The Encyclopedia of Mormonism will gain permanence in the LDS community. It will likely stand as the primary Mormon reference work for the next half century—for the lifetimes of most involved with producing it.

EVALUATING THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM


4 vols., $249; 5 vols. (with Mormon scriptures), $340

INTRODUCTION

BY THE TIME FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENTS OF EDITORIAL APPOINTMENTS FOR MACMILLAN'S FIVE VOLUME ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM WERE MADE (MARCH 1987-AUGUST 1988), MUCH SPECULATION CONCERNING THE END RESULT HAD ALREADY SURFaced IN THE MORMON COMMUNITY. ANTICIPATION RANGED FROM ANXIOUS DELIGHT TO MILD SKEPTICISM TO FEAR AND TREPIDATION. AS THE PROJECT Grew, THE VARYING PREDICTIONS ALL SEEMED TO BE COMING TRUE: THOSE WHO EXPECTED A MONUMENTAL, POSITIVE COMPILATION SAW ONE TAKING SHAPE; THOSE WHO RESERVED JUDGEMENT PROBABLY SAW BOTH GOOD AND BAD COMING FROM THE PROJECT—MANY FINE SCHOLARS WERE INCLUDED, BUT OTHERS WERE LEFT OUT; AND THOSE WHO PREDICTED THE LARGEST PROPAGANDISTIC EFFORT IN MORMON HISTORY SAW, IN THE MOSTLY IN-HOUSE BYU PROJECT, JUST WHAT THEY EXPECTED TO SEE.


THE INCREASING FREQUENCY OF GENERAL AUTHORITY AND CHURCH PUBLIC AFFAIRS REFERENCES TO THE ENCYCLOPEDIA INDICATES THE PERMANENCE THIS WORK WILL GAIN IN THE MORMON COMMUNITY. BECAUSE THE ENCYCLOPEDIA WILL LIKELY STAND AS THE PRIMARY MORON REFERENCE WORK FOR THE NEXT HALF CENTURY—FOR THE LIFETIMES OF MOST INVOLVED WITH PRODUCING IT—INCREASED CRITICAL DISCUSSION IS AN IMPERATIVE. WITH THIS IN MIND, SUNSTONE COMMISSIONED THREE AUTHORS TO APPROACH THE ENCYCLOPEDIA FROM DISTINCT VANTAGE POINTS. THOMAS ALEXANDER REVIEWS THE ENTRIES DEALING WITH HISTORICAL MATTERS. PHILIP BARLOW DISCUSSES THEOLOGICAL TOPICS. AND ARMAND MAUSS CONSIDERS ARTICLES CONCERNED WITH SOCIAL ISSUES. IN AN ADDITIONAL REVIEW, ORIGINALLY PRESENTED AS A PAPER AT SUNSTONE'S 1992 BOOK OF MORMON LECTURE SERIES, GEORGE D. SMITH LOOKS AT THE BOOK OF MORMON'S PORTRAYAL IN THE ENCYCLOPEDIA.

IN ALL OF THE REVIEWS, CERTAIN EDITORIAL FEATURES HAVE REMAINED CONSISTENT. IN KEEPING WITH THE ENCYCLOPEDIA'S OWN USAGE, TOPICS WITH THEIR OWN ENTRIES ARE INDICATED BY THE USE OF SMALL CAPS. ADDITIONALLY, WHERE QUOTATIONS OBVIOUSLY COME FROM A SPECIFIC ENTRY, PAGE NUMBERS HAVE NOT BEEN PROVIDED. WHERE THE ENTRY BEING QUOTED MIGHT NOT BE CLEAR, HOWEVER, PARENTHEtical REFERENCES ARE USED.
The theological articles in the Encyclopedia

WANTED: MORMON THEOLOGIANS. NO PAY, GREAT BENEFITS

Reviewed by Philip L. Barlow

WHEN, IN 1991, DAVID BRION DAVIS REVIEWED the three-volume, two-thousand page, state-of-the-art Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience, he applauded the landmark in scholarship. He was vexed, however, that believers among the one hundred participating scholars had cloaked their own religiosity. Exceptions existed, but many contributors had so uniformly eschewed partisanship that religion in their hands seemed either colorfully eccentric or corpse-cold: anesthetized and neutered. Awash in a tide of illuminating erudition, Davis felt hard pressed to trace among the authors much sense of the sacred, of spirituality, of the mystery of life and being. Indeed, the articles hardly seemed to him to be products of the highly religious society that America remains—despite its changes and in contrast to, say, Europe. In light of this disjunction between scholarship and the phenomenon it so coolly analyzed, Davis contemplated the encyclopedia's most likely readers: religious citizens. The picture that came to mind was of "countless numbers of married couples consulting one hundred celibate monks and nuns for their wisdom on the American sexual experience."¹

No such problem with Macmillan's new and handsome Encyclopedia of Mormonism, which teems with the faith and purposefulness of the Latter-day Saints. The Mormon volumes have roughly the same mass as the Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience, and are its match in creativity and—given their more focused topic—in breadth of coverage. The Mormon work is superior to the more general encyclopedia in certain other respects: in clarity, accessibility, visual richness, and thorough reference helps. Latter-day Saints should take pride in a major publishing event likely to inform their self-reflections during the coming century. And certainly, just as envisioned by those who produced and approved the work, this will be among the prime sources visitors of libraries will consult when looking for information on the Saints.

A few such readers, theologically mindful, may discover in the Encyclopedia an important story quite beyond the riches of information its articles deliberately convey. This story tells something of Mormon character. Half a century ago, Wallace Stegner thought he could discern a portion of the Mormon character simply by attending to "Mormon trees," the tall, straight Lombardy poplars that everywhere lined the ditch banks and fields in the valleys of "Mormon Country" prior to World War II:

Perhaps it is fanciful to judge a people by its trees. Probably the predominance of poplars is the result of nothing more interesting than climatic conditions or the lack of other kinds of seeds and seedlings. Probably it is pure nonsense to see a reflection of Mormon group life in the fact that the poplars were practically never planted singly, but always in groups, and that the groups took the form of straight lines and ranks. Perhaps it is even more nonsensical to speculate that the straight, tall verticality of the Mormon trees appealed obscurely to the rigid sense of order of the settlers, and that a marching row of plumed poplars was symbolic, somehow, of the planter's walking with God and his solidarity with his neighbors.²

Simplification, surely; nonsense, no. Institutions must have their art forms, their symbolic representations. To Stegner, the trees suggested Mormon impulses, symbolized Mormon traits, were Mormon traits externalized.

If the Pulitzer Prize-winning author thought he could discern so much from mere rows of trees, what vision might he see fifty years later in the orchestration of 700 Mormons writing a million words in a thousand essays about themselves, all in a time frame so clipped as to inspire awe in outside observers? For all the diversity in the Mormon Encyclopedia (and there is some) the entries as a whole reveal a distinctive style, an orientation to life, a way of thinking, an organizational method, an implicit as well as an explicit theology. We Mormons may have created in these volumes one of the widest, deepest, clearest mirrors of ourselves yet devised—and not necessarily in ways intended. The reflected image appears not merely in the respective articles' contents, but in the way the entries were conceived, in the efficient process through which the effort was negotiated. It is as if I scribed an autobiography: one could learn much about me by the stories I told. However, looking further, an attentive reader could also discover a good deal from what I did not purposefully design: things I included, things I left out, approaches to problems, untold assumptions at multiple levels on legions of topics, the fashion and focus of mind and values.

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and many other dimensions. So, too, with the Mormon Encyclopedia. In its conception, inception, organization, method, quality of thought, and multi-layered editorial imprints, this encyclopedia is the fruit of the culture of those whom it seeks to describe. In the unsurprisingly apt words of Richard Poll, the Encyclopedia epitomizes its subject.3

An example: One of Mormonism’s central strengths is also the source of a fundamental limitation: the emphasis on the laity and the rejection of a religious professionalism. This weakness-strength (which is to say, this trait) is expressed both deliberately and naturally in the Encyclopedia. In approving the project, the Brethren insisted on, among other things, broad participation. Whereas many encyclopedias of this type are produced by a few dozen or a hundred authors with professional-level competence in the topics or at least in the general disciplines of the topics treated, Mormon leaders were careful to prevent any small cadre of writers from being perceived as quasi-official voices. Prophets, not scholars, speak for the Church. But since institutional prophets did not write for the Encyclopedia, it was thought best to include a wide array of lay contributors—a strategy that also fostered speed. As editor-in-chief Daniel Ludlow’s preface puts it: “The Church does not have a paid clergy or a battery of theologians to write the articles... [All] members are encouraged to become scholars of the gospel” (i.e).

In actual practice, this democratic philosophy was reined by a strong editorial hand. We do not, after all, have 700 writers who are experts on the diverse dimensions of Mormonism they were asked to treat. Therefore, many contributors were seen to need substantial offstage support—and such “support” was not always optional even for seasoned scholars. Observers of the process could in various ways gain a feel for how this sometimes developed. During the meetings of the Mormon History Association in May 1992, for example, I traveled to a banquet in a van with four others. Two of them were well-known in Mormon scholarly circles, and all four were supportive of the Encyclopedia and had contributed to it. When one of them joked that he hardly recognized his essay after it had been returned, reworked by his supervising editor, each of the others laughed and shared similar stories. I do not know how many other participants encountered a similar process (many did not, and others successfully resisted the tendency). In any case the authors of course bear final responsibility in approving their names to be published along with the essays (my companions felt fine about this). Moreover, I have no doubt that the content of the Encyclopedia was often improved by such editorial ghost writing, so I do not share the tendency. The story does suggest, however, that the Encyclopedia’s image of “every member a scholar” invites qualification.

The product of this diluted egalitarianism seems to me a success, especially if one keeps in mind its objectives: to increase understanding without challenging the faith of believers and to engage and inform while avoiding unnecessary offense to non-Mormon readers. Indeed, if the general correlation process in the Church produced material as substantive, accurate, informed, and honest as that found in these volumes, “correlation” would not so often sponsor the dismay it does among so many. Written at a level accessible to good high school students, numerous entries bear witness that simplicity need not be vacuous.

Admittedly, some of the topics covered seem arbitrary. Are we glimpsing our corporate unconscious when we observe that concepts like OBEDIENCE, ENDURING TO THE END, and THANKFULNESS have independent status in our encyclopedia, while equally important virtues like INTEGRITY or CREATIVITY or COURAGE have no entries? But many articles do show theological sophistication in the subjects they treat and were written in simplified form either by people who know most about them and know also the arenas in which they must be contextualized or who have made good use of the real experts. Thus, for example, Keith Norman compacts theological insight and historical range in a fine brief entry on DEIFICATION. Mary Stovall Richards articulates a muted but reasonable and healthy understanding of Mormon FEMINISM. David Paulsen wisely notes diversity in LDS views in his article OMNIPOTENT GOD; OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD; OMNISCIENCE OF GOD, as does Lisa R. Adams on ETERNAL PROGRESSION. David Whittaker and Richard Haglund have fashioned a cogent if optimistic account of our INTELLECTUAL HISTORY. Kent Robson achieves both clarity and substance in the space of three columns on so challenging a subject as TIME AND ETERNITY—and in the process manages what is no mean feat in a correlated work: to retain some color in his writing (“Eternity is time with an adjective: ... endless time”; “Eternity, as continuing time, is tensed: past, present, and future”). Given the Encyclopedia’s constricctions of space, format, and intended audience, many other articles could be cited as splendid work.

Not all contributions are this well done, to be sure, but overall the lay-oriented and partially lay-written project, judged at one level, constitutes a fine resource. However, if someone were to insist on higher standards—the best thinking done in a given field—a sympathetic reviewer would then be placed in an awkward position. One’s more tempered praise would require selective targets. The historical, cultural, and institutional dimensions of the Encyclopedia, for example, are noticeably superior to its theological aspects. This, again, reflects the character of the modern Church: Mormon culture, despite tensions, has spawned several first-rate historians and sociologists while discouraging theologians, insisting that believers teach and learn the gospel with one another and fearing that theologians might more often encroach on domains reserved for prophets.

I am among those who defend many aspects of our lay orientation, yet such a perspective ought not obscure one crucial consequence. No matter how able a person may be in some other endeavor, writing for publication on matters in which one has only avocational background or modest aptitude, as was the practice for much of the Encyclopedia, can be precarious. Last summer, I impressed my assistants (Philip and
yielding a functional result. I took satisfaction in my work, basement building did have benefits, saving me money and architectural profundity, however, was not among the consequences; structural and aesthetic flaws were.

Like my basement, the Encyclopedia of Mormonism could be gauged—should be gauged—using diverse criteria. “Depth, scholarship, and quality of thought” are not the only good measures. Yet they are probably necessary ones. Therefore, in a Mormon context, let me put the difficulty another way. I have high regard for the native acumen and legal expertise of Elder Dallin Oaks, and I honor his station in the Church. I feel similarly about the secular and ecclesiastical stature of Elder Russell Nelson. But if either man were to bless my life directly by performing heart surgery or pleading my cause before the Supreme Court, it might be best if they helped in the respective fields in which they had excelled. Similarly, intelligent men and women, writing without genuine expertise in their subjects, might accomplish a great deal. They might learn a lot and complete their mutual task more quickly than would fewer scholars writing on the same topics. They might here and there serendipitously delight knowledgeable readers or might, more often, produce adequate results by way of editorial co-writing, by condensing the work of others (though this, too, has perils), or by restricting themselves to certain subjects. Frequently, however, we might fear they would run into difficulty, producing work seeming full of good sense to many readers but unlikely to compel those who know a relevant discipline.

Rather than illustrating with any number of problematic articles from the Encyclopedia, it may prove more instructive to pick from among the best of this genre. We thus have Jeffrey Holland—not a theologian but a talented and a good man—writing at length, with intelligence and deep feeling, about the “redemption of man” (gender-inclusive language is not achieved throughout the Encyclopedia) in an entry on the ATONEMENT. Depending on his own interpretation of the scriptures and, according to his bibliography, on Bruce McConkie, Hugh Nibley, and John Taylor, Holland produces an essay that admirably formulates what most Saints, less articulately, may think of the Atonement. This is a significant accomplishment for one sort of encyclopedia. But is the analysis persuasive? Is the operative mechanism of the Atonement essentially “substitutionary”? Or have we merely imposed some Mormon strands over a hoary and now unconsciously accepted tradition (from Athanasius, the fourth-century church official who also brought us the Trinity, and Anselm, an eleventh-century controversialist) that has transformed a scriptural metaphor (“ransom”) into a rationalized dogma? When Jesus died “for our sins,” did he die “in our behalf” or, not the same thing, “in our stead”? Does the phrase “he took our sins upon him” refer to his having condescended to the human condition or refer rather to some unfathomable barter (“x” amount of suffering to “pay” for “y” amount of sinning)? Are the “demands of justice” (an example of language that leads people to thinking in terms of “paying a debt”) external to our own natures as moral entities? Do Jesus’ words as reported in the Doctrine and Covenants, to the effect that we must repent lest our suffering be as exquisite as his own (D&C 19:16-17), imply a literal metaphysical substitution—or might they be paraphrased as: “Danger—this is where sin leads?” I am proposing no answer here, but the ontological, psychological, theological, and metaphysical depths of soteriology are complex. Even if one thinks such issues are irrelevant to practical living, and even allowing that the editors desired the content to remain at a widely accessible level, one might wish that the entry in our encyclopedia reflected awareness of the historical and theological issues at stake before assuming a conclusion.

Of course, choosing a wide range of writers to operate outside their backgrounds brings a potential freshness to any given topic, militates against academic priestcraft, and has other advantages. Furthermore, in suggesting what I think is one source of theological difficulty in the Encyclopedia, I do not mean to imply that all problems originate here. Whether or not one is formally trained in an academic discipline is beside the point in some respects. Formal training does not guarantee high-quality thought, and the entries must stand on their merits no matter who wrote them. Thus, in reading BIBLE: LDS BELIEF IN THE BIBLE, the crucial issue is not whether the author has standing as a biblical scholar (information the List of Contributors fails to divulge). One can more directly discern the writer’s orientation by observing, for example, that his bibliography consists of a single work: Robert J. Matthews’s A Bible! A Bible! Consistent with dependence on this source, and reflecting widely held Mormon views, the author feels the Bible presents the revelations of God tidily packaged in several “dispensations” with a prophet reigning presidentially over each, and writes of the “harmony” of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the teachings of Joseph Smith and all the latter-day prophets and apostles with no hint of critical awareness of the difficulties inherent in the generalization.

A related article, BIBLE SCHOLARSHIP, notes that because “Latter-day Saints prefer prophets to scholars as spiritual guides, and the inspiration of scripture and the Holy Ghost to the reasoning of secondary texts, Bible scholarship plays a smaller role in LDS spirituality than it does in some denominations.” Although I do know Mormon scholars who sometimes envy the Jews, for whom scholarship is recognized as a form of worship, such scholars ought not doubt the entry’s descriptive accuracy on the role of Bible scholarship among Latter-day Saints. However, author Stephen Robinson will sadden or exasperate certain of his BYU colleagues in the departments of political science, English, and elsewhere by defining them out of the kingdom with the pronouncement that “Latter-day Saints insist on objective hermeneutics.” He may also wound tens of thousands of faithful Mormon liberals by implicitly screening them from the Church (“...LDS scholars, like other conservatives, ...”). The essay’s sloping
bibliography lists works by Richard L. Anderson, Bruce R. McConkie, Hugh Nibley, Sidney Sperry, and James Talmage, but neglects treatments by such stalwarts as B. H. Roberts (New Witnesses for God), Lowell L. Bennion (Understanding the Scriptures), and Heber C. Snell (Ancient Israel: Its Story and Meaning). It misses entirely works analyzing biblical scholarship in the Church (such as Gordon Irving's Mormonism and the Bible, 1832-1838), Anthony Hutchinson's LDS Approaches to the Holy Bible, or Richard Sherlock's Faith and History: The Snell Controversy).^5

A more subtle but no less serious set of problems is presented by the entry on the KING JAMES VERSION, which repeats the traditional arguments for why we have retained an archaic translation as our official English Bible. I say "subtle" because although some Saints may be conscious that the elegant KJV is confusing and less accurate than other translations, fewer grasp why the issue should matter very much. As author D. Kelly Ogden (whose temperate, generous tone we should salute) puts it, "Many [Latter-day Saints] feel ... the ancient textual variants [on which modern translations are based] to be relatively insignificant." Now in light of such an assertion I think I hear a turning wherever President J. Reuben Clark is buried, but I too can sympathize with those unconcerned with esoteric points of biblical translation. If this were the problem's core, passion would be hard to muster. Unfortunately, a more fundamental issue is at stake: the King James Version of the Bible functions at several levels as a conceptual prison for late-twentieth-century readers.

Ogden's KJV loyalties were buttressed as recently as the First Presidency's 20 June 1992 statement in the Church News. I respect the Church leaders' decision and support their authority in addressing the difficult tasks they encounter. Even were that not so, there is little doubt that most English-speaking Latter-day Saints will continue for the foreseeable future to use the King James Bible. Following basic gospel principles and simply living responsible lives nevertheless suggests that we should understand the implications of our course: It is not only the inaccuracies in the texts on which the KJV is based that should concern us, although a people who profess to reverence scripture might be expected to take accuracy seriously. Nor is it merely the obscurity of antique words and phrases—a problem diluted for ambitious adults by explanatory footnotes in the LDS edition, but an enduring obstacle for many Saints and for the young. Nor is it even the fact that most modern readers would be hard-pressed to follow the complex style and ideas of Paul, Isaiah, and other biblical writers even were they presented in intelligible and accurate twentieth-century prose. Instead, the most basic problem is that the elegance of the "Authorized" English Bible warps for the modern ear the tone of the original texts, thus distorting our perception of the very nature of scripture. This, in turn, affects a great many things about Mormonism, including the Church's perception of itself.

One can hear no King James-like cathedral bells ringing in the background when one reads the Gospel of Mark in koine Greek (the colloquial dialect in which the earliest manuscripts were written). Mark's writing is raw, fresh, breathless, primitive. The lordly prose of the KJV, especially as it is heard by twentieth-century ears, is for many biblical texts an external imposition, shifting the locus of authority away from the power of the story itself (the "good news") and toward an authority spawned by the partially artificial holiness suffusing our culturally created notion of "scripture." Our addiction to the KJV gilds the lily of the original message, then construes respect for the gild rather than the lily as a mark of orthodoxy. We do not resolve but compound the tangle by arguing that the Prophet Joseph patterned his formulations of the revelations he received after Jacobian language, and that this neo-seventeenth-century style is therefore sacrosanct. That Joseph adopted this pattern was natural enough, but his intent in producing new scripture was to liberate, not to entrap. Since the Prophet felt free to amend the prose of his revelations as his perceptions grew by study and by inspiration, we might wonder at our tendency to counter his example by sacralizing a process and a linguistic style incidental to his mortal time and place. Those Saints who consciously choose the King James Bible over other alternatives might do so for understandable reasons, including deference to the current First Presidency of the Church. What we ought not do is to depend on the KJV as our central translation on the basis of any rational explanations proffered in the Encyclopedia of Mormonism.

Problems in a work so vast as the Encyclopedia are inevitably many; they would exist no matter who was involved with the project. If I expend disproportionate space on them here, it is not because I think there is more bad than good in these books, but because the books are destined to have a colossal influence. They are likely to be in print indefinitely, and plans for an electronic version are reportedly under discussion. As a people, we need to acknowledge and wrestle with diverse issues in hopes that those producing future editions might work to make a good product better.

Thus, essays on the Messiah seem oblivious to modern scholarship, which has made enormous progress in the last fifteen years in grasping how the concept was construed anciently. The article on SCRIPTURE arbitrarily chooses Joseph Fielding Smith's pronouncements over the contrasting views of Brigham Young and others in pronouncing on the relative authority of scripture vis-à-vis living prophets. Another entry, APOCALYPTIC TEXTS, scarcely differentiates between apocalyptic and revelation generally (partially on the grounds that "apocalyptic" originally meant "revelation"). The entry will seem harmless to many readers, who will recognize Joseph Smith's prophetic experiences in the description of apocalyptic, but the essay fails to report and assess much in apocalyptic writings that seems bizarre. The article's embrace of apocalyptic is actually so intimate as to place Mormons on the lunatic fringe of religious adherents. One could include any number of discredited impulses during recent millennia under the compass of its description, including such non-Christian messianic movements as the Native American "ghost dance" of the late nineteenth century, with its erratic and sometimes fatal manifestations.\(^6\)
Perhaps we may detect a trace of our lengthening tradition of embarrassing defensiveness toward narrow Protestant fundamentalist critics in the editor's need to point out that "Twenty-four articles are clustered under the title 'Jesus Christ,' and another sixteen include his name in the title or relate directly to his divine mission and atonement" (lxii). This, to be fair, occurs in the context of an effort to convey the overall structure of the Encyclopedia, but it did conjure for me an old image: legions of Saints meticulously verifying their Christianity by counting the number of times the term "Christ" shows up in the Topical Guide of the LDS Bible. John Welch does well in selecting a sample of interesting "doctrinal points and practical insights" from the Book of Mormon (1:204), but the profundity of these need to be drawn out, given context, and applied to the real world to enable ordinary readers to recognize their depth.

One entry, DOCTRINE: LDS COMPARED WITH OTHER CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES, asserts an "LDS rejection of hellenistic philosophy" (1:400). Its following example notes the Mormon denial of the spirit-matter dichotomy, which holds that spirit and matter are opposed and inimical to each other. But the ancient Stoics taught well before the Latter-day Saints that spirit is refined matter. The entry thus does not demonstrate that Mormonism rejects hellenistic philosophy wholesale but merely, on this particular point, Platonic philosophy. In a double slip of the pen, the author informs us on the next page that Latter-day Saints "accept the concept of the fortunate Fall (mea culpa)"). We should note in passing that Latin for the "fortunate Fall" is not mea culpa ("my fault") but felix culpa. More substantively, however, Latter-day Saints do not accept the notion, at least as construed by other Christians. Augustine, who coined the term, intended it devotionally and nearly hyperbolically, meaning something like: "even the Fall is become a happy occasion since it resulted in bringing a Redeemer so exquisite as ours." Mormons mean: "the Fall brought about the condition of humans as we know it and, for all the suffering entailed, this is nevertheless good, intentional, and essential to fulfilling our natures."

One needs no extraordinary imagination to discern the echoes of spirited editorial negotiation behind EVOLUTION, an entry that itself evolved almost into a non-entry, resulting not so much in a treatment as in a brief policy statement (BLESSING ON THE FOOD got twice as much space). But here, as elsewhere, the editors wisely risked redundancy in favor of adequate coverage, and John Sorenson's ORIGIN OF MAN takes up some of the slack by revealing a diversity of Mormon views on the actual creation process, properly held together by the simple belief that God was the force behind human creation.

Carlfred Broderick, a star in his own field of family therapy and human sexuality, has contributed a good piece on SUFFERING IN THE WORLD, though neither this nor the related and theologically more sophisticated entry on THEODICY (accomplished with excellence by John Cobb Jr. and Truman G. Madsen) have given fully sufficient credit to views that contrast with Mormon perspectives. Theodicy is a sub-field of theology which attempts to vindicate God in allowing evil to exist. Mormon thought really does offer profound resources to deal with this, one of the world's most difficult problems. But we run serious risks by being too dismissive (or unaware entirely) of the power of post-Holocaustal theological thought apart from the world of Mormonism. Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel, for example, insists that well-intended theodicies all too easily become demonic—sedating us when we should take action and justifying what is not justifiable. I ultimately would agree at most points with Cobb and Madsen, but I would want the potency of Wiesel's case first to be absorbed and appropriated by my people. To paraphrase one rabbi: "No theological statement ought to be attempted that would not ring true in the presence of burning or starving children."

It is impossible wholly to separate Mormon theological concerns from those dimensions of the Encyclopedia with other intended foci, such as the historical sections or the glossary. Even the superb graphics are often laden with theological freight (and if the purity and beauty emanating from the image of Helen Bassey Davies Udoeyo [1:24] captures the reflection of contemporary Relief Society presidents, my support for the kingdom continues to expand). Thus, a theological analysis of the Encyclopedia could proceed indefinitely. Had we space, we might contemplate the devil-conscious perspectives that so regularly surface. We could lament the extent to which some of our conceptions (see AUTHORITY) paint an ironic portrait of Jesus as Legalist. We could take cheer at the constructive honesty behind Daniel Bachman's and Ronald Esplin's handling of PLURAL MARRIAGE, and the concise, fair, and competent treatment of WORLD RELIGIONS and their relation to Mormonism by Spencer Palmer and Arnold Green. Or we could puzzle over Gerald Bradford's and Larry Dahl's notion that LDS doctrine, originating as it does directly from God, has no earthly history analogous to the history of other ideas, but is entirely a function of spiritual apostasies and recoveries (MEANING, SOURCE, AND HISTORY OF DOCTRINE).

In particular, we might ponder the urge of several contributors to celebrate the paucity of Mormon theology itself. This attitude culminates in THEOLOGY, an entry which substantially undermines the scope and significance of the LDS theological heritage ("Some of the early leaders, coming as they did from sectarian backgrounds, seem to have felt a need for something approaching an orderly and authoritative setting forth of their beliefs"). Diminishing the significance of the "Lectures on Faith" (originally the "doctrine" in the "Doctrine and Covenants" and once accepted by the Saints as scripture) and ignoring or trivializing the tradition that followed in its wake, the author evidently finds little importance (whether historical or religious) in works by Orson Spencer, Franklin D. Richards, James E. Talmage, B. H. Roberts, John Widtsoe, and others (to say nothing of works produced by thinkers outside the official hierarchy).

Even more telling, the essay denigrates theology as such. This has been a regular theme of many LDS conservatives and
liberals alike who have seen theology as dry, abstract, irrelevant, divisive, speculative, erroneous, and confining. But need theology repel us so? To account for the etymology of the term, there was a time when theologians viewed their task as the study of God and beliefs about God, sometimes attempting to fashion just the sort of enforceable tenets the Doctrine and Covenants warns us against (19:31). Although this sort of thing continues to exist and is properly resisted in Mormonism, the thrust of contemporary theology in the non-fundamentalist Christian world is less concerned with elaborating the unknown through airy metaphysical speculations than with examining how we might best live our lives in light of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Theology, despite the poor or irrelevant uses to which it has often been put, need be construed as no more frightening than this: a critically informed and disciplined reflection on one's faith, its meaning, and its implications. Surely this is a project worthy of Latter-day Saint thinkers. Mormons already reflect publicly on their faith in the form of the personal essay. And Mormons do produce scholarship. What is wanted in a theologian is the admittedly rare capacity to combine the two enterprises, achieving the solidity of the scholar and the imaginative artfulness of the essayist.

Theology can be viewed as directed inward (helping the community of faith understand the nature and implications of its own faith) or outward (interpreting the faith to the outside educated world, and interpreting the world—culture, symbols, images, ideas—in relation to the faith tradition). Someone a few years back spoke of theology as the “grammar of faith”—giving faith structure and helping it make sense to critically informed minds.

Our contemporary phobia about systematic theology apparently stems from concerns about displacing the prophets and a proper wariness against some body of thought coming to function as a quasi-creedal overlord. But the alternatives to a systematic approach to theology are either an unsystematic approach (occasional? random? arbitrary? chaotic?) or no approach at all. Do we really want to champion hostility to organized, critical, and disciplined reflection on the content of our faith? When a Jewish or Christian or Hindu scholar writes systematically about the ideas of his or her tradition, few readers mistake their work as credally binding. This sort of tension arises only when the Vatican or comparable authorities produce and enforce binding doctrinal pronouncements. There is little danger indeed that a contemporary LDS scholar who is not an apostle would be so misunderstood. The work of responsible theologians, like the work of responsible historians, will always be partial, evolving, in dialogue with other perspectives.

Part of our hostility to theology is prompted by the idea that we don't need human interpretations, since we already have the word of God straight from the scriptures and the prophets. This perspective is reflected in the *Encyclopedia.* But though the discussion is tiresome and overwrought in the academy, we apparently need to remind ourselves in the Church that everything, including our reading of the scriptures, involves interpretation. Prophetic words and the scriptures themselves, insofar as they are inspired, are human interpretations of the divine, given after the manner of our language and limitations. This truth somewhat frustrated the Prophet Joseph, who cried, “Oh Lord, deliver us in due time from the little, narrow prison . . . [the] total darkness of paper, pen and ink;—and a crooked, broken, scattered and imperfect language.” But God has not yet done so; language remains the gift God has given. And language, like life, requires sustained probing.

Many feel that Mormonism is inimical to systematic thinking, to formal “concepts,” and ought rather to be expressed only in story or narrative form. This sentiment is not unique to the Latter-day Saints. The family of liberation theologies, including many feminist theologies, have also cast doubt on the usefulness of systematic theology. I am by no means hostile to “story,” but surely visioning and reconceiving religious categories is not only useful but inevitable: we are doing this at some level whether we think we are or not, and it is essential to our religious consciousness to proceed, at least sometimes, with poise, awareness, and control. A story bears examination from many perspectives, and even then may remain ambiguous. As concepts need stories to attain conviction, stories need justifiable concepts to provide orientation and context. There are concepts inherent in stories, fleshing them out clarifies assumptions and implications.

A truly Mormon theologian will not attempt to rival the prophets, who properly hold authority and administrative responsibility for the Church. Although the construction of disciplined theology, like the construction of authentic history, needs to maintain its independence and its integrity, theologians as theologians do not claim prophetic authority for the results of their thoughts. To the extent they do, they are acting as prophets (or as false prophets), not as theologians. But it remains crucial that we explore the nature, meaning, relevance, and implications of our revelation and our tradition as they address the life, the pressing reality, in which we find ourselves.

Is it sufficient, as some argue, to ignore theology in favor of what really matters—faith, repentance, charitable and ethical behavior? The problem here is that such disarmingly simple answers disguise legions of preconceptions. Faith in what? Jesus? God? The scriptures? The Church? Righteousness? Grace? Life? Immortality? Any possible answer raises many additional questions demanding either an informed theological response or else a refusal or inability to recognize the depth of one's presuppositions. Who, for instance is Jesus? With a sense of testimony, one might answer "the Christ" (or something else) either with deep profundity or with nearly perfect naive et. But only to one's intellectual peril can a formal response be attempted without responsibly accounting for the last century of theological and historical scholarship on the matter. Similarly, almost everyone agrees we ought to be charitable and ethical. The real issue thus becomes the form and content and targets of our charity and ethics. In the absence of rigorous and competent theological reflection, a religious person's pre-theological assumptions affect what one thinks is benevolent, good, and proper. These assumptions condition
who and how and when and whether one marries; how one thinks of and raises children; how one spends time and money; one's attitudes (or tragic passivity) toward sexuality, homosexuality, abortion politics, the purpose of life—just about any- and everything. In light of such implications, boasting of theological ignorance constitutes ignorance of a deeper sort.

We must continue to remind ourselves we are not a credal church, but "nature abhors a vacuum." Hence, while telling ourselves we have no creed, a tendency persists to fill the void with some other influential body of thought like Bruce McConkie's Mormon Doctrine, or with manuals that draw heavily from Mormon Doctrine, or with the scriptures themselves (interpreted through a framework that comports with Mormon Doctrine or its analogues). The issue is not simply whether or not we have an official creed. An inextricably related issue is: what is to be the relative quality of the inevitable frameworks of thought that do and will exist in our shared background.

The Encyclopedia of Mormonism will displace Mormon Doctrine as the Latter-day Saints' non-scriptural reference work of choice. Despite its disclaimers about official status, the Encyclopedia emerged with hierarchical sanction from the Church's university, was closely supervised by LDS officials, and is being actively promoted by agencies of the Church (including, for example, free distribution to educators for use in the Church Educational System). All this indicates the work is likely to attain a perceived semi-official status in wide sectors of Mormonism. Indeed, any future systematic theological work by an LDS scholar would be far less likely than the Encyclopedia itself to assume the specter of a misunderstood and misused quasi-creed.

Awareness of such a possibility, like awareness of weaknesses in the Encyclopedia's content, should not negate our gratitude for the significant accomplishment of the editors and contributors. If Mormonism interests you and if you have the money, you should buy these books. They contain much light, and I will turn to them on many occasions in the future.

Examples in the domain of theology or biblical studies include Harvard's Krister Stendahl and Frank Moore Cross, Princeton Theological Seminar's James H. Charlesworth, the University of Michigan's David Noel Freedman, Duke's W. D. Davies, and Claremont's John B. Cobb Jr.


6. The apocalyptic fervor of the Native American Ghost Dance was, in part, an expression of cultural desperation at the encroachments of White civilization. Its starkest repercussions took shape among the Ogalal Sioux, whose sense of messianic power led them to believe they were invulnerable to the bullets of the U.S. Seventh Cavalry at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in December 1890. The more recent tragedy in Waco, Texas, requires additional study before facile connections are made.


8. And indeed, theology as practiced too often does miss the mark. This needs a separate essay of its own, but we can at least note here that the very term "theology" needs further discussion. The word means very different things if one applies it to an authoritative pronouncement of the First Presidency of the LDS church, as distinct from when Sterling McMurrin or Paul Edwards descriptively analyze and contextualize metaphorical systems, or when Margaret and Paul Toscano unashamedly celebrate speculation, teach us about the reincarnations of Jesus, and construe theology as "myth" (the sort of myth they believe one can sit down and consciously create at will). We can further discern quite various methods when Eugene England uses Mormon categories to work through his understanding of the ethical implications of some or another issue, or when Bruce McConkie answers all possible questions by giving a legal cast to the whole of Mormon existence, or when, two decades ago, the RLDS church, "exploring its faith," reconceived as belief system by carefully reasoned inquiry: muting, abandoning, and going beyond the Epitome of Faith (what Latter-day Saints call "the Articles of Faith").

9. Of course, Lotus Midgely, who authored THEOLOGY for the Encyclopedia, may have other objections and may be using the term "systematic theology" in its historical and more technical sense, meaning the sort of treatises that purport to deal exhaustively and authoritatively with a particular set of doctrines, typically including God, creation, sin, redemption, eschatology, ecclesiology, and others. In this case, I can sympathize with his antipathy toward many forms this body of work has taken in the Christian world. However, as I point out in the text above, theological reflection, as distinct from prophetic pronouncement, need not—ought not—claim to be "authoritative" in the sense of credal imposition. "System," in the wider sense of the word, is simply crucial to attain broad coherence. Layer upon layers of assumptions usually inhere in the use of such basic religious terms as "faith," "grace," "salvation," "scripture," "testimony," "Holy Spirit," and "God." Good theology tries to make sense of language used otherwise unctually.

The historical articles in the Encyclopedia

A MIXED—BUT GENERALLY OPEN—BAG

By Thomas G. Alexander

Several years ago the editors of a projected Encyclopedia of Mormonism asked a group of scholars to meet with them to suggest potential strategies for completing the four-volume work (five if you count the supplementary volume of scriptures) of approximately a million words. Responding to that request, academics and interested parties discussed, brainstormed, and sent memos recommending topics for inclusion. The whole project seemed quite exciting, and all of us hoped the volumes would prove useful to those interested in learning more about the Latter-day Saints.

Then the rumors started rolling in. We heard the scuttlebutt—true or not—that the editors had blacklisted certain people including Eugene England, eminently knowledgeable on Mormon literature; D. Michael Quinn, a leading authority on the Mormon practice of plural marriage and on relationships in the Church leadership; and Valeen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell, both extremely knowledgeable on the history of women in the Church. Further rumors surfaced that some entries had come under fire for their content and that authors had been counseled not to write about this or that aspect of important topics. When the published volume included no articles by some of the people mentioned, the rumors seemed confirmed.

As the project proceeded, I began to wonder about the editorial process itself. After former Salt Lake City Mayor Ted Wilson and I submitted our entry on Salt Lake City, we heard nothing from the editors until shortly before the volume was scheduled to go to press. Then Larry Porter, a friend working with the editors, came to see me. He said that some of the editors had become overworked and that they had asked him to try to complete certain revisions in an excessively short period of time. He played the role an editor should play, his proposals for revisions proved extremely helpful, and I gladly made the changes he had suggested.

Several months later, I received the approved manuscript with a cover letter from the editors, and I began to wonder just how others would respond to what I saw as the epistle’s authoritarian tone. The letter left the impression that the editors believed the article in its approved form had reached something near sanctification.

Although the copy editors had completed their work competently, unlike the helpful suggestions that Larry Porter had given me, the content editors had introduced some factual errors and propaganda into the text. In writing about the changes in the composition of political parties in Salt Lake City immediately prior to statehood, the editors had substituted the term “Democrat” Party where I had used the term “Democratic.” In addition, they had edited the manuscript to leave the impression that virtually all Mormons had joined the Republican Party while most gentiles had become Democrats. Since I knew that the term “Democratic Party” was a favorite slam of right-wing Republicans, I asked the editors to restore the proper designation, “Democratic Party.” In addition, I pointed out that Mormons had joined both parties and asked for a revision of that as well. I was heartened when, in spite of the tone of the cover letter, the editors accepted my revisions and the article appeared with the changes I had requested.

With my experience in mind, for this review I turned with hope to the historical entries in the Encyclopedia. I was quite pleased when I saw that, with some exceptions, the articles turned out extraordinarily well.

Some of the articles incorporate much of the most recent scholarship and provide—as they should—short accurate references on important topics. An example is the entry on DESERET, STATE OF that relies on recent work by Peter Crawley to show that Utahns probably never held the constitutional convention. The article on PROHIBITION is an admirable example of the incorporation of recent scholarship, some of which the author himself published, showing the influence of Evangelical Protestants in the inauguration of an experiment in a liquor-free Utah. The article on the UNITED ORDERS is an excellent summary of the successes and failures and the reasons for the divergence between expectation and result. The article on the UTAH EXPEDITION is a distinguished short description and analysis by a knowledgeable author.

The various entries dealing with PLURAL MARRIAGE should serve as a corrective to much misinformation current in the Mormon community. Instead of trying to pawn off on a knowledgeable public the shopworn fraud that only 2-3 percent of the Church membership ever practiced polygamy, these entries recognize that upwards of 25 percent of the men and women married polygaminously in the nineteenth century. The entry on VITAL STATISTICS points out that in the 1860s perhaps 30 percent had entered the principle.

Most satisfactory also are the various entries on periods of the HISTORY OF THE CHURCH. The entry on the Ohio, Missouri, and Nauvoo Periods, for instance, recognizes that the Church members were relatively poor. This should serve as a corrective to Church discussions that often erroneously attribute difficulties in Missouri to the relative wealth and sophisti-
culation of the Latter-day Saints in contrast to the community of poor southern crackers who comprised the old settlers there.

The articles on the HANDCART COMPANIES, the MANIFESTO OF 1890, and SEAGULLS, MIRACLE OF are also well done. The handcart company article places the topic in context and provides accurate information on the entire enterprise and rescue. The author could have improved the article by mentioning that John Taylor and Franklin D. Richards probably bore the responsibility for sending out the Willey and Martin Companies so late, but that is a slight matter. The Manifesto article rightly distinguishes between the document itself and the revelation underpinning it. Moreover, it points to a potential loss of temples as a principal reason for the declaration. The article on the miracle of the seagulls mentions the problems of frost and drought that also contributed to crop damage. The author could have improved it by adding the information that cricket plagues continued to the early 1870s.

SOME of the biographies are absolutely first rate. The best deal with the personal character including both the secular and spiritual sides of their subjects, and they do not shrink from considering controversial topics. In these fine entries we get to know the whole person, not just the religious leader. Among the best are those of HEBER J. GRANT, HEBER C. KIMBALL, DAVID O. MCKAY, BRIGHAM YOUNG, EMMELINE B. WELLS, LAVERN WATTS PARMLEY, CLARISSA S. WILLIAMS, AMY BROWN LYMAN, EMMA HALE SMITH, ELIZA R. SNOW, DAVID WHITMER, WILFORD WOODRUFF, and BATHSHEBA BIGLER SMITH.

I was pleased to see that some knowledgeable scholars from other religious traditions were invited to participate in writing for the Encyclopedia. In addition to several entries by historians from the RLDS community like Alma Blair and Richard Howard, Jan Shipps's entry provides a non-Mormon and religious studies perspective on MORMONISM and its relationship with other branches of Christianity. Inviting John Dillenberger to serve as co-author of the article on PROTESTANTS had similar value.

Some of the articles deal forthrightly with change in the Church. The article on organization and administration, for instance, deals with the spiritual aspects of this topic while pointing out that the role of the Twelve changed over time from a quorum assigned only to supervise religious matters outside the stakes to a council numbered among the general authorities of the Church. It also recognizes that contemporaries perceived the Relief Society in Nauvoo as a counterpart to the Church's ability to penetrate some African states before 1978. The piece on REYNOLDS V. UNITED STATES (1879) deals forthrightly with the issues in the case and considers the importance of the decision in defining the scope of the Constitution's free exercise clause.

Although most articles generally are well done, if I were to cite a major problem with those articles that I found deficient, I would point to the tendency to fail to view the topics in an adequately conceived historical context and thus to miss certain important aspects. In the entry ACADEMIES, for instance, the author argues that a major reason for the founding of academies was the lack of public educational facilities in Utah before 1900. Actually the problem was much more complex than that. What the author does not mention is that a number of Church leaders and educators including Brigham Young, Karl G. Maeser, and W. J. Kerr opposed the movement toward tax-supported public education—particularly on the secondary level—and that many perceived church schools as an alternative to secularized public institutions as well as to the academies founded by Protestant churches, which the author mentions.

Some of the other entries have similar problems. The article on CHURCH AND STATE is not completely forthright in examining the extent of Church involvement in state affairs in the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. Little wonder that the author could propose an amendment stripping the Utah Constitution of its current separation of church and state clause. The article on MATERINITY AND CHILD HEALTH CARE fails to mention or interpret the strong support during the 1920s for the federal Shepherd-Towner Act, which provided funds to assist mothers and children, and provides very little information on attempts to deal with problems of maternity and child care during the period from 1912 to 1990. The article on PARLEY P. PRATT does not deal with the circumstances surrounding Pratt's murder by the former husband of one of the apostle's plural wives. The article on JOSEPH F. SMITH does not mention the failure of his first marriage; and the entry on JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH does not consider the important controversy with Heber J. Grant, B. H. Roberts, and others over his views on evolution. The article on SUNDAY SCHOOL fails to mention that Mormon Sunday schools were part of a larger movement within American and British churches and that LDS leaders participated in national Sunday school conventions with representatives of those organizations.

Some authors tended to ignore the pervasive racism that existed in the Church prior to 1978, and which still exists to a great extent in Mormon popular culture. The entry AFRICA, THE CHURCH IN, for instance, does not consider the prohibition against the blacks holding the priesthood as a reason for the Church's inability to penetrate some African states before 1978. The article on RACE, RACISM fails to appraise the widespread racism among the Church membership especially during the 1940s and 1950s, abundantly clear to African-Americans who wanted to marry Euro-Americans, who tried to purchase housing in Salt Lake City, or who sought public accommodations at the Church-owned Hotel Utah.

Some articles unfortunately leave out information with which the authors may not have been familiar or which they chose to discount. The article on NATIVE AMERICANS, for instance, seems unfamiliar with Al Christy's work. The piece
on NON-MORMONS, SOCIAL RELATIONS WITH should undoubtedly have discussed the tension in the Utah community created by recent LDS block voting, which is well documented by David Magleby and others. The author of the Political Culture section of POLITIES also seems unfamiliar with Magleby’s work showing the tendency in recent years for active Mormons to become Republicans and inactive Mormons and non-Mormons to join the Democratic party in Utah. The article on UTAH TERRITORY fails to mention that citizens elected the members of the legislature and the territorial delegate to discuss the change in attitude of territorial officials like Governor Caleb West and Chief Justice Charles S. Zane after the Church renounced plural marriage. The article on WAR AND PEACE fails to deal adequately with Michael Quinn’s research on the change in Church attitudes at the time of the Spanish American War.

Even the otherwise excellent article on PLURAL MARRIAGE is not without its shortcomings. The major problem with this entry stems from the failure to detail the difficulties caused by the tensions between multiple families. For instance, the authors should have mentioned and tried to account for the much higher divorce rate in polygamous marriages documented by Phillip Kunz, Eugene and Bruce Campbell, and others. Moreover, the article hedges unnecessarily on the extent of new plural marriages after the Manifesto, well documented in the work of Michael Quinn and Kenneth Cannon.

The article on MAGIC suffers from serious defects. It does not mention Joseph Smith’s participation in the practice, well documented in the work of Richard Bushman and Michael Quinn, and cites only negative biblical precedents, neglecting the examples of magic used by prophets like Jacob and Aaron in Old Testament times.

Some problems in the volume seem to have resulted from editorial decisions. It seems probable that either the way in which the editors divided up the subjects or their failure to insist on the deletion of repetition led to unnecessary redundancy. As a result, too many articles devote far too much space to the retelling of historical incidents during the period before 1845, and the encyclopedia gives far too little attention to the history of important events and to the biographies of important figures since Joseph Smith’s death. For instance, in addition to an excellent article on the HAUN’S MILL MASSACRE, authors consider the tragedy in some detail in at least four other places. Settlement and conflict in Missouri are considered in several articles as well. By way of contrast, no articles provide an adequate basis for understanding the adoption of policy during the 1930s that led to a change in the relationship between the Relief Society and Presiding Bishop’s office and local governments and welfare recipients. Moreover, there is no discussion of the controversial Strengthening the Members Committee. Because of their overlap with other articles, some entries seem superfluous. The entry on PERSECUTION, for instance, cites examples generally well covered in other articles dealing with MISSOURI, HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, ANTIPOLYGAMY LEGISLATION, and other similar topics.

Had the editors been willing to cut some of these redundancies, space would undoubtedly have been available to rectify another glaring omission: the absence of biographies of a large number of significant individuals. There are no biographical articles on seminal figures such as B. H. Roberts, significant as a historian and theologian; James E. Talmage, theologian and biographer of Christ; or John A. Widtsoe, whose attempts to reconcile science and religion during the early twentieth century were extremely important. Most glaring, in spite of his incalculable impact on Church doctrine and practice, there is no biography of J. Reuben Clark.

On the other hand, most appropriately, articles appear on each of the auxiliary presidents, including the women who served as presidents of the Relief Society, Primary, and Young Women organizations.

In conclusion, it seems important to stand back from the encyclopedia and to assess its contribution as a whole. In order to do so, it is important to understand a number of recent developments in the LDS community. Unfortunately, a tendency persists in some circles to defend the legitimacy of the censorship of the Church’s past and in doing so to urge historians to produce historical accounts excised of controversy, secular events, or problematic episodes.

I find this disposition enormously troubling. This is because it seems clear that historians do just as great a disservice to the Latter-day Saint community by erasing controversial or secular events from written versions of our history as by neglecting the spiritual aspects of revelations, visions, and divine intervention. Recognizing that any historical account necessarily represents a selection from among the tiny amount of available information left from the past, historians need to understand that in sampling from that material they cannot provide satisfactory generalizations unless they interpret all available types of data, secular and spiritual, bland and controversial.

Moreover, the memory and thus the history of a people belongs to the entire community, not simply to a select group. All Latter-day Saints are stewards of the memory of our people. That means that each Mormon has an obligation to try to understand and interpret the history of our people as fully and honestly as possible. It is particularly important that the community memory of the general membership integrate all aspects of the people’s past.

From that point of view, I found the entry on the MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE most distressing. For whatever reason, the authors, both of whom know the topic well, left out the names and roles of all participants except John D. Lee. Nowhere does the article mention George A. Smith’s southern journey and his admonitions not to sell to outsiders. It fails to consider or interpret the roles of such leaders as Isaac Haight, William Dame, and John Higbee, at least part of whose activities we have known well since the publication of Juanita Brooks’s Mountain Meadows Massacre in 1950. Moreover, the entry devotes more space to the monument recently unveiled at the massacre site and its role in
reconciliation than to an analysis of the reasons for and results of the tragedy. On the positive side, however, the article rightly absolves Brigham Young of blame for the massacre, correcting William Wise's flawed account of the affair.

Although the authors quote Brooks's comment that the participants "were led to do what none singly would have done under normal conditions, and for which none singly can be held responsible," they are far too vague about the planning and scope of the tragedy. The collective conscience of every covenant community needs to retain the memory that normally good, moral, and God-fearing people under extraordinary conditions can perpetrate hideous crimes in the name of God and the public welfare. At very least the Church membership needs to remember that a meeting of the stake presidency and high council planned the tragedy and that units of the territorial militia—citizen-soldiers—carried out the crime. On a general level, the collective memory needs to bear in mind that public action grounded in fear and hatred can lead to violence, death, and dishonor.

On balance, however, in spite of its shortcomings, I would give high marks to the Encyclopedia. I suspect that as recently as twenty years before its publication such an undertaking would have been impossible, both because of the lack of qualified scholars in the LDS community and because of the resistance to dealing forthrightly with topics such as plural marriage and the secular aspects of the lives of such leaders as Heber J. Grant and Brigham Young.

On the whole I would say that the authors and editors of the Encyclopedia did an excellent job. Most of the historical entries are quite readable, and they provide the sort of accurate information that a general reader would need to understand the topics. In addition, the entries and their bibliographies provide the basis for further research by both the layperson and the professional historian.

NOTES
6. Richard L. Bushman, Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); D. Michael Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987); On Jacob's use of magic to produce spotted and speckled cattle see Genesis 30: 37-43; On Aaron's turning his rod into a serpent see Exodus 7:9-12. Some commentators want to argue that these are not incidents of magic because they were done with the help of God, but the essence of magic is the invocation of some extra-human power whether good (white) or bad (black) to bring about a physical effect.

QUIET, COURTEOUS PERFORMER
He struck a tambourine of bone and silver making a bird-among-the-wet-rock sound, making noise that someone see him sitting in the juice-clumps of the fresh-mown banks of the Vistula River, brown-red poisoned water rushing past the bright holy pinnacles of Kraków.

He was, before his cancer and calm begging a pot-stirrer in hellish metallurgical plants, living in darkness and fumes, devoutly Catholic shining with wonder at three painful and bloody births, chasing his wife's screams from the next room with vodka, stabbing diligently with his burning sticks the morning the iron curtain slumped in its rings.

"Don't I still make lovely music," he said, bang bang bang, a dollar's worth of sausage to make him stop, or cigarettes.

The wind has an odor of fresh paint, the wind smells of mercury and green benches.

His wife died in Teplice, his son in Chomutov, his daughter married a Seattle student and lives safe in a strange American place called Oregon—he smiles saying as if god has lifted the embargo on his luck allowing one beautiful thing from all the blood and pain and moral contamination to surge above the sooty smokestacks and survive.

—SEAN BRENDAN BROWN
A review of the social issues in the Encyclopedia

MARCHING DOWN THE MORMON MIDDLE

By Armand L. Mauss

Like my colleagues Eugene England and Richard Poll, I am very pleased, on the whole, with the new *Encyclopedia.* It contains only a few (very few) pieces that are embarrassing for their superstitiousness, simple-mindedness, or manifest ignorance of relevant research literature, and some others that are more bland and "safe" than informative. Yet the overwhelming majority of the pieces could fairly be characterized as accurate, honest, and thorough, especially given the stringent space constraints placed upon the authors, and certain other limitations imposed by the publisher, the editorial board, or both.

One such limitation was the desire to avoid controversy at various stages of the editorial process (including, in some cases, controversy among general authorities themselves). Another limitation was the deliberate effort to pitch the writing at the level of high school graduate or beginning college student. At the insistence of the publisher, the apologists were also rather muted for the most part, an external restraint that certainly enhanced the general quality of the work. The overall result was a good, solid, middle-of-the-road treatment of hundreds of important and interesting Mormon traits and issues.

The circumstances under which the *Encyclopedia* came to be commissioned and contracted with BYU are explained briefly in the Preface (lx-lxi) and in an *LDS Church News* article. Additional details, some gathered through interviews, are provided in Richard D. Poll's article (see note 1). The authors comprised a broad spectrum of expertise (from none to great) and of religious commitment ("Iron rod" to "Liahona" to inactive to RLDS to non-Mormon). Poll indicates that the editors made a deliberate effort to include a mixture of "lay" authors and academic experts to emphasize the lay quality of Mormon leadership. Some of the lay authors came through wonderfully well; others were embarrassments.

The project was kept "close to home" for the most part, since most authors were Utahns, especially BYU and/or Church Education System faculty. Perhaps a fourth of the contributors were female. Some of the criteria for author selection seemed obvious (established expertise, preference for BYU/CES connection, etc.). Other criteria were hard to figure out. Apparently a sort of "snowball" sampling of potential authors took place (someone who knew someone, etc.), since certain "networks" are apparent. For example, there are six or eight authors with McConkie surnames or middle names.

The most serious and recurrent weakness in the *Encyclopedia* is to be found in the follow-up bibliographies at the end of each entry. Naturally these had to be brief and were not intended as exhaustive. One might have thought that such a constraint would have argued for including the most thorough and systematic references in the available space. Only rarely was such the case, however. Most bibliographies had a haphazard quality, greatly limiting their usefulness to readers who might seek more information. Official Church publications were obviously preferred, perhaps understandably so, but most of those will not be readily available to non-Mormon readers.

Among scholarly works, there was a clear bias in favor of non-Mormon books and professional journals over the "unsponsored" books and journals from within the Mormon community. Among the latter, *BYU Studies* was preferred over *Dialogue, Sunstone,* or the *Journal of Mormon History,* even when the latter sources could have provided much better citations. Where a *Dialogue* article had been reprinted in an edited book, the book was more likely to be cited than the original *Dialogue* source.

The reasons for such bibliographical biases can only be surmised. In spite of them, however, *Sunstone* was still cited scores of times, and *Dialogue* at least a hundred times, in the various bibliographies at the ends of articles. The editors and publishers of these periodicals will be missing a good opportunity if they do not make prominent mention in their subscription campaigns of the numerous times that they were cited in the new *Encyclopedia*!

My assignment for this review is limited to those parts of the encyclopedia that deal with current social issues in the LDS community. I have organized my review in several sections: (1) scientific and intellectual issues; (2) marriage and family (including sexual) issues; (3) matters of life and death; (4) gender issues; (5) race and ethnicity issues; (6) earth and the environment; (7) politics and political issues; and (8) social and demographic characteristics.

SCIENTIFIC AND INTELLECTUAL ISSUES

From the *Encyclopedia* articles, most Mormon and non-Mormon readers will get the impression that the LDS church...
strikes an appropriate balance between revelation, on the one hand, and reason or science, on the other. The SCIENCE AND RELIGION entry strongly affirms the importance of science in the balance between the two and concludes with one of the best bibliographies in the entire encyclopedia. SCIENCE AND SCIENTISTS cites well-known LDS scientists like Harvey Fletcher, Henry Eyring, and Willard Gardner, and emphasizes the scientific training received by certain general authorities, both past (Orson Pratt, James Talmage, John Widtsoe) and present (Russell Nelson and Richard Scott). Both of these sections express the traditional LDS premise that there is ultimately no necessary conflict between science and religion.

The REASON AND REVELATION entry stresses the continuity and synthesis between the two in LDS tradition. Warnings against the arrogance of human reason are cited from scripture, but so are affirmations of the openness in LDS teachings to the “intrinsic as well as instrumental goodness of the life of the mind.” FOLLOWING THE BRETHREN cites Doctrine and Covenants 68 to the effect that the prophets, when acting under divine guidance, are expressing the will of the Lord. But the entry’s author recognizes at the same time the human traits of the prophets and explicitly rejects any implication of their infallibility, or any expectation of “blind obedience” in the injunction to “follow the Brethren.” OBEDIENCE discusses only our obligations to the Lord, not to Church leaders.

Yet one wonders how well such appreciation for science and reason in the abstract is reflected in the treatment of specific and controversial issues like the age of the earth or the theory of evolution. In the entries for CREATION ACCOUNTS and EARTH, we are assured that the Church takes no official stand on the length of the six creative periods, on the age of the earth, or on the geological significance of the Flood. Many readers will be surprised to see Apostle Widtsoe quoted to the effect that the Genesis account of the Flood should not be taken too literally (432).

EQUATION is a surprisingly short entry with no bibliography suggested for the reader’s follow-up research, owing, I would surmise, to the controversial nature of the topic (Poll indicates that it was one of the few entries that went all the way to the First Presidency for approval!). The treatment is limited almost entirely to acknowledging that evolution was a matter for “intense discussion” by the First Presidency earlier in the century (when it was decided only that “Adam is the primal parent of our race”), and that the Church has taken no position on just how human creation was accomplished. THE ORIGIN OF MAN article arrives at a similar conclusion. Even the entry for FALL OF ADAM concludes with the observation that the Church has no “stated doctrine” on “the nature of life on earth before the Fall.”

MARRIAGE, FAMILY, AND SEXUAL MATTERS

THE entry on MARRIAGE has two parts: “Social and Behavioral Perspectives” reviews the findings of the social research literature on various aspects of sex, marriage, and family, while “Eternal Marriage” discusses the theology and cultural traditions related to temple marriage. Most readers will be reassured by the generally glowing treatment of LDS family life and conservative non-marital sexual norms. Social scientists will notice some bias in the selection of the research findings reported here, leaving the reader with a more favorable impression than is warranted about LDS divorce figures and the quality of LDS marriages, particularly the presumably happy acceptance of traditional gender roles in LDS families. By contrast, the DIVORCE entry is more realistic in its discussion of the subject in both nineteenth- and twentieth-century Mormon life. ABUSE, SPOUSE AND CHILD, sexual and otherwise, is emphatically (if briefly) condemned, of course.

Polygamy is discussed under several headings, but the most extensive treatment is under PLURAL MARRIAGE, which is a fairly candid but sympathetic handling of the subject. The controversial origins in the 1830s and 1840s, and the post-Manifesto persistence well into the twentieth century, are both frankly acknowledged (see also MANIFESTO OF 1890). The percentages of nineteenth-century Mormons involved in the practice varied, of course, between a fourth and a third, depending on whether the reference is to the percentage of adults, of women, or of households, but these are higher (and more realistic) percentages than those acknowledged in earlier official accounts. The bibliography for this article is exemplary.

Sex and sex-related matters are treated under various headings, and when taken collectively reveal the same kind of ambivalence about sex that permeates Mormon culture generally. On the one hand, CHASTITY is treated in a rather ominous tone, with far more space devoted to the dire consequences of violating the law of chastity than to the benefits of observing it; furthermore, we are told, violations of this law might include not only masturbation but even immodest dress, speech, and thought, a connection implied also in the entry MODESTY IN DRESS. (There is no separate entry for masturbation).

PORNOGRAPHY is given an appropriately limited definition as referring to “explicit depictions of sexual activity” and then roundly condemned, as we would expect in the Mormon setting, for its potentially degrading effects upon women, upon the sexual union, and upon the consumer’s moral and spiritual condition. The article goes on at some length to define pornography consumption as an addictive “illness,” a quite unnecessary “medicalized” definition favored by some Mormon psychologists, but not well established scientifically.

On the other hand, SEXUALITY is generally positive about sex, with the understandable stipulation that it properly occurs only within heterosexual marriage. PROCREATION is a “divine partnership with God” valued not only for the production of children but also for “the desires and feelings” associated with it. CELIBACY for its own sake is presented as very “unMormon,” of course, but a single standard of chastity is required for both sexes. Within the marriage bond “physical intimacy is a blessing . . . when it is an expression of . . . mutual benevolence and commitment . . . , an affirmation of [a couple’s] striving to be one.” The FALL OF ADAM was definitely not sexual, and neither sex nor birth is in any way
tainted by that event. Both here and in the entry for BIRTH CONTROL, we are told that children are highly valued in Mormon culture, but that contraceptive decisions are properly left up to the couple. Abstinence is, of course, one form of birth control, but, like other forms, will have its side effects, "some of which may be harmful to the marriage."

Where sex-related public issues are concerned, Mormons, we are told, are properly wary about SEX EDUCATION, a parental responsibility which "should not be delegated to the public schools;" but when schools are doing it, parents must get involved to insure that nothing in the curriculum will subvert the principle of chastity or other LDS values. The ABORTION entry is very short, consisting mostly of quotations from the General Handbook of Instructions specifying the limited circumstances under which abortion is acceptable for Mormons. Yet it is clear from the entry on STILLBORN CHILDREN that the Church has no doctrine on when the spirit (or "life") enters the fetus and gives no recognition to stillborn children on Church records. HOMOSEXUALITY, of course, if physically expressed, is strongly condemned by Church policy, but at least marriage is definitely not recommended as therapy for homosexual relations. The selection on AIDS is both enlightened and compassionate. While emphasizing that chastity outside marriage is an especially good preventive for AIDS and other diseases, the selection cites First Presidency statements enjoining "Christlike sympathy and compassion" for "all who are infected or ill with AIDS," especially for those who acquired the illness through no fault of their own; yet, even where sin is involved, Mormons should follow "the example of Jesus Christ, who condemned the sin but loved the sinner." AIDS victims applying for Church membership, temple recommends, and other Church privileges are to be treated by the usual standards and not singled out; but victims contemplating marriage must inform potential spouses of their condition. Church members, especially those in health professions, should inform themselves thoroughly about AIDS and "join in wise and constructive efforts to stem the spread" of the disease.

MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH

MODERN medical advances have created moral and ethical issues not faced by the LDS or other religions in earlier generations. Most of these are handled in the Encyclopedia with brief excerpts from the General Handbook whenever possible. The single paragraph on ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION, for example, describes a Church policy that discourages artificial insemination for single women, and prefers the husband as donor for married women, but ultimately leaves such matters up to the couple. Children resulting from artificial insemination are automatically sealed to temple-married mothers, unlike children obtained through ADOPTION who must wait until the adoption is final. STERILIZATION is strongly discouraged among Mormons and should be resorted to only in medical extremities. Besides these specific articles, the general section POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PROCEDURES quotes from the General Handbook to "discourage" donation of sperm and surrogate motherhood and deals with in vitro fertilization in the same way as artificial insemination (see above).

At the other end of the life-cycle, DEATH AND DYING are not to be feared by Mormons, but PROLONGING LIFE is not an obligation "by means that are unreasonable." Ethical dilemmas in such cases are best resolved by family members in consultation with appropriate medical professionals. RAISING THE DEAD remains theoretically possible, judging from ancient scriptures, but no grandiose claims are advanced for such events in the current dispensation. SUICIDE should be prevented wherever possible, but the General Handbook specifies that "only God can judge" the moral responsibility assigned to a "person who takes his own life." No dishonor attaches to that person in death, and if endowed his or her body may be buried in temple clothes, as usual.

For reasons that are not made clear, CREATION of the dead is discouraged as a form of dishonoring the body, but AUTOPSY is fully approved. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT for murderers is condoned but not required by the scriptures or by LDS doctrine. Beyond these, the general section on POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PROCEDURES again quotes from the General Handbook condoning organ transplants but condemning euthanasia in no uncertain terms.

GENDER ISSUES

THE Encyclopedia editors had the good political sense to see that virtually all articles on women's issues were written by women, and in most cases by women with at least moderately feminist viewpoints. FEMINISM is itself a case in point. While it rejects any definition of feminism that advocates separation of women from men and family, it portrays Jesus as deliberately contravening the restrictive traditions about the women of his day. It cites the well known scriptural passages assigning women full equality with men in the eyes of God, and a somewhat lesser known passage in which "not only men but women also" (Alma 32:23) are entitled to revelation through angels.

Both here and elsewhere, the unique Heavenly Mother doctrine is cited, and a prominent separate entry for MOTHER IN HEAVEN finds the source for that doctrine not merely in the words of the well known LDS hymn but in an explicit passage of the 1909 First Presidency statement. The same statement is cited in MOTHERHOOD in order to link the mortal with the post-mortals aspects of that female role. While the crucial child-rearing responsibilities of that role are emphasized, there is absolutely no implication in that entry that motherhood is incompatible with an extra-domestic career.

Women, their roles, and their contributions to LDS life, past and present, are actually discussed under a great many different headings, but they are given a special focus in WOMEN, ROLES OF. In this extensive section, the traditional domestic roles are in no way slighted, but the stress in this section is clearly upon the equality and the equal worth of men and women, both historical and contemporary. There is a candid
acknowledgment of the erosion during the twentieth century of the power and prominence enjoyed by nineteenth-century Mormon women, and of the predicament they now face from the clash between domestic expectations and extra-domestic opportunities.

By contrast, MEN, ROLES OF portrays the Mormon male in much more traditional and idealized terms as a kind of benevolent patriarch preoccupied with exercising his priesthood and ruling his family. "Declining to marry and to create a family" is equated with "serv[ing] his own selfish interests." Fortunately this judgment is balanced somewhat by the more realistic entry for SINGLE ADULTS, where it is acknowledged that a third of all Mormon adults in North America are currently single for a variety of valid reasons. Only half of the Mormon women and two-thirds of the Mormon men now between the ages of eighteen and thirty can be expected to be in intact first marriages when they reach age sixty. The unmarried state is explained in terms of various kinds of demographic imbalances between eligible men and eligible women, rather than in terms of personal selfishness or sloth. This article goes on to describe the various efforts made through Church programs to meet the needs of single members, but the limitations of such programs are frankly acknowledged.

RACE AND ETHNICITY ISSUES

The perceptive reader will notice a number of subtle ways in which the editors of the Encyclopedia have sought to portray the LDS church as ethnically inclusive and non-discriminating. One way can be seen in the photographs scattered throughout the various volumes, where there is a studied effort to include pictures of non-American and non-Caucasian individuals, couples, and groups.

Another way is in the handling of such topics as ABRAHATIC COVENANT, which is portrayed as inclusive rather than exclusive, applying not only to the multitudes who have descended from Abraham through lineages other than Israel's, but indeed to all "who accept the covenant of the divine Redeemer" and thereby become "Abraham's seed spiritually and receive the same blessings as his biological descendants." A similar inclusiveness is acknowledged in SEED OF ABRAHAM and in the discussion of EPHRAIM although more is made in the latter section of the literal Israelite descent attributed to most of today's Latter-day Saints. Obviously, the more universal Mormonism becomes in actual fact the less meaningful becomes all such Hebraic mythology from earlier days.

Neither "Jews" nor "anti-Semitism" rates a separate entry in this encyclopedia, though the Jews are covered extensively under a variety of other headings. Despite a strong traditional identification of Mormons with Jews and with various forms of Zionism, ZIONISM assures the world that LDS leaders advocate peace and coexistence "for all the peoples who lay claim to . . . the Holy Land: Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and others."

NATIVE AMERICANS offers a brief overview of the historical relationships between Mormons and native American Indians, especially in the far West. It emphasizes LDS good intentions toward the Indians, even where Church programs like Student Placement or BYU outreach and scholarships have not always achieved their intended purposes. INDIAN STUDENT PLACEMENT SERVICES goes into greater detail on this extensive (but now much curtailed) program, candidly acknowledging the conflicts arising from the differing interests and viewpoints among various Indian factions and between them and the LDS church. LAMANITES are discussed mainly as Book of Mormon people, but the author at least emphasizes the fact, so often overlooked among contemporary Mormons, that the term has lost all reference to ethnic differences by the end of the Book of Mormon.

The most vexing racial issue for Mormons, of course, has always been their relationships with African American blacks, touched on in various parts of the Encyclopedia. In RACE, RACISM, the authors go to some length to emphasize the contemporary Mormon rejection of all forms of race prejudice, putting as favorable a "spin" as possible on the Church policy (until 1978) of withholding the priesthood from blacks. That policy and its eventual change are given a more candid treatment in DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: OFFICIAL DECLARATION—2, a document mentioned in various other contexts, as well.

The entry for BLACKS covers the topic first historically and then reviews the recent consequences that the policy change has had for Church growth among blacks both in Africa and in America. Residual problems of racism and misunderstanding among white Mormons are candidly acknowledged. The bibliography for this entry was one of the more unsystematic and perplexing ones, especially considering how well informed the authors presumably are: No mention was made of the work of Lester Bush! Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the entry for CIVIL RIGHTS does not apply here, for it deals mainly with civil rights for Mormons. Similarly, EQUALITY discusses mainly economic equality and equalitarianism among the Mormons, not racial, ethnic, or gender equality.

THE EARTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

"ENVIRONMENT" does not rate a special entry in this encyclopedia, but LDS environmentalists will be pleased (if a tad skeptical) to see in the article on EARTH that "Latter-day Saints view [the earth's] natural resources and life forms as a sacred stewardship to be used in ways that will ensure their availability for all succeeding generations," and that Brigham Young was strongly committed "to preservation of the environment and wise use of all natural resources." The entry for ANIMALS interprets the "dominion" passage in Genesis as "neither coercive nor exploitive" and cites various Church presidents as condemning hunting for sport, doctrine obviously not well known among the deer-hunting brethren of the mountain states!

POLITICS AND POLITICAL ISSUES

The selection on POLITICS is quite extensive and is
presented in four parts: Political History, Political Teachings, Political Culture, and Contemporary American Politics. This selection is augmented also by entries for CHURCH AND STATE, CIVIC DUTIES, CIVIL RIGHTS, and a variety of other topics at least marginally relevant, such as JUDICIAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, CONSTITUTIONAL LAW and CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. For the most part, these treatments are historical in nature, or else they discuss venerable principles and ideals like those in Doctrine and Covenants, and the more recent political conflicts in which the LDS church has found itself. "Contemporary American Politics" (a section under POLITICS) devotes some attention to the controversies over The Equal Rights Amendment ratification campaign and the MX missile placement. Those who have carefully scrutinized the nature and extent of Mormon opposition to the ERA around the country will be surprised to find such opposition characterized as limited to "local organizing by private Church members acting on their own accord."

It remains true enough that "the Church rarely takes an official stand on candidates or issues," especially outside Utah, but Church leaders feel entitled to do so whenever key LDS moral values seem to be at stake. Church members, furthermore, are as much entitled to be guided by their religious values in political expression as other citizens might be guided by theirs, religious or otherwise. Recent tendencies for Mormons and/or Utahns to be especially conservative or Republican in their voting are acknowledged but qualified by regional considerations and by a countervailing tendency for Mormon politicians to be more evenly distributed between the major parties. The popular image of Mormons or their religion as somehow inherently favoring Republicans is properly dispelled in these selections, but otherwise readers will find little that is surprising about Mormons and politics.

SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Readers of the Encyclopedia will find especially valuable two extensive sections on the social and demographic traits of Mormons, both prepared by first-rate LDS sociologists: SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS and VITAL STATISTICS. The first of these sections presents and discusses statistical tables gathered from systematic and reliable national U.S. data comparing Mormons with other denominational groups in marital behavior, fertility, sexual attitudes, education, occupation, income, substance use, politics, migration, and various social attitudes.

The second section contains nineteen different graphs, with accompanying discussion, on various Mormon "vital statistics," such as Church membership growth and distribution across time, births across time (compared with non-Mormons), baptisms by world region (separately for converts and child-members), projections of future Church growth and activity, world regional distributions of Mormons by gender, marital status, child-dependency, household composition, Church activity and experience, labor force participation (men and women separately), and so on. In addition to all of this in VITAL STATISTICS, Church membership figures broken down by world region, country, and states of the U.S. are found in APPENDIX 13.

Most of the tables and graphs in these sections convey information already well known to LDS social scientists and others informed on real life among the Mormons, but it is certainly convenient to have such information collected in one or two places for easy reference. A few surprises, however, await those with the idealized LDS Church News conception of Mormons: Although, as we would expect, Mormons use harmful substances at much lower rates than do most other Americans, a third of LDS high school seniors admit current use of alcohol, and their use of cocaine (at 5 percent) is at about the national average for that age group (1375). Despite generally conservative sexual attitudes, furthermore, almost half of the Mormons nationally would approve of premarital sex under some circumstances (1373), and a fourth of them would approve of abortion where the mother is poor or unmarried (1377).

While Mormons tend to think of "family" in the idealized terms of a temple-married father and mother with children, that picture fits only 21 percent of the Mormons even in the United States, only 14 percent in the United Kingdom, and minuscule proportions in Asia and Latin America. Fewer than half of the married Mormons in the U.S. have been married in the temple, fewer than a third in the U.K., and fewer yet in other parts of the world (1533). One can sympathize with the predicament of Church leaders and curriculum writers who must find a way to strike the appropriate balance between exhortation toward ideal norms, on the one hand, and, on the other, avoiding over-idealized expectations that few Church members can identify with.

CONCLUSION

All in all, the Encyclopedia of Mormonism is a great achievement, and sincere congratulations are due the Church leaders, Brigham Young University, the publisher, the editorial board, and the authors. The balance between candor and boosterism is just about right. Despite the necessary disclaimers that the Encyclopedia represents the official Church view, it does precisely that for all practical purposes. Given the personnel on the editorial board, the supervision of two apostles, and the close consultation with the general authorities at various controversial junctures, it is inconceivable that the Encyclopedia (or any of its individual articles) would not reflect at least the collective consensus of the First Presidency and the Twelve, despite misgivings of individual leaders in this or that instance.
That realization is important for all Church members, and for all who would seek accurate and authoritative information about Mormons, their history, their beliefs, and their institutions. This is especially important, however, for Sunstone-ers, Dialogue-ers, and other independently thinking Latter-day Saints who must cope with the occasional criticisms of wary and suspicious leaders and members; for the Encyclopedia of Mormonism will give aid and comfort to the former far more often than to the latter.

Next time some good brother in priesthood meeting or sister in Relief Society insists that whatever the prophets say is "doctrine," or that the doctrines of the Church have "never changed," you need not cite anything so scary as Tom Alexander's well-known Sunstone article on "progressive theology." You can now cite instead, and to the same general effect, several key passages from the Encyclopedia entry on DOCTRINE. Or next time someone informs you that Sunstone and its symposia are for apostates, you can refer him or her to SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS where the Sunstone Foundation and its many sister enterprises are given rather favorable coverage as legitimate and useful institutions in the larger LDS community.

Gee, with this new encyclopedia, I might not need my copy of Mormon Doctrine any more! Maybe I can sell it to Curt Bench.

NOTES

1. See Eugene England, "The Encyclopedia of Mormonism: Mostly Good News," This People 12 (Holladay, UT, 1991): 16-22, and the review of the Encyclopedia by Richard D. Poll in the Journal of Mormon History 16 (Fall 1992): 205-13. Many of the general observations and allegations made here about the process by which the Encyclopedia was produced are based on what Poll has said, often from his first-hand experience or his interviews with knowledgeable principals.


3. The Lester Bush and Armand Mauss collection of Dialogue articles (Neither White nor Black, Signature Books, 1984) is cited in the bibliographies for RACE, RACISM and for DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: OFFICIAL DECLARATION-2, but not in the bibliography for BLACKS. Newell Brimhurst's Saints, Slaves, and Blacks (Greenwood Press, 1981) is cited, however, in the latter bibliography.


The night is soft. 
It surrounds me 
in its genteel embrace. 
Its dusky, silky, skin 
slides slowly over me 
stealing away 
my daytime 
solitude. 
—DAVID CLARK KNOWLTON
conscious omits important scholarship, but does comprehensively present orthodox views of the Book of Mormon. This essay examines some points where the encyclopedia neglects conflicting Book of Mormon scholarship.

TREATMENT OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

The encyclopedia presents the Book of Mormon in about 200 articles, identified in synoptic outline, which summarize names of people, places, teachings, and related Book of Mormon topics. The entries range from ABINADI to ZORAM including several articles under the generic BOOK OF MORMON entry that introduce and summarize the book's content and documentary sources. I discuss the entries under the groupings of Book of Mormon people, Indians and Lamanites, archeology, and authenticity.

Following the overview under the generic BOOK OF MORMON entry, a brief article on the title page of the Book of Mormon defines that page, in Joseph Smith's words, as a "literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates . . . [not] a modern composition" (1:144). By asserting that even the title page is part of an ancient record, the encyclopedia defines its orthodoxy at the outset.

THE PLATES

Before my discussion of specific Book of Mormon entries, the reader should note the complex array of plates and records described as Book of Mormon sources. An adequate guide is provided in the BOOK OF MORMON RECORDS AND PLATES entry, which assembles Book of Mormon references to plates and principal records derived from scattered documents, narratives, flashbacks, and textual explanations. (See below.)

Here the reader discovers that the Book of Mormon is far more complex than a linear translation of a single set of gold plates. The entry author underestates the case when observing that the Book of Mormon is "quite complicated." Numerous primary sources are shown to have been quoted, translated, or abridged into six sets of plates, which in turn were abridged into the "Plates of Mormon," said to be the fifteen books on gold plates translated and published by Joseph Smith.

The author effectively describes the two major Book of Mormon source documents beginning with the "Small Plates of Nephi" (580–200 B.C.), which replaced the lost 116 Book of Lehi pages, and are followed by the remaining "Large Plates of Nephi" (130 B.C.–A.D. 321). The rest of the Book of Mormon is described as (1) connecting statements by its redactor, Mormon, (2) a record of the Jaredites from the Tower of Babel, and (3) a closing statement by Mormon's son, Moroni, who buried the gold plates in the Hill Cumorah. It was Moroni who, in the next millennium, appeared as a resurrected being to Joseph Smith to show him where the plates were buried.

The records and plates chart would have been enhanced by continuing with a chart of record-keepers from Lehi to Moroni. However, the BOOK OF MORMON CHRONOLOGY entry does have a useful table of events, 600 B.C.–A.D. 421, and BOOK OF MORMON PERSONALITIES helps to clarify the plot outline.

THE BOOK OF MORMON PEOPLE

About fifteen groups of Book of Mormon peoples are divided into primary, secondary, and tertiary categories. One editor has counted 337 proper names and twenty-one variations of proper names (see BOOK OF MORMON NAMES). It is within the context of a huge cast that the encyclopedia repeats the traditional claim that the stories of the Book of Mormon are far too complex for one man to have authored. The characterization is arguably even more complex than Tolstoy’s War and Peace.

In fact, the Book of Mormon is so complicated that even the encyclopedia's scholars have come up with contradictory numbering systems for some of the names that are given to more than one character. This inconsistency is understandable, and the editors can hardly be faulted for it. Alma-2’s son is called Helaman-1 in one part of the encyclopedia (1:35, 150) and as Helaman-2 in another (1:195, 2:584) where Helaman-1 is identified as the son of King Benjamin; Nephi-2 is identified as the son of Helaman-2 in one place (1:100, 152) and as the son of Helaman-3 in another (2:585).

Another unusual characteristic about the Book of Mormon is the unreal precision with which its B.C. writings are dated, accomplished as the story goes along by revelation of the number of years before Jesus would be born (1 Nephi 19:8). The encyclopedia refers matter-of-factly to this B.C. dating without noting that this anticipatory calendar is quite unlike the Old Testament record, which does not internally date itself at all. It was not until the seventeenth century that the Bishop of Ussher provided a B.C. chronology for the Old Testament Bible.
The BOOK OF MORMON NAMES entry observes that “the single greatest impediment to understanding the semantic possibilities for the Book of Mormon proper names remains the lack of the original Nephitite text.” The lack of an extant set of Nephitite plates, or anything like Egyptian writing in the New World, has been troublesome for those attempting to establish Book of Mormon authenticity. However, the encyclopedia might have inquired whether anyone has looked for proper names in the portion of “original Nephite text” called the Anthon Transcript, which Joseph Smith said he copied from the Plates of Mormon in 1828. This lack of an original text has also impeded the search for archeological evidence, discussed later.

**INDIANS AND VIEW OF THE HEBREWS**

BOOK OF MORMON peoples are all considered by the encyclopedia to be Indians or Native Americans. In BOOK OF MORMON IN A BIBLICAL CULTURE, the encyclopedia observes that the Book of Mormon confirmed nineteenth-century speculation by some American sects that Indians were the descendants of ancient Hebrews. Ethan Smith's View of the Hebrews (1823, 1825) is identified as just “one of several books reflecting popular fascination at the time of Joseph Smith with the question of Indian Origins.”

The encyclopedia mentions that I. Woodbridge Riley's The Founder of Mormonism (1902) first considered View of the Hebrews as a possible source of the Book of Mormon. Mormon general authority B. H. Roberts in 1921 and 1922 also compared the two books. The encyclopedia claims that Roberts refrained from crediting Ethan Smith's work as a source for Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon and merely posed questions to “be aware of and to find answers for” (4:1510). The encyclopedia's assessment of Roberts's opinions seems to differ from his own words. However, the understated inclusion of Roberts's studies on View of the Hebrews, which others have found to reflect his serious doubts, is much preferable to ignoring his studies altogether—as many LDS leaders have done for seventy years.

The BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES entry cites the 1985 publication of B. H. Roberts's critical work on the Book of Mormon, but does not discuss it in the text along with other sources, which include a published response to Roberts's criticism. Roberts's challenges to LDS church leadership in 1921 and 1922 regarding the Book of Mormon were germane and should have been discussed.

Roberts had asked LDS church president Heber J. Grant:

Did Ethan Smith's View of the Hebrews furnish material for Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon? . . . [T]here are many things in the former that might well have suggested many major things in the other . . . and the cumulative force of them . . . makes them so serious a menace to Joseph Smith's story of the Book of Mormon's origin . . . The evidence, I sorrowfully submit, points to Joseph Smith as their creator. It is difficult to believe that they are the product of history.  

LAMANITES IN EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

THE encyclopedia describes Book of Mormon Lamanites as a dissenting hunter-gatherer culture. But the LAMANITE entry does not mention the curse of dark skin visited upon the Lamanites because of their apostasy, which would be removed upon reconversion, so they again would become “white and delightsome” (3 Nephi 2:15).

By contrast, the BOOK OF MORMON PEOPLES entry does cite references that describe Lamanites as “cursed” with a dark skin, and the NATIVE AMERICANS entry mentions that Nephites were forbidden to marry Lamanites “with their dark skin” (2 Nephi 5:23; Alma 3:8-9). These contrasting entries reflect ambivalent editorial policy toward Lamanite references with racist overtones.

Discussion of LAMANITES IN EARLY LDS HISTORY could have followed up the issue of dark skin with Joseph Smith's reported 1831 admonition for Mormon elders to marry Indian women to produce “white and delightsome” children, which would fulfill Book of Mormon prophecy. It would also have been relevant to cross reference to the VIEW OF THE HEBREWS entry and compare nineteenth-century descriptions of early Indian society with Book of Mormon accounts of Lamanites.

In his 1842 letter to John Wentworth, editor of the Chicago Democrat, Joseph Smith explained the original Mormon doctrine of Indian origins (See WENTWORTH LETTER and vol. 4, Appendix 12). The prophet wrote that in 1823 (during his first visit by the resurrected Book of Mormon author, Moroni), “I was also informed concerning the aboriginal inhabitants of this country, and who they were, and from whence they came; a brief sketch of their origin, progress, civilization, laws, governments, of their righteousness and iniquity.” He then described the records of these Book of Mormon peoples and how “the remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country.”

Joseph Smith's assertion that American Indians were the remnant of Book of Mormon Lamanites, originally from Jerusalem, was soon challenged by archeological evidence that these “Indians” had migrated across the Bering Strait from Asia, beginning at least 20,000 years ago. B. H. Roberts confronted this realization in the 1920s, and soon afterward Mormon writers began to modify Joseph Smith's statement of Indian origins.

Latter-day scholars focused on Book of Mormon suggestions that North and South America were the “land northward” (home of Lamanites) and the “land southward” (home of Nephites), and that the Isthmus of Panama was the “narrow neck” of land that divided Nephites from Lamanites (Alma 22:31-33; 63:5). Realizing that the Book of Mormon story conflicted with archeology, Mormon scholars revised Book of Mormon geography with the “Tehuantepec” theory, which held that the Lamanites were only a small culture within a limited portion of Middle America, largely protected and separate from the massive Native American migrations from the Bering Strait. They suggested that the “narrow neck” of land must refer to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.
The NATIVE AMERICAN entry in the encyclopedia adopts this modified view of Lamanites without explanation: "Many present-day Native Americans" descended from the Lamanites who survived from the last battle in 421 A.D. In apparent acknowledgment of the migrations of Native American peoples across the Bering Strait, the encyclopedia cautiously adds: "Peoples of other extractions also migrated there."

The two entries on the WENTWORTH LETTER and NATIVE AMERICANS illustrate but fail to discuss this important Indian origin controversy in Mormon doctrine. The resolution of this frontal conflict with archeology carries revised assumptions that need to be reconciled with Joseph Smith’s original statements. The encyclopedia does not address this Book of Mormon issue of Indian identity, a focal point of discussion within the LDS church at least since B. H. Roberts recognized the conflict between Joseph Smith’s explanation of Indian origins and archeological evidence of Bering Strait crossings.

Although the writers and editors of the Encyclopedia of Mormonism clearly chose not to address this conflict, one could argue that an encyclopedia designed to promote religious belief should not need to include information of a controversial nature. On the other hand, an encyclopedia of Mormonism should at least inform the reader that there is a controversy, even if it chooses not to discuss it.

**BOOK OF MORMON ARCHEOLOGY**

WHAT do we know about Native American culture from archeological studies? Four entries from the encyclopedia deal directly with this question: ARCHEOLOGY, BOOK OF MORMON ECONOMY AND TECHNOLOGY, BOOK OF MORMON NEAR EASTERN BACKGROUND, and BOOK OF MORMON GEOGRAPHY.

"Archeological data," the encyclopedia observes, "have been used both to support and to discredit the Book of Mormon." The editor continues, "Many scholars see no support for the Book of Mormon in the archeological records, since no one has found any inscriptive evidence for, or material remains that can be tied directly to, any of the persons, places, or things mentioned in the book" (1:62; the Smithsonian Institution’s 1982 "Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon" is cited).7

The ARCHEOLOGY entry goes on to describe "indirect archeological evidence" in support of the Book of Mormon: Mormon anthropologists have "tentatively identified" Olmec (2000-600 B.C.) and Late Pre-Classic Maya (300 B.C.-A.D. 250) cultures with the Jaredite and Nephite cultures of the Book of Mormon, based on "correspondence" between patterns of cultural development. "Horned incense burners, models of house types, wheel-made pottery, cement, the true arch, and the use of stone boxes" are listed as parallel cultural traits that "perhaps indicate transoceanic contact between the ancient Near East and Mesoamerica."

The BOOK OF MORMON ECONOMY AND TECHNOLOGY entry is less cautious than the ARCHEOLOGY entry: "In many cases, though not in every instance," the editor asserts, "archaeology confirms the general details [of the material culture in Book of Mormon societies]."

Problems in evaluating the archeological record are noted: (1) "The problems that remain in matching the Book of Mormon to its presumed ancient setting are no doubt due both to the scant information given in the book itself and to incompleteness in the archeological record," and (2) "Testing what the Book of Mormon says about pre-Columbian material culture is more difficult than it might at first appear to be... craft techniques can be lost."

The entry then names various items in Book of Mormon culture, such as corn, wheat, horses, chariots, silk, and weapons made of steel and iron. Corn, a plentiful export during the "Columbian exchange" between the New and Old Worlds, is the only cultural artifact that supports the Book of Mormon text. However, wheat, one of the grains not found in the New World until the time of Columbus, was not discussed. The editor mentions that Book of Mormon horses have not been found in pre-Columbian archeology, then alludes to attempts to redefine a horse as a deer, without mentioning the term "deer." The entry also speculates that the Pleistocene horse (generally recognized by archeologists as extinct after about 12,000 B.C.) possibly "could have survived into Book of Mormon times." Chariots are said to have had "quite limited" use, but since wheels are "nowhere mentioned in the Book of Mormon (except in a quote from Isaiah)," the editor concludes that "it is unknown what Nephite ‘chariots’ may have been." Book of Mormon silk is acknowledged as "unlikely to have been produced from silkworms as in China," but the editor then proposes that the term "silk" might have referred to similar fabrics such as "fiber from the wild pineapple plant" in Guatemala and "Aztec rabbit hair." The editor queries: "Just what these terms [weapons made of iron and steel] originally meant may not be clear."

Missing from any of these entries are the conclusions of mainstream American archeology. Michael D. Coe of Yale University has concluded that "nothing, absolutely nothing, has ever shown up in any New World excavation that would suggest to a dispassionate observer that the Book of Mormon, as claimed by Joseph Smith, is an historical document relating to the history of early migrants to our hemisphere."8 BYU archeologist Ray Matheny recognizes the lack of iron, steel, machinery, coinage, wheeled vehicles, and old world plants and animals described in the Book of Mormon.9 Thomas Stuart Ferguson, who established the New World Archeological Foundation in 1952 to provide impartial archeological support for the Book of Mormon, proposed to "let the evidence from the ground speak for itself and let the chips fall where they may."9 After years of research Ferguson concluded in 1975 that "you can't set Book of Mormon geography down anywhere—because it is fictional and will never meet the requirements of the dirt-archeology."10 In 1922 Mormon authority B. H. Roberts asked Church president Heber J. Grant: "Shall we boldly acknowledge the [archeological] difficulties [and] confess that the evidences and conclusions of the authorities are against us... Is there any way to escape these difficulties?"11
Is it unreasonable to expect that an encyclopedia of Mormonism would include the views of professional archeologists in addition to faith-promoting theories? Does the Mormon position seem stronger—or weaker—because the editors and writers choose to ignore any acknowledgment of these scientific conclusions?

On the positive side, the editors have made comparatively modest assertions and have avoided directly claiming the existence of pre-Columbian horses, iron and steel technology, and wheeled vehicles in early American culture. In this sense, the encyclopedia takes a relatively responsible approach to Book of Mormon archeology. The trend is positive.

AUTHENTICITY

Archeology leads to the issue of Book of Mormon authenticity. Recent studies have attempted to prove that the Book of Mormon is a composite work of many authors.

The encyclopedia asserts that internal consistency in detail, inclusion of little-known facts about the ancient Near East, prevalence of chiasmus or inverted parallelisms found in the Bible around the seventh century B.C., and studies of characteristic word frequency (“wordprints”) indicate that the Book of Mormon is an ancient work of multiple authors. However, the entry omits studies that challenge these conclusions.

One internal textual challenge to Book of Mormon authenticity is based on its use of Bible quotations that would not have been available to Nephite writers. For example, after their departure from Jerusalem in 600 B.C., Nephite authors quote Isaiah passages from the exilic and post-exilic periods down to 400 B.C. In an apparent attempt to resolve this “Isaiah chronological problem,” the editor adopts the orthodox Mormon assumption that hundreds of years of “Isaiah” writings were the work of one author who wrote the later chapters (44-66) by prophecy (see ISAIAH: AUTHORSHIP). This assumption ignores evidence that Isaiah writers of the exilic period wrote in different styles and from different historical perspectives.

Under the ISAIAH TEXTS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON, the one-Isaiah argument is made without clearly stating the chronological problem, which some observers have interpreted as an obvious error if Joseph Smith had composed the Book of Mormon story. Following extended quotations from Isaiah, the author of the SECOND NEPHI entry notes, “Apparently, Joseph Smith put these quotations from Isaiah in King James English, but with many variant readings reflecting the Nephite source.” In a less apologetic examination, New Testament scholar Stan Larson has demonstrated that Smith copied even the errors in the King James Bible, including those from Isaiah passages, into the Book of Mormon.

The Isaiah chronological problem, as well as similar unlikely uses of Malachi and other biblical writers, should be included in an encyclopedic examination of the Mormon interpretation of Isaiah as a single author. The Encyclopedia of Mormonism, instead, begs the question with the one-Isaiah assumption and avoids scholarly debate.

In one of its more candid statements, the BOOK OF MOR-

MON STUDIES entry specifies four ways people might regard the Book of Mormon: (1) as inspired and historically authentic; (2) as a conscious fabrication by Joseph Smith; (3) as inspired, but not historically ancient; or (4) as partly ancient with inspired nineteenth-century expansions. These less-than-orthodox views about the Book of Mormon acknowledge the controversies that other entries sought to minimize or avoid.

CONCLUSION

WHAT the encyclopedia endeavors to do, it does well. With the Book of Mormon, it is at its best unravelling complex Book of Mormon accounts and peoples in the fifteen books. The encyclopedia follows self-imposed limitations on what it endeavors to do, on how far to challenge orthodoxy, as well as how far to assert Mormon archeological claims. Nevertheless, the editors needed to address more clearly the archeological, historical, and racist implications of Mormon statements about Indian origins, lifestyle, and dark skin.

As a “religious encyclopedia” that addresses a goal of preserving a body of belief, the Encyclopedia of Mormonism impressively fulfills its mission. At the same time, the encyclopedia, like an iceberg, presents only a portion of important background and issues concerning the Book of Mormon. It is a brief for orthodoxy that lacks the scope and diversity necessary to qualify it as truly encyclopedic.

NOTES

5. This unpublished 17 July 1831 revelation was described three decades later in an 1861 letter from W. W. Phelps to Brigham Young quoting Joseph Smith: “It is my will, that in time, ye should take unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites, that their posterity may become white, delightsome and just.” In the 8 December 1831 Ohio Star, Ezra Booth wrote of a revelation directing Mormon elders to marry with the “natives.”
6. In 1954 Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith rejected this limited geographic theory: “Within recent years there has arisen among certain students of the Book of Mormon a theory to the effect that within the period covered by the Book of Mormon, the Nephites and Lamanites were confined almost within the borders of the territory comprising Central America and the southern portion of Mexico; the Isthmus of Tehuantepec probably being the ‘narrow neck’ of land spoken of in the Book of Mormon rather than the Isthmus of Panama. . . . This modernistic theory of necessity, in order to be consistent, must place the waters of Ripliancum and the Hill Cumorah someplace within the restricted territory of Central America, notwithstanding the teachings of the Church to the contrary for upwards of 100 years.” (Deseret News, Church Section, 27 February 1954, 2-3).
7. Smithsonian Institution, “Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon” (Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, SIU-76, 1982).
9. Ray T. Matheny, “Book of Mormon Archeology,” Sunstone Theological Symposium, Salt Lake Sheraton Hotel, 25 August 1984. Typescript in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Matheny also noted that esoteric examples of iron (which might have been mete-
orite) or barley (which was a New World barley of Hohokam people, nothing to do with Old World barley) are not sufficient—the Book of Mormon text implies major systems of metallurgy and grains. Matheny also criticized as weak the attempt to explain a non-existent horse as a familiar name for an unknown animal, such as a taip deer, because the text provides a "literary context for the use of the word, 'horse,'" including chariots and pasturing; "horse" is not just "some substitution" term.


