE OWL

When we reach the ground floor Dan reminds me that he hasn't paid his respect to the two new old ones. I almost tell him that it isn't necessary, but then I realize that you wouldn't have sent them while he was here without providing for the possibility of them meeting him. Or at least I hope not. I know you better than anyone, but I can't read your mind, dear. One of these days you're going to forget a contingency or wind things too Byzantine, and I'm going to goof up.

"Your dedication is touching, Dan."

I whisper to the supervisor. "Ah, they are waiting for their medical examinations. If you'll please follow me to the exam room, you can pay your respects there."

Dan heaves out a half bow, and I sweep past him with a flourish of my dress.

The exam room is small so Dan and I leave our entourages at the door. The new old ones appear especially shrunken and bony in their dressing gowns; their halos raggedly ring their heads, the skin raw and bleeding in places. I wince and briefly close my eyes and picture them as they'll look in a few weeks of being under my care. That's the trick, the one you can't seem to master: don't see them as they look when they pathetically stumble in, but as they will become. It's the only way to truly bestow them with the dignity they need to flourish in spite of their infirmities. There are a man and a woman, but by the way they are sitting apart, turned away from each other, they don't appear to be a couple.

Dan walks briskly up to the man, who cowers and looks to me. Is this due to my natural charisma and touch with old ones, because you have briefed them, or that I am a woman? I smile warmly at him.

"Welcome," I say. "This is Dan. He is Chief of one of our sister tribes in the Confederation. In the Confederation we pay our respects to the old ones whenever we visit a tribe. That's why he is here. Go ahead, Dan."

Dan does the routine with the old man, and then begins to slather him with questions. The old man replies with vague answers and non-sequiturs. He's distracted and may not be all there. Dan's questions quickly change from oily to steely, although he still tries to keep up a veneer of the conversational.

I look at the old woman. She winks at me. I try not to laugh. Did you set this up? I can't tell if the old man is playacting or not, but it seems like not.

Dan's bluster is getting pathetic now. He knows it and turns to the old woman, grasps her hand and begins to recite his forgiveness. The old woman gazes at his face, a faraway look in her eyes.

Suddenly her eyes focus in on his, and she quietly asks: "Danny?"

Dan stops cold.

"Danny? Is it you after all this time? Oh, how I've missed you, son. I almost didn't recognize you underneath the beard and all the . . ." She trails off, her eyes basting themselves with tears.

He turns to me. "Is this some kind of trick?"

"I don't know. I . . . I don't think so." What are you doing here, honey? This is a dangerous game to be playing. I'm not sure how you want me to spin this.

"Danny? Don't you recognize me?" Her voice is the confused cry of a bird with a broken wing.

"No, I don't," he spits out crisply. "My mother is dead. I have never met you in my life. And . . ." He turns back to me. "This is a disgusting trick to play, Mrs. Esplin. You and your husband better have a good explanation for this."

I panic just a little. "I think this must just be a case of mistaken identity. I'm sorry, Dan. She is new . . ."

"Danny," she said, her tone sharp and commanding now. "Don't lie to the nice woman and make her feel bad. I taught you better than that. First you leave the Church and now you go and get fat. And who are all those women waiting outside the door dressed in the same uniform as you? And why do I smell tobacco on your clothes? Oh, Danny. You were such a good Mormon boy before the world changed. Now you don't even recognize your own mother." And now tears begin to stream down her wrinkled, cherubic face.

"You are mistaken, old one. You are crazy and delusional. Your halo must have malfunctioned." He turns and walks out, his wives hopping madly into formation behind him.

I look at the old woman, but there is no wink this time. Her white hair has grown long, curling haphazardly around her halo. She has a faraway look in her eyes as she sits in a loose dressing gown, the wind-burned leather of her cheeks staining wet. My heart begins to fill, but I must go. Always there is never enough time.

I walk out into the hall.

"I'm sorry, Dan. I had no idea that would happen. And you can believe that I won't mention anything about this to my husband."

His face puffs with indignation. "Your husband better watch himself. He swore the oath, but that doesn't mean him and you and your whole crew don't stink of Peculiar."

Dan stalks off, trailing wives. I follow suit, my own security detail snickering behind me.

\* \* \*

### THE DRAGON

Polygamous Dan comes puffing out of the old ones' dorm just as I arrive at the shipment area. He sees me and picks up his pace. His wives scurry to catch up. Then I see you. You in your flowing red dress flanked by two members of your security team. You wear it all so casually, so naturally. You don't think you do. But you are wrong. These people do what I say. Most of them would even die for me. But for you they'd change their lives. They'd push themselves to the limit. Work patiently for years to reach whatever grand vision you dazzled them with.

You are looking at me with your intense gray eyes, but I can't read your face.

"You dare insult me?" Dan clenches his fist. I do believe he wants to take a swing at me, my love. I smile and put on the cheer.

"Dan, it's good to see you. I don't know what you're talking about, but I'm sure we can sort things out. What has happened? Was our payment not satisfactory?"

"You know damn well what happened."

"Dan. Clearly someone or something has upset you. If you'd care to explain, I'd be happy to look into it and take appropriate steps to remedy the situation."

Dan is quiet for a second. I glance away. You are still standing near the entrance of the dorm and are avoiding looking at me. This either means that you think I set up whatever happened or you have made a misstep and are ashamed. I'm guessing it's probably the former and not the latter.

"Explain? Yeah, I'm going to explain so you and your, your lovely wife can snicker at me behind your condescending smiles. I don't think so." The way he sneers out the adjective pertaining to you makes me want to knock his teeth out. I resist even though my twitching hands have desires and designs on my holster. You want me to just let it go. You will tell me later that the insults only mean something if we allow them to and that the only way to win the game is to stay implacable.

Dan turns to walk away, but then he turns back. "Actually, here's what needs to be explained: Where did these latest old ones come from? Who arrived with them?"

“Dan, I’m very sorry about whatever has caused this tension to arise. You know, I value our friendship and treat you with the utmost hospitality and respect. If one of my people has violated that, I will take full responsibility.”

“Very prettily said, but that doesn’t answer my question.”

“We had an arrival last night. Three talents and the two old ones that I presume you just met.”

“Are all of them Peculiars?”

“One or both of the old ones may be, but as you well know, the Confederation understands that old ones can’t help the superstitions and ideologies they were indoctrinated with. The talents were as children, but left that all behind as adults and, of course, they have just sworn the oath to me.”

Dan grunts. His eyes meet my own. He can only push things so far, and he knows it. He doesn’t yet have the power and personnel and support among the other Chiefs to topple me. Then there’s the fact that we’re his most valuable trading partner in the Confederation.

“Well, it’s good to hear you aren’t harboring active Peculiars. I’d hate to report certain things to the other members of the Confederation. Although I’m sure you would easily pass an audit.”

“Of course—we always do. Well, it looks like you are all packed up. Would you like to continue your inspection?”

“That depends. What would I find?”

I smile. “Nothing as interesting as what you apparently already did.”

Dan chuckles. “Oh, that—it was nothing. Just took me by surprise. You are bound to have some startling moments whenever there are so many old ones around. And you do have a lot of old ones around. Best be careful in your collecting. I know the missus has a soft heart, but if you keep down this track, you soon won’t be a sustainable operation.”

You aren’t going to like this—but he isn’t wrong.

We walk over to Dan’s choppers. You move to join us. And as we all join up, his wives and our people all jostle together, and I notice you pretend to stumble as you approach one of Dan’s wives and grab her arm to steady yourself and give it a little squeeze. She’s pretty. And young. Her fatigues fit her loosely. She is trying hard not to look at you. It all takes just a second, but clearly some

sort of knowledge is passing between you and her. This isn't good. Thankfully, Dan appears not to notice; he's talking with one of his wives, getting the full report on the goods we have provided as exchange.

You manage to be charming and conciliatory without referring directly to what happened. I manage to be jocular in that particularly competitive way men are. Dan acts all casual and cool and engages in several public displays of affection with his wives.

\* \* \*

### THE OWL

Dan's choppers are over the horizon before your shoulders fully relax. I want to ask you if it was a set-up. But I don't think you'll answer me straight if I do. I grab your hand, and you squeeze mine as we gaze out across the desert. Our people have suddenly become very busy behind us. They're good about giving us these moments.

I decide to try anyway and turn to you. "Is she really his mother?"

"I don't know." You say this with your lips tightened, your head askance. I keep my face turned toward you and say nothing. You look me in the eyes, green meeting gray. "I really don't."

"What are you going to do about Dan?"

"Nothing much. He can hint around that we should be audited, but it won't do him much good since we've been audited twice as much as anyone else in the Confederation, and he's due before us. He can't go in to specifics about our new acquisitions because he knows that if he does that I'll spread around the story about his little encounter."

"How many of them are you letting go?"

"Six. They'll leave tonight and should be able to travel by night until they're well enough way from us."

"What are you going to do about your father?"

You want to reply. Say something definitive. Lay down the law. Your face tightens, and I can tell you are about to lecture me, but my eyes warn you off and instead you kiss me, and we walk hand in hand back to our separate duties.

\* \* \*

### THE OWL AND THE DRAGON

We take the dark watch. We sleep the fitful sleep and thirst in our dreams. We mourn with those who mourn and gather up the lost sheep. We put the pieces back together as best as we can.

The two red dots creep across the broken plateau, traveling under a moon almost full, heavy with light. The sky is littered with stars. And so they are gone and heaven only knows if more will come. They were too baffled to be grateful, too saddened by the thought of those they are leaving behind to feel relieved. They've made good time during the evening hours, but they're still well within range of our radar. Neither of us has said a word for more than an hour. We stand arm in arm watching them move across the screen. They promised to somehow send back a message when they make it through. You told them not to bother. I will look for it anyway.

\* \* \*

We take the dark watch. The room is cold. Neither of us moves to grab a blanket. We huddle closer. The tracking devices on the two four-wheelers have been programmed to brick themselves once they move beyond the twenty-mile range. And that, hopefully, will be that.

We can use these two new talents. They fill out some areas of expertise that have been keeping us from winning certain projects. It may have been a dear price for them to pay—but it's for the best. Of course, they hadn't been content to let the fact that we were letting them go speak for itself. They had wanted some other signal that we were one of them. I refused to indulge them. But I looked into your gray eyes, saw what was there and left the room. I don't know what you said to them, what you possibly even did with them. And you know that I will never ask.

## “Questions at the Veil”<sup>1</sup>

*Philip L. Barlow*

In the months after September 11, 2001, essayist and poet Frederick Turner crafted an unpublished tale entitled “The Terrorist Goes to Paradise.”<sup>2</sup>

Told in the first person by the terrorist himself, the story recounts the glories and privileges that greet an operative who helped fly a jet into New York’s towering World Trade Center. Upon his arrival in heaven the terrorist discovers to his pleasure that, for his heroism, as he presumes, Allah has provided him with all his fantasies and more: movement without restriction, unencumbered by time; scenes of beauty surpassing mortal ability to express; seventy-two voluptuous virgins enacting without restraint his every whim; infinite, incomparable food without satiation; a ministering angel attending to his every request and answering every query. It is all . . . *heavenly*.

Unfortunately, difficulties arise. After the novelty of heaven wears thin, the terrorist grows restless because he lacks a calling, a purpose, some way to contribute. He inquires, restlessly, as to whether he can receive some assignment. His angel forwards the request, but a disappointing word comes back: he is thanked for his offer, but told that he has done “quite enough.”

His second problem is the discovery that the afterlife bears an odor. Our hero comes to notice a distracting, then annoying, then putrid, over-cooked, and apparently permanent smell that mars all his pleasures. No matter where he goes—to his virgins, to his feasts, to the wondrous gardens of paradise—he cannot escape the stench. Heaven has its virtues, but how do the others bear this?

Eventually he becomes aware of an additional, final, and overwhelming problem. “Finally,” says the paradisiacal terrorist, “to every other feeling was added a sense of pollution, ultimate pollution, as if for all these months I had [somehow been defiling my-

self], as if I were utterly filled up and choked and bloated with myself, as if I had made myself pregnant, like a woman, but pregnant with something foul, inescapable . . . like the smell of the afterworld.”

The smell! *That*, at least, “I thought I could finally deal with,” the terrorist continues. “[Seeing me upset], my angel hovered anxiously about me, and when I had recovered my voice I demanded, weakly, that he banish the smell, at last.” “Oh alas, that I cannot do, my master,” he said,

For our rule in the kingdom of heaven is that everyone be what they have chosen to be, and that even redemption by the Savior cannot enforce a self to be other than what it is—for then it would not be its own self, and God would have become a *Shaitan*, and violated the principle of His being, which is love and freedom. He must go on loving you for what you are, and that means He cannot rip out your soul. For you see, the smell is the smell of *You*. It is not out in the air, but the inner smell of your own head, of your own self. It is not what you *smell*, but what you smell *with*.

Over the years, I have come to believe that a good portion of what we smell, what we see, what we hear, and what we sense is, in actuality, what we smell, see, hear, and sense *with*. The lens through which we see phenomena and gauge evidence is comprised not only of our worldview and wit, but also in considerable measure of our character, attitude, and imagination.

Long before I studied much about religion, epistemology, or postmodern thought in the formal academy, Lowell Bennion impressed upon me the notion that we live in two worlds: the objective world of external reality and the inner, subjective world of values. In the external world, I am small, scarcely of consequence, subject to great forces beyond my control. In the inner world of interpretation and values, however, I play a significant role: I have a measure of choice in what I desire, aspire to, and value. I help fashion the lens through which I interpret the world.<sup>3</sup>

This is true even of professional scholars, who intentionally hone critical epistemologies. As these scholars search out their paths—their systems of belief and action, including their publications and lives in the academy—they are not merely weighing evidence. They are also choosing and defining subjects, selecting evidence and discerning and assigning significance, which are pro-

cesses conditioned by who they are, by what they care about, and by the principles and authorities most persuasive or prestigious to them.

In this spirit, what follows is self-consciously personal: a meditation on an element of Mormon belief. My words amount to an act of "theology." People mean rather different things by "theology": sometimes they mean an exegesis of scripture; sometimes they mean a compendium of what living prophets or some magisterium or council has said. The theological writings of St. Paul or Irenaeus are different not only in content, but also in method and character from those of Augustine or the formulators of the Nicene Creed or Rosemary Radford Ruether's feminist declarations. In a Mormon context, the formal, metaphysical, classically inflected products of Blake Ostler are different in kind from, say, Truman Madsen's abbreviated, lyrical, allusive portraits calculated to inspire, or Bruce McConkie's taxonomy of proper Mormon belief, or the theological aspects of the "Proclamation on the Family," or the search for scriptural support of some ethical position such as we might read in Gene England. If this essay gets to count as "theology," this is what theology means for the next few pages: in my hands, theology is *the art and discipline of meaning-making at the nexus of three ideological streams, which are the revelation and tradition of my Mormon Christian religion, my personal faith and experience, and my interpretations of the observable world*. By the "observable world" I mean "reality," far and near, to the modest extent that I am able to apprehend it by attention to the findings of science, scholarship, direct observation, and the commentary of thoughtful fellow travelers. My theme is "Questions at the Veil."

As a Mormon, I know about claims of revelation. I have been deeply moved by some of the faith's canonized prophetic manifestations. In fact, I think I have encountered inspiration directly. I also do not believe that Mormons have a monopoly on this experience.

It is not lost on me, of course, that Mormonism makes extravagant claims and seems unlikely from certain angles of vision. Short of divine intervention, I do not know how I would have come to this movement if looking at it only from the outside,

though among my friends several of the most sensitive and thoughtful have somehow done so. Who knows where the hand of Providence might lead? More commonly, however, modern critical minds outside the fold find the Church's origins "fantastical," beyond the pale, based as they are on the supernatural visions of a young, obscure, largely ignorant, rural, antebellum American boy. The story of the movement's emergence seems rather too "golden," like the alleged plates from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon—before returning them to the angel who disclosed them. The movement's history is controversial, and all too human. Its cosmology seems esoteric, its good-hearted people gullible for marvels and wonders. Its ritual seems secretive, its God anthropomorphic, its theology heterodox and alien.

Yet the phenomenon persists. Despite its strangeness, perhaps because of its strangeness, the religion thrives, nourishes adherents, serves the world, challenges and is challenged by the wider culture, and perplexes its most thoughtful observers. It is nothing if not vital for its engaged community.

If one wishes to understand this curious movement (a pursuit at which I continue to work), it helps to remember that *all* claims that grapple with the contours of reality may seem bizarre when extracted from their context, when superficially engaged, or when viewed through the presumptions of another paradigm. This is so of a Buddhist's sense of recurrent birth, her highest aspiration to "cease to be"; or a Presbyterian's commitment to a mysterious Trinity and to a God enfleshed who walked on water, died, and came back to life; or an atheist's faith in a universe explained as fabulous accident. Unlike the early Christian apologist Tertullian (if we are to construe him literally), I am not a believer *because* the object of my faith is absurd (or "impossible," as may be a better translation),<sup>4</sup> but because the apparent outrageousness of Mormonism has not dissuaded me from rewarding participation and further probing. In this respect the Church parallels the universe itself. As geneticist J. B. S. Haldane observed, "The universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we *can* suppose."<sup>5</sup> And still I find myself a grateful participant in this implausible yet indisputable reality. This paradox holds promise, invites inquiry, and requires imagination. In the words of Annie Dillard, "our faithlessness is a cowardice born of our very smallness, a

massive failure of imagination." Nature abounds in radicalism, extremism, selective anarchy. Were we to judge nature strictly by our common sense, we could scarcely believe the world exists. "If creation had been left up to me," writes Dillard, "I'm sure I wouldn't have had the imagination or courage to do more than shape a single, reasonably sized atom, smooth as a snowball, and let it go at that. No claims of any and all revelations could be so far-fetched as a single giraffe."<sup>6</sup>

In the midst of the odd, unfathomable, tragic, and wondrous reality in which human beings find themselves, we Mormons are "a peculiar people" in both modern and biblical ways. We are, first, *people*, which means it is not hard to discover among us, individually and corporately, shortcomings and foolishness as well as wisdom and nobility. We are humans in union with and yet distinct from others. Like the ancient Hebrews, we may be wayward or—like Job's friends, Christ's Pharisees, or Mosiah's Zoramites—we may be too sure of ourselves, our religious paradigms, and our righteousness, thereby displeasing God. Yet in our imperfection, we are a people trying together, by covenant, to respond to the divine, which we believe calls to us. We are a people comprised of *persons*, and so we are diverse. In any given Sabbath meeting at which I find myself, I am surrounded by those I love and with whom I share much, but who also believe or disbelieve things that I judge differently. So far, room has been made for me in the Mormon tent. In short, I am—quite happily—an eccentric member of a peculiar people on a strange planet.

One entry into this peculiar people's sense of the human place in our bewildering universe is through the concept of "the veil." In Latter-day Saint parlance the veil refers to a barrier of memory and consciousness that separates humans from a wider reality. That reality is "eternity." This eternity precedes or outflanks our birth and the creation of our universe ("preexistence"). It is that into which we shall enter upon death ("afterlife"). Eternity is an enduring realm where God and all who are not in time, or our order of time, dwell ("the other side"). The veil, as the intangible barrier between the temporal and the eternal, is the bounds of our awareness.

Like all language, these terms comprise models that, even

when apt, point to what likely are vastly more complex and capacious actualities. Even our best conceptions resemble two-dimensional maps symbolizing multi-dimensional reality: white lies that tell the truth of the landscape.<sup>7</sup> They are highly impressionistic paintings that as a whole gesture toward something large. Viewed up close, however, the individual strokes may be crude, even errant and contradictory. Joseph Smith's strokes are often crude indeed like those in a Van Gogh painting.<sup>8</sup> Granting my assumption that external reality entails dimensions unsuspected by human thought, I like the Mormon metaphor of "veil" to describe something of the present human circumstance.

A veil is "something" rather than "nothing," suggesting a barrier but also a reality beyond itself. It is not a window through which one casually discerns the transcendent "out there." Nor is it an impenetrable "wall." A veil may be thick and gauzy, and in this opaque form it may indeed be mistaken for a wall and have something in common with notions of thinkers and artists over the centuries who lament the vacuum of knowledge characterizing the human condition. This sense of "unknowability" inclines some to a resigned indifference to wider horizons for their actions, creating a class of the religiously tone-deaf. In more passionate souls, existential unknowing coupled with a sense of the incongruity of reality can drive one to bifurcation, as with Voltaire: "To believe in God is impossible; not to believe in Him is absurd."<sup>9</sup>

But on some occasions a veil is thinner, obscurely translucent. We have inklings of something beyond what empiricism allows. Perhaps the Mormon notion of the permeable veil that shrouds human minds has limited connection with Wordsworth's "intimations of immortality"—intimations which have thrived across diverse cultures, over millennia.<sup>10</sup> In several short parables, the ever-enigmatic Franz Kafka wrote of a haunting awareness of a message, a presence, a judgment, a *something* he found unshakable but maddeningly indiscernible because it is too peripheral to our predominant senses.<sup>11</sup> Mormon sensibility understands that the veil may even be parted: at death, in ritual, by revelation.

I like the veil for more than its utility as a descriptive image for our mortal relation to a wider reality. I embrace it as a present and potentially useful fact. Unlike some of my fellow believers, I do

not think of it as merely an obstacle to be punctured by revelation. I construe it, rather, as a phenomenon with a purpose, or to which I can assign a purpose: a pithy psychological or metaphysical "something" with which I am in creative and useful tension, like the friction I minimize when lubricating my car, but on which I depend when steering it.

Insufficient regard for the veil can be problematic, even dangerous. We Mormons often are blithe about our revelations. While I prize curiosity, imagination, and the written and unwritten inspiration that points to eternal aspirations and horizons and sometimes helps me pick my way through thickets, I do not believe in encouraging adult naïveté, Freudian projection, superstition, or fanaticism—under the sovereign notion that "more faith is always good." Suicidal and homicidal terrorists, as I suggested earlier, are also possessed by extraordinary faith. For Christians, the scriptural mandate is that we be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves," not harmless as doves and just as dumb.<sup>12</sup>

Nor do I believe in spending much time elaborating the unknown. Every time I hear confident and comforting explanations of "the way things are," I am apt to think, "This doesn't go far toward explaining crocodiles, flesh-eating bacteria, babies born with two heads, or the tsunami that just obliterated more than 250,000 people over yonder." Nor does it account for the conflicting inspirations that various people sometimes profess. My impression is that, informed and animated by a thoughtful faith in a wider horizon, the veil should funnel the bulk of our attention to the here and now—on the time, people, problems, and opportunities of this day, at this moment. Despite the grace offering glimpses of eternal purposes, my life unfolds in tremendous, all-but-complete ignorance of our mysterious universe. The merest dabble into quantum physics, black holes, dark matter and energy, interstellar wormholes, or the Higgs-Boson reminds me of that fact. There is no proving God to others. Ultimate reality is not something I *know*; it is something in which I put my trust.

In Mormon understanding, the veil is necessary to our stage of progression as beings. While we search, listen, and pray for comfort and direction beyond our sphere, the veil—the necessary epistemic distance from this "beyond"—affords us a freedom for

independent action not otherwise possible were we literally and readily able to see God smiling or frowning at each move. The freedom independently to discern and choose between good and evil (morality) and good and bad (quality) is at the core of our purpose.

Although Mormon thought instructs that we are in but one stage of a broader evolution, we are invited through mortal experience to discover, forge, claim, and realize—to make real—our identity and character. In LDS belief the potential of that character for degradation or exaltation is scarcely bounded, and it yields a unique construction of two dimensions of Christ and his atonement: “The potential evil of human beings is of such a depth that the Son of God died in the flesh to confront it; the potential good of human beings is of such a height that the Son of God lived in the flesh to reveal it.”<sup>13</sup> On the latter point, distinctively emphasized in Mormonism, the gift of knowledge offered is something in the spirit of Disney’s *The Lion King* (from a scene which my young daughter years ago forced me to memorize), in which the deceased King Mufasa speaks from the beyond to his exiled, befuddled, uncoronated, but coming-of-age son: “Simba, you are more than you have become.”

Be-veiled as we are—in our confusion and unknowing, our curiosity and vulnerability, our passions, agonies, delights, yearning, choosing, and striving—we humans ask questions. We are hard-wired to do so: our existential circumstances and our natures require it. Unless this impulse is unnaturally driven from us, we are intrinsically interrogative beings. And therein lies a tale: Our native curiosity is itself a clue to our intended response to the experience of being human on this earth.

This curiosity can be distorted. I recall taking my one-year-old nephew, David, out for walks in the forest that lay behind our family home in Utah. Together we delighted at implausible wonders: the November air, crisp as an apple; red ants and black ants resolving some dispute, thereby revealing an appalling lack of multi-cultural sensitivity that was no doubt the result of ethnic prejudice; three distinct trees somehow grown together as one; blue-brown beetles visually as formidable, up close, as any dinosaur. As we walked, we named things. I would say “robin” or “lily” or “dirt”

and David would approximate the sound. I cheered and hugged; David was reinforced. He learned language.

But in time I noticed a change. The focal point of his attention, with my Skinnerian assistance, subtly shifted: from the bird or the flight of the bird, to his own ability to attach conventional sounds to the bird—to name it. Now, acquiring language still seems to me a good idea, but in the process of becoming himself in this way, David diluted—distorted—another part of himself: his unfiltered sense of relation with the world. Over time, and in his case, I am happy to say, temporarily, he learned less about curiosity and experiencing the universe and more about getting A's in school. A similar disease can beset us in the academy, as we compete and perform, and the disease can affect the sorts of projects we take on, even how we spend our careers.

Despite these dangers of distortion, we are, again, natively interrogative beings. We ask questions of life, of the cosmos. We ask questions of the God we believe in, the God we rail against, or the God we do not believe in because we see other people's superstitions, or because God seems inaccessible, or because of the world's hurt, and our own.

Our questions to this God form themselves variously. Among the most common is "Why *me?*"—a protest posing as query. Among them also are "Why, God, don't you show yourself?" And "What does life mean?" "Where do I fit?" "Who am I?" And "What will become of me?"

Many of the most poignant questions present themselves classically in the Bible and other Mormon scriptures. Fueling our awareness of injustice, the scriptures ask, "Why do the wicked prosper?" In excruciating (literally: *crucifying*) times, it may come to "Why hast thou forsaken me?" As a cluster, the questions represent the human search for God or meaning or ultimacy or relief. Sometimes they signify despair; sometimes, human outrage at the human condition.

Such questions are understandable, legitimate, perhaps even necessary for a season. Pursued relentlessly and with vehemence, however, they can cripple our radar. We may rage until we lose hearing. We may forget our station. Our purchase will not be sweet illumination, but only gall.

It helps me at times to shift my perspective: *Our interrogation of God may be fruitfully inverted*. Through this means, the questions may be read not as the human search for God, but as God's search for humanity.<sup>14</sup> Here, the answers to the questions we ask of God, through the veil, come back, through the same medium, as counter-questions—queries put to our souls by God. Latter-day Saints know sacred queries in their temple ritual, but the queries that haunt, or ought to haunt, the human soul are widely accessible. Developing an ear for these soul-queries alters our ordinary epistemological preoccupations and our existentially natural but sometimes self-centered questions. It puts us, rather than God, in the dock. Absorbing questions rather than inexorably posing them may, at times, be a more promising avenue of inquiry.

Such questions have their archetypes in scripture. Some might be put to us as a people: “Have you become of one heart and one mind, with no poor among you?”<sup>15</sup> Others, on which I focus here, come to me as an individual. God asks, “Adam, where art thou?” as if to say, “Man, Woman, where do you stand? What ground do you inhabit? What have you been about? What hast thou done?”<sup>16</sup> Or, more explicitly, He might ask us to ponder, “What manner of men—of women—ought ye to be?”<sup>17</sup>

We have Christ's inquiry of Peter, posed also to us: “Lovest thou me?” And to the disciple's perhaps too-ready answer, the question recurs and recurs, implying an underlying question: “*Really?*”<sup>18</sup>

Alma the Younger in effect expounds upon Christ's query to Peter by asking, “Can ye look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenances?”<sup>19</sup>

While we march to our carrels and jobs and to our churches and sports arenas, perhaps oblivious to the wounded and bereft around us, Christ may ask, “Have I been so long with you, and yet thou hast not known me?”<sup>20</sup>

To our questions-become-accusations against the Divine, in the midst of our pain, comes the divine question to Everyman, embodied in Job: “Who is this who speaks with words devoid of knowledge?”<sup>21</sup>

To our moral or situational quandaries, perhaps the best question is not “What would Jesus do?” (a rather sentimental and unscriptural presumption), but rather, as Dostoyevsky transposed the query, “What will *you* do, with only His image before you?”<sup>22</sup>

On a stormy sea, the Lord asks, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"<sup>23</sup>

Under a heavy weight, before a dreaded task, a cup we would have pass from us, comes Mordecai's godly challenge to Queen Esther, whose life and people are in peril: "Who knows but that you have come to your . . . position for such a time as this?"<sup>24</sup>

When in our preoccupations we seek more to be comforted than to comfort, seek compassion only from, and not toward, God, we are asked, "Could you not watch with me one hour?"<sup>25</sup>

It may be that "Christ the Word," as the Gospel of John casts him and as the Greek *logos* connotes, is indeed the "word"—that is, the "reason," the "mind," the "logic" and "expression" of God. But it may also be that Christ is, at last, God's interrogative syntax, enfleshed: "Whom do men say that I am?" "Whom do *you* say?" And implicitly: "So what?"<sup>26</sup> I value my life in the Church. I value also the life of the mind and the academy. In some ways my religious practice and professional efforts are independent spheres. But who I am (and how I answer questions put to me by scripture) naturally conditions how I construe and go about all my tasks.

My personal though Mormon-infused ruminations have it that we are interrogatory beings, that God is a loving but question-asking God, and that the veil through which we and God question one another is an interrogatory medium. Life itself is intrinsically interrogative; and like Wordsworth, I embrace rather than lament the veil that makes it so, even as I am grateful for intimations and prophetic glimpses beyond it.<sup>27</sup>

To whatever religion we subscribe the limits of our knowing, and the human ability and instinct to ponder those limits, implies an ultimate Question that lurks behind all else. Although it may be submerged, the Question is never extinguished, not in any day or moment. Even for those who hold to no God, even to those in the direst circumstances, and even to those who cannot hear or articulate the inquiry, it abides: Life itself asks of us a Question from which there is no escape. Viktor Frankl discovered that the question need not be extinguished, short of death, even in the vise of Hitler's concentration camps.<sup>28</sup> But for me, the ultimate author of the Question that life poses is the Author of creation. Our inescapable reply, the way that we reply, the quality and content of our

reply, is that which creates meaning—and forges the caliber of our souls. We *become* the answer to life’s query.

Life, then, is a question, posed by God, through a veil.  
How shall we respond?<sup>29</sup>

### Notes

1. Preliminary versions of the ideas that follow were presented as lectures at the annual meeting of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology on September 21, 2012, at Utah State University and at the biennial “Faith and Knowledge” Conference on February 22, 2013, at the Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. Thanks to Terryl Givens for a thoughtful response to an initial hearing and to Cory M. Nani for research, critique, and editorial assistance.

2. Unpublished, copy in my possession.

3. Lowell L. Bennion, *The Things that Matter Most* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1978), 19–22.

4. Tertullian, *De Carne Christi Liber: Treatise on the Incarnation*, trans. by Ernest Evans (London: S. P. C. K., 1956), 18–19, section xviii, lines 23–26. The popularized statement referenced here, “*redo quia absurdum*” (“I believe because it is absurd”), simplifies yet neuters what Tertullian may have intended. The phrase in the Latin, “*crucifixus est Dei Filius, non pudet, quia pudendum est; et mortuus est Dei Filius, prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est; et sepultus resurrexit, certum est, quia impossibile*,” more accurately translates to “The Son of God died; it is immediately credible—because it is silly. He was buried, and rose again; it is certain—because it is impossible.” Terryl Givens drew my attention to what may be error in the common translation that has come down through the centuries.

5. J. B. S. Haldane, *Possible Worlds, and Other Papers*, Essay Reprint Series (Freeport, N. Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 286.

6. Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 1st Perennial Classics Edition, Perennial Classics (New York: HarperPerennial, 1998), 146.

7. Mark Monmonier and H. J. de Blij, *How to Lie with Maps*, 2d. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1.

8. Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of Latter-day Saints in American Religion*, updated edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), xxiii.

9. While widely attributed to Voltaire, there seems to be no publication bearing the philosopher’s name in which this statement appears as recorded. Nonetheless, its pervasive usage in modern literature suggests some degree of authenticity in origin.

10. Terryl Givens, *When Souls Had Wings: Pre-Mortal Existence in Western Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

11. Franz Kafka, *The Basic Kafka*, 159–60, provides an example. More broadly, one can discern in Kafka's "The Castle," "The Trial," "The Burrow," and elsewhere a persistent struggle not merely with his illness, his pathologies, his cloudy relations with his father and with women, his Jewishness, and his entanglement as an employee of the modern bureaucratic state. One can discern beyond all this the grappling of a tortured prophet of "the modern mind" that "knows two things at once: that there is no God, and that there must be God." This God, for Kafka, need not be personal, to be sure. See Roberto Calasso's brilliant interpretation of Kafka: *K*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2006).

12. Matthew 10:16.

13. Philip L. Barlow, "Unorthodox Orthodoxy: The Idea of Deification in Christian History." *Sunstone*, September–October 1983, 18.

14. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1955).

15. Moses 7:18; Deuteronomy 15:4.

16. Genesis 3:9.

17. 3 Nephi 27:27; see also Lynn G. Robbins, "What Manner of Men and Women Ought Ye to Be?" *Ensign*, May 2011, 103–5.

18. John 21:17.

19. Alma 5:14.

20. John 14:9.

21. Job 38:2.

22. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov: A Novel in Four Parts and an Epilogue*, translated by Constance Garnett (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 269.

23. Matthew 8:26.

24. Esther 4:14.

25. Matthew 26:40.

26. Mark 8:27.

27. William Woodsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, edited by Christopher B. Ricks (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 349–55.

28. Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 108–9.

29. Philosopher Dennis Rasmussen, through rather a different path, asks a related question at the beginning of *The Lord's Question: A Call to Come unto Him* (Provo: Keter Foundation, 1985), 4. While the seeds of my own thought were planted long ago by an encounter with the work of Viktor Frankl, Rasmussen and I share interests. His book poses a series

of questions asked by an all-knowing God to fallible man. If an omniscient and omnipotent deity asks a question to which he already knows the answer, wonders Rasmussen, what response does man actually have? Is the question posed by God more accurately considered a question posed by ourselves, since God knows better than we what the answer ought to be?

## CONTRIBUTORS

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SHAWN P. BAILEY {spbailey@gmail.com} watched a game show called *Double Dare* back in the eighties. Rather than answer difficult questions, contestants could declare: “I’ll take the physical challenge!” Physical challenges generally involved taking a pie in the face or having copious amounts of green slime poured over one’s head. Bailey wishes life had an “I’ll take the physical challenge!” option. “Boss giving you a hard time? Don’t want to take that test? Need to discipline a difficult child? Spouse reasonably concerned about something? Just take the physical challenge!” Bailey resides in Utah with his wife and kids. He practices law in Utah and Idaho. He is the author of *Millstone City* and *The Mission Rules*, and his works have also appeared in *Fire in the Pasture* and *Monsters & Mormons*. His homemade author vanity website: spbailey.net.

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M. SHAYNE BELL {nicoji@rocketmail.com} received a creative writing fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts (1991). He worked as poetry editor for *Sunstone* (1990–95). A poem of his, “One Hundred Years of Russian Revolution,” was a

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“out and away.” He splits his time between Cambridge, Massachusetts, northern New York, and Montreal, where he intermittently renovates apartments and Victorian houses, paddles in dragon boats, builds tree houses in the Bauhaus style and watches his gardens grow. His verse has recently won the *Irrantum* Prize for Poetry (2012) and was shortlisted for both the ARC Poem of the Year (Canada, 2013) and the Fish Poetry Prize (Ireland, 2013). Eggertsen’s poems have been anthologized in *Fire in the Pasture* (2011), *Animal Companions*, *Animal Doctors* (2012), and *Ekphrastia Gone Wild!* (2013). He is now seeking a publisher for a chapbook of his poetry.

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