

# IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY CLOSETS

Marvin Rytting

**S**everal years ago, I heard Truman Madsen tell about a Protestant minister who had remarked, "You Mormons have a wonderful way of life, but your theology is an abomination." My immediate reaction was that he had it backwards—our theology is inspiring; the abominable part is the lifestyle.

For the half of my life that I have been struggling with being Mormon, I have compared notes with many "closet doubters." In the process, I have become aware that we differ both in what we find troubling as well as in what we find satisfying about being Mormon. I understand my own pattern of religious affirmation and disaffection best by explaining it as a function of my personality, but have come to realize that not everyone who doubts or struggles shares my personality characteristics. We each have our own pattern of believing and doubting. Some have problems with the theology; others with the lifestyle.

In my last column, "Gifts Differing," I presented a Jungian typology of personality which combines four dimensions. The *extraversion-introversion* continuum reflects the extent to which a person is interested mainly in the external world of action, people, and things or the internal world of concepts and ideas. The *sensing-intuition* dimension defines the preference for perceiving the immediate, real, practical facts of experience as opposed to looking for possibilities, relationships, and meanings in experience. The inclination to make decisions by objectively and impersonally considering causes and effects rather than by subjectively weighing values and their personal consequences is the basis for the *thinking-feeling* scale. And the *judgment-perception* dichotomy compares the preference for living in a planned, orderly, and controlling way against living in a spontaneous, flexible, and adapting way.

Everybody uses both poles of each of these continua, and to

have a well-balanced life we should attempt to develop both sides. But most people have a clear preference for one pole or the other on at least one of these dimensions and at least a mild preference on the others. The different combinations of these preferences produce different personality characteristics and areas of interest. For example, people who prefer sensing and thinking tend to be practical and matter-of-fact and to do well with technical skills. Those who combine sensing with feeling are inclined to be sympathetic and friendly and to enjoy providing practical help and services for people. The combination of intuition and feeling produces people who are enthusiastic and insightful and like using their abilities in understanding and communicating with people. And a preference for intuition plus thinking results in logical and ingenious people who enjoy theoretical and technical innovations.

All of these characteristics are useful to a religious organization. The sensing-thinking people make good administrators—the prototypical stake president. The sensing-feeling types find satisfaction in providing Christian service like the stereotypic Relief Society president. Pastoral counseling is the forte of the intuitive-feeling types—exactly what the ideal bishop ought to be (but seldom is). Those who combine intuition and thinking would make great theologians. Unfortunately, the latter two types and their skills are underutilized in the Mormon church, which seems to be dominated by the sensing types.

Another set of combinations differentiates possible approaches to knowledge. Introverted-sensing types, for example, are thoughtful realists for whom knowledge is important to establish truth. For the more action-oriented realists (extraverted-sensing), knowledge is valued for its practical uses. The extraverted-intuitives are action-oriented innovators who seek knowledge for its potential to create change, while the

introverted-intuitives acquire knowledge for its own sake. While all of these approaches to knowledge are equally valid, we tend to value one over the others (even if slightly) based on our personality preferences.

Earle C. Page has suggested some ways in which this Jungian typology relates to different spiritual paths. The primary arena for the extraverts is the external world, and their natural spiritual path is action or activity. They seek participation and avoid exclusion and loneliness. Focusing on God's role as the Creator who is revealed through scripture, events, and people, they take a social approach to religious experience.

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rience and enjoy group prayer. The natural spiritual path for introverts, on the other hand, is reflection. Consequently, these disciples receive God's revelation through individual experience and inspiration, and prefer private prayer and solitary religious experience. They seek fulfillment and avoid intrusions and confusion.

Service is the natural spiritual path of the sensing types. With their focus on the body, the most significant aspect of God is the incarnation. Because they prefer sensory reality, details, and the status quo, they see God revealed within society and institutions like the church and have a practical and literal approach to the Bible and religious experience. They seek for obedience and faithfulness and avoid ambiguity. In contrast, the spirit is the primary arena of the intuitives and their natural spiritual path is awareness. With their preference for possibilities, patterns, and change, they receive God's revelation

through insight and imagination, and tend to take a symbolic or metaphorical approach to the scriptures and religious experience. They seek harmony and mystical union and avoid restriction and repetition.

Because the primary arena of the thinking types is the mind, their natural spiritual path is knowledge, and they focus on God's principles which are revealed through reason and speculation. They like cognitive prayer and have an analytical and abstract approach to scripture and religious experience. Seeking enlightenment, justice, and truth, they avoid inconsistency and ignorance. Feeling types, on the other hand, focus on the heart. For them, the

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most natural spiritual path is devotion. They see God in familial terms (Father and Mother) and experience God's revelation through relationships and emotions. Their approach to the scriptures and religious experience is personal and immediate and they prefer affective prayer. They seek communion and appreciation and avoid conflict and estrangement.

Judging types naturally follow the spiritual path of discipline and do so with initiative. They seek productivity and closure and avoid helplessness and disorder. As a natural result, they take a systematic approach to religious experience and prefer planned prayer. They see God as a judge and ruler who is revealed through order and a set of "oughts." Perceptive types, however, have a natural affinity for spontaneity as a spiritual path

which they follow in a responsive way. They seek openness and receptivity and avoid regimentation and deadlines. For them God is a redeemer and healer, experienced through the revelatory windows of serendipity and "what is."

None of these spiritual paths is inherently preferable and they each have pitfalls. This means that we should monitor the way we follow our own spiritual paths rather than try to change paths. For example, the discipline of the judging types can produce competence but can also lead to inappropriate, rigid control and judging of others. They are especially vulnerable to the temptation of self-righteousness. The spontaneity of the perceptive types reflects an acceptance or serenity, but can also result in passivity, impulsiveness, and procrastination. The special temptation for them is their vulnerability to rebelliousness and carelessness.

This analysis illuminates the difficulties I have with the Mormon lifestyle, particularly regarding what people like me avoid (which Page parenthetically labels as "hell"). Being introverted, intuitive, feeling, and perceptive, I dislike intrusions, restriction, repetition, conflict, estrangement, regimentation, and deadlines—and I avoid them like hell. I often encounter these qualities in the Church, which sometimes causes feelings of conflict and estrangement. On the other hand, being introverted, I find it quite easy to ignore the external conflict and focus instead upon my personal relationship to God. I feel like I do not need the Church, but I am not inclined to fight it or leave it. I simply want to be allowed to follow my own path of reflective awareness and spontaneous devotion. This approach gives me a religious temperament, but not a very Mormon one. Indeed, we seldom hear Mormon exhortations to reflection, awareness, devotion, and spontaneity—well, maybe devotion. However, we are often encouraged to activity, service, knowledge, and discipline.

Of course, my path is not the only one that can have rocky terrain. Any form of affirmation can become a path of disaffection. The extraverts, for example, are likely to feel participation and inclusion in the Church, but they are also vulnerable to taking seriously any feelings of exclusion—the type of Mormon who goes inactive

because of something the bishop said or did not say. Sensory types tend to be faithful and obedient, but they can be bothered by changes in the Church and if they sense too much ambiguity or learn about too many historical skeletons, they are apt to be converted to another set of absolute truths. The Saints Alive people fit this pattern of leaving the Church over theological issues. Other Mormons likely to have problems with the theology are the thinking types who can become dissatisfied with inconsistencies or perturbed by the rejection of critical analysis. The judging types tend to fit well into the Church, but could easily decide that it has become too worldly and needs a good

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retrenchment. As a result, they may form a group that will adhere to a strict observance of the rules. There are many ways of falling away.

Like blind people arguing about the nature of elephants, we experience the Church differently because we look from different perspectives. Our differences often arise at the level of personal experience and personality preference. Disputations at this level are irrelevant, even meaningless. It is more productive not only to accept our differences but to value them, actively promoting the expression of every spiritual path, knowing that we are all enriched by a diversity of perspectives.

In Jungian psychology, the psyche is most at risk when it is one-sided—when the preferred poles of these dimensions are

relied upon too heavily and the opposite ends are neglected. Psychological health comes from balance, from developing all modes of perceiving and judging. The preferences are not eliminated by balance, however, because the development is never exactly equal.

I believe that the Church suffers from one-sidedness in not acknowledging the value of the introverted, intuitive, and perceptive spiritual paths, and that it needs the influence of these perspectives for its own spiritual health. Those of us for whom this lack of balance makes it uncomfor-

table to be typical Mormons need to avoid making the same mistake in the opposite direction. We need to recognize that our closets are not the same and may not contain the same clothes—nor the same doubts. We certainly do not want to waste our time and energy criticizing each other's wardrobes.

# THE TONGUE OF THE DUMB

Michael Hicks

**A**s you read this, you to whom I am blind are mute. Your tongue may be moving in your jaw, the muscles of your cheek may tighten and relax, your lips may touch and part as though to speak. But you are silent, and you have been this way before on an earlier page, on a chapel bench while someone prayed, as you lay sleeping or awake. You may even be quite literally speechless, by birth or by injury. But your silence now probably bespeaks the act of your mind as it transforms black shapes on a clean page into a voice in your thoughts, with all its dimly felt gestures and quiet images.

"But, gentlemen of the jury, there are many kinds of silence." So spoke Cromwell at Thomas More's trial in *A Man for All Seasons*. "Silence can, according to circumstances, speak." The stilling of speech, like speech itself, has intentions, has an attitude and a rhetoric. So as you silently read, and I speak only in the voice of your mind, the telling of silence is my theme.

There is a silence of affirmation. More spoke of it: *qui tacet consentire*, silence gives consent. Refusing to disrupt the existing order of sound and thought, speechlessness consents to and affirms things as they are. Worshipful silence, what we teach to children as "reverence," is not in its pure state a suppression of the word but rather the expression of the absence of necessity: The presence of The Word is sufficient. No speech arises to the lips to confound the balance of God's world. The cultivation of this silence has always been the labor

of mystics, whose surrender to God is affirmed by the extinction of thought. The word—the precious definer of humanity—is sacrificed that man may return to God and banish the curse of Babel.

This silence is the perfect embodiment of divine mystery, unutterability. It consents to a cosmic order of which man has no right to speak. For either his conceptions will be fragmentary and misleading or that which he understands well he will expose to the uncomprehending darkness. Key words, revealed by God in secret places, must not be spoken openly where beasts may mimic them. For this reason the Prophet Joseph's motto concerning the endowment was "be faithful and silent." And regarding those who speak out of turn, not knowing what they say, Joseph prayed that they would "shut their mouths in everlasting silence."

Speaking has perils, but so has silence, as when affirmation is stood on its head. There is a silence that Cromwell called the "most eloquent denial." It does not consent, nor surrender, but refuses to surrender. It is the silence of protest. Summoned to obey, More confronts the princes with silence, just as Christ had held his tongue before the priests and elders. For Jesus and Sir Thomas it was as though to speak would be to release the soul through the tongue, never to recover it, to break the shell of silence, let the spirit slip like an egg into the fire. We who believe and who think are not all called to face princes, but I believe we are all sometime called to be bereft of words in the face of foolishness or

malignancy, even though our silence may leave a scar in the palms, or worse.

In those instances there comes at last the silence of the consummation of belief and the completion of thought. There is a mental cadence that comes when thought and belief have created, if only for

**I believe we are all sometime called to be bereft of words in the face of foolishness or malignancy. In those instances there comes at last the silence of the consummation of belief and the completion of thought. There is a mental cadence that comes when thought and belief have created, if only for a moment, a small order amid the chaos.**

a moment, a small order amid the chaos. (Not that God has failed, but that he corrects himself through human lives well lived.) Here is the silence of More's severed head. The profound silence of the death of great men and women is an ordinary quietness raised to a higher power, not unlike in its essence the still small awe at the close of a nicely turned phrase or a shadow of thought. Good lives, like good books or even good essays, find their seriousness confirmed in the period that closes them, sealing their last rhythm with a sign of silence. Only those who truly think and solemnly believe can hear it. You and I approach one now together, a period, a metaphor of the close of life, a quiet completion of thought in which, faintly, the tongue of the dumb does sing.

# WORDS OF WISDOM

James N. Kimball

One of the best kept secrets in the Kimball family was Uncle Golden's problems with the Word of Wisdom. He struggled with it all of his life and his diary reveals some very interesting insights into his handling of this problem. He said that by the time Heber Grant got serious about it, it was a little too late. He had been drinking coffee since he was a young boy working in the Bear River Valley driving mules. He said oftentimes that's all there was for breakfast. Even in the mission field he relates that if he ever had a dime in his pocket, which was very rare, he would take a nickel of it and buy a stamp and write his mother and take the other nickel and buy a cup of coffee.

When he heard that President Grant was changing the emphasis in the Church and making the Word of Wisdom a matter of enforcement, his diary states that Golden went to the President, saying, "Hell, Heber, what are you doin'? You know my problem with this." President Grant reportedly said, "Well, Golden, you do the best you can."

Later on in life Uncle Golden said, "Well, I've almost got the problem licked. I'm eighty now and in a few more years I think I'll have it completely under control."

Golden sometimes said, "If it weren't for my nephew, Ranch Kimball, it would be a lot easier for me to overcome this habit of drinking coffee. But Ranch comes down and picks me up at the Church Office Building every now and then and on a nice day we drive all the way up City Creek Canyon, way up to the top. Nobody's there; we're just by ourselves, and on a beautiful day we'll park and Ranch'll put a pot of coffee on. When it perks, he'll pour out two tin cups full and we'll sit there and drink coffee and reminisce about the family, the days in Round Valley, and the things that are happening in the Church and in the world. I remember one day Ranch turned to me and said, 'Uncle Golden, does this bother you sitting up here and drinking coffee with me and being a General Authority?' and I said to

him, 'Hell no.' And he said, 'Why not?' and I said, 'It's simple, Ranch; the eighty-ninth section doesn't apply at this altitude.'"

But then he went on to say that it wasn't always that easy for him. For example, in the winter months, he could hardly get started in the morning without a little stimulant, and sometimes it was a source of great embarrassment to him. He tells the story of President Grant's calling him on the telephone one winter day and asking him to go up to Brigham City to a Deseret Sunday School conference. Golden was to take the new superintendent of the Deseret Sunday School that President Grant had just set apart that day. Uncle Golden asked who it was and was told the man's name was David O. McKay. "You take him along, Golden, and you break him in," said President Grant. "He's a nice young man."

At 4:00 A.M. the next morning Brother McKay and Uncle Golden left Salt Lake and drove with a team of horses north to Brigham City. In some places where there were heavy snow drifts, they had to get out and change from a wagon to a sled borrowed from a farmer. Finally about 8:00 in the morning they got to Brigham City. It was cold, and Uncle Golden was frozen right to the bone. He said he needed a little stimulant to get him going, but he didn't know quite how to handle it with Brother McKay. The meeting didn't begin until 9:00, and Uncle Golden noticed a restaurant, the Idle Isle, on Main Street. He turned to Brother McKay and said, "Why don't we go over and have a little breakfast; we've got an hour and it's not fast Sunday." Brother McKay thought it a marvelous idea.

When they went into the restaurant, no one else was there. The waitress came up to their table and said, "What could I get for you two gentlemen?" According to Uncle Golden, Brother McKay blurted out, "Well, we'll have some ham and eggs and two cups of hot chocolate, please." Uncle Golden almost died; this wasn't what he had in mind at all. But after a few minutes an idea came to him. He excused himself,

saying he needed to go to the men's room. Golden then walked back into the kitchen and grabbed that waitress and said, "Say, would you mind putting a little coffee in my hot chocolate, please?" She said no, she wouldn't mind at all; they did that kind of thing all the time up in Brigham City.

Golden washed his hands and went back to the table and sat down. In a few minutes the waitress came with the ham and eggs and the hot chocolate. When she got up to the table, she looked at both men and said, "Now which one of you wanted coffee in his hot chocolate?" Flustered, Uncle Golden looked at her and said, "Ah, hell, put it in both of them."

Golden later related that Brother McKay thought that was awfully funny, and he laughed so hard and so long that he couldn't even eat his breakfast. But the problem was that after that Brother McKay would go around the Church and every time he was asked to speak, he would tell that story to people. In his diary, Uncle Golden wrote he wished McKay would keep his damn mouth shut, but then added, "Maybe Heber will release him, and we won't hear any more about him."

As he got older and later on in his life, he said that people began to tell him how wonderful he was and what a marvelous person he was. He remarked no one ever said a damn thing like that until he got old and ready to die. But on one occasion, a group of non-Mormon businessmen had a dinner to honor Uncle Golden. It was at the Rotisserie Restaurant on south Main Street just below Broadway. Uncle Golden attended and was a little embarrassed by it all because they had a big banner up on the wall which read, "Golden Kimball: Friend of Man." He said they were all Gentiles there, but they were all his friends. He sat at the head table. Next to him was the gentleman in charge of the dinner and master of ceremonies. He and Uncle Golden were talking when the waiter came up to take their order. When asked what he'd like to drink, Uncle Golden said, "I'll have some water." But the gentile friend sitting next to him grabbed the waiter and said, "No, you bring Mr. Kimball some coffee; he likes coffee." As the waiter left the room, Uncle Golden said to himself, "The Lord heard me say water."

# BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES THE 1984 DAVID WOOLLEY EVANS & BEATRICE EVANS BIOGRAPHY AWARD

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A prize of \$10,000 will be awarded for a distinguished biography of any person significant in the culture or history of what may be called Mormon Country. (Mormon Country is generally regarded as extending throughout the Intermountain West of the United States but also includes Southern Canada and Northern Mexico.) If manuscripts are submitted, they should be book length and ready for publication. If books are submitted, they should have been published within 1984. All authors, regardless of religious affiliation, are invited to submit entries. Entries are not limited to Mormon subjects.

This award is made possible by a generous grant to Brigham Young University from David Wooley Evans, Beatrice Cannon Evans, and other members and friends of the Evans family. The judging will be by members of the governing board of the biography award or other qualified judges appointed by them. Among others, board members include:

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**JEFFREY R. HOLLAND**, *president of Brigham Young University*

**HOWARD LAMAR**, *Coe Professor of American history, Yale University.*

**MERLO PUSEY**, *eminent biographer and former associate editor of the Washington Post.*

Decisions of the judges will be final. Manuscripts may be submitted to Neal E. Lambert, associate academic vice president, D-367 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602. The deadline for submissions for the 1984 prize is 31 December 1984. The university expects to announce the winner by 1 April 1985. Subsequent awards will be given annually.

For further information write to Neal E. Lambert at the above address.

# EVANS BIOGRAPHY AWARD

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