

## NEWS

# CHURCH ISSUES STATEMENT ON "SYMPOSIA"

ON FRIDAY, 23 August 1991, two weeks after the Sunstone symposium in Salt Lake City, the LDS church released the accompanying "Statement" which expressed concern about some topics presented at unnamed "recent symposia."

Although the Statement didn't mention specific Sunstone sessions, most informed observers identified several sessions: "LDS Garments: A View From the Outside" by Colleen McDannell, the non-Mormon McMurrin professor of philosophy at the University of Utah; a widely-reported discussion of Church policies relating to the continuing problems of terrorism against LDS missionaries and chapels in South America by BYU assistant professor of anthropology David Knowlton; and John Sillito's paper on the excommunication of Apostle Richard Lyman, which also was reported

in the media.

In its reporting on the Statement, *Salt Lake Tribune* quoted a response by SUNSTONE's publisher and editor, Daniel Rector and Elbert Peck: "We are very sorry if some deliberations at our symposia gave offense or were interpreted as detracting from the mission of the Church. Our intent is to conduct thoughtful discussions of religious questions in a spirit of good will. We believe that, in the long run, an open and honest examination of the varied perspectives of the Latter-day Saints and their friends helps to build the kingdom of God."

The *Tribune* also quoted noted author and symposium participant Lowell Bennion: "We are asked to love the Lord with all our hearts and minds. It is a poor religion that can't stand the test of thinking."

Shortly after the Statement's

release, another *Tribune* story reported that David Knowlton had had an interview with his stake president about his symposium session on South American terrorists. Apparently, several parents of missionaries in South America contacted general authorities because they were concerned for their children's safety as a result of reading press reports of Knowlton's presentation. Knowlton felt that since the BYU board of trustees and the Church leaders were nearly identical, the interview was a form of academic intimidation. The story quoted from his letter to the general authorities.

In response to the Statement, letters appeared in both Salt Lake newspapers. Garold Kotter wrote to the *Deseret News* criticizing the *News's* journalism for simply running the Statement without providing context or seeking quotes from affected parties. "Although occasional remarks (not entire presentations) may have stretched the bounds of propriety," said Kotter about the Sunstone symposium, "I found the presenters well-intentioned and the presentations enlightening, thought provoking and

even, at times, inspiring in the testimony-building sense."

Robyn Knibbe's letter to the *News* said she moderated a symposium panel on divorce which was a "positive, uplifting and open discussion." She described the symposium as a "rewarding, testimony-building experience that nurtures and excites my intellect." "Because Sunstone is independent of the church, it operates without censorship. On rare occasions, presenters have been insensitive and have offended the church. I am sorry for those occasions, but what saddens me more is the attempt to divide the membership of the church rather than encircling all members to include the wonderful diversity in the LDS church."

Don S. Redd responded to Knibbe in a letter by saying that the Statement was only to "caution those who have gone out of bounds . . . not to silence them."

Then a story headlined "LDS Church Turns Up Heat in Feud With Intellectuals" by Associated Press reporter Vern Anderson appeared on general conference Saturday. "Consistently, from the beginning, the church leadership has always been uncomfortable

## STATEMENT

THE COUNCIL of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has issued the following statement to members of the Church.

Recent symposia sponsored and attended by some members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have included some presentations relating to the House of the Lord, the holy temples, that are offensive. We deplore the bad taste and insensitivity of these public discussions of things we hold sacred. We are especially saddened at the participation of our own members, especially those who hold Church or other positions that give them stature among

Latter-day Saints and who have allowed their stature to be used to promote such presentations.

We have a different concern about some of the other topics at these symposia. Some of the presentations by persons whom we believe to be faithful members of the Church have included matters that were seized upon and publicized in such a way as to injure the Church or its members or to jeopardize the effectiveness or safety of our missionaries. We appreciate the search for knowledge and the discussion of gospel subjects. However, we believe that Latter-day Saints who are committed to the mission of their Church and the well-being of their fellow members will strive to be sensi-

tive to those matters that are more appropriate for private conferring and correction than for public debate. Jesus taught that when a person has trespassed against us, we should "go and tell them his fault between thee and him alone," and if he will "neglect to hear" this private communication we should "tell it unto the church." (Matthew 18:15, 17). Modern revelation tells us that this last step "shall be done in a meeting, and that not before the world" (D&C 42:89). There are times when public discussion of sacred or personal matters is inappropriate.

Some of our faithful members

have doubtless participated in these symposia because they were invited to state or defend the Church's position on a particular topic. There are times when it is better to have the Church without representation than to have implications of Church participation used to promote a program that contains some (though admittedly not all) presentations that result in ridiculing sacred things or injuring The Church of Jesus Christ, detracting from its mission, or jeopardizing the well-being of its members.

THE COUNCIL OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND  
THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

with open forums that have been organized by the rank and file," Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn was quoted as saying. "In the 19th century, the leadership recognized the existence of a loyal opposition and the 20th does not."

The A.P. story reported Knowlton's interview with his stake president. It also reported that Christian Fannesbeck had written a letter to the First Presidency saying he was "puzzled" by the Statement. In response, Fannesbeck was called in by his stake president and relieved of his Church calling as a Blazer-B instructor. He said he was told the action was taken on instruction of high Church officials.

In addition, the story said Kim Clark was called in by his stake president for his *Tribune* letter and told that the president was undertaking an investigation that could result in disfellowshipment or excommunication.

Church leaders chose not to be interviewed for the story, but in a written statement LDS spokesperson Don LeFevre said dissent can be "conflict, discord, strife, objection, protest, rebellion, contradiction, or to differ, disagree or oppose. . . . Those members whose actions fit those definitions subject themselves to the possibility of church discipline, whether it be formal [a disciplinary counsel, formerly called Church court] or informal [private counsel and caution]."

In the story, SUNSTONE editor Elbert Peck said he viewed what goes on in the magazine and at the symposia as healthy and importantly independent—"they are the very things that go on in the foyer of every chapel, not necessarily what's said from the pulpit."

At the annual October general conference, several talks seemed to address Sunstone. Most explicitly, Apostle Boyd K. Packer said: "The natural man," Paul told us, 'receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they

are spiritually discerned.'

"Recently the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued a statement alerting members of the Church to the dangers of participating in symposia which concentrate on doctrine and ordinances and measure them by the intellect alone.

"If doctrines and behavior are measured by intellect alone, the essential spiritual ingredient is missing and we will be misled. . . . There is safety in learning doctrines in gatherings which are sponsored by proper authority."

Apostle Marvin J. Ashton said, "Some of us may be inclined to study the word with the idea in mind that we must add much where the Lord has said little! Those who would 'add upon' could well be guided by the anchor question of, do my writings, comments, or observations build faith and strengthen testimonies? Oftentimes we can cause confusion and misdirection in our lives and in the lives of others if we promote the startling and unorthodox."

Speaking on testimony, Elder Charles Didier of the Seventy said, "Know by asking your Heavenly Father in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. Do not turn to public discussions and forums."

Clearly, the limits of independent discussion by, of, and for Mormons is an area whose boundaries are currently being refined.

## RESEARCH REQUEST

**JAMES STAPLES** is researching fundamentalist priesthood authority from President John Taylor. Correspondence with anyone holding such authority or with knowledge of one who does would be greatly appreciated. Mail to James Staples at 5 Marcia Way #67, Roseville, Ca. 95678.

## AWARDS

### JOHN WHITMER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION Awarded at 1991 annual meeting on 29 September 1991

Best Article

**LINDA SILLITOE**

"Off the Record: Telling the Rest of the Truth"  
SUNSTONE, December 1990

Best Book

**ROGER D. LAUNIUS**

*Father Figure: Joseph Smith III  
and the Creation of the Reorganized Church*  
Herald House

Special Citation

**CHAD FLAKE**

For his works on Mormon bibliography

### DAVID WOOLLEY AND BEATRICE CANNON EVANS BIOGRAPHY AWARD

THE ANNUAL \$10,000 Evans Biography Award was established to encourage the writing of biography in "Mormon Country"—the Intermountain West, Southern Canada, and Northern Mexico. Scholarly and professional biographies on persons playing a role in the history of Mormon Country are eligible for the next contest if printed or produced between January 1991 and March 1992. Entries are not limited to Mormon subjects. Contact: Evans Biography Award, Mountain West Center for Regional Studies, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-0735 (801/750-3630).

1990 Recipient

**WILLIAM DEBUYS AND ALEX HARRIS**

*River of Traps: A Village of Life*  
University of New Mexico Press

Judges' comments: "We were drawn to it because it is so evidently a work of art. The powerful and beautiful photographs match the beautiful writing. They combine to evoke a life in its entire cultural and natural setting. . . . Not a leading figure by any means, Jacobo Romero was representative of the extensive Hispanic culture in northern New Mexico. The book calls into being a place, a people, and a man."

1990 Runners-up

**S. GEORGE ELLSWORTH**

*The Journals of Addison Pratt*  
University of Utah Press

Judges' comments: "A grand achievement. . . . Ellsworth has not only chronicled the life in these sketches but interpreted it, showing how Pratt the faithful missionary in the South Pacific was never quite at home in the Mormon homeland of Utah."

**BRIGHAM MADSEN**

*Glory Hunter: A Biography of Patrick Edward Connor*  
University of Utah Press

Judges' comments: "A grim story of cruelty and conflict. . . . Madsen's extensive research illuminates the origins of oppositional politics in Utah of which Connor was the founder and preeminent leader for many years."

## SPEECHES & CONFERENCES

### PANEL DISCUSSES PRAYING TO MOTHER IN HEAVEN

ON 7 SEPTEMBER 1991, the Salt Lake chapter of the Mormon Women's Forum sponsored a meeting on "How Should We Worship God the Mother?" Panel moderator Lavina Fielding Anderson introduced the topic by reading excerpts from President Gordon B. Hinckley's address to the April 1991 regional representatives seminar where he instructed Saints not to pray to Mother in Heaven (see SUNSTONE 15:3). A few weeks after this meeting, President Hinckley gave the same counsel at the general women's meeting of the Church.

Carol Lynn Pearson, the first panelist and playwright/actor of *Mother Wove the Morning*, said that since a knowledge of God the Mother has been lost, all humankind suffers from a profound injury and are wounded children. "We will no longer be content to be without a Mother," she said. "The human family is crying out for Mother, inviting her to come home. . . . Having a wonderful father does not preclude the need for a mother."

Pearson said the most important work to do now is to reintegrate the feminine doctrine into the LDS religious experience. "The emergence of the feminine in a partnership between the sexes is a genie that will not be put back in. We will be more whole and holy, our vision of God will be more whole and holy, the equality of men and women will be more whole and holy" when this is done.

Rodney Turner, retired BYU religion professor and author of *Women and the Priesthood*, said that although the meeting's title presupposed that worshipping Mother is appropriate, there is no justification in the gospel setting for it. According to him, Heavenly Mother's "milieu is the realm of spirit and glory. Earth is not her immediate concern or responsibility." Motherhood is the ultimate sense of her calling and the premortal life is her personal concern. He said Mother worship has its roots in pagan sex and fertility rites and ritual prostitution. He said Moses spoke against it and that it reappeared in Catholic worship of Mary. If praying to Mother "is so important, why wasn't it revealed in the Restoration?" he asked.

He said that to reject the priesthood order is to reject the Father and to cut oneself off from Christ. Women are queens and priestesses but not gods. The Godhead, the "Presidency of Heaven," is a presidency of three male deities, similar to a stake presidency whose members each have wives who are responsible for domestic religious education but not ecclesiastical functions.

Turner said that to continue to pray to Mother after the prophet and the First Presidency have said not to is to "rationalize yourself to apostasy." "You can't get ahead of the prophet. . . . Satan will carefully lead you to hell, singing praises to our Mother in Heaven."

"These questions have ramifications far beyond women being comforted," he said. "It hurts the international Church and makes us look like a cult. The gospel is faith, repentance, and baptism, not this doctrinal esoterica."

He said that prayers to Mother for heightened spirituality were "desperate measures and unwise behavior." Agreeing with President Hinckley, Turner said there is no uncertainty in the scriptures about praying only to the Father in the name of the Son. "Is the female nature as unfathomable to God as to men?" he asked. "Do women have needs he cannot meet? Is any problem too difficult for him?"

"For Latter-day Saints to pray any other way is to pray in vain," he concluded.

Paul Toscano, co-author of *Strangers in Paradox*, spoke next and

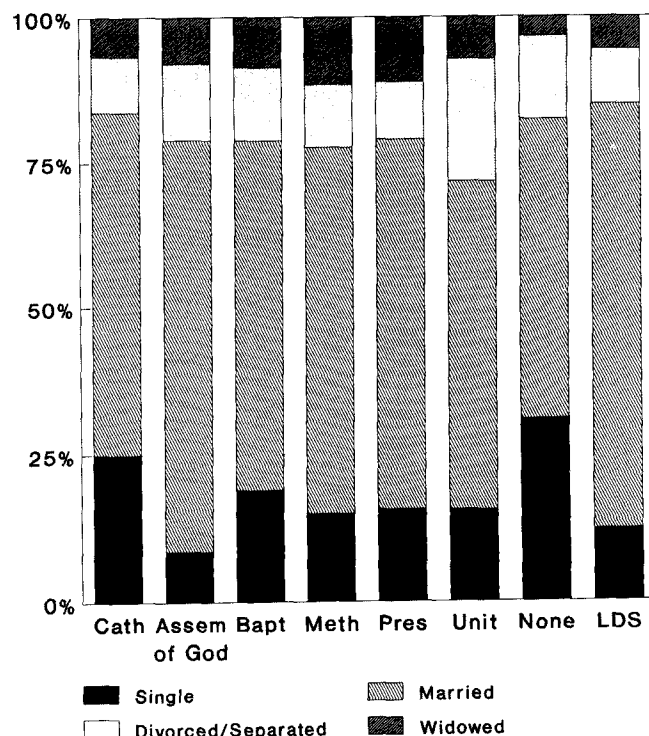
said that questions about Mother turn on her theological status. Citing a vision of Joseph Smith, recorded in Zebedee Coltrin's journal, where he saw the Father, Mother, and Christ, Toscano postulated that Mother was a member of the Godhead. He also cited Eliza Snow's poem/prayer "Invocation" (now titled "O, My Father") to both Father and Mother and the fact that Nephi's vision begins with the virgin Mary.

Toscano said the doctrine of Heavenly Mother empowers women, and "men are afraid of that." He said the scriptures do not say that men are to be providers and presiders and that women are to be nurturers. "If scriptures are silent, we cannot conclude the negative proposition," he said, citing latter-day examples of revealed doctrines on previous unmentioned points in scripture which the Church had misinterpreted. "The Restoration is not over," Toscano said, responding to Turner. "Prophets can be wrong."

## PECULIAR PEOPLE

### MARITAL STATUS BY RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION

AMONG TWENTY-SEVEN religious groups reported in the National Survey of Religious Identification, Mormons are reported as having the highest percentage of adults currently married. Corresponding to the high percentage married, divorced, separated, single, and widowed are comparatively infrequent among Mormons. Those with no religious preference are particularly likely to be single, while divorce or marital separation is more common among Unitarians. Overall there is substantial variation in marital status across major religious groups.



Source: National Survey of Religious Identification, Graduate School, CUNY, March, 1991

Toscano said equality of sexes is a message in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, and that Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants says that when a man and a woman marry they become Gods of equal status. "The God revealed in the King Follett discourse is a male and female God. The worship of one is the worship of the other." Ultimate "priesthood is not on a man or a woman only but on both." Hence, Toscano concluded, it is not "wise to relegate Mother to obscurity or idolatry."

Concluding panelist Kathleen Woodbury, a science fiction author, said she was surprised to learn that the topic of praying to Mother had come up. "Are you implying he [the Father] can't be concerned with your problems?" she asked. "The idea that I can pray to Heav-

enly Father about *anything* is integral to my faith. I cannot think of another person." She noted that President Hinckley instructed Saints not to pray to Heavenly Mother but "he didn't say to forget about her." She said honoring and revering Mother without praying to her is the same thing we do with Christ. "Heavenly Father hasn't revealed much about her," she added. "I would like more information. It is a question we should be asking."

Woodbury said that praying to Father is an act of faith that he knows how to save all humans. "Heavenly Father is not like any male we know. Don't judge him by the men you know." "All he wants is for us to come back," she said, noting that he will not hold back any good thing from those who walk uprightly. "He will make it fair."

## SUNSTONE CALENDAR

**THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS** will hold its 1992 annual meeting at Westminster College in Salt Lake City on Saturday, **25 January 1992**. Contact: Bruce Jorgensen, English Department, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602 (801/378-3205).

**MORMON-L**, an electronic discussion group for Mormon studies, has been created on the BITNET network with the intention of providing a forum for serious academic discussion of topics relating to the LDS church, but it is open to all persons who want to engage in substantial discussion on such topics as history, literature, fine arts, theology, and Church life. The discussion will be minimally moderated to limit casual chatter, but not to suppress controversial topics. **MORMON-L** is not to be used for either pro- or anti-Mormon evangelism.

To join **MORMON-L**, you must have access to the BITNET computer communications network. For information regarding computer communications, contact the computer support center at your institution or a computer store. Most universities or large institutions are already linked to BITNET. Individuals may be able to send and receive **MORMON-L** postings through such services as CompuServe.

To subscribe, send the following message to **LISTSERV@BYUVM**: "Subscribe Mormon-L your name," leaving the subject header blank. Your name will then be added to the list.

To communicate directly with the list moderators without having your communication posted to the list, contact either of the two men below:

J. Michael Allen .....**HISJMA@BYUVM.BITNET**

William J. Hamblin .....**HISWJH@BYUVM.BITNET**

Mailed correspondence may be sent to the moderators at Department of History, 323 KMB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

**WASATCH REVIEW** is a new independent literary journal designed to explore the Mormon culture. *Wasatch Review* seeks short stories, poetry, and personal essays that honestly and creatively articulate the Mormon experience. Send manuscripts and SASE to: *Wasatch Review*, 635 North 100 West, Apt. F, Orem, UT 84057.

**ZARAHEMLA**, a forthcoming journal for poetry which deals implicitly with poems which are LDS in tone, theme, treatment, or content, is seeking submissions. Poems may be in any form, traditional or experimental, but individual poems should not exceed 60 lines in length. Three to seven poems typed may be submitted at one time, with SASE. *Zarahemla* will be published through Orson Scott Card's Hatrack River Publications. Pre-publication rate is \$14 for four issues. Contact: Michael R. Collings, 1089 Sheffield Place, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360-5353 (805/496-3032).

### SUNSTONE LECTURES AND SYMPOSIA

**1991 NEW TESTAMENT LECTURE SERIES** features a monthly lecture on the second Tuesday of each month. On 12 November **Stephen C. Walker** will be speaking on "Parables: Tales to Tilt the Soul." On 10 December **Eugene England's** is entitled "On Finding Christ the Merciful at Christmas." Lectures are held in the Social Work Auditorium at the University of Utah (the two-story building west of the Social and Behavioral Science tower).

**1991 SUNSTONE NORTHWEST SYMPOSIUM** will be held on **8-9 November** at the Mountaineers Building in Seattle, WA. Proposals for papers and panel discussions are now being accepted. Volunteers interested in helping organize the conference are needed. Contact: Molly Bennion, 1150 22nd Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112 (206/325-6868).

**1992 SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM WEST** will be held on **6-7 March** at the Burbank Hilton. Proposals for papers and panel discussions are now being accepted. Volunteers interested in helping organize the conference are needed. Contact: Steve Eccles, 1482 Winston Court, Upland, CA (714/982-4763).

**1992 WASHINGTON, D.C., SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM** will be held on **10-11 April** on the American University campus. Proposals for papers and panel discussions are now being accepted. Contact: Don and Lucinda Gustavson, 413 Clearview Ave, Torrington, CT 06790 (203/496-7090).

**1992 CHICAGO SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM** will be held sometime in **October 1992**. Contact: Becky Linford, 461 Elm Court, Naperville, IL, 60540-0348 (708/778-9551).

*Now in its third printing:*  
**For Those Who Wonder**

by D. Jeff Burton  
Foreword by Lowell L. Bennion



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## ONE FOLD

### POOR GIVE MORE TO CHURCHES

PROPORTIONATELY, THE poor give more to their churches than do the wealthy, according to researcher Steven Hart, author of *Religious Giving: Patterns and Variations*. "The richest fifth of the population gives half as much, percentage-wise, as people in the lowest fifth of the population," Hart said.

From information collected by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, Hart found the poorest fifth of church members gave, on average, 3.4 percent of their income, while the wealthiest gave 1.6 percent. The average amount of money given by the poorest members was about \$200 per year while the wealthiest gave a little more than \$1,000. By denomination, Mormons are at the top of the list, donating an average of 7.1 percent of their income; Unitarian-Universalists and Christian Scientists are at the bottom, giving less than 1 percent.

### ZONING RESTRICTIONS AFFECT MAINLINE CHURCHES

LEGAL AND zoning restrictions on the use of land for religious purposes may well be the biggest church-state issue of the 1990s, writes Lyle Schaller in *The Lutheran* magazine (17 July). Recent church-state cases have pitted religious organizations against their surrounding neighbors. In the middle of the century, Jewish congregations, Mormons, and the Jehovah's Witnesses often faced emotional opposition to the religious use of land. "Today the construction plans of Lutherans, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, and other old-line religious bodies are being rejected or postponed by opponents who don't want the church in their neighborhood." Often planning commissions and city councils "pass the buck" by letting the courts decide the issue. Schaller notes that "an increasing number of municipalities" have required churches to have a "special use permit," while schools, golf courses, and other places of assembly in residential areas do not require such certification. The courts have "not provided consistent ruling" on whether such limits infringe on religious freedom. Often church land-use cases are decided on emotional grounds rather than on correct legal principles. (*Religion Watch*)

### SUBURBS CREATE NEW CATHOLIC STRUCTURES

CATHOLIC PARISHES are increasingly adopting new structures and strategies, often involving small group meetings, to meet the spiritual needs of members living in suburban areas burgeoning throughout the U.S., according to the Catholic newspaper *Our Sunday Visitor*. Because of the fast population growth in many suburban areas, some parishes can have upwards of 10,000 people and have been borrowing "concepts of small groups that meet regularly for Bible study, prayer, social ministry and other needs, concepts that were first popularized among the poor in Latin America [such as in the base Christian communities]." One large parish has divided into seventeen neighborhood groups each led by a parish coordinator. They emphasize welcoming newcomers "so that people feel connected." The article cites a recent Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life, which showed that large suburban parishes "frequently exhibit signs of community which, paradoxically, are lacking in smaller urban or rural parishes." (*Religion Watch*)

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## MORMON MEDIA IMAGE

### CALIFORNIA MAGAZINE HIGHLIGHTS

#### LDS ETHNIC DIVERSITY

THE JULY issue of *California* magazine featured a two-page article entitled "Mission from Utah" which was about the new Mormon "world church." Author Joel Kotkin said that the California Saints are "creating a more cosmopolitan Mormonism, in sharp contrast to the reactionary, often-derisive, stereotypical 'white bread' image often held by the media and others." Kotkin outlined the growing diversity among the Saints and focused on how the impressive ethnic diversity in California's stakes is creating a microcosm of the entire Church where innovative programs are being developed.

#### NY TIMES FEATURES CHURCH

ON SUNDAY morning, 15 September 1991, Manhattan Saints were pleasantly surprised to pick up their *New York Times* and see Brigham Young and the Salt Lake Temple on the front page, illustrating a lengthy article entitled "Despite Growth, Mormons Find New Hurdles." *Times* religion editor and author of the article, Peter Steinfelds, noted that just as the LDS church had overcome its earlier negative reputation and finally fit into the American mainstream, its phenomenal world-wide growth is creating new challenges, including being stretched financially, bombings by Latin American terrorists, open debate and criticism by members, simplifying meeting schedules, the lessening of community, and adapting doctrines and Church organization. "This is a healthy exercise for us," Apostle Russell M. Nelson told the *Times*. "It makes us examine our own performance and assess our priorities."

The article was made available to other papers throughout the nation. The Church-owned *Deseret News* ran it the same morning as the *Times* did. However, with fourteen paragraphs deleted, including a brief history of the Church as well as unflattering sentences about the Church attempting to buy and hide embarrassing documents later discovered to be forged by Mark Hofmann, the *Arizona Republic's* estimate of Church revenue, a description of the Quorums of the Seventy as a non-policy setting supervisory group, and intellectual debate and discussion. In response to a letter criticizing its deletions, the *News* explained that it cut only historical background which its readers already knew.

#### UTAH CULTURE-SHOCKS ISLANDERS

THOUSANDS OF Pacific Islanders, trading their tropical paradise for a chance at the American dream in Utah, have found only disillusionment in the land of opportunity, notwithstanding that most are Mormon. According to an Associated Press story in the *Los Angeles Times*, state and religious leaders have taken few steps to ease the cultural passage for about 15,000 to 20,000 Tongans and close to 3,000 Samoans, a population that doubled during the 1980s. According to the article, the islanders confront numerous problems because they come from close-knit communities and are unprepared for the life of a minority in an almost all-white, individualistic society. Without the communal problem-solving of the islands, many parents are at a loss at child-rearing, and some teenagers join gangs such as the Tongan Crips or the Sons of Samoa. Many criticize the LDS church, saying it should do more to help them assimilate.

## UPDATE



### REPUBLIC OF RUSSIA LEGALIZES CHURCH

"RUSSIA RECOGNIZES LDS CHURCH" read the 25 June 1991 *Deseret News* headline. Although, in context of the opening of the Eastern Bloc, the news didn't have the end-time feel many thought it would when they contemplated the possibilities during the Cold War. The announcement was made by Alexander Dutskoï, vice president of the Soviet Union's Russian Republic at a banquet following the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's performance in Moscow's Bolshoi Theater. The recognition gives the Church a legal right to make requests to ministries of the Russian government.

### LDS CHURCH AND ACLU UNITE

THE LDS CHURCH has allied itself with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and 40 other groups to promote legislation that would prohibit the government from interfering with religious practices unless there is a "compelling interest."

The alliance resulted because of a recent Supreme Court decision which allowed Oregon to deny unemployment benefits to drug rehabilitation counselors who were fired for the sacramental use of peyote, a hallucinogenic drug, in Native American religious ceremonies.

The 42 concerned groups created the Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion primarily to promote The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1991. The bill, being reintroduced by Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Joseph Biden (D-DE), is designed to restore the longstanding test which requires the government to demonstrate a "compelling interest" in order to interfere with a religious practice. By this standard, no governmental authority is allowed to restrict a person's free exercise of religion unless (1) the authority can demonstrate the restriction is essential to further a compelling governmental interest and (2) the restriction is the least restrictive means of furthering that interest. "In the Oregon vs. Smith decision, the court swept aside such deference to religion as a luxury," said Mark Chopko, general counsel for the U.S. Catholic Conference.

While few religious groups support the use of hallucinogenic drugs, they fear for their own unique practices. Proponents of the bill say the Supreme Court's decision could jeopardize the use of ceremonial wine, the right of public school students to be excused for religious holidays, the practice of kosher slaughter, the right to wear religious garments such as yarmulkes or not to wear gym uniforms they believe are immodest.

### U OF U GETS FIRST NON-LDS PRESIDENT

ALTHOUGH THE University of Utah has the reputation of being the only real "gentile" university in Utah—with over half its faculty being non-Mormon, and some departments described as almost anti-Mormon—its president has always been a member of the religion of the university's founder, Brigham Young. Until now. This June the Utah State Board of Regents named Arthur K. Smith to replace Chase N. Peterson as president. Smith, 53, comes from the University of South Carolina where he served a year as interim president.

### Y LAW SCHOOL ATTRACTS MORE WOMEN

IN 1983 only 18 percent of BYU's J. Reuben Clark Law School students were women, a fact noted in its accreditation report to the American Bar Association: "The Mormon Church places a strong emphasis on education, but Mormon women are not oriented toward professional careers. Church teachings encourage women to stay home, raise families, etc." However, of this year's entering class, 38 percent are women. Nationally, the average female law school enrollment rose during the last decade from 34 percent to 42 percent. "Our applications among women students and minority students were up [last year] over 50 percent," the law school's associate dean of administration, Scott Cameron, told the *Daily Universe*. The increased enrollment is attributed by many to changes in LDS attitudes toward women and a change in law school recruitment philosophy.

### UTAH MORMONS FAVOR SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION

IN A poll conducted by Research Insight, Inc., for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Utahns were asked the question "Should a woman have the right to choose if she has an abortion?", 46 percent of the LDS respondents answered yes. Eighty-two percent of the Utah LDS population agreed that sex education should be taught in public schools, but only 36 percent thought that "every public school student [should] be required to take sex education classes." In response to the question, "Should teachers be allowed to discuss the use of condoms as a means of birth control and/or safe sex?", 60 percent of Utah Mormons said yes. The poll prompted many letters to the editor challenging its accuracy, the wording of the questions, and the conclusions drawn on a controversial topic such as abortion from only one unnuanced question.

### SCOUTS ACCOMMODATE GAYS, WOMEN, & ATHEISTS

IN RESPONSE to legal challenges by a gay rights group and the United Way in California, the Boy Scouts of America created a youth program called "Learning for Life" that will allow homosexuals, girls, and atheists to join. The program will be separate from the traditional Scout program, but will be administered by local Scout councils that choose to offer it. The Provo, Salt Lake, and Ogden, Utah, Scout councils have each decided not to offer the new program "at this time." The LDS church has taken the program's announcement "under advisement." However, last June the *New York Times* featured a story on the Boy Scouts which discussed its connection with religious organizations, including the LDS church which is the largest single sponsor of Scout troops. In the story Elder Jack Goasling Jr., a Church liaison to BSA, speculated, "I am not the one who makes the decision, but we would withdraw from the Boy Scouts of America" if it included gays, girls, and atheists.

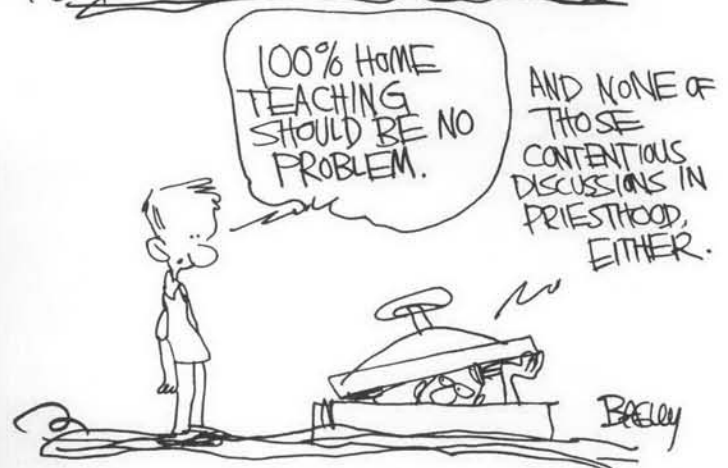


**PATRIOT MISSIVES**

THIS YEAR, Salt Lake's July 24 celebration of the Mormon pioneers entry into the valley featured a lengthy military contingent of armored personnel carriers, Bradley tanks, and tow missiles. As the parade of tanks and troops rolled down Main Street past the temple and around the Brigham Young statue (with his hand stretched out ironically reviewing the troops), it was hard not to consider the Mormon War and the occupation by Johnston's Army over a century before. The pioneer Mormons may have avoided conflict and sat out the Civil War, but today's Pioneer Stake float celebrated Utah patriotism with canon and missile. Most LDS ward and stake floats (whose themes are assigned by the Church) acclaimed LDS themes which had broad application, such as home evening or the freedom to worship.



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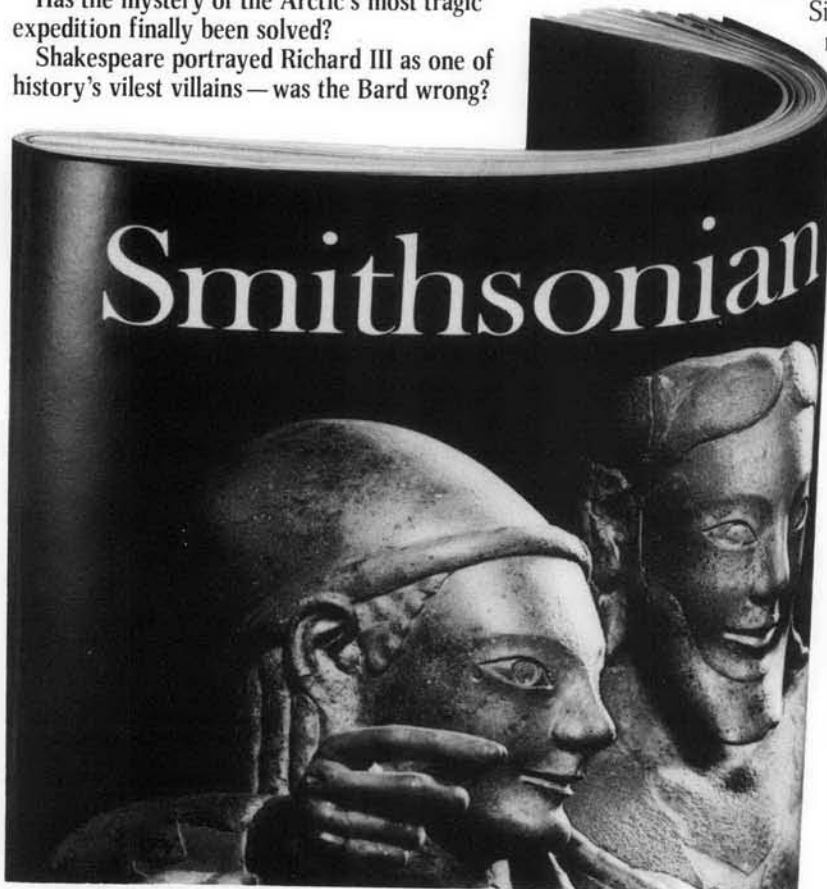
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