
REVIEWS

ARRINGTON'S HISTORIANS

NEW VIEWS OF MORMON HISTORY: A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS
IN HONOR OF LEONARD J. ARRINGTON

edited by Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher
University of Utah Press, 1987, 480 pages, \$19.95



Reviewed by Klaus J. Hansen

BY WAY OF explaining the reasons for this *Festschrift* in the Germanic tradition of honoring prominent scholars, Davis Bitton states that Leonard Arrington "is the single most important Mormon historian of his generation." One can certainly accept this statement in its most obvious and somewhat narrow sense as referring to a professional historian who, more than any other of his peers and contemporaries, has served the cause of Mormon history as scholar, teacher, popularizer, administrator, and self-confessed "historical entrepreneur." Reading between the lines, one can also assign a larger meaning to this claim (as I will attempt to show in this review).

In listing Arrington's many accomplishments, Bitton leaves no doubt that his stature is secure. This is backed up at least in part by a survey reported on in the last chapter of this volume (conducted by Utah State University historian S. George Ellsworth) in which a select group of respondents accorded Arrington's *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900*

KLAUS J. HANSEN is the author of *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) and professor of history at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

(1958) pride of place when asked to name the ten best books in the field of Utah and Mormon studies, based on sound scholarship and literary quality. Thus, even if this were Leonard Arrington's only contribution to Mormon history, his prominence in the field would be assured. How much more secure, then, must his position be in light of a bibliography of truly staggering proportions appended to the volume. Quantity, of course, is no substitute for quality, and as editor Bitton reports, not all of Arrington's many works have received the same high acclaim as *Great Basin Kingdom*. Yet there seems to be critical consensus that another magnum opus, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (1985), is at the very least on the same high level as the former work, while *The Mormon Experience* (1979, co-authored with Davis Bitton) is widely regarded as the best general, interpretive history of Mormonism currently in print.

Two reasons for Bitton's assessment, then, are Arrington's truly awesome capacity for work and his tremendous versatility. He possesses a disciplined intelligence while at the same time allows wide rein to a multiplicity of interests and abilities. Bitton gets to the heart of Arrington's success when he discusses his personality: jovial, friendly, he works "in an atmosphere that is electric with activity."

"What is the life of the mind without joy?" he continues. "Compared to many occupations that are essentially repetitious and mechanical, the work of the historian has to be almost one of celebration. It is an activity of exploration and discovery, it is interesting, it makes a difference. At least this is history as we have experienced it in the presence of . . . Leonard James Arrington" (xvi).

Given Arrington's prodigious scholarly output, it is hard to imagine how he found time for his many other activities as "entrepreneur" and administrator. He has served as officer and president of several prestigious professional historical organizations, underscoring the respect he has earned in the secular academic world. But most important, of course, is his service to the Mormon historical community. In 1965 he became founding president of the newly-organized Mormon History Association, as well as an advisory editor to the fledgling *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. Then, in 1972, came the momentous call to the office of Church Historian—the first (and perhaps last) professional historian to serve in that capacity. Unlike his predecessors, who had been essentially administrators, Arrington continued as a practicing historian and established an ambitious and far-reaching program for the publication of sources and interpretive syntheses, aided by an impressive staff of professional associates and assistants known collectively as the History Division. "The Arrington group had no monopoly on Mormon history, of course" writes Bitton, "but it would be hard to deny that in many respects they were at the cutting edge" (xii). Arrington served as its head from 1972-82, though in 1977 his title was changed from Church Historian to Director of the History Division. Significantly, his is the only portrait absent from those of "Church Historians" displayed in the Historical Department. Following a reorganization begun in 1980, the Arrington group (or what remained of it) was moved to Brigham Young University in 1982 and was renamed the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of Church History "for reasons that can be guessed at but perhaps not fully known," concludes Bitton somewhat cryptically (xii).

This may well be the point at which to amplify the "larger meaning" of Leonard Arrington's importance alluded to in the opening paragraph. For Mormon historians the mid-seventies—coterminous with Arrington's position as "Church Historian"—were heady years in which archives were opened up in a spirit of research and exploration that made virtually no subject taboo. Davis Bitton called

the era "Camelot." (Others might call it a kind of Mormon *glasnost*.) I myself was privileged to share in this spirit of intellectual ferment and camaraderie as a Summer Fellow in 1974. Yet even at that time, I had a foreboding that it would not last. I well recall that when I received the invitation I had to make some hard decisions regarding other plans. I felt that if I didn't take the opportunity then, it might never present itself again—that sooner or later there would be a "crackdown." Even at the time there were some limits to "openness." I vividly recall being denied access to records of the Council of Fifty that colleagues had been allowed to peruse earlier. Meanwhile, these papers had been removed to the vault of the First Presidency, which was not governed by the same rules of access then prevailing in the Historical Department. Still, at the time this was a minor blip in an otherwise friendly sky. Or so it seemed.

If the truth be known, forces were already being marshalled in opposition to the "New Mormon History," as it came to be called, encompassing far more than the Arrington group. Yet because of its visibility within the Church, and also because of its relative vulnerability (academic historians not employed by the Church were, after all, virtually immune from pressure), it was Arrington's History Division that bore the brunt of the attack, even though genial Leonard Arrington is not by nature an abrasive personality nor inclined to provoking controversy. Still, Arrington could not help but be at the center of it because of who he was and what he represented, even if he appeared to stand above the fray leaving public skirmishes over the meaning of the "New Mormon History" largely to others and allowed his work as a historian to speak for itself. Given his prodigious output, as well as that of his associates, this was of course quite sufficient to provide ammunition for those who had a different view of the proper relationship between faith, reason, and empirical evidence in pursuit of a "correct" understanding of the Mormon past.

This is not to say that Arrington was a naysayer, someone who injected doubt and unbelief into his scholarship. Though no doubt "objective" in his own mind in the presentation of the Mormon story, he has a tendency to accentuate the positive, for example his Brigham Young biography. On the basis of that very same evidence, my own view of Young is considerably more negative than Arrington's. Yet having said this, I must acknowledge that both of us work within the accepted boundaries of academic historical scholarship, and our disagreements are of the

kind that might divide biographers of Jefferson or Lincoln in the world of secular scholarship—a world in which Arrington is, of course, very much at home.

IN this regard, these essays are a most appropriate tribute to Arrington. With one exception they reflect and, to a large extent, emulate the kind of professional scholarship at which he excels. Some of them may accentuate the positive side of Mormonism more than Arrington did, and others may be more critical than he, yet with few exceptions they could stand on their own in most academic publications—even if most of them may not be, contrary to the billing on the dust jacket, "on the cutting edge."

One reason for their scholarly respectability is that most of these essays do not deal with what Martin Marty has called "generative issues" in Mormon history—questions that address the very fundamentals of the Mormon religion (the First Vision, for example, rather than polygamy). I say this by way of explanation rather than as criticism. For these are the issues that in the old days were largely responsible for the degeneration of the historical debate into a virulent pro/anti dichotomy of the true/false variety. Arrington and his group, by eschewing this trap, have been in the forefront of liberating Mormon historical scholarship from its stance of apologetics and (at its worst) pathological defensiveness. By making Mormon history accessible to a largely college-educated generation, they have established a link to the past that otherwise might have been lost. In the meantime, "generative" issues are best left to outsiders such as Jan Shipps, who in her deft way can address them without being called an apologist, or to insiders such as Richard Bushman, whose individualistic apologetics are unlikely to be identified with Mormon institutions.

These essays are for the most part well-researched, well-crafted pieces that illuminate the Mormon story: Church leaders in Missouri prisons (Dean Jessee); the Articles of Faith (David Whitaker), tithing (William Hartley), the United Order (Dean May), "going to meeting" (Ronald Walker), demographic pressures in Utah farming community (Gordon Irving), LDS education in the Pacific Islands (Lanier Britsch), Mormon women and partisan politics (Carol Cornwall Madsen), the impact of the New Deal on the Relief Society (Jill Mulvay Derr), non-English languages used in U.S. Mormon congregations (Richard Jensen), divided political loyalties of Mormon pioneers (the late Eugene Campbell), Utah and the

Mormons (Richard Poll), Mormons and non-Mormons in modern Mormon communities (Jan Shipps), a comparison of Mormons and Anabaptists (Michael Quinn), time in Mormon history (Paul Edwards), and an essay on Mormon historiography since 1950 (James Allen). A perceptive essay on the evolution of covenant theology by Thomas Alexander gets closer to Marty's generative issues while remaining true to the canons of academic scholarship in every respect.

The only piece to break this mold—though ironically the opening essay that might well have been intended to set the spirit and the tone for this collection—is Richard Bushman's "The Book of Mormon in Early Mormon History." Here we encounter the kind of "faithful history" that unabashedly addresses generative issues which, in this context, might raise eyebrows in the secular academy. It is the quintessentially most "Mormon" of the essays in this collection. The Book of Mormon, says Bushman, is sacred history, one of numerous such histories created since the foundation of the world: "Restoration in the Book of Mormon sense meant the recovery of the entire experience of all the world's peoples through the translation and absorption of their histories. Nothing less than the restoration of world history was the charge given to Joseph Smith when he accepted the responsibilities of seer and translator prophesied of him in the Book of Mormon" (16). Within this realm of the sacred, historical methodology is of course far removed from the practices of the academic historian, in or out of the Church. Clearly, this sacred history was not the kind of history practiced in "Camelot." And not surprisingly there were those within the Church who saw the function of Church Historian as keeper and disseminator of the kind of history represented by the Book of Mormon and other records translated by the Prophet Joseph, rather than as promoter of an academic history acceptable in the secular world.

Of course, if Bushman is correct in his view that a major function of the historian of the sacred is that of "translator"—replete with seer stones and the like (since most of those histories are written in languages inaccessible to modern scholars)—the contemporary hiatus (if you like) of this function may well have the potential for creating anxiety and defensiveness among the protagonists of sacred history, which is then acted out in the arena of current historical controversy.

For in addition to his function as translator, the sacred historian is also charged with recording and disseminating the history of his culture in a language accessible to virtually all

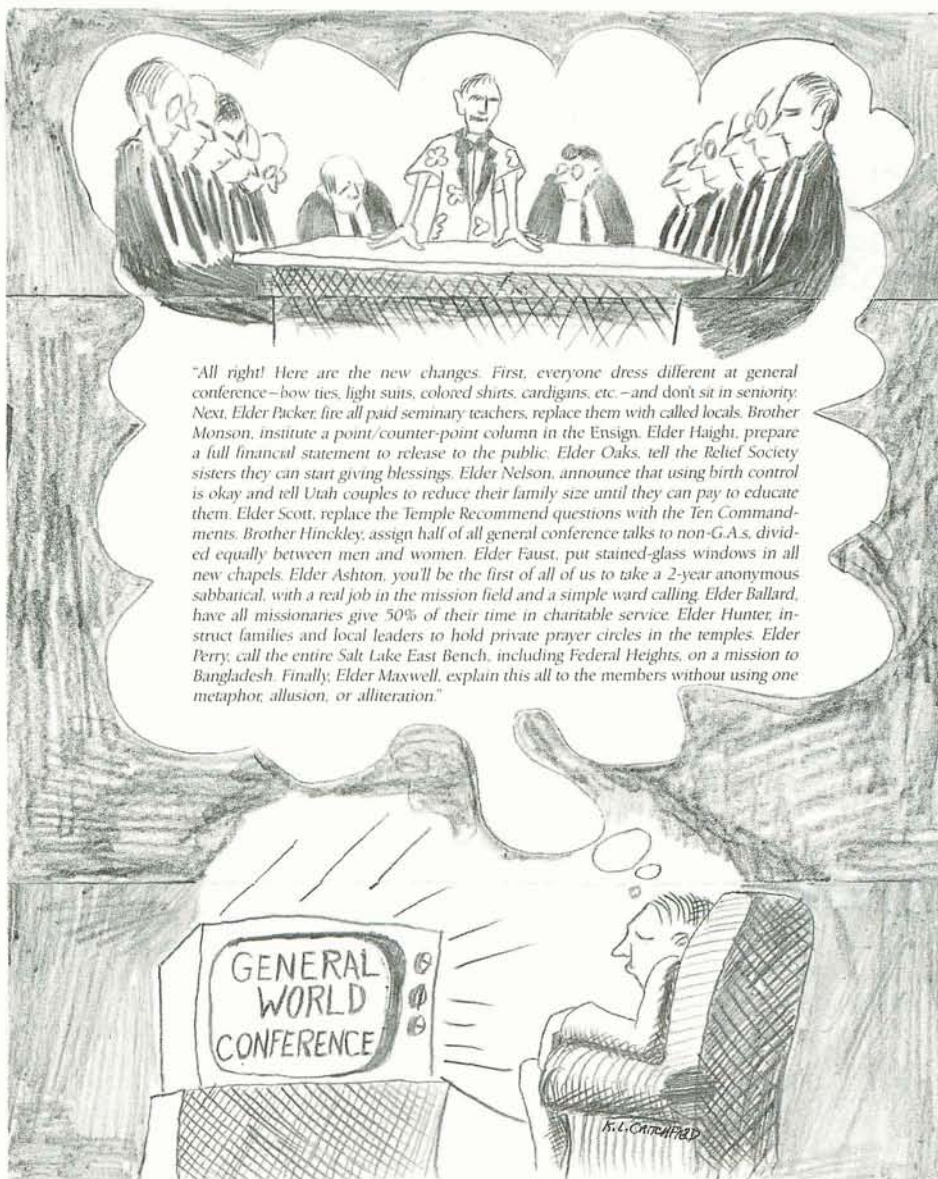
of its members. It is this function, perhaps more than any other, that has the potential for becoming a battleground at a time when that culture is experiencing major stresses in its search for a viable relationship with a modernizing world. The centrality of history in this search is underscored by George Orwell's famous observation that "he who controls the past controls the future." The controversies surrounding "Camelot" are thus at the heart of a fundamental struggle over the meaning and future of Mormonism in a rapidly changing world.

Richard Bushman's "Faithful History" (*Dialogue*, Winter 1969, 11) was a largely successful attempt at reconciling the seemingly opposing poles of sacred and secular history—though even then those on the extremity of both poles could not be accommodated easily by Bushman's formula, which implies a general consensus among its practitioners. In the meantime, the poles have moved even further apart, making reconciliation between the two camps even more difficult. This, however, is cause for pessimism only if we insist that integration of the two approaches is necessary. Yet perhaps the frank recognition that this is no longer possible—that Bushman's "Faithful History," while useful in its day, has now outlived its purpose—is the solution to the dilemma. Perhaps the time has come to acknowledge that sacred and secular history, though incompatible, must be recognized equally as legitimate approaches to the past in a modern Mormon world inevitably straddling both, and must learn to live together, if only in an uneasy truce.

Church leaders—pragmatists that they often are—seem to have acknowledged as much in their creation of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of Church History. Leonard Arrington himself has called attention to positive aspects of the move, such as the diminishing of some of the pressures imposed by official identification with Church headquarters, and the protective umbrella of academic freedom of a university (even if ultimately controlled by the Church). The volume under review, certainly, is evidence that Leonard Arrington's kind of history is alive and well. Lamentably, access to Church Archives is more difficult than in the heyday of "Camelot," though infinitely better and far more professional than prior to the Arrington era, which has obviously made an ineradicable imprint. Historians of "Camelot," taking the long view historians are supposed to, may yet see the whole experience in more positive terms than those of us whose high immediate hopes were so quickly dashed.

If I can agree with Davis Bitton that "Leonard James Arrington— who, whatever anyone may or may not do with official labels, will for all who understand always be considered for his generation Mormonism's Church Historian" (xvi), I can also understand why there are those who would firmly reject the symbolism of this proposition. What I cannot understand, however, is the denial of historical fact that Leonard Arrington was sustained as Church Historian in a general conference of the Church. The absence of his portrait in the Historical Department does not reflect on the character of Leonard Arrington but on the pettiness of Church officials. Yet even as time inflicts new wounds it tends to heal old ones. Thus, I don't have to be much of a prophet to predict that the time will come when Arrington's portrait will take its right-

ful place among his fellow Church Historians. This will not signify a capitulation of those who disagree with Leonard Arrington and disapprove of his work. But it does imply that even they will have to give recognition, however grudgingly, to an undeniable historical fact, and, perhaps, even to the seminal influence of Leonard James Arrington's life and work on the pursuit of Mormon history. ☐



SIXTY YEARS OF INSIGHT

DO JUSTLY AND LOVE MERCY

by Lowell Bennion

Canon Press, 1988, 97 pages, \$9.95

THE BEST OF LOWELL BENNION

SELECTED WRITINGS 1928-1988

edited by Eugene England

Deseret Book Company, 1988

305 pages, photographs, \$15.95



Reviewed by Stan Christensen

WHEN ASKED TO review the most recent Lowell Bennion book I quickly excused myself saying, "I'm biased toward anything he writes." The reply: "It would be difficult to find someone without a bias toward Lowell Bennion." My bias started at age fourteen at Teton Valley Boys' Ranch near Driggs, Idaho. Bennion spent the better part of a summer subtly showing forty of us the meaning of practical religion. He artfully exercised our bodies and minds, gaining our trust at an age when skepticism was the norm.

His ability to instill in others a desire for gospel learning through both scholarship and experience reaches far beyond teenagers and southern Idaho. The direction of that influence is echoed in the title of his recent book appropriately taken from the favorite Lowell Bennion scripture:

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord; and bow myself before the high God? . . . He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to *do justly*,

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and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God (Micah 6:6-8).

In *Do Justly and Love Mercy* Bennion pursues his essential maxim that true religion is based on social morality. He does this by exploring issues related to wealth, gender, reverence, and government. He draws upon his own experience and provides a window into the minds of other great humanists such as Albert Schweitzer, David O. McKay, and Goethe. Bennion encourages us to think for ourselves, to form our own ideas concerning the interrelatedness of gospel and social issues.

In the age of BMWs, CDs, and T-bills, Bennion stimulates moral consciousness on issues of wealth and service. He cites the Word of Wisdom and asks "at what point does an honest day's work become workaholism?" He is quick to point out that neither the work nor the "things" associated with materialism are the problem. "But to acquire them we must work overtime and are tempted to love them more than our neighbor in need."

He is painfully obvious in his remedy to the challenges of wealth: simple living. He calls us to serve and teaches us that service should not be only "an occasional interlude between seasons of pleasure and seasons of working hard to add field to field, stock to

stock, or gadget to gadget." Bennion's students know the extent of his own selfless service; his life is his testimony.

In a chapter titled "Opportunities for Women" Bennion leaves us with as many questions as answers. He starts this discussion with the premise that "Equality is consistent with our democratic philosophy and the . . . spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ." He then takes a hard look at defining and achieving this equality within the Church. A highly personal discussion of his own familial experience reveals his opinions on careers and families. His provocative look at women's roles in both family and Church leadership stirs our emotions: "automatically excluding an entire class of people from leadership because of gender is unfair," and "the hierarchical subordination of women as a group in the Church usually works to the benefit of the hierarchically superior men." Bennion engages our emotions in these issues at hand, but suggests no remedies.

In his chapter "Sexuality and the Gospel" Bennion openly discusses the "whys" of historical Mormon attitudes toward sex and the unfortunate love/sex dichotomy so prevalent in our society today. In the process he gives us much needed advice concerning marriage and relationships (a true Lowell Bennion strength). Even the most hurried reader should make time to peruse this chapter, whose topic deserves more than the usual brushing over it receives in religious forums. This section is replete with insightful scriptural references which will compel the reader to further study.

In the chapter titled "The Sanctity of Life" Lowell Bennion redirects our attention to principles of reverence we often overlook. Rather than taking a strong stand on life and death issues such as abortion, capital punishment, and war, Bennion pleads with us to "cultivate a basic reverence for life." He meekly strikes a moral chord in our conscience, linking reverence with our attitudes and actions toward the hungry, the diseased, and the illiterate. "Each individual, no matter what his or her circumstances, merits our reverence." As I read this section I wondered if my senses had been dulled to the misery of so many around me.

In several chapters Bennion explores the relationship of the gospel to politics and government. After an interesting survey of Mormonism and Capitalism he reminds us that "No existing socio-economic order is ideal or consistent with the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ." He discusses positive and negative aspects of several types of govern-

ments spanning various time periods, and shows us the need for a variety of systems. He emphasizes the necessity of careful thought and open-mindedness and denounces blind allegiance.

Here again he stresses what we in the Church should already know but don't understand: the need to accommodate more than one point of view. Related is his discussion of "Being a Liberal." Here he explains his tenet that "liberal" is a misnomer by researching this label in its historical, political, and religious context. He warns us against such labeling and again encourages diversity of opinion. "Surely," he says, "the gospel is big enough to accommodate more than one point of view."

Whether he is showing urban teenagers how to build a buck-and-rail fence in southern Idaho or preaching at General Conference (one of the few non-General Authori-

ties to be repeatedly invited), Lowell Bennion is a voice unafraid who preaches and practices social morality. *Do Justly and Love Mercy* eloquently catches the spirit of this continual plea.

AS Bennion provides a window into the minds of great humanists, editor Eugene England welcomes us into the world of the thoughts and ideas of Lowell Bennion. In the introduction to his useful book, *The Best of Lowell Bennion*, England states his purpose to help increase the tribe of Lowell Bennion students. This work is the perfect tool to accomplish that.

In a single volume England has put together a thoughtful selection of Lowell Bennion's important writings. He has organized the essays into sections which will give the

most loyal Bennion student new insight. Here we find classic Lowell Bennion articles such as "The Things That Matter Most" and "What It Means to Be a Latter-day Saint," as well as less read but revealing material including excerpts from his missionary diary and personal thoughts on the German sociologist Max Weber, a significant influence in Bennion's life.

Additionally England has written a moving introduction entitled "The Achievement of Lowell Bennion" which prods us to learn more of the life and philosophy of this great man. It is regrettable that this book is printed on inexpensive paper; it is a volume worth keeping. Present and future Bennion students will benefit from this thoughtful, well-organized compilation containing sixty years of insight from one of the Church's great thinkers. ☒

NEWS

APOSTLE BLAMES VIETNAM DEFEAT ON IMMORALITY

AT A Fourth of July celebration this summer, Elder Boyd K. Packer, of the Quorum of the Twelve, said that the United States lost the Vietnam War because "something is weakening the moral fiber of America."

Speaking on "The Country With A Conscience" at the American Freedom Festival in Provo, Utah, Elder Packer praised the anonymous rank and file, including the patriots at Concord and Lexington, on whom the great moments in history rest.

He quoted Alma 43:45-47 to justify fighting to defend the rights of the people and praised U.S. history where, "sustained by a courage that comes only from a moral people, we have fought for our homes and our families, our lands, our country, our rights, and our freedom."

"While we were never to a man 'Simon Pure' and there have always been some of us bad enough not to deserve the title of a good, moral Christian people, there have always been enough of us who have been good enough to deserve it," he said.

"Strength that comes from decency, from morality, is the one essential ingredient required for the preservation of freedom, . . . and there is reason to believe that we are losing it."

"Something changed," he said. "The balance, which measures the morality of all of us put together, is slowly tipping in the wrong fatal direction."

"The War in Vietnam did something to us. We had the military might, the arms, the ammunition, the manpower, the planes and ships and instruments of war undreamed of in the past. But we could not conquer!" concluded the former World War II pilot.

"What happened did not happen at Danang or Saigon. It only surfaced there. It happened first in and to the universities of America. It happened when agnostics and atheists were protected in teaching their philosophy of religion in public institutions of higher learning."

"Some terrible things occurred in Vietnam. Our men had no stomach for it when they were doing it and could not get over it

after it was done. Many fought without the conviction that what they were doing had a fundamental moral purpose.

"It was different from the atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Because of the slaughter occurring each day and the certainty of a horrible increase in casualties on both sides in an invasion of Japan, it had been argued, not without substance, that the loss of life on both sides would be less should the war be brought to an end. Even then, something was lost to humanity when that occurred because the rank and file of humanity suffered.

"It had been different in Korea as well, for we had our motives more securely in place. And what was to happen later to the moral fabric of our nation had not happened then.

"Something has happened to our collective conscience. Countries have a conscience you know, just like men do. Something in our national conscience became unsettled. A clouded conscience cannot conquer, not in the end it cannot. A clear conscience cannot be defeated."

Elder Packer then discussed some of the things he sees weakening the U.S.'s moral fiber including unmarried couples, abortion, the elimination of prayer from public life, addictive drugs,

and the placing of the collective rights of the majority in subjugation to any citizen's individual rights.

On public prayer, he said, "If one single soul does not wish to listen for a moment to a public prayer, one which does not offend, even pleases the majority, we are told we must now eliminate prayer completely from all public life."

"Did our young men die for this?" he asked. "We have always held the rights of the individual to be sovereign. But we have never before placed the collective rights of the majority in subjugation to the individual rights of any single citizen."

As an illustration, Elder Packer criticized the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that the burning of the U.S. flag is a form of protected speech. "The burning of the flag is an act which in itself becomes symbolic. It symbolizes the rejection of The Pledge of Allegiance. The Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of speech. Speech is made up of spoken or printed words. Words are words are words. Acts are acts are acts. The willful destruction of the flag which belongs to all of us is the act of an extremist. A court decision legalizing the destruction of it to protect the rights of one protester is equally extreme," he said.

LATTER-DAY SENTINEL FOLDS

By Hand Carré

Elder Packer concluded by exhorting the audience to pray before they vote and to "teach your children decency and honor, cooperation and tolerance, citizenship and patriotism. . . . Take care of your family, you yourself. Don't abandon that responsibility to the government, and don't let them take it from you. . . . Go to church, do your part, pay your tithes and offerings, say your prayers, read the scriptures. Then when the crisis comes, and it will, you and all the rest of us will know what is right and be willing to do what is right." ☞

THE DECADES-OLD independent Mormon publication *The Latter-day Sentinel* folded this September. Editor Crismon Lewis said that insufficient advertising for its new editions was the chief factor in the paper's collapse. At the time of its closure, the *Sentinel* published editions in its home state of Arizona and also in California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Utah.

Last fall the Church-owned Deseret Book Company refused to carry the *Sentinel* in any of its stores and began phasing out advertising in the paper as contracts expired. "It was a blow, not just to business but to morale," said Lewis. "It wasn't the death-

blow, but it hurt."

Lewis said Deseret Book offered no official explanation for either action. "They did say a few readers had complained about our political views," he said. There was no direct evidence to link Deseret Book's actions with the Church's official announcement at about the same time which denied any endorsement of the *Sentinel's* pre-election evaluation of political candidates and moral issues. Lewis acknowledged, however, that the paper's reputation may have been hurt by the statement, or by the "misunderstanding that we were endorsing candidates." The *Sentinel* was a strong defender of

former Arizona governor Evan Mecham when impeachment proceedings against him were underway.

Although the colored tabloid newspaper had a striking feel to the look and tone of the *Church News*, Lewis said he doubted whether Elder Dallin Oaks's general conference talk on "alternate voices" in the Church was directed to the *Sentinel*. "He may have," he said, "but I thought he was talking more about [SUNSTONE]. . . . I saw him right after the session; he didn't ask me 'did you get my message?' or anything like that." Elder Oaks's address, however, did mention unofficial

SUNSTONE CALENDAR

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION/SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE has announced a call for papers for the annual Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Regional Meeting on 27-28 April 1990 at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver. Proposals for papers must be submitted by 15 October 1989 and should include a one-page abstract describing the nature of the presentation. Proposals for papers and panels are welcome in all areas of religion and biblical studies. Since guest scholars Wendy Doniger, University of Chicago, and Carol Meyers, Duke University, will present papers on gender issues, other gender-related presentations are desired. For more information contact Professor Sheila Greeve Davaney, Iliff School of Theology, 2201 S. University Blvd., Denver, Colorado 80210 (303/744-1287).

THE CANADIAN MORMON STUDIES ASSOCIATION will sponsor a conference on "Mormons in Canada: A Local Perspective" on 20-24 June 1990 at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta. Proposals for papers, sessions, or other contributions should be sent to Keith Parry, CMSA 1990 Conference, c/o Dept. of Anthropology, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada T1K 3M4. Participants can expect to have their travel and accommodation expenses paid.

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS LECTURE SERIES. The 12 September lecture will feature Blake T. Ostler on "The Development of the Idea of Grace in the Doctrine and Covenants." On 10 October Steven C. Walker will speak on "Divine-Human Dialogue: Listening for the Voice of God in the Doctrine and Covenants." All lectures are held in room 101 of James Fletcher Building at the University of Utah and begin at 7:30 P.M., a \$2.00 donation is appreciated.

THE EVERGREEN FOUNDATION is a new organization in Salt Lake City which consists of former homosexuals and lesbians who are dedicated to helping others overcome their gender identity concerns. Membership is extended to individuals who have changed their homosexual behavior at least two years ago. The organization is primarily concerned with placing books in libraries and educating the community in dispelling false and misleading information con-

cerning the homosexual condition. They can be reached by writing to PO Box 526126, Salt Lake City, UT 84152-6126.

HERALD PUBLISHING HOUSE AND THE TEMPLE SCHOOL in Independence, Missouri, have announced the second Distinguished Author Lecture Series. The lectures are held in the Stone Church in Independence. Professor Robert Mesle of Graceland College will speak on 15 October about his experience writing *The Bible as Story and Struggle* (Herald House, 1989). Paul Edwards, director of the Temple School Division, RLDS church, will discuss the background for his book *The Chief: An Administrative Biography of Fred M. Smith* (Herald House, 1988) on 14 January 1990. Marcia Legg, an editor for Temple School, will talk about her book, *Portraits from Our Restoration Heritage* (Herald House 1987), and the "Living Faith" curriculum series on 11 March 1990.

THE JOHN WHITMER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION has announced a call for manuscripts for its new monograph series. To be published by Independence Press, Independence, MO, this series is designed to foster serious historical research in the development of the Latter Day Saint movement, and to bridge the gap between journal articles and full-length studies. First consideration will be given to manuscripts relating to Latter Day Saint history during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, Jr., and to those contributing to an understanding of the Reorganization experience; however, submissions on all aspects of Mormonism are welcome. All submissions will be considered in a blind-referee process and be judged on the basis of literary merit and contribution to historical knowledge. Manuscripts should be less than 18,000 words in length. For information and an editorial guide for preparing submissions contact Roger D. Launius, John Whitmer Historical Association Monograph Series Editor, 1001 E. Cedar Street, New Baden, IL 62265 (618/588-7291).

THE MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION's 1990 annual meeting on 12-17 June in Laie, Hawaii, will include visits to the Polynesian Cultural Center among other beautiful and exotic locations. The conference will deal with the Church in the Pacific, the international

organs which try to imply that they are Church-sponsored.

The last issue of the *Sentinel*, 6 September 1989, carried farewell messages from Lewis and Larry C. Linton, president of Landa, Inc., which purchased the paper's assets last March. Linton said the company had "tried desperately to turn the paper around financially [but] we were simply unable to do so."

Lewis hopes that "clones" of the *Sentinel* will fill the space it left. Some former employees in Phoenix and in Las Vegas are starting new publications, unaffiliated with Landa but with their cooperation, he said. ☐

PRESS COVERAGE OF LEE'S EXCOMMUNICATION AMBIVALENT

ON FRIDAY, 1 September 1989, the First Presidency issued a surprise statement which announced the excommunication of Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of Seventy since 1975 and the only Native American General Authority, for apostasy and "conduct unbecoming a member."

Later in the day, Elder Lee—now Dr. Lee in most news stories—visited with reporters in the Salt Lake press complex and answered questions and distributed copies of two hand written letters addressed "to the First Presidency

and the Twelve"—a 15-page undated letter he had apparently given to the authorities months earlier and a 23-page letter he reportedly had read to them that morning at his excommunication hearing.

The first letter roundly criticized the Church leadership for neglecting the American Indians and Polynesians by abolishing or cutting back on long-standing programs designed to help them (BYU's Indian program, student placement in Anglo LDS homes, Indian seminaries, missionaries on reservations, etc.). As a child, Lee

enrolled in the placement program and was considered a "success story."

Lee spoke of anti-Indian feeling among the Anglo leaders of the church and an individual hostility toward him. He cited specifically that he had been placed on "probation" in an informal way—without the kind of procedures that would have been used for the Twelve—and "stripped of all assignments."

Even after the probation supposedly ended, he said he had still not been allowed again to organize stakes, which showed a continu-

Church, and other aspects of the history and culture of Mormonism. Proposals for papers or complete sessions are desired and should include the title or topic, historical methods, significance of the study, and a one page vita of each participant and should be submitted to Program Chair, Martha Sonntag Bradley, 4611 Belmour Way, Salt Lake City, UT 84117.

MHA is seeking a person interested in being its executive secretary beginning with the 1990 annual meeting. The executive secretary is a member of the MHA Council and works closely with MHA committees. It provides a great opportunity to meet members and to participate in the association's organization. It carries a stipend in the form of transportation costs to annual meetings. All names of nominees should be submitted by 1 November to Carol Cornwall Madsen, 303 KMB, BYU, Provo, UT 84602.

THE NATIONAL COMMUNAL SOCIETIES ASSOCIATION will hold its 16th annual meeting on 5-8 October 1989 in Yankton, South Dakota, and will feature visits to several Hutterite colonies and presentations by Hutterites. Contact: Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, IN 47712.

THE NATIONAL REGISTRY FOR THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF HISTORY, sponsored by the Association for the Bibliography of History, solicits listings of bibliographical projects in progress, in any field of history, by historians/bibliographers in the U.S. and Canada. It hopes to reduce duplication of projects and to serve as a medium concerning works in progress. Listings are published yearly in *American History: A Bibliographical Review* (Meckler & Co.). For information and registration forms, write Thomas T. Helde, Director, NRBH, Dept. of History, Georgetown University, Washington, DC 20057.

SEATTLE SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held 10-11 November 1989. Send proposals, offers to help, and requests for details to Molly Bennion, 1150 22nd Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112 (206/325-6868).

THE SOCIETY FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION (SSSR) will hold its 1989 annual meeting in Salt Lake City on 27-29 October at the Marriott Hotel. The meeting will include a strong component of Mormon studies presentations including a Friday night plenary session titled "Growth and Change in New Religious Movements:

Mormonism as Case Study" and a Saturday plenary session by noted Mormon sociologist Rodney Stark. There are over 70 other sessions dealing with topics such as changing patterns of work, family, and religion; AIDS and religion; a workshop on teaching the sociology of religion; feminist reflections on religious language; church growth, region and religious diversity; the result of the recent Gallup poll on the "Religious State of the American People"; women's spirituality; psychological approaches to religious experience; liberation theology; religious responses to modernity; and religion and politics. Contact Arthur Greil, Division of Social Sciences, PO Box 545, Alfred University, Alfred, NY 10802.

U.S. membership in SSSR is \$24 annually (\$10 for students) and benefits include a subscription to the quarterly *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. Send membership inquiries to SSSR, Marist 108, Catholic University, Washington, DC 20064

THE SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF MORMON LIFE (SSSML) will hold its annual meeting during the forthcoming SSSR meeting (see above listing) in Salt Lake City on 27-29 October. Anyone interested is invited. For more information or agenda items, contact Don Lindsey, Department of Criminal Justice, California State University, San Bernardino, CA 92407.

SUNSTONE WEST SYMPOSIUM will be held on 2-3 March 1990 at the Doubletree Hotel at Plaza Los Fuentes in Pasadena, California. Proposals for panel discussions and papers are requested. Contact Steve Eccles, 1482 Winston Court, Upland, CA 91786 (714/982-4752).

THE 1990 WASHINGTON D.C. SYMPOSIUM will be held in early April. To submit proposals or for more information, contact Donald Gustavson, 413 Clearfield Avenue, Torrington, CT 06790 (203/496-7090).

VETERANS ASSISTING SAINTS ABROAD ASSOCIATION (VASAA). Due to very grievous accusations, and at the request of U.S. and Thai authorities, VASSA recommends that all donors withhold any contributions to either the Bangkok Children's Shelter or to the World Foundation for Orphaned and Abandoned Children in Springville, Utah, until further notice.

ing lack of trust rather than a return to full status. He felt that the way he had been treated showed a lack of mercy and an inappropriate exercise of power. He also felt that his "spiritual gifts" had been rejected and their results labeled as false doctrine.

The letter closed with a plea for reconciliation, for an end to the restraints on him. It pledged his loyalty and willingness to go forward in spite of continued feelings that he had been ill treated.

Apparently Lee did not get the response he hoped for and suffered increased feelings of isolation. The second letter which he reportedly read to the apostles and presidency showed a deep doctrinal concern that was mixed with deep personal feelings of alienation that led him to make very strong statements about the character and motives of other Church Leaders.

In a complicated theological argument, he explained that true Israel includes Jews, Lamanites, and the lost Ten Tribes. Accord-

ing to Lee, most Church members are Gentiles who through their baptism become "adopted" children of Israel. He quoted the Book of Mormon as predicting that after Israel rejected the gospel the Gentiles would receive it and bring it back to Israel, but that the ultimate responsibility in the Kingdom would be upon Israel, with the believing Gentiles (adopted into the House of Israel) assisting them to build the New Jerusalem in preparation for Christ's return.

It was basic to Lee that "adopted Israel" never displace those who are literal descendants of Israel in fulfilling their tribal responsibility. Lee, however, stated that individual salvation was the same for all members regardless of descent, but that they differed in their assignments.

In a passage frequently quoted by the press Lee said: "While physical extermination may have been one of Federal governments policies long ago, your current scriptural and spiritual extermination of Indians and other Lamanites is the greater sin and

great shall be your condemnation for this. . . . I cannot be a party to this kind of teaching which runs counter to the Lord's instructions in the scriptures."

Lee said the Church leaders' sins led to feelings of white supremacy and a neglect of Lamanites and other people of color. He accused the Brethren of "pride, arrogance, and unrighteous dominion and control which encourages priesthood abuse, induces fear and produces forced obedience." He chided them for their love of power, status, money, and for covering up their sins and for having "no sense of responsibility to the poor."

"The well-to-do seemed to get all the important assignments and callings," he elaborated. "Every weekend all we do is rub shoulders with the active or well-to-do while neglecting the poor who need our help the most."

In his interviews with the press immediately after his excommunication, Lee predicted that another American Indian would shortly be

named as a General Authority "so they can continue to look good." He said he would advise his two sons to complete their LDS missions. He said he had no intention of recruiting his own following and discouraged disillusioned Church members from leaving the faith.

In response, Associated Press reporter Vern Anderson produced a wire story which was carried in newspapers across the nation, announcing the excommunication and quoting from Lee's letters. For its Friday afternoon edition, the Church-owned *Deseret News* rushed a brief front-page boxed announcement.

KUTV reporter Rod Decker was able to interview Lee for his news spots, as was KTVX. However, at the Church-owned KSL-TV, coverage of the story caused a major war between its journalists and the management. Originally, KSL was instructed by a representative of the First Presidency to simply report (read) the First Presidency's short announcement without any embellishment, including any contextual information such as general biographical facts such as Lee's position, length of service, Indian heritage, etc. Throughout the afternoon KSL reporters protested with no effect and forty minutes before air time both news anchors and other staff decided to walk off the set unless they were allowed to report the story according to their journalistic standards. After the AP wire story with Lee's interview appeared, a high-level meeting was called and it was decided to allow the station to go with the story. When approval was finally given, KSL contacted Lee several times to do a live interview (and had a remote broadcasting truck in his neighborhood if he consented), but Lee refused saying he didn't think KSL could be objective. KSL reporters regret they can never again say that they have "never had direct interference from Church officials."

Throughout the afternoon and the night *Deseret News* flip-flopped



"At BYU Harry was a Skousen conservative, as bishop he was a Maxwell moderate, as high priests instructor he was a McMurrin liberal. Now, he just reads This People magazine"

on how the story would be reported in its Saturday morning edition. Initially, Elder James Faust, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, instructed the paper to simply run the Church's announcement without a headline. Later President Gordon Hinckley, counselor in the First Presidency, told them to do what you have to do with the story. Although the Church was not commenting on the excommunication, senior officials at the paper had obtained from General Authorities quotes which they wanted attributed to Church spokesperson Bruce Olsen. In a humorous situation, when the News reporter called Olsen on the story and he said he had nothing to say, she replied, "Oh, but let me tell you what you've *already* said" and then she read him her quotes. Reportedly, he chuckled and replied, "I'm speechless."

In spite of the involvement of Church leaders, the *Deseret News* covered the story very similar to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, with the exception of its headline. Reportedly, the News's headline was originally "Lee Accuses the leaders of being racially biased," but sometime during the night an editor switched the headline with the subhead which was based on an Olsen "quote" so the final headline read "LDS Church affirms love for Indians," quite a contrast to the *Tribune's* "Mormon Officials Excommunicate General Authority."

Surprisingly, with less excuse than the News, the *Tribune* chose not to run the story on A-1, but put it on the cover of its Saturday morning State/Local B section (as did the News). Of the Westach Front newspapers, Ogden's *Standard-Examiner* provided the most extensive coverage with a front-page banner headline, and sidebar stories on LDS excommunication, the Navajo/LDS culture clash, the reaction of Ogden citizens and Lee's friends and family members (shock and surprise), and Lee's *Deseret Book* published biography, *Silent Courage* (the 9th printing came off the press the

week of the excommunication and *Deseret Book Stores* plan to continue to carry it).

Although reporters did not like being only able to report Lee's side of the story, which he aggressively promoted, during the first week both Salt Lake papers seemed overly-timid about doing follow-up articles on the story's issues and those raised by Lee in the long list of questions (over 75) he presented to the Church leaders. Obvious issues include the appar-

photograph of Lee and the headline "Disciplinary action taken Sept. 1 against General Authority." The seven-paragraph story reported the Church's official statement, Bruce Olsen's no-comment comment and affirmation of the Church's care for Indians, a biographical paragraph of Lee, and, surprising to some, a candid paragraph summarizing Lee's now public criticisms.

The next day, Sunday, A.P. reporter Vern Anderson had a

lard and H. Burke Peterson, an apostle and a seventy, traveled to speak to the Indians there and also in Shiprock, NM. Reportedly, they reiterated the promise that God won't allow the prophet to lead the Church astray. "Generally they said it was not the Church's fault and that it was due to George losing his testimony" said one Navajo. "They are trying to nip it in the bud, but at the end we are all somewhat confused."

Elder Peterson apparently tried unsuccessfully to address Lee's doctrinal question on lineage by quoting Joseph Smith that at baptism a Gentile's blood is literally changed to that of the House of Israel. "I think a lot of people left disoriented on that question," one Navajo reported.

Church leaders continue to decline press invitations to comment, citing Church policy against divulging details of disciplinary actions. However, in a priesthood leadership session at a regional conference in Washington, D.C., President Thomas Monson reportedly said that it was only after long-suffering with Lee, who would not stop speaking in public about his ideas, that they had to turn to excommunication.

Perhaps the Church would have preferred that Lee didn't make his private letters public—to have had their announcement the only available statement—but in the weeks following the event as the scanty knowledge of it grew, it appeared that the more an LDS person became familiar and even sympathetic with some of Lee's criticisms, the more saddened they were by the outcome. Most, recognizing that they only had Lee's side of the story, trusted that the Brethren reluctantly made the decision only after all other options were exhausted. Still, given the known facts many asked, "Why couldn't he have just been released?"

In any event, with or without the help of the press and Church leaders, Latter-day Saints will be processing the ramifications of this event for some time. ☐

To the First Presidency and the Twelve.

Dear Brethren:

After consulting with the Lord and with him guiding my thoughts and hand, may I please speak with you in the spirit of love via this letter, I hope and pray that you will listen with your heart and with the spirit.

The feelings expressed are genuine and sincere and were not spawned out of bitterness nor rebellion although I may be justified in doing so.

I speak unto you not just for myself but for all the Lamanites, the Jews and the Lost Ten Tribes, Like my Father Nephi of old, I pray continually for my people and mine eyes have watered my pillow by night because of them and I cry unto my Heavenly Father in faith and I know that he will hear my cry.

Like my people in the Book of Mormon I glory in plainness and simplicity of the restored gospel.

Page 1 of George P. Lee's second letter

ent ineffectiveness and termination of numerous BYU and Church Indian programs and services, the response of LDS Indians to Lee's criticisms and his excommunication, and critiques by LDS theologians of Lee's Lamanite theology, the crux of his dissent.

A week later in the next issue of the *Church News* (the paper is included in Saturday's *Deseret News* but is printed earlier), the excommunication was announced prominently on page 3 with a

follow-up story which reported that Lee had gone to the mountains for a month-long spiritual retreat. "It's the way of my people," he said. "My father would take me to a mountaintop and we'd communicate with the Great Spirit. I was more spiritual then than I am now."

Anderson also reported on the Navajo reaction. In response to a letter by Romero Brown, an LDS bishop in a Navajo ward in Window Rock, AZ, Elders Russell Bal-