

living jargon that may someday rise to dialect and even language status, and a dictionary would be a tremendous record of contemporary speech patterns.

I'm not a lexicographer. (There are those who question whether I'm literate.) But the project of creating a Mormon dictionary fascinates me, and I'm eager to be informed of more examples of Saintspeak, whether in the form of new meanings for old words, completely new words and phrases, or unusual speech patterns. And if you have noticed examples of Saintspeak that I haven't mentioned here—and I have only scratched the surface—I'd be delighted to hear from you. Write to Dictionary, 117 "J" Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103, and tell me not only what the word or phrase is, but also how it is used and where you've heard it, particularly if it's unusual. If I can browbeat the publisher into letting me do so, the results of your contributions will appear in a later issue of *Sunstone*, and if the Saintspeak Dictionary ever appears as a book, I promise to mention your name. (As for money, forget it. Dictionaries are made for fun, not profit.)

It is a mark of the vigor of our culture that we have created such an active private language. It seems only logical, in retrospect, that the gospel that so drastically changed peoples' lifestyles, careers, and even family patterns should also have an influence upon their speech. And the continuing growth of our speech will help to further cement our unity as a people, will further separate us from the world. And while at the top levels the Church works to give us a uniquely Mormon image, Saintspeak is working at every level to make us uniquely Mormon in fact.

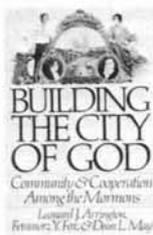
But in the meantime, maybe we ought to start providing translators in sacrament meeting.

ORSON SCOTT CARD is a freelance writer living in Salt Lake City with wife Kristine and newborn son Geoffrey. A frequent contributor to *Sunstone*, Scott was recently nominated for a Hugo Award for his short story, "Ender's Game," and for the John W. Campbell Award for best new science fiction writer of the year—one of five nominees worldwide for each award.

Reviews

Books

Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons
Leonard Arrington,
Feramorz Y. Fox,
and Dean L. May
Deseret Book, 1976
477 pages, index; \$7.95



To Mormons the phrase "building the city of God" means broadly the creation of a temporal kingdom governed by God through his prophets. The organization through which this goal would be realized is the priesthood, which provides channels of authority and communication from the prophets and Church councils to local bishops and quorum leaders. Arrington, Fox and May have skillfully detailed the history of this idea in Mormonism in all of its manifestations from Joseph Smith's Law of Consecration and Stewardship through Brigham Young's United Order to the present-day Church welfare system. They have collected and organized a large body of information about economic cooperation among the Mormons, especially about the consequences of putting cooperative programs into practice. They have shown that economic cooperation has been widespread in the Church during periods of general hardship also interestingly, that the failure of the Mormon experiments in communal living were due not to the weaknesses of the people (the cause usually cited by Church authorities), but rather to the outside pressures of mobs, of the federal government, and of social and political forces, such as the transcontinental railroad and the discoveries of gold in California and silver in Utah.

Historians often justify their craft by telling us that we must understand something of the past in order to understand the present. There are a number of contemporary issues which

justify this claim—issues sufficiently controversial to prompt the authors to preface their work with the assurance that they are active and believing Latter-day Saints.

The problem of the relationship between the doctrines and the temporal social and economic programs of the Church has always been a source of lively controversy. From the beginning there has been a tendency for people to see Mormon doctrine as applied to temporal affairs through glasses colored by their own prejudices and self-interests. While this tendency applies both to liberals and conservatives, it has been particularly applicable lately to adherents of a conservative brand of social and economic philosophy characterized by "rugged individualism" and laissez-faire capitalism. This interpretation of the Gospel has been evident, for instance, in public statements asserting that one could not be a faithful Mormon and simultaneously believe in principles of cooperative political action and central economic planning. Whatever the sources of this interpretation may be, they are certainly contradicted by this history of social and economic cooperation among the Mormons.

Because the historical record challenges the prejudices of some members of the Church, the authors have presented their material with great restraint. While they did compare and contrast Mormon communal living experiments with 19th and 20th century non-Mormon communal movements, including Robert Owen, Fourier, and the hippies, they did not address another nagging question: the similarities between the Mormon doctrine, which the authors label "communitarianism", and communism. This question deserved at least a brief answer in such a thorough treatise because it has been asked many times and should be laid to rest. The shape such an answer should take is quite clearly implied in the book as it stands: there is no common ideological ground between Communism and Mormonism, but the actual experiences of living in a Mormon United Order or a commune

or a kibbutz may be quite similar in many respects. The spelling out of these differences and similarities would make an interesting paragraph or two, at least. In addition it would contribute a balance to the work by making it clear that Mormon doctrines are no more hospitable to extremism on the left than they are to extremism on the right.

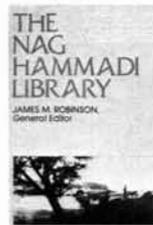
Unquestionably, *Building the City of God* is a major contribution to our understanding of Mormon history, especially of a facet that has been relatively neglected. As with any work, minor improvements could be suggested. For instance, it would be helpful to serious readers (and there should be many) if the notes were incorporated as footnotes in the body of the work instead of at the end. Also, one is bothered by the chaos of the references for chapter 16, at least five of which are clearly misnumbered. These minor imperfections, however, do not detract from an otherwise excellent and substantial study.

Scott B. Birkinshaw

Scott B. Birkinshaw is an Assistant Professor of Libraries at Weber State College, and a doctoral candidate at the University of Utah.

The Nag Hammadi Library

Edited by Marvin W. Meyer
Harper & Row, 1977
477 pages; \$15.00



Writings of popular L.D.S. scholars have led many members of the Church to believe that early Christians are divisible into two basic groups: 1.) proto-Catholics (and all other apostates), and 2.)

members of some primitive form of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In fact, such is not the case. Instead of only two factions, there were many variations of Christianity, each regarded by its adherents as the legitimate heir of Christ's original organization; a few have continued until the present as small, unknown, and esoteric sects, others have been consolidated into the mainstream of the Roman or Greek traditions, while some have become extinct.

The Gnostic Christians constitute a variety of the last category, fading away early in the history of Christianity. Consequently, they are all but unknown today, and would have continued to be so were it not for the phenomenal discovery of the remains

of a Coptic Gnostic library at Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945. For well over twenty five years scholars have been studying the enigmatic texts from this small library, publishing their findings in various specialized journals throughout the world with the unfortunate result that information about them has been virtually unavailable to interested laymen.

Until now. International experts have combined their efforts in the Coptic Gnostic Library Project sponsored by the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity to produce excellent translations of all the tractates (some appearing here for the first time), in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, a volume which opens to view for a popular audience one of the most intriguing and controversial varieties of early Christianity.

Although a fairly substantial amount of background knowledge is useful when studying the tractates, the editors of *The Nag Hammadi Library* have made a superior effort to acquaint the reader with the problems and importance of the texts by providing a brief introduction to each translation. There is also an excellent general introduction which concisely familiarizes the reader with Gnosticism, the Nag Hammadi tractates, and recounts the history of their discovery. But it must be kept in mind that *The Nag Hammadi Library* does not pretend to be a definitive study; it is to be followed by a much more detailed and exhaustive eleven-volume series in which extensive scriptural references and indices are expected as well as the scholarly apparatus usually attendant with this type of study.

It is important to realize that the contents of this book are not easily apprehended, for the Coptic Gnostic Christians lived in a vastly different philosophical milieu from our own, so that their thoughts will often seem quite foreign, perhaps rather naive from our viewpoint, and certainly difficult to understand in many instances.

And another warning: the reader should not be surprised to discover that Mormon doctrine is not detectably present in the texts. Before a connection with L.D.S. theology can be developed, there would have to be a substantial amount of interpretation of the source material from a twentieth-century Mormon perspective, without regard to proper historical context. Thus this book offers little reassurance to those Latter-day Saints

whose quest is to find additional confirmation that our Church is true.

Then why read *The Nag Hammadi Library* at all if it is not necessarily testimony building and must be studied to be comprehended? Perhaps the best answer to that is contained on the first page of the introduction: "... the focus of this library has much in common with primitive Christianity, with eastern religions, and with holy men of all times, as well as with the more secular equivalents of today such as the counterculture movements coming from the 1960's. Disinterest in the goods of a consumer society, withdrawal into communes of the like-minded away from the bustle and clutter of big-city distraction, non-involvement in the compromises of the political process, sharing an in-group's knowledge both of the disaster-course of the culture and of an ideal, radical alternative not commonly known"—all this in modern garb is the real challenge rooted in such materials as the Nag Hammadi library.

Edward H. Ashment

Edward H. Ashment, a Ph.D. candidate in Egyptology at the University of Chicago, received his B.A. from B.Y.U. in History, where he taught in the Department of Ancient Scripture.

Mormon Manuscripts to 1846: A Guide to the Holdings of the Harold B. Lee Library

Hyrum L. Andrus and Richard E Bennett, compilers
Brigham Young University 1977
pages, index; \$4.95



The history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during its first two decades is significant for the development of the theology, ideals, organizational structure and practices which

have characterized the Church ever since. Students of contemporary Mormonism, as well as nineteenth century Utah, look to events in New York, Ohio, Missouri and Illinois for both theological and historical precedents. Not surprisingly, Mormonism's pre-Utah period has been thoroughly studied by scholars, Saint and Gentile alike, who are interested in compiling and interpreting the Mormon past.

Sources for the study of this crucial period, especially manuscript sources, have been relatively limited. Most of what has been available dates back to the collecting activities of the Church Historian's office, where such material

was gathered in the process of compiling the history of Joseph Smith, later published under the editorship of B. H. Roberts as the *History of the Church, Period I*. Little has been added to these sources over the years, with a few exceptions: the microfilming efforts of Larry Porter in New York state in the early 1970s and the collecting efforts of Nauvoo Restoration since the mid-1960s.

Mormon Manuscripts to 1846 therefore comes as a bit of a surprise. A volume of 231 pages with nearly 600 descriptive entries suggests a major new resource for Mormonism's formative period. The guide, although simply a photo-offset reproduction of typescript, is handsomely designed, sprinkled with historic photographs and illustrations, and attractively bound. A thorough introduction describes the scope of the guide, and carefully outlines the organization, format and terms used. A useful name and subject index is also included.

Appealing as the form of the guide is, the promise of substance is not kept; the guide is a bit of a disappointment. Not that it fails to describe the holdings in the manuscript collections at the Lee Library; it does that quite adequately. The disappointment is that there is so little to describe; mainly small collections and photocopies of collections from other repositories. While BYU has done a commendable job of bringing together a good research collection on early Mormonism, it has not significantly added to the body of original source material of the period.

The guide is a disappointment also because of the way the holdings are described. In the first place, the guide describes a large number of collections which are copies of materials housed elsewhere. Because the descriptions fail to acknowledge ownership of the originals—whether they are in private possession, in one of the eight repositories listed in the introduction, or somewhere else—the reader is left with a fuzzy concept of the nature of the collections at the Lee Library. Moreover, in describing small collections and single items, the guide gives them the same attention as larger and more important collections, thus missing an opportunity to highlight the Library's truly significant holding. Additionally, the guide contains biographical entries under the name of the subject but fails to provide information about the authors, and because it includes undated retrospective writings—materials about the pre-1846 period but not written

during those years—the guide ignores important factors in historical interpretation.

At the same time, the guide describes in individual entries portions of single collections, such as various compilations of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. In doing so, the guides compilers not only inflate the number of entries, but more importantly overlook the significance of describing material in the aggregate. These kinds of collections, consisting as they do of the research and writing of loving descendants, perhaps tell more about twentieth century attitudes, values and beliefs than they add to our understanding of early Church history.

A guide should clearly reflect the material described. This guide is neither entirely clear nor a true reflection of the holdings of the Lee Library. A more useful guide and one which more truly reflects the strengths of the BYU collections would have had one section describing the original materials of the pre-1846 period. Though this would have been a small section, it would have served to highlight the significant collections which are otherwise buried in the guide. And, because there is so much of it, another section devoted to describing copies of materials housed elsewhere, with notes on the locations of the originals, would be needed. Still another section, with descriptions of reminiscences and third-person biographies, and with aggregate descriptions of small collections, would have put that material into perspective. There is nothing sacred about placing guide entries in alphabetical order; the index can serve that function.

The collections on early Mormonism at the Harold B. Lee Library are good, but not great, as a careful reading of the guide will reveal. Nevertheless, the compilers of *Mormon Manuscripts to 1846* are to be congratulated for describing their holdings. Perhaps other institutions holding Mormon-related manuscripts will take inspiration from the efforts of the archivists at Brigham Young University and publish guides to their collections.

Max J. Evans

MAX EVANS, a graduate of Utah State University, has written articles on Mormon history and archival principles. Presently, he is Assistant to the Archivist at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Television

Holocaust

An NBC docu-drama televised in four segments, April 16-19, 1978



By the time this article appears, NBC will have found out if *Holocaust* was as successful in the all-important Nielson battle as they hoped. Regardless of how well or how badly the show did in the ratings,

Holocaust is a victory of sorts for American network television. Unlike most other "TV docu-dramas" (a terrible phrase, almost as bad as "sitcom"), *Holocaust* manages to depict events of great social and historical importance without hopelessly trivializing them. The series is probably as honest, conscientious a portrayal as network television could have managed; as such, it also points up the limitations of television more clearly than its less notable productions.

Holocaust spans a full decade, from the infamous Kristallnacht of 1935 to the allied occupation of Germany and the struggle to establish the state of Israel. Most events are seen through the eyes of the Weiss family, a believable, upper-middle class family of Jewish Berliners. Until Hitler re-opened anti-Semitism, Germany had less religious prejudice than almost any other country in Europe. The German Jews were thoroughly assimilated, tending to see themselves as Germans first and Jews second.

Because the Weisses are bourgeois and respectable, more or less like the average American family, most viewers would find it easy to identify with their trials. Early in the first episode, the Weisses are expelled from Berlin and sent to the Warsaw ghetto. Events move quickly: Karl, the eldest son, marries a Roman Catholic girl, but is nonetheless sent to Buchenwald. His wife bribes the camp's commandant with sexual favors, and eventually gets Karl transferred to Theresienstadt, the "paradise camp" that serves as a showcase for international Red Cross observers. His brother Rudy goes on the run, and his one-man re-enactment of Moses' wanderings in the Sinai takes him from one end of Eastern Europe to the other. During his travels he meets Helena, a Czech Zionist; eventually they marry and join the Jewish

partisans in the Ukraine.

Unlike *Roots*, *Holocaust* does not strain for a happy ending. Most of the major characters in the show are brutally murdered on-screen, a shocking touch of realism that American audiences are unaccustomed to. Instead of a quick, clean act, as it is often portrayed, murder in *Holocaust* is depicted as revolting and despicable.

The industrialized barbarism of the Third Reich represents a dispassionate bestiality unique in twentieth century Europe, although today Hitler has less flamboyant imitators throughout the Third World. The contrast between the civilized, rational Germans and the bulldozer graves at Treblinka is vividly captured. In one powerful scene, two SS officers watch a bus chug down the road as they calmly discuss more efficient methods of disposing of the Jews. Occasionally they have to raise their voices a little, to be heard over the pounding and screaming of those in the bus futilely trying to escape the carbon monoxide that is being pumped into the sealed vehicle.

The Nazi perspective is represented by Erik Dorf, the most interesting character in the story. Dorf is a nice family man who rises rapidly through the SS ranks as the legal eagle for the extermination program. Though he finds the program deeply repugnant, Dorf is pressed on by his status-hungry, Lady Macbeth-ish wife. He takes refuge behind a smokescreen of semantic hair-splitting and antiseptic unemotionalism. A revealing sequence takes place when Dorf is sent to supervise the extermination in the Ukraine. One of his subordinates, Captain Blobel, rationalizes his actions by searching for evidence that Jews are subhuman. Friction develops almost immediately between his earthy ideological commitment and Dorf's icy nihilism. When Dorf complains about the jocular, almost festive atmosphere in which the executions are carried out, Blobel finally loses patience and goads Dorf into going down into the trench with a revolver to finish off those who were not killed by the machine guns. "The first one is the hardest," Blobel tells him coldly. "You shoot ten Jews, the next hundred are easy. You shoot a hundred, you can shoot a thousand." The almost intolerable tension in Dorf's face as he squeezes the trigger shows how fragile his facade really is.

Holocaust avoids most of the World War II stereotypes. Jews were not the only victims of Nazi persecution; and several characters are "good Germans" who try to temper the savagery of

Hitler's directives. Surprisingly, the chief complaints of West German newspaper correspondents here (*Holocaust* will be shown in West Germany within a year) were that the series fell far short of capturing the true horror of the events described, or that the Nazis came across too nicely. Yet, *Holocaust* represents the best attempt thus far to deal on television with a horrifying and complex chapter of history.

That is *Holocaust's* triumph, and television's indictment. As powerful, as historically accurate, as conscientiously written as *Holocaust* may be, a better job could have been done. Except for Erik Dorf, the characters are essentially two-dimensional, too oversimplified to really draw us into their personal dramas. There are a few good intimate moments, but by and large *Holocaust* does best when it focuses on the lines of Jews shuffling into the gas chambers and avoids the sticky, personal moments.

Even the historical picture is painted with very broad strokes. We never learn the real motives behind the Nazi extermination of the Jews, as opposed to the racist tripe fed to the masses. Other, important points are glossed over as well. The tacit acceptance,

even passive cooperation, with which most European Christian churches met Hitler's atrocities is a black mark that should be carefully examined by all Christians, including Mormons, who succumbed after only a token struggle. Regrettably, *Holocaust* spends only a few minutes on this important issue.

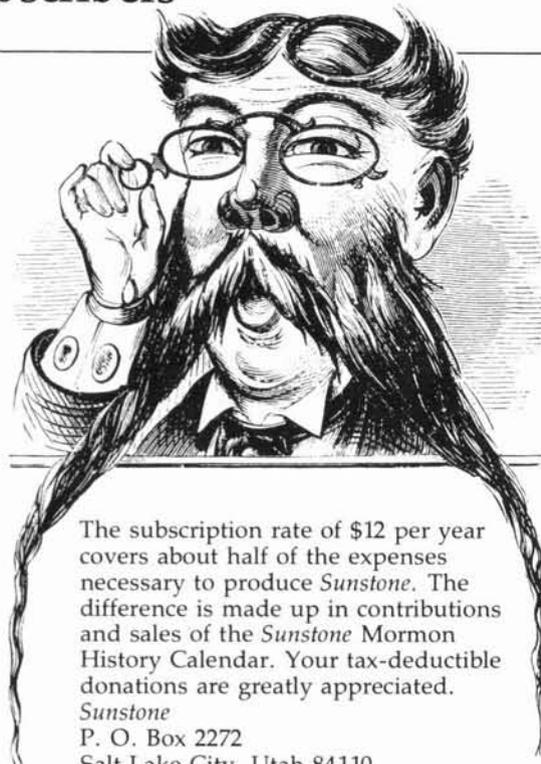
Television is even more limited than other media in that it is hamstrung by the necessity of big audiences, the need to please sponsors, to work with snippets of plot to accommodate commercial breaks. Ironically, those breaks were perhaps the most powerful element of *Holocaust*: the contrast between the stark, despairing show and the idiotic, fatuous ads provided an unexpected emotional jarring.

Though *Holocaust* fell short of its subject, those who learned of *history's* holocaust only in high school textbooks probably found the series a gripping presentation of events the enormity of which had been only dimly perceived. Though the series' reach far exceeded its grasp, it serves as a powerful reminder of the awful reality of human nature's darkest side.

Ron Bitton

RON BITTON, whose entertainment reviews have appeared regularly in the University of Utah's *Daily Chronicle*, is a political science student.

Dear Subscribers



The subscription rate of \$12 per year covers about half of the expenses necessary to produce *Sunstone*. The difference is made up in contributions and sales of the *Sunstone* Mormon History Calendar. Your tax-deductible donations are greatly appreciated.

Sunstone
P. O. Box 2272
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110