



CORNUCOPIA

SUNSTONE invites short musings: chatty reports, cultural trend sightings, theological meditations. All lovely things of good report, please share them. Send submissions to: <SunstoneED@aol.com>

Twenty Years Ago in Sunstone

IT DOESN'T APPLY AT THIS ALTITUDE

James N. Kimball's "J. Golden Nuggets" was one of the most popular regular columns of SUNSTONE past. In each installment, Kimball, a nephew of the colorful early Church leader would share classic "Uncle Golden" stories. The following favorite was printed originally as "Words of Wisdom" in the Autumn 1984 issue.

ONE OF THE BEST KEPT SECRETS IN THE KIMBALL family was Uncle Golden's problem with the Word of Wisdom. He struggled with it all of his life, and his diary reveals some very interesting insights into his handling of this problem. He said that by the time Heber Grant got serious about it, it was a little too late. He had been drinking

coffee since he was a young boy working in the Bear River Valley driving mules. He said oftentimes that's all there was for breakfast. Even in the mission field, he relates that if he ever had a dime in his pocket, which was very rare, he would take a nickel of it and buy a stamp and write his mother and take the other nickel and buy a cup of coffee.

When he heard that President Grant was changing the emphasis in the Church and making the Word of Wisdom a matter of enforcement, his diary states that Golden went to the President, saying, "Hell, Heber, what are you doin'? You know my problem with this." President Grant reportedly said, "Well, Golden, you do the best you can."

Later on in life, Uncle Golden said, "Well, I've almost got the problem licked. I'm eighty now, and in a few more years, I think I'll have it completely under control."

Golden sometimes said, "If it weren't for my nephew, Ranch Kimball, it would be a lot easier for me to overcome this habit of drinking coffee. But Ranch comes down and picks me up at the Church Office Building every now and then, and on a nice day, we drive all the way up City Creek Canyon, way up to the top. Nobody's there; we're just by ourselves, and on a beautiful

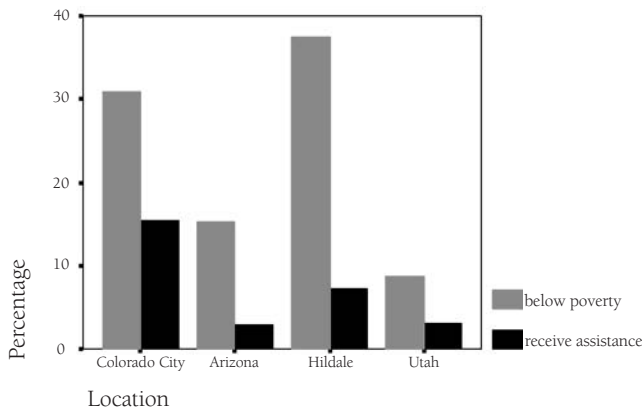
Peculiar People

POVERTY AND INCOME IN COLORADO CITY & HILDALE

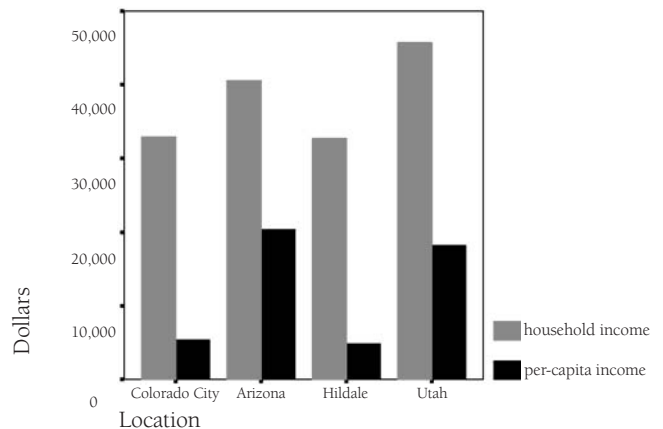
ACCORDING TO THE 2000 CENSUS, POVERTY rates and use of public assistance are much higher than state averages in the polygamist communities of Colorado City and Hildale situated on the Arizona/Utah border.

Results from the 2000 Census show that household income is also somewhat below the state averages in those polygamist communities. But household size is large in these communities, so that per capita income is only about one-fourth of the state average.

Percentage of families below poverty and receiving public assistance



Median household income and per-capita income



The All-seeing Eye

AND I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL . . . CHANT “OM”?



FEELING CONFLICTED ABOUT PRACTICING Eastern meditation in order to center yourself before teaching Primary? Perhaps an Angel Moroni incense burner can help ease your mind! Lotus meets trumpet; inner voice meets voice from the dust!

This testament to the imagination of yet another Mormon kitsch creator was recently spotted on eBay by Sunstone friend Boyd Petersen. The item's sales pitch includes fake testimonials, including one from "I. Read SUNSTONE." (Gee, thanks.)

Our favorite part of the seller's description reads:

This 10" tall Moroni statue stands on a hand-made Spanish cedar base. He holds the horn to his side with his left hand and the incense in his right. . . . Fits any standard incense stick. The horn can be removed from his left hand and placed in the traditional position (for when the bishop comes to visit).

day we'll park and Ranch'll put a pot of coffee on. When it perks, he'll pour out two tin cups full, and we'll sit there and drink coffee and reminisce about the family, the days in Round Valley, and the things that are happening in the Church and in the world. I remember one day Ranch turned to me and said, 'Uncle Golden, does this bother you sitting up here and drinking coffee with me and being a General Authority?' and I said to him, 'Hell no.' And he said, 'Why not?' and I said, 'It's simple, Ranch; the eighty-ninth section doesn't apply at this altitude.'

But then Uncle Golden went on to say that it wasn't always that easy for him. For example, in the winter months, he could hardly get started in the morning without a little stimulant, and sometimes it was a source of great embarrassment to him. He tells the story of President Grant's calling him on the telephone one winter day and asking him to go up to Brigham City to a Deseret Sunday School conference. Golden was to take the new superintendent of the Deseret Sunday School that President Grant had just set apart that day. Uncle Golden asked who it was and was told the man's name was David O. McKay. "You take him along, Golden, and you break him in," said President Grant. "He's a nice young man."

At 4:00 a.m. the next morning, Brother McKay and Uncle Golden left Salt Lake and drove with a team of horses north to Brigham City. In some places where there were heavy snow drifts, they had to get out and change from a wagon to a sled borrowed from a farmer. Finally about 8:00 in the morning, they got to Brigham City. It was cold, and Uncle Golden was frozen right to the bone. He said he needed a little stimulant to

get him going, but he didn't know quite how to handle it with Brother McKay. The meeting didn't begin until 9:00, and Uncle Golden noticed a restaurant, the Idle Isle, on Main Street. He turned to Brother McKay and said, "Why don't we go over and have a little breakfast; we've got an hour, and it's not fast Sunday." Brother McKay thought it a marvelous idea.

When they went into the restaurant, no one else was there. The waitress came up to their table and said, "What could I get for you two gentlemen?" According to Uncle Golden, Brother McKay blurted out, "Well, we'll have some ham and eggs and two cups of hot chocolate, please." Uncle Golden almost died; this wasn't what he had in mind at all.

But after a few minutes, an idea came to him. He excused himself, saying he needed to go to the men's room. Golden then walked back into the kitchen and grabbed that waitress and said, "Say, would you mind putting a little coffee in my hot chocolate, please?" She said no, she wouldn't mind at all; they did that kind of thing all the time up in Brigham City.

Golden washed his hands and went back to the table and sat down. In a few minutes, the waitress came with the ham and eggs and the hot chocolate. When she got up to the table, she looked at both men and said, "Now which one of you wanted coffee in his hot chocolate?" Flustered, Uncle Golden looked at her and said, "Ah, hell, put it in both of them."

Golden later related that Brother McKay thought that was awfully funny, and he laughed so hard and so long that he couldn't even eat his breakfast. But the problem was that after that, Brother McKay would go around the Church and every time he was asked to speak, he would tell that story to people.

Mormon Media Image

EATING ONE'S WAY TO ETERNAL DAMNATION

IN THE RECENT SONY PICTURES RELEASE, *S.W.A.T.*, a brash young officer, Jim (Colin Farrell), is temporarily busted down to managing the team's equipment room following a disastrous mission. Once there, Jim quickly learns his new partner Gus (James DuMont) is a Mormon convert with a wife who is very serious about the Word of Wisdom.

JIM: "You're a little too attached to that soda, Gus."

GUS: "I love that stuff. My wife would have my behind if she caught me sucking that down."

JIM: "Why, is she a Mr. Pibb fan?"

GUS: "You know the deal, Jim. When we got married, I converted to Mormonism. We can't consume anything that alters our state of mind. We treat our bodies with respect."

In a later scene, Jim catches Gus with—gasp!—McDonalds!

JIM: "Hey Gus! Isn't that eternal damnation you're chowing down there?"

GUS: "You can't tell Michelle."



JIM: "She won't smell the fries on your breath?"

GUS: "That's why God invented mouthwash."

JIM: "Gus, you're cheating on your wife with fast food."

GUS: "You're absolutely right!" (He shudders and, realizing his sin, shoves the food away.)

The film never mentions whether Gus confess his infidelity to his bishop.

In his diary, Uncle Golden wrote he wished McKay would keep his damn mouth shut, but then added, "Maybe Heber will release him, and we won't hear any more about him."

As he got older and later on in his life, Uncle Golden said that people began to tell him what a marvelous person he was. He remarked that no one ever said a damn thing like that until he got old and ready to die. But on one occasion, a group of non-Mormon businessmen had a dinner to honor Uncle Golden. It was at the Rotisserie Restaurant on south Main Street, just below Broadway. Uncle Golden attended and was a little embarrassed by it all because they had a big banner up on the wall which read, "Golden Kimball: Friend of Man." He said they were all Gentiles there, but they were all his friends. He sat at the head table. Next to him was the gentleman in charge of the dinner and master of ceremonies. He and Uncle Golden were talking when the waiter came up to take their order. When asked what he'd like to drink, Uncle Golden said, "I'll have some water." But the friend grabbed the waiter and said, "No, you bring Mr. Kimball some coffee; he likes coffee." As the waiter left the room, Uncle Golden said to himself, "The Lord heard me say water."

*Margin Notes*FEAR AND TREMBLING
THE MORMON WAY

I sense much of fear in the contemporary landscape. Having lost the ancient sense of fear as a healthy dose of reverence and wonder, we are left with only the negative

connotations of the word. The "fear of the Lord" spoken of in the Bible as the "beginning of wisdom" becomes incomprehensible; instead of opening us up, allowing us to explore our capacity for devotion in the presence of something larger and wiser than ourselves, fear is seen as something that shrinks us, harms us, and renders us incapable of acting on our own behalf.

—excerpt from *Amazing Grace* by KATHLEEN NORRIS

TWO DECADES AGO, MY SISTER LEFT THE CHURCH without much of an explanation apart from an extensive list of horrific anecdotes from her year at BYU. I was a pre-teen at the time, but I clearly remember her angry tirades against the hypocrisy in our religion: unrighteous dominion, false doctrine, rampant gossip, common cruelty. As the little sister, I would sit respectfully and listen attentively to her warnings against being as ill-treated as she had been, but her experience was foreign to me, and I remember feeling chronically perplexed by her passionate angst.

I remained somewhat distanced from her disenchantment until just recently when she revealed that her clearest memory of growing up Mormon is an overwhelming fear of an ever-lurking God who was anxiously awaiting to assign punishments to the very least of her sins.

My sister came of age during the fervor of the 1970s, part of the "Lost Generation," raised in the backlash against the upheaval of the 60s, during the ERA and Zero Population Growth movements. Church leaders seemed to be fairly free- and heavy-handed with political and cultural edicts during that period, which may have seemed to deemphasize free agency and grace, and to harshly reinforce retribution and justice.

True to the “contemporary religious landscape” that Kathleen Norris observes, I realize now that my sister felt unprotected, unloved, unacceptable, endangered by her own imperfections, and totally unempowered to speak against the doctrine of fear that was being taught in too many meetings on too many levels.

I WONDER WHAT the correct uses of fear are in the current LDS context. In our Bible dictionary, fear has dual and opposing definitions: both as a synonym for “reverence,” “awe,” and “worship” and as “something unworthy of a child of God, something that ‘perfect love casteth out.’” But in the hymn, “How Firm a Foundation,” the voice of God assures us:

Fear not, I am with thee;
Oh, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid.
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous omnipotent hand.

As a parent and frequent teacher of children and youth, I find myself talking a lot about choices and consequences (both positive and negative, but nonetheless unavoidable). And I wonder if there is a way to tame the natural *person* and foster an earth-shattering amazement of the Divine while avoiding fear’s debilitating, intimidating twin on our journey toward worship and self-governance. In my classes, love and preparation are the motivator and method toward eternal life, but I gather from my students that the “hellfire and brimstone” brand of instruction widely persists in Mormon culture even into the twenty-first century. Could recasting fear as a feeling of “reverence and wonder” be a more effective means toward righteousness than wielding a fear of cosmic castigation?

My model of encouraging a love-based fear—as depicted in the hymn “I Stand All Amazed”—is taken from the advice,

caution and reassurance given in D&C 38:30: “Wherefore, treasure up wisdom in your bosoms, lest the wickedness of men reveal these things unto you by their wickedness, in a manner which shall speak in your ears with a voice louder than that which shall shake the earth; but if ye are prepared ye shall not fear.”

In our search for the “beginning of wisdom,” perhaps one point of “wickedness” that we should wisely avoid is teaching a “fear of God” that is based on a misperception of Him as an arbitrary, punitive character. In our lifelong preparation to “meet our Maker,” perhaps it would be more effective and fitting to “fear and tremble” before God purely out of our wonder-filled, awe-struck devotion to the Divine Being who knows us best and loves us most.

—ALISON TAKENAKA
Essex Junction, Vermont



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