

Church leaders and ordinary members may look forward to future course corrections with confidence that those corrections will keep us on the path toward becoming truly Latter-day Saints in the most universal sense

## “COURSE CORRECTIONS”: SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

By James B. Allen

ONE SUNDAY LATE IN 1989 I WAS SITTING IN A ward council meeting and, like everyone else there, was both astonished and delighted to hear the bishop read a letter from the First Presidency announcing that ward and stake budget donations would no longer be required from members of the Church, and that all operating expenses of local units would henceforth be paid from tithes and offerings. At first the policy would apply only to the United States and Canada, but it seemed clear that eventually it would extend to other parts of the world. Immediately everyone began to ask all the inevitable questions: What did this mean for ward budgets? What about taking up voluntary donations for various activities that would no longer be budgeted? Would youth activity be curtailed? Could we find other ways to use the money “saved” by not having to raise ward budgets? No one knew all the answers, and it was clear that it would take time to work out all the administrative problems. I remember leaving that meeting with an exhilaration that I believe was shared by the others—a feeling that I had witnessed another important step in the direction of both simplifying and universalizing Church policy and programs, and also in the direction of being more responsive to the ever-increasing financial burdens of the average Latter-day Saint.

The new policy went into effect the first of the year and on 18 February 1990, I attended the televised “Member Finances Fireside” where it was discussed in more detail. I was

particularly impressed with the talk by Elder Boyd K. Packer, the first speaker, who concluded his remarks with these words:

I could not express to you, my brethren and sisters, the depth of my feeling about what has been announced. *It is a course correction; it is an inspired move.* It will have influence upon the Church across the world, not just in our generation, but in the generations to come.<sup>1</sup>

The term “course correction” was a particularly fitting metaphor. Anyone who has been in the Church for long should have learned to expect such changes frequently, especially in the wake of the rapid internationalization and interculturalization of the past few decades. The Church is moving swiftly toward becoming a truly universal Church, one that can more readily accommodate diverse cultures, nationalities, and language groups. This movement has been an important catalyst in bringing about change. A few statistics will emphasize what is happening. In 1950 Church membership was about 1,100,000. At the beginning of 1990 it was 7,300,000.<sup>2</sup> In 1950 there were 180 organized stakes, about 47 percent of them in Utah. Forty years later there were 1700, over half of which had been created in the past twelve years, and only about 23 percent of which were in Utah.<sup>3</sup> In 1950 the Church was organized in less than fifty nations or territories, while today it is in 128 nations. In 1950 some 7.7 percent of the population of the Church lived outside the United States and Canada. By the end of 1987, this had changed to 34.5 percent.<sup>4</sup> In 1950 most missionaries spent ten days or so in a mission home in Salt Lake City, where they received minimal training. Today they receive intensive language and missionary training in fourteen missionary training centers around the world, and 23 percent of all the missionaries who go to training centers go to those outside Provo, Utah. In 1950 the Church was operating eight temples, only one of which was outside the United States. Now it operates forty-four, twenty-three are outside the United States.

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Administratively, the number of general authorities of the Church tripled in four decades: about thirty in 1950 and ninety in 1990. In the 1950s there was no such thing as area and regional organizations. Today, after a rather complicated series of administrative changes, the Church is administered through nine area organizations outside North America, presided over by general authorities living in those areas, and eight areas in North America.

The process of administering the Church is becoming increasingly complex. Despite whatever course corrections are made, many old problems remain and new ones constantly appear. But I find reason for optimism as I begin to see attitudes change at all levels. Recent events suggest that we may anticipate even more course corrections as Church leaders continue to attempt to simplify programs, cut down burdensome costs and, above all, help increase the spirituality of the Saints worldwide. On 25 November 1990, for example, while sitting in sacrament meeting, I heard an announcement that delighted me just as much as the one I heard a year earlier. This time the bishop read a letter from the First Presidency, dated 20 November, announcing that beginning 1 January the contributions required to support missionaries called from the United States or Canada would be equalized at \$350 U.S. or \$400 Canadian dollars. Previously costs had varied from \$100 to \$750, depending on the mission. But the letter did not stop there. Evidently concerned with what missionary contributions could do for the spiritual well being of the Saints, the First Presidency emphasized that missionary service has always required sacrifice and that the sacrifices willingly made in the past must continue. As always, the costs are to be borne, first, by the missionary, second, by the family, and third, by ward members. Bishops will be required to provide to Church headquarters an amount equal to the cost of maintaining the number of missionaries from their wards and these funds, in turn, will be distributed to the respective mission presidents for distribution. In addition to conforming to recent I.R.S. rulings about deductions for supporting missionaries, this equalization is clearly a positive move which, among other things, will make it easier for families to plan ahead for missionary expenses. Beyond that, however, I cannot escape the feeling that a potential spiritual value will come as many Church members may feel not only an increased obligation but also an increased desire to donate to the ward missionary fund, whether or not they have sons and daughters in the mission field. More realistically than ever before, the missionary fund is a general fund, rather than a specific fund for specific individuals, and I believe many Saints will see it as a marvelous place to make continuing, tax-deductible, contributions to building the Kingdom.

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## REASONS FOR COURSE CORRECTIONS

THE “course correction” metaphor might well be thought of as comparing the progress of the Church to the progress of a ship at sea, an aircraft in the air, or a vehicle exploring space: they frequently encounter obstacles or unanticipated difficulties, and constant adjustments, both small and large, are needed to keep them moving toward their pre-determined destinations.

One objective for many of the recent course corrections may be to move more clearly and effectively in the direction of fulfilling Joseph Smith’s original ideal that one day the Church would fill the world, not just with token members here and there but with all the opportunities and advantages of the full Church program.<sup>5</sup> President David O. McKay reaffirmed the vision in a general conference address in 1955, when he stressed the need “to put forth every effort within reason and practicability to place within reach of Church members in these distant missions every educational and spiritual privilege that the Church has to offer.”<sup>6</sup> The Church was embarking upon an irreversible effort not only to convert people around the world but also, at long last, to induce them more effectively to remain in their homelands to build up Zion.

There were problems, however, that kept the Church from achieving the full potential of that vision. Among them was the priesthood policy which clearly inhibited missionary work among blacks in the United States and Africa and also among people in South America whose ancestry was uncertain. In addition, political realities made it practically unthinkable in the 1950s and 1960s that an American church, and one in which prominent leaders were speaking out strongly and frequently against Communism, could gain recognition or even approval to function in at least a third of the world.

The spirit, nevertheless, was there. During President McKay’s administration, stakes were organized in the South Pacific and Europe; temples were constructed in New Zealand, Switzerland, and England; missions were organized in several nations where they had never been before; and the physical gathering of the Saints to the “Utah Zion” was coming to an end. A constant theme in the 1960s and 1970s was that the essence of the gospel really crossed national and cultural boundaries. In the 1970s there was a noticeable decline, and finally a disappearance, of political utterances that could offend other governments, particularly socialist governments. In the 1980s the Church was able to gain recognition in some countries behind the “iron curtain,” and a temple was built in the German Democratic Republic. Then, as we all know, the dramatic revolutions of 1989-1990 opened many of the “iron

curtain” countries to the world. It suddenly became apparent that at last Mormon missionaries would be free to come and go—even, eventually, in the Soviet Union.

But the reasons for these course corrections went deeper than merely filling the world statistically: they were also concerned with the spirituality of the Saints. Elder Packer emphasized, for example, that the change in financial policy was designed not just to save the members’ money but also to save their time so that, without excessive Church programming, they could learn the principles of the gospel and then have time to apply them in their families.

Finally, many recent course corrections are related to what seems to be a renewed emphasis on universal brotherhood and sisterhood within the Church: an effort to adjust attitudes as well as programs and policies in order to meet the needs of people of all cultures without imposing on them certain “Wasatch-Front Americanisms” that were never a necessary part of the gospel.

#### AN OVERVIEW OF SOME OF THE RECENT COURSE CORRECTIONS

WHAT, then, have been some other “course corrections” made by the Church in recent decades? Most Church members probably could list a dozen or so almost without thinking; here are a few that have been particularly significant.

#### *Organizational/Administrative Course Corrections*

- 1950: An early morning seminary program was adopted in California, setting the stage for the rapid expansion of week-day religious instruction in areas outside those dominated by Latter-day Saints.
- 1956: Student wards and stakes were first organized, heralding the adaptation of Church programs more fully to the needs of college students.
- 1960s and 1970s: The Church Correlation program was adopted and expanded, and the Correlation Executive Committee was appointed. Correlation was designed to bring all Church programs and auxiliaries more effectively under a unified system, and to administer them through specific priesthood authority lines. It was an attempt to perfect the organization in such a way that essentials would be emphasized, duplication of efforts would be eliminated. According to Elder Harold B. Lee in 1961, “In the adoption of such a program, we may possibly and hopefully look forward to the consolidation and simplification of church curricula, church publications, church buildings, church meetings, and many other aspects of the Lord’s work.”<sup>7</sup> This statement only foreshadowed much of what has happened in recent years.

One aspect of correlation was a more precise identification of the mission of the Church and of priesthood quorums. In 1964 the new *Melchizedek Priesthood Handbook* identified three major priesthood quorum objectives as (1) perfect the Saints, (2) missionary work, and (3) temple work. Later these were slightly reworded and popularized as the three-fold mission of the Church: perfect the Saints, preach the gospel, and redeem the dead. Perfecting the Saints included such responsibilities as home teaching and welfare service, and eventually this three-fold mission helped define how the priesthood was organized, from the general authorities down to quorum leaders.

In 1975, the establishment of the Correlation Department was a significant development. Today one division of the department oversees all curriculum developments to make sure they are correlated in every proper way. Another, the Research and Evaluation division, does extensive and sophisticated research into every aspect of the Church in order to provide hopefully reliable data as a base for future course corrections.

- 1961: Members of the First Council of the Seventy were ordained High Priests, and their responsibilities as assistants to the Twelve were expanded.

- 1965: Renewed emphasis was placed on family home evening—and a Church-wide “program” was adopted. The “program” aspect of it has receded since then, leaving families responsible for their own decisions, but the emphasis on the idea of family home evening

remains strong.

- 1970: The Aaronic Priesthood and Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association were merged.
- 1970s: The Church withdrew from many business enterprises, including the operation of Church hospitals. One reason was to save the time of many general authorities who served on boards.
- 1970s: The foundation was developed for the current area and regional organizations.
- 1971: The Church publishing program was consolidated: only three magazines (*Ensign* for adults, *New Era* for youth, and *The Friend* for children) were authorized and all others were eliminated. (An *International Magazine* was soon adopted, however, and its contents were drawn from the pages of the three basic magazines.)
- 1971: The office of assistant to the twelve was eliminated, and the First Quorum of the Seventy was organized. In 1989, the Second Quorum was also organized.
- 1973: A legally separate Social Services Corporation was organized to meet needs of people requiring special social services, such as adoptions, foster care, and specialized counseling.

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- 1974: The former Mutual Improvement Associations became the Young Men's and Young Women's programs. All adult programs were taken over by the Relief Society and the Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

- 1977: General conferences were shortened to two days.

- 1977: The First Presidency made a distinction between ecclesiastical and temporal affairs of the Church. Ecclesiastical affairs were to be administered by the Quorum of the Twelve and temporal affairs by the presiding bishopric. One important result was that youth programs, formerly the responsibility of the presiding bishopric, came under the wing of the Twelve.

- 1979: The frequency of stake conferences was reduced to twice a year.

- 1979-81: New editions of the Standard Works, along with the "Topical Guide," integrated cross references and tended to enhance LDS scripture study.

- 1978: The annual general women's conference was inaugurated.

- 1978: The policy was adopted of placing some general authorities on "emeritus" status. In 1979 the Patriarch to the Church was put on emeritus status, and the office of Patriarch to the Church was effectively eliminated.

- 1980: The consolidated meeting schedule was inaugurated. The immediate catalyst was the need for energy savings because of a major energy crisis that year. But the First Presidency also declared that a more basic consideration was to give families more time for scripture study and other activities in the home.

It might also be worthwhile to note the changes in the new handbook of instructions as compared with that of ten years ago. For example:

- There are no more Church "courts": they were replaced by "disciplinary councils."

- The bishop's role in interviewing is more flexible. "In large wards, the interviews of Aaronic priesthood young men and women may become burdensome. Bishops, acting with inspiration and wisdom, may wish to adjust their scheduling and frequency of interviews."<sup>8</sup>

#### *Doctrinal and Attitudinal Course Corrections*

THE most important course corrections, however, may be those that cannot be quantified. In 1950, for example, it might have been possible to identify how many people of particular races were in the Church, not just through estimates but through membership records. It was Church policy, at least in some areas, to identify some racial groups with a special letter on their membership records. This only reflected the social realities of the time but today it would be impossible to identify race through official membership records. The Church identifies its members as brothers and sisters without

distinction as to racial backgrounds.

There have been other changes that could, and probably have, affected LDS attitudes and perspectives. The priesthood revelation of 1978 clearly had far-reaching doctrinal and attitudinal implications. I believe that general racial and cultural attitudes, especially among white American Mormons, has improved greatly. I see clear evidence of this when I compare attitudes of BYU students today with those I remember from twenty-five years ago. Attitudes toward women, particularly working mothers and career women, have improved to some degree, but not as much as many would like. There is, perhaps, a greater awareness of women's problems and needs. There has been a dramatic decline in political rhetoric and more acceptance of the idea that anyone, regardless of political persuasion, can have a testimony of Christ and be a good member of the Church. In addition, there seems to be an increasing awareness of other cultures and of the fact that the "Wasatch Front" Church cannot be the model for the world wide Church.

Many general authorities have tried to lead the way in these attitudinal changes. I particularly liked a statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer in 1985: "Now we are moving into those countries," he said,

but we can't move *there* with all the baggage we produce and carry *here!* We can't move with a 1947 Utah Church! Could it be that we are not prepared to take the *gospel* because we are not

prepared to take (and they are not prepared to receive) all of the things we have wrapped up with it as extra baggage.<sup>9</sup>

Observers must also be impressed with the fact that general conference addresses tend to define sainthood not in terms of Church membership as such but, more particularly, in terms of what Elder M. Russell Ballard called the "small and simple things" in his April 1990 address. Love, service, home, family, and worship of the Savior: these were the universals that constituted the essence of Mormonism so far as the message of that conference was concerned.<sup>10</sup>

Elder Packer emphasized the brethren's hope that the recent changes will reduce and simplify activities and, particularly, back away from the tendency to program everything. This does not mean that he wanted to get rid of all Church programs, but simply that he thought we have too many. He was appalled, in fact, at the idea entertained by some people that if certain required Church programs were reduced the apparent void could be filled by creating more local programs. We need to "change our mindset," he told the regional representatives in March, "and realize that a reduction of and a secession from that constant programming must be accomplished." I am

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encouraged by these comments, for perhaps *not* pressing for new programs is itself an important course correction.

### *The Process of Course Correction*

COURSE corrections do not come easily or lightly. The process is complex, and certainly cannot be described adequately in a small space. In general, however, it involves a recognition of a problem, often because of input from various members of the Church. There is also considerable investigation, with data from various sources, including: the Correlation Department's Research and Evaluation Division; long hours of meetings and discussion by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve; prayer; development of a new policy or program with more input from a variety of sources; "beta testing" (i.e., often particular wards and stakes will be given the assignment to adopt a new program or policy, test it out for a certain amount of time, then evaluate it); more evaluation, data gathering, and prayer, accompanied by some assurance that the new plan is approved of the Lord; and, finally, the announcement of a new Church policy.

### *The Results of Course Corrections*

AS might be expected, nearly all such course corrections carry with them both positive and negative results. With respect to the change in ward and stake financing, for example, along with the consolidated meeting schedule, one emphasis was on deprogramming so that families would have more time together and increase their unity and spirituality. Unfortunately, however, many active Latter-day Saints do not yet see much more time available. In addition to the three-hour Sunday block there are still a multitude of leadership meetings, preparation meetings, welfare assignments, home teaching assignments, visiting teaching assignments, temple assignments, stake leadership meetings, personal interviews, youth activities, and other Church-related responsibilities that take their time. More serious, however, is the possibility that even those who are less involved, and therefore have more time, may not have learned how to take advantage of it for the spiritual purposes Elder Packer envisioned.

At the same time, there are seemingly increasing numbers of people in the Church whose needs are not being met by de-programming. Some Latter-day Saints have expressed concern over the possibility that the elimination of money-raising activities may severely inhibit many of the opportunities for group involvement that once meant a great deal to the youth. But there are also people who are not members of families, or are converts who have come into the

Church without their families, who need something more than the traditional emphasis on Church family life. Single adults, both men and women, have special needs that are not always met within the traditional emphasis on family, and a variety of other groups have other special needs. I am not suggesting elaborate programming, but only that many people feel their needs have yet to be adequately addressed. Perhaps many of their needs are better met outside Church programs.

Even as he described the desired impact of the new member finance program, Elder Packer candidly recognized that there are still problems. He emphasized the need for balance between assessing families' time and money to support Church activities, on the one hand, and, on the other, having Church activities that complement what families should do for themselves. But, he said, "that is a difficult balance because some families need more support than others. Perhaps we have been over-programming stable families to meet the needs of those with problems. We must seek a better way."<sup>11</sup>

VARIOUS people have also raised other questions, which may or may not be valid, but some of them are worth noting if for no other reason than that they have been widely expressed.

Have not the recent changes actually resulted in even greater centralization, some ask, and therefore greater control from Salt Lake City, at a time when growth and interculturalization really suggest the need for more decentralization and more opportunity for local determination? Is one result of de-programming actually more centralized programming, but of a different sort? All the tithes go directly to Church headquarters, local fundraising is eliminated, and Church units can function only on the basis of what Church headquarters sees fit to return. This, moreover, is based on percentage of Church attendance, which means that active Church members may suffer in areas where attendance is notoriously low for reasons not attributable to them. By comparison, wards in certain high-density LDS areas with better attendance at sacrament meeting will obviously benefit.

What will reducing financial and time commitments do to our sense of community? For example, I admit that I was as pleased as anyone when I found out that I would not have to donate anything extra for the construction of a new ward chapel. Recently, however, I drove by the spot where the new chapel I will attend next year is being built. Suddenly I felt a strange sense of loss as I realized that neither I nor the bishop had anything to do with planning it, that I will have nothing to do even with any tiny part of the construction, and that I put no money into it. The only involvement, so far as I can tell,

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was that the bishop is kept informed of what is going to happen. We will no doubt remain the close-knit, friendly ward that we now are, but, somehow, there will be something missing because we seemingly had no sacrifice to make on behalf of the building. But maybe another recent course correction will make up for that: our responsibility for much of the building's maintenance, particularly the outside maintenance, snow removal, and all the furniture moving that has come with the new custodial services policy.

Has the simplification of lesson manuals, and the effort to make them applicable to all cultures and to the newest, least experienced members as well as to long-standing members, made them too unchallenging?

Has the consolidated meeting schedule cut into the socializing that often went on before and after meetings, and did this former socializing help in unifying and consolidating a ward?

Will spontaneous, imaginative, and inspiring local public service programs, that often cost the Saints both time and money, be discouraged because of the prohibition on fundraising and organized activity? Many such activities have been carried out by various local Church units and resulted not only in inspiring Christian service—the thing the gospel is really all about—but also in cultivating greater unity among the Saints themselves.

On the other hand, there have been some positive results. Because of the financial course correction, many Church units now have greater budgets than ever before, and feel that they can now come closer to fulfilling their legitimate needs. At the same time, the more wealthy wards have been required to tighten their belts. While some find discomfort others are beginning to consider the new policy a form of the “law of consecration,” and seem willing to forgo expensive activities for the sake of seemingly greater equality within the Church structure.

As a result of other course corrections, the program of the Church is being carried more readily and more effectively into many different nations, and being adapted more realistically to diverse cultures. We certainly have not arrived at our goal, but the course corrections seem well taken. Statements from leaders, such as those cited above from Elders Packer and Ballard, seem most encouraging to me. The concern over the Saints' time and money is being dealt with, and, despite the problems suggested here, I personally believe the general direction is a positive one. With respect to the minor concern about Melchizedek priesthood manuals, for example, I am convinced that the real answer is in the nature of whoever is assigned to give instruction in Church classes. I have observed that the *topics* themselves are usually very important and extremely valid for discussion, and even though some might

criticize the manuals themselves, they provide the basis for an imaginative instructor to present some tremendously challenging and inspirational lessons. In addition, there is still room for flexibility because quorum leaders are instructed that they can pick and choose the lessons as they are applicable to their particular quorums, and they can provide whatever lessons they believe are needed at particular times. The opportunity for flexibility is certainly consistent with the goal of universalism.

#### *The Acceptance of Course Corrections*

I once heard someone wonder if the constant stream of changes in the Church might upset or undermine the faith of the Saints, for it might suggest that some programs or policies or teachings were not inspired after all. The answer to that, of course, is the fact that believing Latter-day Saints have faith in the principle of continuing revelation, and that principle itself has far-reaching implications for change. I was especially interested in the way Elder Bruce R. McConkie put it shortly after the 1978 revelation on priesthood. (In my mind, this was one of the most significant course corrections in the history of the Church.) Elder McConkie reminded Church Education System teachers of the various things that had been said in the past, even by general authorities, that were taken to mean that blacks would not receive the priesthood during this life:

I have said the same things, and people write me letters and say “You said such and such, and how is it now that we do such and such?” And all I can say is that it is time disbelieving people repented and got in line and believed in a living, modern prophet. Forget everything I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world.

We get our truth and our light line upon line and precept upon precept. We have now had added a new flood of intelligence and light on this particular subject, and it erases all the darkness and all the views and all the thoughts of the past. They don't matter any more.<sup>12</sup>

That attitude, it seems to me, is catching on in the Church. We don't take change lightly and, as Elder Packer observed to the regional representatives, “There are always those who will go to the extreme and want to cancel all activities. That is not what I am talking about. . . . I am talking about a *careful* course correction.”<sup>13</sup> Church leaders may be slow to make changes, but when they feel the time is ripe they are not afraid to make

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them, even if they seem to fly in the face of long and almost sacred traditions. And Church members have, for the most part, accepted them very well. There have been many exceptions, of course, including a full-page newspaper advertisement by some Church members protesting the change in priesthood policy. For the most part, however, I think the Latter-day Saints accept the principle of continuing revelation with all its implications, and also know that the inspiration that results in course correction usually does not come without long periods of painstaking research, evaluation, and even testing, in addition to prayer. The Saints are also sophisticated enough to recognize that not every new course of action is perfect, despite all that went into it, and that with experience various adjustments will continue to be made. The important thing, after all, is the long-range goal, not the particular program or policy itself, and I believe that most active Latter-day Saints will accept the frequent course corrections in that spirit.

In conclusion, let me comment on an experience I had several years ago. In 1973 I was asked by the *New Era* to submit an article on changes in the Church. I spent a lot of time on it, and the article did what I thought was a good job of comparing the Church in the 1970s with the Church of a hundred years earlier, but also emphasizing the inspired nature of the changes. The *New Era* liked it, prepared it for publication, and even paid me \$75 for it. Finally, however, on 27 February 1974, I received a call from the editor who said that the correlation committee had turned down the article, and there seemed to be two basic reasons: (1) the committee could not see any value in talking about change as such, and (2) it was fearful that in discussing so many changes we would leave the impression that everything was changing, and therefore raise questions in the minds of the *New Era* readers about whether gospel doctrines were changing and whether or not the Church was true.<sup>14</sup> Naturally I was disappointed, but I mention the incident here only by way of contrast. I think the situation has changed and, in fact, five years later the *Ensign* even published a similar, though much stronger, article that I had been invited to write on the same subject!<sup>15</sup> I am optimistic that while the attitude expressed in 1974 may not have totally disappeared, it has visibly receded, and Church leaders and ordinary members alike may discuss past changes and look forward to future course corrections not only without damage to faith but also with confidence that those corrections will be designed to keep us on the path toward becoming truly Latter-day Saints in the most universal sense possible. ☞

## NOTES

1. Elder Boyd K. Packer, "Teach Them Correct Principles," address at the Member Finances Fireside, 18 February 1990, *Ensign* (May 1990): 89-91, emphasis added.
2. F. Michael Watson, "Statistical Report 1989," *The Ensign* (May, 1990), p. 22.
3. Watson, plus percentage estimate based on 1989-1990 *Church Almanac* figures.
4. The 1989-90 *Church Almanac* shows 2,243,000 outside North America, 118,000 in Canada, and 4,100,000 in U.S.
5. As Joseph prayed during the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, "Remember all thy church, O Lord, with all their families, and all their immediate connections, with all their sick and afflicted ones, with all the poor and the meek of the earth; that the kingdom, which thou hast set up without hands, may become a great mountain and fill the whole earth"

(D&C 109:72).

6. *Conference Report*, April 1955, 25.
7. *Conference Report*, September 1961, 79.
8. As quoted by Elder Boyd K. Packer, address to Regional Representatives Seminar, 30 March 1990. (Reprinted in this issue, see pages 32-33).
9. Elder Boyd K. Packer, address to Church Coordinating Committee Meeting, 8 September 1987, as cited in Lee Copeland, "From Calcutta to Kaysville: Is Righteousness Color-coded?" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21 (Fall 1988): 97.
10. See the report of conference addresses in *The Ensign*, May 1990, and particularly the addresses of M. Russell Ballard, Rex D. Pinegar ("Home First"), Derek A. Cuthbert ("The Spirituality of Service"), Richard P. Lindsay ("Ye Have Done it Unto Me"), L. Tom Perry ("Family Traditions"), Joseph B. Wirthlin ("Personal Integrity"), Malcolm S. Jeppsen ("Who is a True Friend?"), Thomas S. Monson ("My Brother's Keeper" and "A Little Child Shall Lead Them"), Marvin J. Ashton ("Neither Boast of Faith Nor of Mighty Works"), Gordon B. Hinckley ("Blessed are the Merciful"), Dallin H. Oaks ("World Peace"). In addition, see the report of the October Conference in *The Ensign*, November 1990, and especially the address by Bishop Glenn L. Pace ("A Thousand times").
11. Packer, "Teach Them Correct Principles," 90.
12. Elder Bruce R. McConkie, "All Are Alike Unto God," Address given to CES Religious Education Symposium, BYU, 18 August 1978, 12.
13. Packer, address to the Regional Representatives, 30 March 1990. Underline added for emphasis. (see page 31 of this issue.)
14. Notes and observations written down at the time by James B. Allen, 27 February 1974.
15. James B. Allen, "Line Upon Line," *The Ensign* (July 1979): 32-37.

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## CRIB DEATH: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DESK

The lonely baby blue boy was  
streaked past my desk in a blur  
of paramedics and monitors,  
knees squared out from his hips,  
immovable like a plastic  
resuscitation doll in CPR class.  
Two nurses and a doctor joined  
the race. But soon it was called.

My own child stretched lazily inside me  
as I wrote the official time  
of death in red by the white  
blank where his name belonged.

The parents never came.

Wrapped in white, he was a lone peek-holed egg  
balanced on a black rubber borrowed bed.  
Vacant eyes slumbered, waiting to be cradled  
one more time in familiar arms.

Slipping my hand under his neck and pulling  
him to me, I rocked him on the ledge  
of the unknown child inside.  
I sang to both.

—JANICE REISEWITZ ANDERSON