



CORNUCOPIA

THE SEASON OF THE ELDERS AND THE VERY BAD GIRLS

WHEN I WAS RIDING MY BIKE TO CAMPUS today, I saw two guys headed my way, walking down the sidewalk in a residential area. Dressed in tidy black slacks, immaculate white shirts, conservative neckties, wearing backpacks, each carrying a well-worn dark-bound book, each wearing an engraved name tag, even at half a block away, I recognized who they were and what they were up to.

When our paths crossed, I hailed them warmly: "Good morning, Elders!" And with huge smiles and great gusto, they returned the greeting, "Good morning, good morning!"

They were, of course, young men on mission with the Mormon Church, visiting Corvallis for an extended period of time to evangelize, you know, go door to door spreading the word about their faith. That takes the kind of nerve and devotion I couldn't pungle up if I worked on it for a year. But you know, I love people who are in the fires of a spiritual quest, (preachers on the quad, Krishna freaks, the faithful filing into

the mosque, nuns in habits, Native American drummers) so of course I smiled and waved.

I have always liked these guys. They get the door slammed in their face, they get cussed out, and yet they remain endlessly courteous, with bounteous good humor. Mormons are famous for their good-neighborliness, hearty energy, and general all-around clean-cut demeanor. They have radio and TV commercials that take a stand for decency and compassion, and they comb their hair. They make our nice Catholic kids look rather scruffy by comparison. I like 'em.

And I found myself recalling one day in late autumn, some years ago when our two oldest daughters were teen-agers. They were at home alone, and two elders came to the door. Our daughters engaged them in conversation for a considerable time. The Elders said they would come into the house only when we, the parents, were at home, and indeed they did.

In the parlance of the girls at the time, these guys were stud-muffins. Hunks. And the nicest guys you'd ever hope to meet. Of course, as elders, they had serious business, and they withdrew with our kids downstairs into the family room and discussed aspects of their faith.

One visit ended about dinner time, and we invited them to dine with the family. They were most grateful for the free food.

This was the first of several visits and sharing of table, and always, either before or after dinner, the elders went into the family room to counsel with our teen-aged daughters. Well, supposedly. It sounded a lot to us like kids just having fun, whooping it up.

Now, I don't know if this is true or not, but as the weeks went by, our daughters told us several things. According to them, the elders had explained that while they were on a mission, they were refraining from certain, like, they didn't listen to rock records, things like that. But, said one of our teen angels, they apparently were not refraining from playing footsie under the dinner table. Well-balanced youths, those.

When Christmas came around, we invited the elders to have Christmas dinner with our family, and our daughters—knowing full well the





Elders, or “studmuffins,” pass the tests of very bad girls.

mischievous they were making—gave them a Christmas present: a record, Billy Joel’s “Uptown Girl.”

Bad girls, we said. Bad, bad girls. The poor guys aren’t supposed to listen to pop music; you are very wicked. The elders opened their present in the family room, and shortly we were surprised to hear Billy Joel: “Uptown girl . . .” (boom boom). Turns out that the elders had expressed concern that our kids might have spent their hard-earned allowances on a record that was perhaps defective, and to be sure that it was not, it would only be prudent to test it. They tested it about twenty times, just to be sure, and—admit it—everybody danced. To do otherwise, explained the elders soberly, would be to dishonor their hostesses.

Then one night, the session in the family room was going on longer than usual, and the voices were muffled. Suddenly, our eldest daughter whooshed up the stairs and came leaping into the kitchen as quietly as she could, but very very agitated—“MOM! DAD! When the elders come upstairs, just agree with EVERYTHING THEY SAY!”

What? What? “Well, the guys said that they had been wondering for a long time why we were all nice to them, and we told them that actually, we are Mormons.” WHAT? “Yeah”—(breathless, fast)—“we told ‘em that we are a Mormon ‘Test House’ to be sure that the elders are behaving themselves on missions, and that this is a big secret. Nobody ever tells the elders about the test houses.”

Before we could gather our wits, our other daughter and the two elders romped into the kitchen, laughing hysterically. “WOW, the elders said, WOW, WOW, WOW!” They pumped my husband’s hand energetically, beaming, and before they left, we shook hands all around, saying things like “So, how about THAT!” and “Oh, MY!” and “WELL, WELL, WELL!”

“WOW,” they said when they left, laughing and still laughing, “WOW.”

The visits continued throughout their mission, with noth-

ing more said about our being a test house, and we all hugged when it was time for them to leave Corvallis.

A couple of years later, one of them returned with pictures of his wife and baby, and I didn’t ask if they had really believed our very bad daughters. All I know is, it was a lovely episode, and when I saw those two guys on the sidewalk this morning, I really meant it: “GOOD morning, Elders, great good morning. Just watch out for those test houses with the very bad girls.”

—JUDY RINGLE
Corvallis, Oregon

Out of the Best Books

“A FALSE SENTIMENT”

Throughout 1998, Todd Compton’s *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Signature Books) has caused many Latter-day Saint women and men to confront the hard realities of living *The Principle* and of Pioneer notions of love and romance. The book hosts mini biographies of each woman polygamously sealed to the Prophet while he was alive, and it provides fascinating glimpses not only of the secretive practices in Nauvoo but also of the open years in Deseret. One telling and oft-shared paragraph is from the chapter on Zina Diantha Huntington (Jacobs Smith Young):

“ZINA’S VIEWS ON POLYGAMY ARE FOUND IN the 1869 *New York World* interview. The journalist, ‘H.,’ described Zina as ‘a tall, thin lady, apparently about fifty years of age’ who ascribed much of the unhappiness in polygamous families to women who expect ‘too much attention from the husband and because they do not obtain it, or see a little attention bestowed upon one of the other wives, they become sullen and morose, and permit their ill-temper to finally find vent.’ First wives are a particular problem, as they have a tendency to look upon the husband with a ‘selfish devotion’ that desires to claim all his time and attention for themselves. The successful polygamous wife, as her marriage develops, ‘must regard her husband with indifference, and with no other feeling than that of reverence, for love we regard as a false sentiment; a feeling which should have no existence in polygamy.’ By ‘love’ Zina meant romantic love only, not Christian love, and in this interview she was repeating conventional Mormon rhetoric disparaging romance.”

☀☀☀☀ Sunraves

MY FAVORITE WORKS IN MORMON LITERATURE

MORMON LETTERS now offers a rich literary banquet. Here are my favorite dishes from the various genres in which we taste the Mormon experience.

1. *Personal Voices*, ed. by Mary Lythgoe Bradford (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986). Personal essays, general audience. Still the best anthology of our personal essays, this collection is from the first twenty years of *Dialogue: A Journal of*

Mormon Thought.

2. *The Backslider* by Levi Peterson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986). This is simply the best novel of "contemporary Mormonism" (actually 1950s). It contains, in the "Cowboy Jesus" vision that the protagonist receives, one of the most lovely and believable epiphanies in modern fiction, a capstone to Peterson's extraordinary achievement—an achievement not only in thematic content that is seriously theological, particularly concerning the Atonement, but also in form that is meticulously crafted to give permanent being to that content.

3. "The King Follett Discourse" by Joseph Smith (various editions). The Prophet's last testament is still the finest Mormon personal essay and finest Mormon sermon—two genres that seem particularly congenial, for both doctrinal and historical reasons, to the Mormon spiritual sensibility—and the one work likely to be our most characteristic and ultimately most valued contribution to world literature.

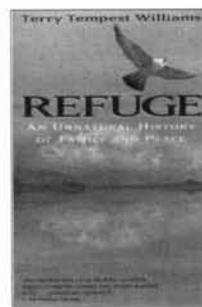
4. *Seventh Son* by Orson Scott Card (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, Inc., 1987). A fascinating study of a Joseph Smith-like worker of "magic" in an alternate frontier America, this fantasy stretches Mormon concepts of ultimate evil, revelation, divine power, and prophethood and also stretches traditional limits on the genuinely religious elements of science fiction and fantasy.

5. *The Lord of Experience* by Clinton Larson (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1967). This was the first collection of Mormon poetry that was real poetry. Larson deserves to be called the spiritual father of modern Mormon literature and of the period of "faithful realism." Larson was able to depart both from the didactic and inward-looking provinciality of the first one hundred years of Mormon literature and the elitist, patronizing provinciality of his contemporaries in the "lost" generation.



Harvest includes the best of Mormon poets born from 1900 to to 1965, almost all of whom were influenced by Clinton Larson's breakthrough (see next item), and continues into the young generation beginning to be published nationally in the 1980s.

8. *Mr. Wahlquist in Yellowstone and Other Stories* by Douglas H. Thayer (Salt Lake City, Utah: Peregrine Smith, 1989).

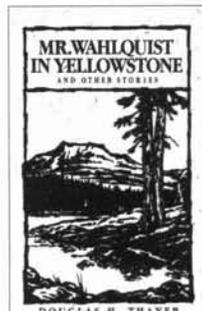


Exquisitely well-crafted studies of Western experience in the light of Mormon theology, Thayer's collection contains the finest of Mormon, and one of the finest of twentieth-century American, short stories, "The Red-tailed Hawk."

9. *The Giant Joshua* by Maurine Whipple (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1941). Whipple's novel gives us our best fictional access to our roots as Mormons and as Rocky Mountain, high desert peo-

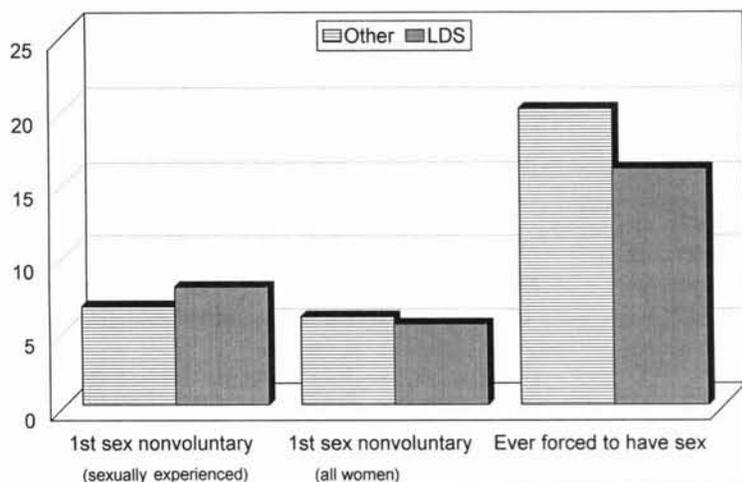
6. *The Evening and the Morning* by Virginia Sorensen (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1949). Perhaps our best-crafted Mormon novel, this certainly is the one that most thoroughly, compassionately, yet realistically examines the nature and consequences of infidelity.

7. *Harvest: Contemporary Mormon Poems*, ed. by Eugene England and Dennis Clark (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988).



Peculiar People

LDS Women's Experience with Coercive Sex



FORCED SEX

IN THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF Family Growth, a national probability sample of nearly eleven thousand women between the ages of fourteen and forty-five, 20 percent of the women say they have been forced to have sex at some time in their life. Sixteen percent of Mormon women say they have been forced to have sex. Among women who have ever had sex, slightly more Mormon women say their first sexual intercourse was nonvoluntary (7.9 percent) than is the case nationally (6.6 percent). If the comparison is made on all women rather than just those who are sexually experienced, Mormons are less likely to have had nonvoluntary first sex.

ple and our most profound imaginative knowledge of our spiritual ancestors, the Dixie pioneers.

10. *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* by Terry Tempest Williams (New York: Vintage Books, 1991). *Refuge* is a nationally honored and widely read Mormon meditation on death, self, relation to the natural world, down-winders, cancer, healing, birds, love, Tempestuous women.

EUGENE ENGLAND

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Voice from Abroad

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE WEIRDEST THINGS HAPPEN IN RUSSIA. I mean it. I could tell you this story, and say that it was fiction and that I made it up, and I'm sure you would say, "That's dumb. Nothing really happens like that." But the fact is, it's true, and I can't change the details just to make it sound more realistic.

So Brad (my husband) and I are out walking in Saint Petersburg. We're walking from the city center out toward the embankment of the Neva River. And he's telling me about what happened when he attended the local Sacrament meeting the day before.

We walk through a park and through a kid's playground. Brad is telling me how the main speaker gets up to the podium, his hair is in all directions, and his clothes are kind of messed up—a real eccentric, in other words. And this guy starts talking about how our spirits were actually begotten by a Mother God and a Father God in a real mother and father sort of way.

And I say, "What's wrong with that? That sounds to me like it's straight out of *Mormon Doctrine*."

And Brad says, "I know. But the people in the congregation thought it was weird. Everybody got really uncomfortable. But the guy goes on. He starts talking about how even before our spirits, and before the 'spirit matter,' there is an 'eternal kernel' in each of us."

And I say, "What's wrong with that? That sounds to me like it's straight from Joseph Smith."

And Brad says, "I know. But nobody there had ever heard anything like this before. And they're all getting really nervous. The woman sitting next to me, in a flowered dress like she came straight out of Utah (even though she's actually Russian), leans forward and whispers something to the person ahead of her, like, 'We know Bro. So-and-So, he's always got these strange ideas.'"

By this time, we are walking out along the embankment, past the statue to Peter the Great (one of the multitudinous monuments to great men that are all over St. Petersburg), with the grandiose St. Isaac's Cathedral looming up huge in the background.

Brad says, "So the guy goes on. He starts talking about how there is 'spirit matter,' and 'physical matter,' and that 'spirit matter' is just as material as 'physical matter,' only more re-

fined. And that miracles and angels and revelations are in the world of the 'spirit matter,' and so they can't be explained by the physical world."

And I say, "How did he manage to talk about all this stuff in one talk?"

And Brad says, "He mostly just rambled. And the meeting went way over." (Sounds like a typical Mormon meeting to me.)

By this time, we are stopped on the sidewalk at the corner, waiting for the crossing light to turn green. And we wait and we wait, and then we realize that the cars are all backed up because a traffic policeman has turned the stop light off and closed off the intersection. He's stopped traffic because some dignitary is supposed to come through in his special motorcade.

"So, anyway," Brad says as we're standing there, "when the guy started talking about 'spirit matter,' this man in the congregation finally gets up, makes this exasperated gesture, and stomps out, like, 'I'm not going to listen to this nonsense from the pulpit anymore.'"

"Do you think they would feel any better if they had McConkie to read in Russian?" I ask.

Just then, the policeman steps into the center of the intersection, and starts waving his baton: he can see the dignitary's car coming down the boulevard, heading towards us. He waves the dignitary's car through dramatically, along with the two police cars that are with him, one in front and one behind.

"How come," I say, "we have to stop all the traffic at the intersection for ten minutes just for this one guy?" (And it's true: during the four weeks I lived in the center of Petersburg, I saw official motorcades three times on the city's busiest streets, and every time, the traffic policemen stopped traffic specially so that the Chief High Pooh Bah Whoever could go through. I've never seen this in any other city where I've lived.)

Brad doesn't bother to answer. At least now we can finally cross the street. But first we have to wait for the cars to clear out. So we're still waiting on the corner, and the breeze changes direction and blows off the river, and then we can hear the sound of a trombone and a banjo. They are playing something dixieland, but I can't quite make it out. They are trying to attract people to one of the tour boats that cruise up and down the Neva.

"Hear that?" I say to Brad.

"Hear what," he says.

"That Dixieland. I've never heard Dixieland jazz in Russia before. That's so funny." And I stop a minute to listen hard, and I figure it out.

"Guess what they're playing!" And I start laughing. "They're playing 'Kalinka.'" (The jaunty little Russian 'folk song' that every tourist learns by heart.)

"They are not," says Brad.

"They are, too," says I. "It's the same tune. Only you've never heard it played that way before."

—CHERIE WOODWORTH

Estonia

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KING JAMES VERSION

CHAPTER 5

AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

13 ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

THE REVISED ENGLISH BIBLE
Oxford and Cambridge University Presses, 1989

The Sermon on the Mount

5 WHEN he saw the crowds he went up a mountain. There he sat down, and when his disciples had gathered round him² he began to address them. And this is the teaching he gave:

³Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

⁴Blessed are the sorrowful; they shall find consolation.

⁵Blessed are the gentle; they shall have the earth for their possession.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst to see right prevail; they shall be satisfied.

⁷Blessed are those who show mercy; mercy shall be shown to them.

⁸Blessed are those whose hearts are pure; they shall see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called God's children.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right; the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

¹¹Blessed are you, when you suffer insults and persecution and calumnies of every kind for my sake. ¹²Exult and be glad, for you have a rich reward in heaven; in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you.

¹³You are the salt to the world. And if salt becomes tasteless, how is its saltiness to be restored? It is good for nothing but to be thrown away and trodden underfoot.

¹⁴You are light for all the world. A town that stands on a hill cannot be hidden.

¹⁵When a lamp is lit, it is not put under the meal-tub, but on the lamp-stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶Like the lamp, you must shed light among your fellows, so that, when they see the good you do, they may give praise to your Father in heaven.

THE NEW TESTAMENT IN
MODERN ENGLISH (PHILLIPS)
MacMillan, 1972

CHAPTER 5

Jesus proclaims the new values of the kingdom
WHEN Jesus saw the vast crowds he went up the hill-side and after he had sat down his disciples came to him.

Then he began his teaching by saying to them,

“How happy are those who know their need for God, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs!”

“How happy are those who know what sorrow means, for they will be given courage and comfort!”

“Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth will belong to them!”

“Happy are those who are hungry and thirsty for true goodness, for they will be fully satisfied!”

“Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them!”

“Happy are the utterly sincere, for they will see God!”

“Happy are those who make peace, for they will be known as sons of God!”

“Happy are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of goodness, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs!”

“And what happiness will be yours when people blame you and ill-treat you and say all kinds of slanderous things against you for my sake! Be glad then, yes, be tremendously glad—for your reward in Heaven is magnificent. They persecuted the prophets before your time in exactly the same way.

“You are the earth's salt. But if the salt should become tasteless, what can make it salt again? It is completely useless and can only be thrown out of doors and stamped under foot.

“You are the world's light—it is impossible to hide a town built on the top of a hill. Men do not light a lamp and put it under a bucket. They put it on a lamp-stand and it gives light for everybody in the house.

“Let your light shine like that in the sight of men. Let them see the good things you do and praise your Father in Heaven.

HEAVENLY LIFE IN WORLDLY EXPERIENCE

RAPPIN' WITH JESUS:
THE GOOD NEWS ACCORDING
TO THE FOUR BROTHERS
African American Family Press, 1994

Jesus Raps With the Brothers On the Hill

One day as folks were starting to press all 'round Jesus, He decided to go up on a hill for a minute to rap with His chosen brothers. He wanted them to know what was up.

"You know, there's a little something for everybody," Jesus told 'em. "Brothers who are down in the way they feel, they ain't got nothing to worry 'bout 'cuz the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them. Even those who feel like they've lost, can be on the one again 'cuz there will be arms 'round 'em to make 'em feel better. And you know those brothers who seem weak and on the bottom of the tadpole, the world is theirs. No kidding. And those folks who always do right, got a kind word to say, a good deed or two to do, it's coming back to 'em in spades. If a brother shows kindness and mercy, it's coming back to him more than he can count. Righteousness is given to those whose hearts are pure and good, for in the end they shall see the Almighty. And those that keep the peace, my brothers, shall be called the Almighty's children. But, those who are dissed and stepped on 'cuz they are trying to do the right thing, the kingdom of heaven is theirs. And here's the kicker," Jesus told them. "If you have to suffer 'cuz you're my main brothers, no matter what it is, you gotta know that in the end, the ultimate is gonna be laid on you. It'll be worth more than gold.

"Look, this is for real. My brothers, you're gonna be the salt of the earth. And you know that salt ain't no good to nobody if there's no flavor left. Might as well throw it out, but this ain't gonna happen.

"You will be the light of the world. Won't be no hiding places. If you put a city on a hill, everybody gets a peek, right? You don't put a light under a basket, do you? No, you put a shade on top and it lights up the house. This is what I'm trying to tell you guys. You gotta let your light shine so that brothers can see what's happenin' with each of you. You gotta let your light shine."

IN THE MAY/JUNE 1978 ISSUE OF SUNSTONE, IN "GRACE AND WORKS in Martin Luther and Joseph Smith," Hartford Theological Seminary President John Dillenberger wrote:

"For Joseph Smith, the fall affects all of humanity, but not all of any human being. As intelligences and spirits, we are as given or eternal as God or the given matter formed in creation. The consequences of the fall are physical: we suffer a bodily death—though we will be restored to our bodies, glorified indeed; and we are called upon to live in our bodies as if we were in heaven, that future state in which our spirits will dominate our bodily existence. It is as if the fall put spirit on trial, not in itself, but in terms of its relation to and dominance over the body. In this sense there is a haunting similarity to Swedenborgianism.

"More fundamentally, it explains the simultaneous puritanical view of the sins of the body and the glorification of the body in spiritual expression. No religious tradition is more harsh in flaunting the moral sexual code than Mormonism. No religion is more positive about the body as indeed a joyous temple. That some of us may not look that positively upon Mormonism's particular spiritual expression in bodily incarnation should not blind us to the fact that bodily existence is seldom seen religiously in more positive terms.

"For Joseph Smith, the fall does not essentially affect the spirit. That central essence, primordial and eternal, is not affected at its core. Nevertheless, the redemption of humanity in its totality, in bodily humanity, is dependent upon the atonement, that loving, suffering act of God in His Son Jesus. That act and love are the reality we must accept and act out in our lives. Without it there is no hope; in the light of it, we, as did God and Christ, can face all things.

"Joseph Smith, a martyr himself, did not take a Pollyanna stance toward the human scene. The evil with which we wrestle is real. But the power inherent in humanity is that of accepting such grace, incorporating it in our lives, and living in the light of that empowering grace. Such work would have no possibility without grace. It is the conjunction of our abilities and powers and the reality of grace that enables. The appropriation and expression of grace in deeds of life and in sacramental ordinances for ourselves and others comprises the God-intended life. It means that the correlation between this world and the next is genuine; that there is no radical disjunction.

"The temple life is already the direct paradigm of heaven itself. Our empowered lives live already in the life to come, where the foretaste of the fulfillment needs extension rather than transformation. The vision of Joseph Smith is the heavenly life already manifest in this worldly existence."

Church & State

MORMON CULTURE

WHILE INTERNING FOR UTAH CONGRESSMAN BILL ORTON (D) IN D.C. in '96, I talked with Alex, a legislative assistant from Louisiana who loved to rag on Utah and Mormons—nothing but blind sheep. Often, Alex would dis on the Book of Mormon and angels in bright clouds bearing gold books. He'd say, "I just don't get you folks from Utah. Only the non-Utahns in this office make sense to me." Julie, an intern from BYU, would defend the angels while reminding Alex she was from Las Vegas.

Well, recently I've had a revelation or two (sorry, no angels) that surprised me,

and they might Alex as well. Last winter, I interned for Senator Scott Howell (D), the minority leader in the Utah Senate, and, as fly on the wall, I caught bits of gossip that put a new spin on that Utah/Mormon culture thing.

Revelation #1: Alex was right: Utah culture and Mormon culture are the same thing, at least in defining "Utah culture" as the force driving Utah politics. The majority of bills presented on Utah's capitol hill are motivated by the religious agendas of the sponsoring legislators (somewhere around 95 percent of whom are Saints, so to speak). And a common measuring rod many legislators use in voting may be whether or not friends and neighbors back in their own wards in Moroni, Utah, or

wherever, would approve. And because of the Mormon supermajority, no bill will pass if it doesn't pass the muster of wards back home. So yeah, Alex was right: in politics, Utah culture and Mormon culture are inseparable.

Revelation #2: Here's the shocker. The Mormon/Utah culture thing is separable from the LDS church itself. While Mormon/Utah culture dominated most of the legislation put forth, the LDS church wasn't pulling the strings. In fact, when Utah talking heads say the Church rarely exercises its political muscle, they're right. If legislators want to know the Church's opinion on some issue, they have to seek Church leaders out, not vice versa. And even then, LDS leaders seem fairly leery of saying anything that might be quoted—in the press, committee meetings, even among legislators in private. It's not that the Church wants its influence to be hush-hush, but rather that it doesn't want much direct influence. Church leaders seem to follow Joseph Smith's counsel: "teach the people correct principles, and let them govern themselves."

An example is gun control. Utah has one of the most conservative gun control laws anywhere. Almost any Utahn can pack a concealed weapon pretty much anywhere. Before the this last legislative session began, the Church made a statement saying churches should have the right to forbid concealed weapons, and the Church-owned *Deseret News* editorialized likewise. I heard a tale about one apostle pounding a fist upon a table and saying to several legislators, "Isn't our position on guns clear? No guns in churches." (This issue was the single largest attempt at direct LDS influence I was ever aware of.) Conservative Senate President Lane Beattie sponsored a bill to require gun locks. Word was that after the bill passed committee, he was to amend it to grant churches and schools the right to forbid concealed weapons. But, because back-room conversations convinced Beattie that, though he was well-liked by conservative colleagues, he couldn't garner support. Rather than face a humiliating defeat, he withdrew the bill. That was the best chance the legislature had to act according to Church pronouncements on guns. And while they acted contrary to Church wishes, they did act consistently with Mormon/Utah

All-Seeing Eye



STARSHIP TEMPLES

LAST YEAR, THE MOVIE *STARSHIP TROOPERS*, based on the classic Robert Heinlein sci-fi adventure, briefly mentioned space-colonizing Mormons as the cause for the viscous Bug War against the alien Arachnids. Now that the flick is out on video, it's possible to replay and freeze-frame it to make sure just what the relevant text says and to see if that really was an Angel Moroni. For the record, here's what the narrator says: "Mormon extremists disregarded federal warnings and established Fort Joe Smith deep inside the Arachnid quarantine zone. Too late they realized that Dantana had already been chosen by other colonists."

culture. On some issues, the culture is out of touch with Church leaders.

Another example is abortion. Whereas the Church position is no abortion except in cases of rape, incest, or health or life of the mother, many Utah conservatives take a more fundamentalist, Christian Right approach and say no abortion, period.

I also heard that Church leaders do not want Utah's hosting of the 2002 Winter Olympics to be an embarrassment. Rather than putting on skimpy, cheap games, some Church leaders have apparently suggested that state tax dollars be used to make the games respectable. In Utah—as it would be in many

states—that's a pretty unpopular notion among fiscal conservatives. Also, Church leaders seem to want the state to closely watch polygamists, aggressively work to keep tobacco from children, and build a beautiful state—through open-space projects, city planning, and pro-environment legislation. These ideas won't rally the conservative masses.

So Alex, wherever you are, this intern's take is that Church and state are indeed separate in Utah. It's just that "church" means *the* Church, while "state" essentially means Mormon culture.

—ERIC LYNN JONES



MORMON INDEX

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- Number of Old Testament prophets mentioned in the Book of Mormon but not in the Bible: 5
- Percentage of increase of Mormons, in the past thirty-years, as a proportion of the U.S. population: 96
- Percentage of increase of Jehovah's Witnesses, in the past thirty-years, as a proportion of the U.S. population: 119
- Percentage of increase of the Church of God in Christ, in the past thirty-years, as a proportion of the U.S. population: 863
- Percentage of Mormons "born again": 26
- Ratio of Mormon women to men, ages fifteen to twenty-nine in Utah in 1850: 100:124
- Ratio of men to women endowed in 1869–1870: 73:100
- Percentage of Manti, Utah, population in 1880 that was living in polygamous families: 25.2
- Percentage of 1880 Manti women, age 18 or older, in plural marriages: 44
- Percentage increase in BYU tuition in 1998: 3.4
- National ranking of BYU's law school: 25
- Number of first-edition copies of the Book of Mormon printed: 5,000
- Total number of copies of the Book of Mormon ever published by the LDS church: 88,000,000
- Year in which the black, missionary name tags originated: 1962
- Ratio of square footage in the Kirtland Temple to the announced Columbus, Ohio, temple: 2:1
- Percentage of the fifty state "Mother of the Year" award recipients in 1998 who were LDS: 20
- Number of blankets distributed in Maine by LDS welfare services after 1998 winter "storm of the century": 4,000
- Annual number of applications BYU receives: 8,000
- Number accepted for admission: 6,000
- Number actually enrolled: 4,800
- LDS worldwide growth rate, 1978–1993: 156 percent
- LDS U.S. growth rate for same period: 82 percent
- LDS Africa growth rate for same period: 963 percent
- Percentage of Mormons who believe in life after death: 93
- Percentage of Americans who believe in life after death: 71

1,2 Jay Parry, Larry Morris, *The Mormon Book of Lists* (Bookcraft), 118; 3, 4, 5 *The New York Times Magazine*, 7 Dec. 1997, 60; 6 Poll by evangelical Paul Barna, pub. 27 Sept. 1997 (St. Paul, Minnesota Pioneer Press); 7,8,9,10 *Journal of Mormon History*, 24:1 (spring 1998), 91, 92, 93; 11 *Deseret News*, 19 Dec. 1997, B1; 12 *Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 Feb. 1998, B2; 13, 14 *LDS Church News*, 4 Apr. 1993, 3; 15 Wilburn and Zelma West, *Journey through Life*; 16 *LDS Church News*, [no date available]; 17 [no source available]; 18 *LDS Church News*, 24 Jan. 1998, 12; 19, 20, 21 *Daily Universe*, 16 Mar. 1998, 11; 22, 23, 24 Rodney Stark, "The Basis of Mormon Success: A Theoretical Application," in *Latter-day Saint Social Life: Social Research on the LDS Church and Its Members*, ed. James T. Duke (BYU Religious Studies Center), 38; 25, 26 James T. Duke, "Cultural Continuity and Tension: A Test of Stark's Theory of Church Growth," in *Latter-day Saint Social Life: Social Research on the LDS Church and Its Members*, ed. James T. Duke (BYU Religious Studies Center), 93.