

Although defending the kingdom might seem to be a conservative mission, apologists are having a progressive influence on how Latter-day Saints understand their faith.

DEFENDING THE KINGDOM, RETHINKING THE FAITH: HOW APOLOGETICS IS RESHAPING MORMON ORTHODOXY

By John-Charles Duffy

By analogy, Mormon apologetics would be the “defense of [Mormonism] on intellectual grounds” by attempting to demonstrate that the basic ideas of Mormonism are “entirely in accordance with the demands of reason.” . . . Under this definition, I am an “apologist”; indeed, I am proud to be a defender of the Kingdom of God.

—WILLIAM J. HAMBLIN¹

OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN a dramatic rise in the quantity, sophistication, and prestige of LDS apologetics. The bulk of this discourse has been produced under the auspices of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), which since 1985 has enjoyed a publishing partnership with Church-owned Deseret Book and, in 1997, received official status (and thus Church funding) as an entity of Brigham Young University.² Drawing on the gifts of LDS academics from various disciplines, FARMS has published a wealth of literature that, in the eyes of many Saints, establishes the plausibility of LDS faith claims on scholarly grounds.³ In addition, the *FARMS Review*⁴ has been an important outlet for polemical essays rebutting challenges to LDS orthodoxy raised by Christian counterculturalists, Mormon revisionists, or secular academics. Additional outlets for LDS apologetics have emerged in recent years: the Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR), the Scholarly and Historical Information

Exchange for Latter-day Saints (SHIELDS), Zion’s Lighthouse Message Board (ZLMB), and websites by passionate amateurs, including LDS-themed pages at Jeff Lindsay’s Cracked Planet, Michael Ash’s Mormon Fortress, and Wade Englund’s Apologetics.

The recent surge in LDS apologetic activity is noteworthy given certain Mormon traditions that militate against the development of apologetics. First, there is a tradition within Mormonism that eschews argument on the grounds that “the spirit of contention is of the devil” (3 Nephi 11:29). LDS leaders and teachers have explicitly cited this tradition to advocate against apologetics. Second, Mormonism has long emphasized that knowledge of the truth comes through spiritual manifestations (testimony), understood as something apart from the intellect, which has often been negatively valorized. This tradition, too, has been invoked by Latter-day Saints who disparage the search for rational arguments or evidences in support of faith.

The increased prominence of apologetics within Mormonism has meant a corresponding decline for Mormonism’s anti-contention and anti-intellectual traditions. In other words, the recent rise of LDS apologetics has involved (1) an increase of openly confrontational discourse or verbal aggression, and (2) an increase in the value attributed to scholarship and the intellect. I am inclined to regard the first as negative and the second as positive, which is to say that I regard the new apologetics as a mixed blessing for the Saints. However, my view of LDS apologetics is more positive, overall, than that espoused by some revisionist Mormons. Whereas critics have dismissed apologetics as a reactionary “pseudo-scholarship,” I have come to see apologetics, rather, as contributing to a more progressive version of LDS orthodoxy. Paradoxically, as apologists seek to defend the



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claims of orthodoxy, they promote a new understanding of Mormonism that, in certain ways, is less hostile toward the world.

THE ANTI-CONTENTION TRADITION

Apologetics has been critiqued as contentious and unchristian.

Little is to be gained by kicking skunks or entering into a spitting contest with camels. . . . Our commission is to bear witness of the restored gospel . . . not to respond to every objection the adversary and his legions raise against it.

—JOSEPH FIELDING MCCONKIE⁵

A HARD-LINE VERSION of Mormonism's anti-contention tradition maintains that the best way for the Saints to respond to criticism of their faith is to not respond at all: keep away from detractors; do not try to answer them; in the words of Boyd K. Packer, "ignore them."⁶ In this view, reacting to criticism draws the Saints' energies away from the positive work of proclaiming the gospel and building the kingdom. At the least, then, apologetics represents a poor investment of time; at worst, apologists may play into the hands of Satan, who would naturally seek to lure the Saints away from the weightier tasks to which they have been called.⁷ Proponents of this view tend to equate the desire to respond to critics with an unchristian desire to retaliate.⁸ General Authorities who have preached this view include Elders Carlos E. Asay, Marvin J. Ashton, and Boyd K. Packer. Also, a 1983 First Presidency directive maintains that it is neither "wise [n]or appropriate to react to all criticisms" and that the Saints ought not to "enter into debates with [critics] either individually or before audiences."⁹ More recently, this view has been reiterated by BYU religion professor Joseph Fielding McConkie (son of Apostle Bruce R. McConkie and grandson of President Joseph Fielding Smith).

An attenuated version of the anti-contention tradition recognizes that it isn't always possible to simply ignore challenges to the faith. A Saint may be confronted by a hostile questioner during a public presentation, for instance, or a loved one who has been exposed to anti-Mormon claims may be in danger of falling away. In such cases, one may have to engage the criticism but should do so in a non-argumentative manner. An institute instructor writing for the *Ensign* suggests that when confronted by a challenger, you should "explain that you are not interested in debating or arguing—but in sharing your point of view and lis-

MAJOR APOLOGETIC GROUPS AND WEBSITES

FARMS

(<http://farms.byu.edu>)

FOUNDED in 1979 by John W. Welch, FARMS is the most professional, the best-financed, and the most prolific contributor to Mormon apologetics. The organization has published dozens of titles for both LDS and mainstream academic audiences; also two major periodicals, the *FARMS Review* and the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, in addition to a newsletter, *Insights*. FARMS has organized symposia, provided fellowships to promising LDS scholars, and funded archaeological excavations in Arabia and Mesoamerica. In 1997, FARMS was officially incorporated into BYU, where it now forms part of the Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (ISPART).

FAIR

(<http://www.fairlds.org>)

FOUNDED in 1997, FAIR serves as a clearinghouse of apologetic information with special attention to serving Latter-day Saints who find FARMS materials too specialized for their use. FAIR's online resources include short papers and brochures, a bookstore, and a sister site dedicated to issues of blacks in the Church: <http://www.blacklds.org>.

SHIELDS

(<http://www.shields-research.org>)

A WEBSITE which has been owned since 1997 by amateur apologists Stan Barker, Gene Humbert, and Malin Jacobs, SHIELDS is combative and mocking in tone. One of the site's major features is an archive of email correspondence between countercultists and LDS apologists, including FARMS scholars Daniel Peterson, Louis Midgley, and William Hamblin.

ZLMB

(<http://pub26.ezboard.com/bpacumenispages>)

THIS high-traffic public message board was founded in 2000 as a place where apologists, revisionists, and evangelicals could come together into a single online community. Moderators are "selected from across the spectrum of belief" in an effort to foster "passionate but civil exchange" on apologetic questions.

JEFF LINDSAY'S CRACKED PLANET

(<http://www.jefflindsay.com>)

A PATENT agent living in Wisconsin, Lindsay is probably the most prolific of the amateur apologists. His extensive personal website includes numerous, often lengthy, essays on apologetic topics (in addition to other pet issues).

MORMON FORTRESS

(<http://www.mormonfortress.com>)

A WEBSITE by Michael Ash, who aspires "to eventually offer my own articles [responding to] every hostile charge made against the LDS Church, its doctrines, or past/present leaders." Interactive media features satirizing anti-Mormonism have made this site quite popular.

WADE ENGLUND'S APOLOGETICS

(<http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/Anti.htm>)

ENGLUND may be most well known for creating "mirror sites" that rebut or satirize anti-Mormon websites (replicating the look of each anti-Mormon site but replacing the content).

tening to his.” The same writer cautions against the “temptation to accuse or attack an antagonist, to try to embarrass him or put him down, especially if you feel he is purposely distorting the facts.”¹⁰ In this attenuated approach, avoiding contention is understood as a question of the tone or the form of one’s engagement with criticism (in contrast to the hard-line approach, which urges one not to engage at all).

Prominent BYU religion professors have modeled two different approaches to engaging criticisms of the faith in non-argumentative ways. One approach is exemplified by Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert Millet in their book *Sustaining and Defending the Faith*. The authors decline to “respond to specific questions or challenges,” since they equate that project with the spirit of contention condemned by the Savior in 3 Nephi 11:29. In this they echo the hard-line anti-contention tradition. They depart somewhat from that tradition, however, in that they do seek to “show the inconsistency and sham of our antagonists’ questions.”¹¹ They do this by reiterating general principles that allow them to neutralize challenges to the faith in broad strokes. For example, by reminding readers that Satan has always waged war on the truth, McConkie and Millet encourage the Saints to view critics in terms provided by LDS orthodoxy: as deceitful persecutors, self-justifying apostates, or misguided people blinded by false traditions.¹² The goal of this approach is to persuade the Saints to reject criticism of the faith *a priori*, thus obviating any need to produce counterarguments to specific criticisms. This approach also allows the authors to maintain a proactive stance (preaching gospel principles) rather than a defensive one (arguing with critics).

Another BYU religion professor, Stephen E. Robinson, likewise elaborates a non-argumentative response to criticism of the faith though his approach is very different from that of McConkie and Millet. In his book *Are Mormons Christian?*¹³ and then again in an interfaith dialogue with evangelical theologian Craig L. Blomberg, *How Wide the Divide?*¹⁴ Robinson seeks to neutralize challenges to Mormonism’s claim to be Christian. He proceeds by arguing for fundamental similarities between Mormonism and mainline Christianity, especially its evangelical wing (which is the source of most Christian polemics against Mormonism). Robinson maintains, for example, that the LDS view of the Bible is equivalent to that set forth in the evangelical Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy;¹⁵ and he argues that even with distinctive elements such as the Book of Mormon and the King Follett discourse, Mormonism should qualify as Christian by evangelical standards of orthodoxy.¹⁶ Robinson decries the unfairness of anti-Mormon polemics. However, by framing his discourse as an effort to build bridges with more fair-minded Christians, Robinson avoids a contentious tone: he is not so much rebutting the Saints’ detractors as he is inviting mainline Christians to stand in solidarity with the Saints against the detractors.¹⁷

The writings of Robinson, McConkie, and Millet can be described as apologetic inasmuch as they aim to neutralize challenges to Mormonism. I suspect, however, that these authors would object to being labeled apologists, given that they

model alternatives to the more argumentative discourse generally evoked by the term apologetics. McConkie and Millet protest that they “have little interest in theological dogfights,”¹⁸ and Robinson distances himself from “those contentious souls who simply want to carry on a war of words with the anti-Mormons,” reminding readers that “the spirit of contention is always un-Christian.”¹⁹ These statements are an implicit critique of LDS apologists who do engage argumentatively with detractors.

IN DEFENSE OF CONTENTION
*Apologists view polemics as indispensable—
not to mention entertaining.*

We did not pick this fight with the Church’s critics, but we will not withdraw from it. I can only regret that some may think less of us for that fact.

—DANIEL C. PETERSON²⁰

NOT ALL LATTER-DAY Saints are willing to ignore their critics, as the hard-line anti-contention tradition would have them do. Nor do all Saints feel obligated to avoid discourse that is argumentative in form or belligerent in tone, as advocated by the more attenuated version of the anti-contention tradition. LDS apologists have developed rebuttals to specific criticisms directed at their faith (an approach rejected by McConkie and Millet). Some even engage critics in direct confrontation or debate (for which Robinson sought to model a better way). Apologetic discourse found in the pages of the *FARMS Review* or at SHIELDS and other websites, can be unabashedly aggressive: scornful, peremptory, propelled by hostile emotion (see sidebar, pages 26–27).

Latter-day Saints who engage in such discourse recognize that the anti-contention tradition is a problem for them. Daniel Peterson, long-time editor of the *FARMS Review*, reports that he and other apologists have “on a number of occasions” been challenged by fellow Saints for being “so polemical, so argumentative.”²¹ Apostle Henry B. Eyring, speaking at the FARMS annual banquet in the aftermath of a publicized clash between FARMS and Signature Books, felt it necessary to warn that “a spirit of contention will drive away the very influence by which [people] can know truth.” Eyring exhorted FARMS writers to practice “kindness toward each other and those you hope to invite rather than to vanquish.”²²

In response to the anti-contention tradition, apologists have had to develop an apologia for apologetics itself—to defend their defense of the faith. A talk by Elder Boyd K. Packer, which cited Nehemiah 6:3 to make the point that the Saints should “not be drawn away to respond to enemies,” seems to have been particularly problematic for apologists, who have devised various careful ways to neutralize this challenge to their project²³ (see sidebar, page 29). Fortunately for the apologists, Church leaders have not always promoted the hard-line anti-contention tradition: apologists can cite a number of past Church publications that endorse defending the faith against detractors.²⁴ Especially useful has been a statement by Apostle

Neal A. Maxwell that the Church's critics should not be allowed to get away with "uncontested slam dunks."²⁵

One way that apologists justify their confrontational approach is to represent criticism of the faith as an extreme threat. If apologetics is, as Robinson says, "a war of words,"²⁶ it is, in apologists' view, a war that must be fought—"a battle against Satan for souls."²⁷ "The attacks of the critics create casualties," Peterson warns.²⁸ He "regularly" responds to members and investigators around the globe whose faith is threatened by exposure to anti-Mormon claims, and he laments that Saints have fallen away for lack of access to adequate rebuttals.²⁹ Indeed, the threat posed by anti-Mormons is not only spiritual: the Saints' very lives are claimed to be at risk. Peterson claims there is "abundant evidence" that some anti-Mormons would violate the Saints' constitutional right to religious freedom if they could,³⁰ he accuses *The God Makers'* Ed Decker of being responsible for chapel bombings in Chile and state repression of the Church in Ghana,³¹ he compares fundamentalist crusades against Mormons to the Nazis' campaign against the Jews.³² In this view, persecution of the Saints—even the threat of extermination—is as real in the twenty-first century as it was in the nineteenth.³³ Given this apocalyptic outlook, it is not surprising that apologists reject the counsel to ignore detractors as naïve,³⁴ nor is it surprising that apologists' responses to critics can be at times so belligerent.

Underlining the serious threat posed by anti-Mormons, and thus the need for aggressive engagement, is one strategy for defending apologetics in the face of the anti-contention tradition. Curiously, that strategy is deployed side-by-side with a very different one: apologists deflect accusations that they are contentious by downplaying how actively or extensively engaged they are with anti-Mormonism, or by denying that they find pleasure in that engagement. Apologists may speak of themselves as having just happened to "run across" anti-Mormon literature or to "wander" into a Christian bookstore that sells anti-Mormon material.³⁵ One SHIELDS apologist who debated with a protester outside a temple open house represents this as a kind of self-sacrifice—drawing the protester's fire so that others would be spared.³⁶ Corresponding with evangelical countercultists by email, apologists Louis Midgley and Barry Bickmore represent themselves as seeking clarification, not con-

tention.³⁷ Peterson minimizes his apologetic activities when he writes that he and others "occasionally feel called upon" to engage with anti-Mormonism (my emphasis); he professes to find this "an increasingly wearisome chore."³⁸

Such rhetoric rings hollow, however, given that apologists also speak of their engagement with anti-Mormonism as wildly entertaining. A tabloid produced by one anti-Mormon ministry is said to have an LDS fan base who find the publication "uproariously funny."³⁹ Attendees at the FAIR symposium have enjoyed "sidesplitting" readings of anti-Mormon literature.⁴⁰ Peterson describes reading an anti-Mormon book that left "tears of laughter flowing down my face" and had him phoning friends "time and again" to "share particularly funny passages."⁴¹ Elsewhere he writes of a road trip during which he played anti-Mormon literature on tape for the amusement of his children: "We laughed till our sides ached."⁴² In a volume of the *FARMS Review*, Peterson reprints "with considerable delight" an outrageously inaccurate, bigoted article on Mormonism from a foreign newspaper, and he invites readers to submit more of the same: "Perhaps we will even select and publish some of the ones we find most entertaining."⁴³

To a certain degree, this laughter needs to be understood as a hostile rhetorical pose: attacking the enemy by heaping scorn upon him. Still, there are indications that apologists genuinely enjoy what they do—that they find apologetics pleasurable to the point of addictive. Michael Ash, creator of the apologetic



JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN CHARLES DUFFY

Please, Lou, stop reading anti-Mormon literature . . . for the children's sake!

website Mormon Fortress, uses the self-satirizing term *apolo-holic* to describe

an LDS Apologist who can't seem to leave apologetics alone. Despite his (or her) best endeavors, the Apolo-holic stays up too late discussing Mormonism on message boards, reads a little too much (is there such a

thing?) pro and anti literature, and occasionally forgets to feed the dog due to writing rebuttals to criticisms.⁴⁴

Peterson invokes this same trope—apologetics as addiction—in answering the question, “Why does the *FARMS Review of Books* devote so much attention to [anti-Mormon] books of little or no merit?”

HOSTILITY AND CONTEMPT IN LDS APOLOGETICS

Tone is everything!

—NEAL LAMBERT¹

LDS APOLOGISTS, FARMS in particular, have gained a reputation for rancor.² Even an article in the Church-owned *Deseret News* once characterized polemical essays in the *FARMS Review* as “vitriolic.”³ Though not all apologists write this way,⁴ there is an unmistakable trend within LDS apologetics toward hostility and contempt—sometimes blatant, sometimes relatively muted. Apologists who write this way insist that anti-Mormonism requires this response: as one team of writers puts it, when dealing with some anti-Mormons, it’s impossible to “tell it like it is and still satisfy conventional expectations about politeness and fair play.”⁵

Apologists profess to be both “amused and disgusted” by their enemies: amused by the absurdity of critics’ arguments, disgusted by critics’ fraudulence.⁶ Two themes, then, recur in LDS apologetic discourse: (1) the stupidity and (2) the mendacity of anti-Mormons. Not only their arguments, but anti-Mormons themselves are said to be stupid. This point is made over and over, in hostile reviews,⁷ in cartoons,⁸ in jokes,⁹ even in insulting statements made directly to non-LDS correspondents.¹⁰ But in addition to being stupid, anti-Mormons are also accused of being liars. They knowingly misrepresent LDS beliefs;¹¹ they lie about their credentials;¹² it is even said that anti-Mormons have posed as Church members or investigators in order to infiltrate the flock.¹³

Apologists are happy to publicize samples of anti-Mormon discourse they believe exemplify their enemies’ stupidity: hence Gary Novak’s *Worst of the Anti-Mormon Web*,¹⁴ Wade Englund’s catalogue of anti-Mormon fallacies,¹⁵ and the Philastus Hurlbut award that Daniel Peterson and other apologists launched to “recognize” the most absurd anti-Mormon statement of the year.¹⁶ By contrast, when apologists encounter discourse they regard as mendacious, they strive to suppress it. Much of the correspondence between apologists and countercultists that is archived at SHIELDS was initiated for this purpose. In some cases, apologists have taken a soft approach to trying to convince countercultists to retract allegedly false claims—professing concern for the countercultists’ reputation, for instance.¹⁷ At other times, the approach has been more preemptory.¹⁸ Unable to make the countercultists yield,

apologists may bear witness against them in the name of Christ or command them to repent.¹⁹ Peterson quite bluntly accuses one countercultist of serving Satan.²⁰

A related strain of apologetic discourse represents anti-Mormons as people who know deep down that they’re wrong but who persist in fighting the truth.²¹ If a correspondent declines to engage further, apologists often take this to mean that the anti-Mormon has seen his arguments cannot prevail and is fleeing the scene: apologists have dubbed this the “Robert McKay maneuver” after a countercultist with whom William Hamblin corresponded.²² In their exchanges with anti-Mormons, apologists almost invariably claim the last word.²³

LDS apologists often appear to be driven by strong emotion. Peterson’s writing, in particular, shows signs on occasion of having been produced in a surge of scorn or anger.²⁴ In their correspondence with countercultists, apologists seem to champ at the bit, impatient for their opponents to respond so they can continue the debate.²⁵ Their zeal to “score points” or “demolish” enemy arguments²⁶ may cloud apologists’ reason, leading them to rebut a claim that an opponent didn’t make,²⁷ or to claim to have rebutted an argument when they patently have not.²⁸

Occasionally apologists “admit” that anti-Mormons make them angry.²⁹ But fearing, perhaps, that this will give their enemies the satisfaction of thinking they’ve struck a nerve, apologists are more likely to claim that anti-Mormonism merely amuses them.³⁰

Apologists firmly resist accusations of “verbal viciousness,”³¹ preferring instead to describe their polemics with words such as “forthright” or “hard-hitting.”³² If accused of acrimony, they may protest that they are simply being “droll” and that their opponents should “lighten up.”³³ Alternatively, they may deflect the accusation back to their critics.³⁴ When Eugene England chastised FARMS for being proud and unmerciful during a public conflict with Signature Books in 1991, Peterson protested that FARMS had behaved in a Christian manner and hinted that England, on the contrary, was being unchristian in accusing FARMS.³⁵

At times, apologists openly denigrate those they regard as the enemy—as when SHIELDS characterizes detractors as people who “have nothing better to do with their pitiful lives,”³⁶ or when Louis Midgley calls non-LDS historian and past MHA president Lawrence Foster “an idiot.”³⁷ At other times, contempt has taken the form of underhanded digs. The most famous of these is an acrostic message, “Metcalfe is Butthead” that William Hamblin is reported to have embedded

The answer to this question lies partly in my quirky predilections as the *Review's* founder and editor. The hostile mendacity of much anti-Mormon literature fascinates me, in an odd sort of way. And dealing with such writing is, simply, good clean fun. (As I tell my wife, it's an odd hobby, but there are worse ones: it

might have been cocaine.)⁴⁵

Likewise, from Louis Midgley:

My interest in this literature goes deeper than a mild curiosity for the odd leaflet, tract, or book that happens to come along. One might even say that I am hooked on the stuff. I have even corresponded with

in an essay for the *FARMS Review*.³⁸ In a response to critiques leveled at the *FARMS Review* by John Hatch, Peterson disdained to reply to Hatch by name, but he did work four variations of the word “hatch” into his essay—hatch, hatched, hatchery, and hatchling—apparently for the amusement of cognoscenti.³⁹ Peterson and Midgley have made what look like furtive jabs at the homosexuality of individuals in liberal or revisionist Mormon circles;⁴⁰ and Peterson has said that he would “give [his] right arm” to be able to fool anti-Mormons into “publish[ing] a side-splitting satire of themselves.”⁴¹

Though they complain when detractors use epithets such as Morg or FARMS-boys,⁴² apologists have developed a rich satirical vocabulary of their own: anti-mormonoids,⁴³ Deckerites,⁴⁴ Signaturi,⁴⁵ Quinnspeak,⁴⁶ and B.S. (for “Big Scholars”).⁴⁷ Michael Ash has compiled a whole glossary of satirical coinages, including Metcalferrhea, Quinnosis Syndrome, Tannerexia, and Tannertantrium.⁴⁸ Peterson waggishly calls *Dialogue* “a journal of allegedly Mormon thought,”⁴⁹ and there may be witty intent in D. Michael Quinn’s having been dubbed “a former Mormon historian” (former Mormon? or former historian?).⁵⁰

Another way that apologists ridicule opponents is highlighting trivial errors in their writing—through the apparently malicious use of “sic,” for example,⁵¹ or by caviling about the misuse of words like evince or apocrypha.⁵² Obviously intended to undermine opponents’ credibility, such moves also let apologists revel in scorn: John Gee once offered a list of errors in a book he was reviewing for the “amusement,” so he said, of his readers.⁵³

Finally, apologists have a penchant for describing their work with metaphors of violence: blowing away zombies;⁵⁴ force-feeding countercultists;⁵⁵ stomping out weeds;⁵⁶ dropping a hydrogen bomb.⁵⁷ *FARMS* recently published a polemic review under the pseudonym Rockwell D. Porter, an allusion to the legendary Mormon gunslinger Porter Rockwell.⁵⁸ Apologists implicitly invoke the threat of divine destruction for their enemies when they compare detractors to Book of Mormon apos-



JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN-CHARLES DUFFEY

—That’s not very Christian.

—I agree. I think I’ll make fun of them on my website.

tates Nehor or Korihor, or to New Testament dissemblers Ananias and Sapphira,⁵⁹ all of whom met violent ends.

As I read the more hostile apologists, I am reminded of literary critic Jane Tompkins’s reflections on the “bloodless violence” that academics perpetrate on one another through words. Tompkins proposes that “although it’s not the same thing to savage a person’s book as it is to kill them with a machine gun, . . . the nature of the feelings that motivate both acts is qualitatively the same.”⁶⁰ Michael McGough, writing about high school debaters for the *New Republic*, suggests that debate provides an experience akin to that offered by fantasy role-playing games such as *Dungeons and Dragons*: “the thrill of combat in an imaginary universe,” where victory depends on intellectual, not physical, prowess.⁶¹ I suggest that apologetics provides the same kind of thrill. If I’m right, this would help explain why LDS apologists are virtually all male:⁶² a wealth of research shows that males are more overtly aggressive than females are, ergo more likely to relish an exchange of verbal hostilities.⁶³

The notes for this sidebar begin on page 51.

some of those “antimormonoids.” My wife warns me about the utter futility of such behavior. And she is not mollified by my descriptions of the amusing side of anti-Mormon literature. Responding to her remonstrances and entreaties, I occasionally resolve to leave the stuff alone. But then a newsletter will arrive in the mail or a rumor will surface and I will begin to rationalize: what harm can come from having a look at some unsavory details about the latest unpleasant quarrel among the antimormonoids, or from glancing through a tract, or writing just one more letter? And then, like one who cannot pass the swinging doors of a bar, I am back into it again.⁴⁶

Far from ignoring or shunning anti-Mormonism, apologists seek it out with the passion of devoted hobbyists: purchasing anti-Mormon materials from Christian bookstores;⁴⁷ subscribing to countercultist newsletters;⁴⁸ visiting anti-Mormon websites or message boards;⁴⁹ listening to anti-Mormon tapes while driving;⁵⁰ attending anti-Mormon presentations and rallies;⁵¹ leaving one another voice messages to share the latest “juicy news about still another . . . anti-Mormon outrage.”⁵² Apologists have contacted Mormonism’s critics directly by email or phone;⁵³ they have called in to radio programs to challenge critics on the air.⁵⁴ Peterson once offered to publicly debate Ed Decker⁵⁵ and has alluded to an instance when “several Latter-day Saints,” including “a fairly well-known defender of the faith,” went out with Decker for lunch at a restaurant.⁵⁶ Midgley was forcibly escorted from Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s bookstore after he confronted them there,⁵⁷ and he

recently attended a book signing to publicly challenge Grant Palmer, a retired institute director who has questioned traditional LDS faith claims.⁵⁸

The relish with which some apologists pursue their work can be understood in terms developed by Dominic Infante, an influential theorist of aggression in communication. Infante maintains that certain individuals have personalities that incline them toward *argumentativeness* (“the trait to present and defend positions on controversial issues while attacking the positions which other people take”) or *verbal aggressiveness* (“the inclination to attack the self-concepts of individuals instead of, or in addition to, their positions on particular issues”).⁵⁹ Infante sees argumentativeness as a positive trait and verbal aggression as a negative one, though this distinction has been questioned.⁶⁰ In any case, LDS apologists display both traits. To be an apologist is, by definition, to be argumentative—that is, inclined to “present and defend positions on controversial issues.”⁶¹ And the more confrontational apologists engage in discursive practices that Infante defines as verbal aggression, including challenges to competence, character attacks, teasing, ridicule, and commands.⁶²

Despite its antisocial character, verbal aggression is rewarded by the prestige it yields within the mutually supportive network of LDS apologists: Peterson, for example, has won from other apologists admiring epithets such as “Dannibal Lector—he who eats anti-Mormons for lunch” or “the Meanest Man in Mormonism.”⁶³ Verbal aggression is validated also by apologists’ sense of being locked in combat with unscrupulous and potentially lethal enemies—by their perception that they

are an important line of defense for the Church. If twenty-first century anti-Mormonism is the equivalent of nineteenth-century persecution, then verbally aggressive apologists are the intellectual equivalent of Danites: meeting violence with violence, defending the Saints through a counteroffensive of their own.⁶⁴

Verbal aggression is not the only way to respond to persecution. Proponents of Mormonism’s anti-contention tradition share the apologists’ sense that the Saints are under attack but have nevertheless advocated non-argumentative responses. Indeed, Infante has suggested ways to respond to verbal attack that recall themes from LDS anti-contention discourse: “Avoid verbally aggressive individuals. . . .” “In argumentative



JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN CHARLES DUFFY

situations . . . reaffirm the opponent's sense of competence, allow one's opponent to speak without interruption, emphasize attitudes and values shared with the opponent, . . . use a calm delivery, . . . allow the opponent to save face."⁶⁵

Though I confess to being guilty of it myself,⁶⁶ I deem verbal aggression to be unchristian and spiritually corrosive. I therefore wish that the LDS community generally and FARMS specifically would be more emphatic in disapproving the verbally aggressive apologetics to which individuals such as Peterson and Midgley are inclined. At the same time, it needs to be noted that verbal aggression is hardly a universal style among LDS apologists: FAIR, for example, makes a concerted effort to be (in Infante's terms) argumentative but not verbally aggressive.⁶⁷ It also needs to be noted that many of the LDS scholars who work with FARMS eschew altogether the sorts of polemical discourse I have been discussing thus far.⁶⁸ These scholars do not see themselves as pursuing an apologetic agenda, even though others perceive their work thus. This brings me to my second area of interest: the anti-intellectual tradition in Mormonism and its relationship to apologetics.

THE ANTI-INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

Apologetics is disparaged by Saints who see little value in rational argument or evidence.

One seductive danger vying for the attentions of Latter-day Saints is the temptation to substitute various "evidences" for faith.

—JOSEPH FIELDING MCCONKIE⁶⁹

MORMONISM HAS LONG been ambivalent about the value of scholarship and the intellect. Mormon traditions affirming the importance of education and the enlightened rationality of LDS beliefs have existed side-by-side with a Jacksonian disdain for intellectual elites (theologians, doctors) and a tendency to underline the limitations of mortal wisdom in order to make clear the need for revelation.⁷⁰ Latter-day Saints maintain that knowledge of the truth comes ultimately through "testimony," understood as spiritual manifestations that transcend normal intellectual activity. Out of this belief has grown a discourse that tends to denigrate intellectualism and to represent reason and scholarship as irrelevant to questions of faith. This discourse is what I have in mind when I speak of an anti-intellectual tradition in Mormonism. Recent spokesmen for this tradition include BYU religion professors Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Monte S. Nyman, all of whom take a dim view of apologetics.

Citing 1 Corinthians 2:13–14, McConkie maintains that the things of God can be understood only through the Spirit of God: only by receiving a testimony can a person come to know the truth of the restored gospel.⁷¹ For McConkie, this means that rational arguments for the faith have no power whatsoever to persuade nonbelievers. To contend is not only unchristian; it is unavailing. McConkie holds, for example, that it is "fruitless" to argue for LDS faith claims by appeals to the Bible, because the Bible can be correctly understood only by "a revealed understanding"—i.e., by those who have received a testimony of the restored gospel.⁷² Likewise, McConkie insists that if you try

WRESTLING WITH NEHEMIAH

And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

—Nehemiah 6:3

THIS verse has been problematic for apologists since Elder Boyd K. Packer used it to enjoin the Saints "not be drawn away to respond to enemies."¹ McConkie and Millet allude to Nehemiah in their own critique of apologetics,² and several apologists have taken up the task of neutralizing the challenge the verse poses. The constraints of orthodox discourse do not allow apologists to explicitly rebut Packer; however, they subtly offer alternative interpretations of the verse.

One strategy has been to minimize, in one way or another, the extent of the prohibition against responding to detractors. An institute instructor writing for the *Ensign's* "I Have a Question" column referred to Elder Packer's use of Nehemiah 6:3 as if the apostle had intended to prohibit the Saints from responding only in the case of temple exposés.³ Other apologists have cited Nehemiah to explain why General Authorities,⁴ full-time missionaries,⁵ or even most members⁶ do not or should not engage with critics—while rejecting a notion that apologetics should be altogether shunned.

Daniel Peterson offers the boldest challenge to Elder Packer's use of Nehemiah. On one occasion, Peterson cites

Nehemiah 6:3 in a bow to the notion that generally detractors do not merit a response.⁷ But elsewhere Peterson cites an earlier passage from the same book (Nehemiah 4:13–23) to show that "Nehemiah's construction workers [labored] with one hand while the other [held] a sword."⁸ Implicitly dissenting from Elder Packer's conclusion, Peterson writes: "The attacks of the critics create casualties. . . . Sometimes it is necessary to climb down from the wall."⁹

That apologists have been able to work around the prohibition against responding to critics may reflect a shift in Church leaders' thinking about how to cope with detractors. Statements such as Elder Packer's were made in the early 1980s, during *The God Makers* controversy. As the new millennium begins, however, the hierarchy seem more comfortable responding openly to perceived criticism: witness the "Mistakes in the News" page on the Church website,¹⁰ or the Church's official responses to John Krakauer's *Under the Banner of Heaven*.¹¹

The notes for this sidebar appear on page 55.

to defend gospel truth using arguments elaborated “according to [the] rules of scholarship, you will lose.”⁷³ Without a witness from the Spirit, a person will not recognize the truth of LDS claims, no matter what arguments or evidences are offered. Apologetics is therefore a pointless endeavor when directed at non-believers; if we hope to persuade others of our faith’s claims, our only option is to bear testimony and invite listeners to gain testimonies of their own.⁷⁴

What about those who already have testimonies? Can apologetics supplement spiritual witnesses in order to strengthen faith? McConkie and Millet concede that evidences may “add to” one’s testimony or “anchor the converted.”⁷⁵ But they fear that the Saints will be tempted to rely on evidences in place of faith, scholarship in place of revelation. Faith requires assent to “things that defy the intellect,” a willingness to believe against reason or in the absence of evidence.⁷⁶ What then, McConkie asks, is the point of seeking scholarly evidence for faith claims?

Given that it is the Lord’s purpose that our testimony of the Book of Mormon rest on faith, what is our purpose in so zealously seeking evidences of all sorts . . . ? If such evidence supplants the necessity of faith, are we not at odds with the Lord’s purposes? . . . Some seem to be more interested in proving the Book of Mormon true than in discovering what it actually teaches. [Yet] the *only* meaningful evidence that the book is true is its doctrines.⁷⁷ (my emphasis)

Sensitive to accusations of anti-intellectualism, McConkie is quick to add that he does not mean to disparage scholarship; he and Millet make several disclaimers of this sort.⁷⁸ Still, McConkie, Millet, and others emphasize the threat they believe scholarship poses to faith. Faith in the unseen, Millet fears, “may be particularly difficult for one who is devoted to research and study.”⁷⁹ One contributor to the *FARMS Review* warns that “the use of scholarly tools” may “breed habits of mind that reflexively privilege secular scholarship over the gospel.”⁸⁰ McConkie goes so far as to assert that “true science and true religion are incompatible by their very definition,”⁸¹ which does much to explain the pessimism of the following passage from McConkie and Millet’s *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (a passage criticized by writers associated with FARMS):



But is it faithful astronomy?

As to the world’s scholarship, it ought be observed that the best of man’s learning, as it has been directed toward the Bible, has not resulted in an increase of faith in that holy book. . . . Scholars are far too wont to sift the sands of faith through screens of their own making, and in doing so often find themselves left with nothing but the rocks of their own unbelief. Similarly, with some concern we sense among many Latter-day Saints a preoccupation with “evidences” to “prove” the Book of Mormon.⁸²

It is not only the search for evidence that troubles McConkie. Even the idea that scholarship can help the Saints better understand the scriptures makes him uneasy, for he sees this as tending to place the scholar between unschooled believers and God, “precisely what happened in the Great Apostasy.”⁸³

Thus, notwithstanding concessions that scholarship has a “secondary” role to play, Latter-day Saints moving in the anti-intellectual tradition incline to speak in either/or terms: the Saints must choose between scholarly and devotional study of the scriptures. Hence Nyman asks: “Should we not learn and teach what the Book of Mormon itself teaches concerning the sacred preaching, the great revelations, and the prophecies *rather than* what others have said about its contents, literary styles, or external evidences?” (my emphasis).⁸⁴ Similarly, another LDS writer disapproves of Saints who are “inordinately preoccupied with proving the authenticity of the Book of Mormon by going on at great length about textual, linguistic, historical, cultural, and geographical matters . . . *rather than*

concentrating on the spiritual message of the book” (my emphasis).⁸⁵ These either/or constructions denigrate apologetics—and the writers clearly have in mind scholarship produced by FARMS.

IN DEFENSE OF INTELLECT
*Apologists and other orthodox scholars
seek to integrate faith and intellect.*

*The glorious burden of the disciple-scholar is fides
quaerens intellectum, faith seeking—and finding—
“reason of the hope that is in [us]” (1 Peter 3:15).*

—STEPHEN D. RICKS⁸⁶

SIX OF THE first eight volumes of the *FARMS Review* contain critical responses to the anti-intellectual tradition, either as articulated by McConkie and Millet or as reflected in anthologies of Book of Mormon commentary edited by Nyman. The passage from *Doctrinal Commentary*, cited above, is a particular target: Louis Midgley characterizes this passage as “an attack on all biblical scholarship” as well as on Book of Mormon scholarship produced by FARMS.⁸⁷ Reviewers complain about McConkie and Millet’s “anti-intellectual bias”⁸⁸ or the “anti-learned” and “narrow” attitude implicit in a Nyman anthology’s preference for devotional study over scholarship.⁸⁹ “If this is the attitude with which our university students are taught to approach the scriptures,” one writer laments, “can we really expect them to become the kind of people who can reconcile discovered and revealed truth without feeling they have to reject one or the other?”⁹⁰ FARMS reviewers eschew the either/or mentality of the anti-intellectual tradition.⁹¹ The Saints, they insist, need meat in addition to milk: we deserve a scholarship that moves beyond the equivalent of “a good-to-excellent Sunday School Gospel Doctrine lesson,”⁹² beyond the “platitudes, kitsch, and clichés” toward which devotional study was said to tend.⁹³

Champions of scriptural scholarship do not deny the primacy of testimony or the Spirit. FARMS readily concedes that “the insights of studies such as those produced in the name of FARMS are of secondary importance when compared with the eternal truths” revealed through the guidance of the Spirit⁹⁴ and that scholarship must therefore “complement, not replace” devotional study of the scriptures “for spiritual and moral ends.”⁹⁵ FARMS scholars have repeatedly denied that they aim to “prove” LDS faith claims: they speak, rather, of “plausibility,”⁹⁶ “probability,”⁹⁷ “corroborations,”⁹⁸ or “reasonable grounds”⁹⁹ for belief. Testimony alone can offer “ultimate proof.”¹⁰⁰

The constraints of LDS orthodoxy make these disclaimers *de rigueur*. Nevertheless, FARMS scholars and FAIR apologists attach considerable importance to argument and evidence as means of strengthening faith, refuting critics, and even persuading nonbelievers. As John W. Welch puts it (quoting B. H. Roberts), evidence may be “secondary” to testimony, but it is also “of first-rate importance.”¹⁰¹ Lance Starr of FAIR defends apologetics on the grounds that it can “strengthen faith and fortify

CRITIQUES OF APOLOGETICS IN THE CHRISTIAN MAINSTREAM

THE value of apologetics has been questioned not only within the LDS community but also in the Christian mainstream. In the wake of the Enlightenment, and especially during the twentieth century, apologetics experienced a decline in prestige among Christians. As liberal Christians have come to doubt the “propriety” of insisting that one religion is right, apologetics has become the province of conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists, whose discourse may not rise above the “wanton cult-bashing” with which Latter-day Saints are all too familiar.¹

Prominent theologians of the twentieth century—liberal and orthodox alike—took a dim view of apologetics, typically on the grounds that the search for proof was antithetical to the call to walk by faith. Already in the nineteenth century, Kierkegaard had maintained that faith must “regard the proof as its enemy. . . . [W]hen faith begins to cease to be faith, then a proof becomes necessary so as to command respect from the side of unbelief.”² These sentiments were echoed in the next century by Rudolf Bultmann, who rejected apologetics in an application of the Reformation principle *sola fide* (faith alone),³ by Karl Barth, who complained that in attempting to argue on unbelievers’ terms, apologists step out of faith instead of bearing witness to it;⁴ and by H. Richard Niebuhr, who characterized apologetics as idolatrous trust in human reason, motivated by defensiveness and doubt.⁵

Liberal theologian Paul Tillich had harsh words for what he saw as apologists’ misuse of science. Specifically, Tillich disdained apologists who exploit “gaps” in the present state of scientific knowledge in an effort to leave room for the claims of faith. This methodology required that “whenever our knowledge advanced, another defense position had to be given up”—an “undignified procedure” which Tillich believed had “discredited” apologetics.⁶ In Tillich’s view, the only way to avoid this problem was to place the “truth of faith” and the “truth of science” in entirely separate spheres.⁷

Tillich’s representation of apologists as people retreating from damning evidence recalls accusations that Mormon revisionists have lodged against the “limited geography” hypotheses of the Book of Mormon, for instance. On the other hand, Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert Millet echo conservative theologians such as Barth in their tendency to see the search for evidence as antithetical to faith. When Elder Boyd K. Packer insists that the Saints should ignore detractors, he parallels a conviction of Niebuhr’s: that efforts to defend the faith distract Christians from “single-minded devotion” to their true vocation.⁸

The notes for this sidebar appear on page 55.

If apologetics is “a war of words,”
it is, in the apologists’ view, a war
that must be fought — “a battle
against Satan for souls.”
“The attacks of the critics
create casualties.”

testimonies,” citing his own experience as a Church member unprepared for the “attack[s]” and “accusations” against his faith that he experienced in college.¹⁰² Noel B. Reynolds makes a similar claim when he writes that FARMS scholarship can “provide important shelter for fledgling testimonies” by lending credibility to LDS faith: “it may be important for young people or others . . . to know that the most serious scholarly students of the Book of Mormon are led to conclusions exactly opposite those of the book’s critics.”¹⁰³

For apologists, evidence not only strengthens faith in those who already have testimonies; it can also play a role in missionary work (something McConkie and Millet specifically oppose).¹⁰⁴ LDS apologists frequently quote a statement by Austin Farrer, who said, regarding the writings of C. S. Lewis, “Though argument does not create conviction, the lack of it destroys belief. . . . Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish.”¹⁰⁵ Along this same line, John Sorenson writes that faithful scholarship “can clear away obstacles in the minds of those prejudiced by unfriendly scholars or bigots so that the honest will give belief a chance,”¹⁰⁶ while Noel Reynolds maintains that because not everyone finds it “easy to believe on the testimony of others,” arguments and evidences can help “persuade the ambivalent.”¹⁰⁷ Consistent with this view, missionaries have used apologetic resources by FARMS and FAIR to “remov[e] the stumbling blocks” to conversion.¹⁰⁸ California institute director Ross Baron has become famous at FAIR for his “missionary firesides,” apologetic presentations during which he fields hostile questions from nonmembers; Baron claims that his firesides have resulted in “close to a hundred baptisms” and more than fifty reactivations.¹⁰⁹ FARMS scholars, too, have given fireside presentations targeting nonmembers and the less active.¹¹⁰

Scholarly evidence may stop short of proving LDS faith claims, but it seems, in the eyes of some, to stop *just* short. Consider, for example, a statement by Warren and Michaela Aston, discoverers of the Arabian site that has come to be widely accepted among the Saints as Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:6). Immediately after affirming that testimony alone can provide “ultimate ‘proof’” of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, the Astons continue in a vein that shows they attribute to their work considerable significance as empirical evidence of the Book of Mormon.



But in [naming and describing specific places], the Book of Mormon makes available to us the simple test of matching its claims against the physical world. . . . We sincerely hope that those who already know the Book of Mormon is true will have additional verification of their faith and that the uninterested will have new reasons to more seriously consider the claims of the book. And those who still dismiss the book as a fraud or merely the product of Joseph Smith’s environment will have to explain how so much specific information (which was not available to anyone in 1830) can now be demonstrated as totally accurate.¹¹¹

David Rolph Seely has complained that what scholarship tentatively proposes, Latter-day Saints may be quick to hail as established fact.¹¹² Even FARMS scholars, careful as a rule not to speak of “proof,” can at times sound remarkably confident about the possibility of empirically establishing the claims of faith. Welch (a lawyer) speaks of “prov[ing] Joseph Smith a true prophet by circumstantial evidence.”¹¹³ Reynolds believes that with the Book of Mormon, “we are presented, possibly for the first time, with a claimed major miracle which can be

readily subjected to rigorous public, empirical tests,” the results of which would serve as empirical evidence for the existence of God.¹¹⁴ Reynolds is also confident that scholars have successfully “refute[d] most of the criticisms” leveled at the Book of Mormon.¹¹⁵ Others among Reynolds’s colleagues might prefer more tempered versions of his claims, but FARMS scholars do seem to share a sense that their work has made anti-Mormons (in Reynolds’s words) more “cautious.”¹¹⁶ A 1998 article by Christian apologists Carl Mosser and Paul Owen, which argues that evangelicals have greatly underestimated the apologetic challenge FARMS poses, has contributed to apologists’ feelings of vindication.¹¹⁷

At this point, however, I need to underline an important fact. One of the ways FARMS scholars have defended themselves against the accusation that apologetics competes with testimony is to deny apologetic motives. Reynolds, for instance, claims that while FARMS research has been “appropriated for apologetic purposes,” apologetics “rarely” motivates the research.¹¹⁸ “Our primary objective,” he says, “is to understand the [Book of Mormon] itself.”¹¹⁹ The idea that FARMS is devoted not to apologetics but to “understanding and appreciation” of the scriptures has been echoed by Welch and Sorenson and is canonized in FARMS’s statement of purpose.¹²⁰ Even Daniel Peterson, while acknowledging that he and others are “temperamentally inclined” to play the role of apologist, reiterates that apologetics is not FARMS’s primary mission when he describes the apologetic role as having “been thrust upon us.”¹²¹

These statements are not merely an evasive rhetorical ploy. There is a significant distinction between scholarship that sets out to defend LDS faith claims and scholarship that assumes LDS faith claims. Much of the work produced under the auspices of FARMS is of the latter category. As Welch explains, “We assume that the Book of Mormon is an ancient book and then look for insights by seeing it in terms of ancient language, culture, and history.” Such work is implicitly apologetic inasmuch as by its very existence, it asserts the plausibility or credibility of uniquely LDS beliefs. Still, the explicit objective of this kind of work is not to refute detractors but to use the tools of scholarship to “enhance our understanding of the text,” a quite different agenda.¹²² In the same way that archaeology, history, and literary studies have shed new light on the Bible and the world from which it comes, FARMS scholars seek to produce a scholarship that sheds new light on the Book of Mormon (understood as a translation of a Hebrew record from an ancient American milieu).

Work that assumes, but does not necessarily defend, LDS faith claims I prefer to call “orthodox scholarship.” Henceforth, I will use the term apologetics to refer only to discourse that explicitly responds to criticisms of the faith. Apologetics, then, as I use the term, is a subset of orthodox scholarship. Apologetics includes polemical essays from the *FARMS Review*, the materials produced by FAIR, and the polemics found at websites such as SHIELDS and Mormon Fortress. Orthodox scholarship is the most appropriate term for much of what appears in the *Journal of Book of Mormon*

Studies (especially under John Sorenson’s editorship),¹²³ as well as many of the FARMS Reprints and books such as *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* or *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem*.¹²⁴ Orthodox scholars’ commitment to understanding the ancient world for purposes beyond apologetics is further exemplified by FARMS’s work on the Dead Sea Scrolls project, as well as other endeavors to preserve or translate ancient texts of mainstream scholarly interest.¹²⁵

By insisting on the term orthodox scholarship, I aim to highlight the intellectualism demonstrated by FARMS scholars, by less formally schooled apologists, and by the thousands of Latter-day Saints who read this material.¹²⁶ The popularity of orthodox scholarship (including apologetics) suggests that a significant segment of the LDS population has high levels of what psychologists call “need for cognition.” Need for cognition is a personality trait, defined as “a need to understand and make reasonable the experimental world,” a “tendency to engage in and enjoy thinking,” the possession of an “active, exploring mind”—in layman’s terms, an intellectual temperament.¹²⁷ Latter-day Saints who value orthodox scholarship and apologetics demonstrate this trait. Though they might be uneasy about the label, given the pejorative connotations it has come to have in LDS discourse, these Saints are “intellectuals.”¹²⁸ Many are lay intellectuals,¹²⁹ but they are intellectuals nevertheless.

These Saints hunger for a faith that is reasonable and compatible with mainstream scholarship. Valuing novelty, they chafe under a devotional discourse that circulates the same correlated insights over and over.¹³⁰ They lament the lack of “curiosity” among the Saints;¹³¹ they champion “original thinking and asking the unanswerable questions” as foundational to the Restoration.¹³² In counter-distinction to Elder Bruce R. McConkie’s low assessment of the value of scholarly tools for scriptural study,¹³³ orthodox intellectuals maintain that scholarship can “aid immeasurably in permitting us to plumb the profound truths” of the scriptures.¹³⁴ Scholarship thus functions as a vehicle of revelation—a source of “further light and knowledge,” as John Sorenson has said.¹³⁵ Far from seeing scholarship as a threat to faith, orthodox intellectuals describe their faith as being “enhanced,” “enriched,” and “deepened” by scholarship.¹³⁶ We have seen how the constraints of orthodox discourse require intellectually inclined Saints to concede that intellect is subordinate to testimony. But it would be more accurate to say that these Saints integrate intellect and testimony, breaking down the wall that in anti-intellectual discourse separates the intellectual from the spiritual.

In this attempt at integration, FARMS scholars, apologists, and their readers resemble “Sunstone Mormons”—with the crucial distinction that where Sunstone forums tolerate heterodoxy, orthodox intellectuals are orthodox. They insist on the historicity of LDS faith claims, the literal reality of the plan of salvation, the exclusive authority of the restored Church, and the obedience owed to the hierarchy. However, the orthodoxy of a John Sorenson is not that of a Joseph Fielding McConkie, which is why I see apologetics—or, more broadly now, orthodox scholarship—as a progressive influence on LDS orthodoxy.

PARADIGMS AND PROOF: A HYPOTHETICAL CASE

THE role of paradigms in shaping how people react to evidence can be illustrated by the following hypothetical scenario (inspired by one that Louis Midgley once proposed during a confrontation with Sandra Tanner).¹

Imagine that tomorrow, archaeologists in Mesoamerica unearth a Hebrew inscription bearing the name Nephi. Naturally, news of this discovery will cause waves of excitement among Latter-day Saints, many of whom will hail the find as definitive evidence for the Book of Mormon. FARMS scholars and other orthodox intellectuals will be more reserved, urging the Saints not to jump to conclusions until the artifact has been authenticated. FARMS's cautious enthusiasm will be echoed in a statement by LDS Public Affairs.

By contrast, revisionists and evangelicals will immediately conclude that the artifact must be a hoax, and they will hold to that position despite any evidence to the contrary. If studies tend to confirm that the artifact is genuine, skeptics will question the studies' integrity or insist on the forger's skill. Meanwhile, outside Mormon and anti-Mormon circles, most scholars will regard the find as a minor curiosity, akin to the Bat Creek Stone (a Hebrew inscription discovered in Tennessee). Orthodox intellectuals will interpret this scholarly indifference as prejudice; revisionists will claim vindication.

No one in this hypothetical scenario is being unreasonable or intellectually dishonest: each group judges the new evidence in a way that is consistent with the presuppositions yielded by the group's paradigm. It is no more unreasonable for skeptics in this hypothetical scenario to discount the Nephi inscription than it is for Latter-day Saints to discount the studies which—in real life—are cited to support the authenticity of the miraculous icon of the Virgin of Guadalupe, for example.² Everyone walks by the light of faith, be it of a religious or secular variety, which means that no one looks upon the world through objective eyes. Proof is in the eyes of the beholders, who see what their paradigms train them to see.

The notes for this sidebar appear on page 55.

IS THIS "PSEUDO-SCHOLARSHIP"?

*Academic credibility is a problem for orthodox scholars—
but not in the way revisionists believe.*

Closely examined, whether historically or in the contemporary laboratory, [science] seems an attempt to force nature into the preformed and relatively inflexible box that [one's] paradigm provides.

—THOMAS S. KUHN¹³⁷

ORTHODOX SCHOLARSHIP HAS been criticized from within the Mormon world by revisionists—that is, by researchers (LDS or former LDS) who offer ac-

counts of Mormon history or scripture that are at odds with traditional LDS accounts, typically because the revisionist accounts reflect a naturalistic perspective (one that does not invoke the supernatural). Where orthodox accounts present Joseph Smith as a bona fide prophet and translator, revisionist accounts tend to attribute Mormonism's founding texts and teachings to Smith's own psychology in combination with environmental influences: folk magic, religious controversies of the day, speculations about the Mound Builders, and so on.

Revisionist Mormons critical of orthodox scholarship represent it as scholarship done backwards. According to revisionists, where a true scholar is "dedicated to pursuing the truth, regardless of where it leads," an apologist "knows the conclusions at the start and sifts the facts and evidence to find support."¹³⁸ Revisionists therefore dismiss orthodox scholarship as "pseudo-scholarship,"¹³⁹ mere "rationalizations" to shore up LDS faith claims against contrary evidence.¹⁴⁰ They claim apologists "misrepresent data";¹⁴¹ apply a "double standard" (e.g., faulting opponents for things apologists do themselves);¹⁴² use "Machiavellian" rhetorical ploys—"distortion, mislabeling, deletion, false analogy, semantic trick[s]."¹⁴³ Thus revisionists portray apologists the same way apologists portray anti-Mormons: as unscrupulous, deceitful individuals, desperate to defend a position they know, deep down, is untenable.¹⁴⁴ Anti-apologetic discourse of this type has been deployed by Edward Ashment, Brent Lee Metcalfe, D. Michael Quinn, and Dan Vogel.

I see two problems with this discourse. First, I am not convinced that orthodox scholars seek to deceive. Certainly I can identify cases where apologists' rational faculties appear to have been clouded by hostility, leading them to make arguments that are inaccurate or unfair; and I can identify cases where apologists have done underhanded or vicious things.¹⁴⁵ But as I consider particular allegations of deception, it seems to me that revisionists may be quick to attribute malicious intent where a more innocent explanation is possible. For example: Responding to a hostile review by Stephen Robinson of *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, Quinn accuses Robinson of deliberately withholding from readers information that works against Robinson's claims. Yet shortly before this, Quinn had responded to similar accusations Robinson had made against him by insisting that he did not intend to omit the information Robinson accuses him of concealing.¹⁴⁶ If Quinn's omission can be due to innocent oversight, why must we assume that Robinson's omission is malicious?¹⁴⁷

Second, revisionist critiques of apologetics invoke a view of scholarship that in today's postmodern climate seems naïve. As non-LDS observer Massimo Introvigne points out, many revisionists profess an Enlightenment-era faith in the possibility of arriving at truth through objective, rational method¹⁴⁸—hence revisionist complaints that apologists have an agenda, the implication being that true scholarship would simply follow the evidence to its logical conclusions. Postmodernism, however,

maintains that there is no scholarship without an agenda; there is no such thing as simply following the evidence to its logical conclusions. Some orthodox scholars have espoused this post-modern outlook to rebut accusations of pseudo-scholarship and to lend academic credibility to the notion that LDS scholars should work, without apologies, from the distinctive perspective of their faith.¹⁴⁹ In this regard, these orthodox scholars are more in tune with prevailing trends in academia than are Mormon revisionists (though as we will see, Mormon revisionists have the advantage in other ways when it comes to academic credibility).

Philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn's notion of paradigms is helpful here. In his classic *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn maintains that scholarship—or to use his term, science—is never simply a question of elaborating theories that adequately account for the known facts, since “more than one theoretical construction can always be placed upon a given collection of data.”¹⁵⁰ Which construction will prove most persuasive to a scholarly community depends on that community's paradigm, defined as the “constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community.”¹⁵¹

A paradigm contains the underlying assumptions that scholars bring to their work: it dictates what scholars view as established fact, what kind of new data they look for, the relative significance they assign to different data, the questions or puzzles that preoccupy them, and the interpretative lenses they prefer. Paradigms constrain scholarship—they limit what scholars see and think—but without paradigms, there would be no scholarship. Most importantly, paradigms are not embraced on strictly scientific grounds (i.e., on the grounds of how adequately a paradigm solves the problems posed by the data) but on the basis of criteria that “lie outside the apparent sphere of science entirely.” Among these extra-scientific criteria, Kuhn names religious convictions, “idiosyncrasies of autobiography and personality,” or the reputation, even the nationality, of those promoting a particular paradigm.¹⁵² This is to say that scholarship is rhetorical and political: it is never an exercise in the purely objective apprehension of truth.¹⁵³

Because I am persuaded by Kuhn's discussion of paradigms, I am not moved by revisionist complaints that apologists “invent *ad hoc* hypotheses to protect and maintain a crumbling central hypothesis”¹⁵⁴ or that they “presumptuously admit as relevant only those facts that support [their] conclusions.”¹⁵⁵ I am not moved by these complaints because, the pejorative tone aside, they accurately describe what *all* scholars do. In the face of contrary evidence, all scholars invent hypotheses that will preserve the paradigm to which they are committed, unless extra-scientific forces prompt them to convert to a different paradigm. All scholars assign the greatest relevance to those facts for which their paradigm accounts; facts they cannot explain, they set aside as problems for which solutions will later have to be found.¹⁵⁶ As Kuhn says, scholarship is “a strenuous and devoted attempt to force nature into the conceptual boxes supplied by” one's paradigm.¹⁵⁷ This is as true for orthodox scholars as it is for revisionists. Orthodox schol-

arship is shaped by one paradigm (LDS orthodoxy); revisionism is shaped by a different paradigm (naturalism).¹⁵⁸ Inevitably, intellectuals committed to each paradigm will see themselves as possessing the best account for the data, and they will see adherents of the other paradigm as ignoring significant data. In Kuhn's view, however, neither paradigm is “right” in the way its adherents imagine, and no paradigm ever could be: “no paradigm ever solves all the problems it defines and . . . no two paradigms leave all the same problems unsolved.”¹⁵⁹

I deem it inaccurate, then, to label orthodox scholarship “pseudo-scholarship” if the point of the label is to accuse orthodox scholars of being unscientific in their method. Orthodox scholars, just like revisionists, work scientifically (in Kuhn's sense of that term) within the constraints of a paradigm they have embraced for extra-scientific reasons—that is, they use scholarly methods to make sense of data in ways that are consistent with their underlying religious or philosophical commitments.

Nevertheless, the label “pseudo-scholarship” can be illuminating to the degree that it signals the problematic position orthodox scholarship occupies in academia. To a certain extent, the “constellation of beliefs, values, [and] techniques” (in Kuhn's words) embraced by orthodox scholars corresponds to that of academia generally, inasmuch as orthodox scholars have embraced what FARMS calls the “tools of sound scholarship.”¹⁶⁰ But orthodox scholars work in a paradigm that fundamentally sets them apart from all of their non-LDS colleagues. Orthodox scholarship presupposes and promotes a worldview that no one outside of LDS orthodoxy accepts. The assumption that the Book of Mormon is an ancient record translated by supernatural means is patently at odds with the naturalism that permeates contemporary academic discourse. And while scholars from other religious traditions may share with the Saints a belief in the supernatural, other scholars' faith commitments naturally incline them to reject Mormonism's particular supernatural claims.

Mormon revisionists do not have this problem. Granted that revisionists' Enlightenment-era understanding of scholarship places them outside the postmodern mainstream; still, as converts to naturalism, revisionists operate more within the paradigm of mainstream scholarship than do apologists. Thus, even when revisionists may lack academic credentials, their work is positioned to enjoy credibility in non-LDS spheres inasmuch as it coincides with non-LDS understandings of Mormonism (e.g., the assumption that the Book of Mormon is a nineteenth-century document). By contrast, orthodox scholars may have academic credentials, but they have an ongoing problem with academic credibility, since they operate from assumptions that are incredible to non-LDS eyes.

One way FARMS has sought to enhance its academic credibility is by producing non-apologetic works that serve mainstream scholarly interests. The most prominent of these has been the Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Reference Library, produced by FARMS in conjunction with Oxford University Press and Brill Academic Publishers. This important electronic re-

source makes photos, transcriptions, and translations of the scrolls available on CD-ROM.¹⁶¹ Other FARMS publications for mainstream academic use include bibliographies on ancient temples and pre-Columbian contact with the Americas,¹⁶² as well as translations of Muslim, Eastern Christian, and Mayan documents produced as part of ISPART.¹⁶³ While projects such as these have not led to academic acceptance of LDS faith claims (such as the antiquity of the Book of Mormon), these projects have established the technical competence of FARMS scholars. This in turn has enhanced the credibility that certain evangelicals accord to LDS apologists and their work—as when Mosser and Owen insist that evangelicals need to put greater effort into rebutting FARMS scholarship.¹⁶⁴

In addition to producing mainstream work, LDS academics have enjoyed a limited success importing distinctively orthodox scholarship into mainstream scholarly forums. Eric G. Hansen, John Tvedtnes, and Angela Cromwell have read papers at the annual joint meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature, discussing Hebrew or Near Eastern characteristics of the Book of Mormon;¹⁶⁵ Jewish scholar Raphael Patai asked FARMS scholar John Lundquist to write an appendix on the Book of Mormon for a history of Jewish seafaring;¹⁶⁶ and Grant Hardy's reader's edition of the Book of Mormon, published by University of Illinois Press, includes a map of Lehi's journeys through Arabia, with reference to orthodox scholarship by John Welch

ORTHODOX SCHOLARS VS. ORTHODOX AMATEURS

ORTHODOX scholarship must be distinguished from amateur work along the same lines by hobbyists without academic credentials. Sometimes amateurs compete with orthodox scholars, as in the case of hobbyists who promote alternatives to John Sorenson's Mesoamerican geography of the Book of Mormon.¹ Or amateurs may attempt to capitalize on work done by orthodox scholars—plowing in the furrow of Book of Mormon chiasmus dug by John Welch, for example,² or recycling rebuttals to familiar anti-Mormon arguments.³ Such works often receive negative (if diplomatic) assessments in the *FARMS Review*, which thus draws a line between amateurs, who are not to be taken very seriously, and orthodox scholars, who are.

Amateur attempts at scholarship grow out of Mormonism's Jacksonian anti-intellectual tradition. LDS teachings about testimony and personal revelation hold out the promise that anyone can come to a knowledge of truth, apart from scholarly training. This promise lends impetus to a culture of dilettantes, zealous but undertrained researchers who often self-publish their work (following a precedent established when Joseph Smith self-published the Book of Mormon). Such authors either see no need for an advanced degree, or they vaunt degrees or certifications in areas unrelated to the subjects on which they write. Precisely because they lack advanced academic

training, amateurs probably do not realize how crude their work looks to scholars.

Though they are not as hostile toward amateurs as they are toward countercultists or revisionists, orthodox scholars are troubled by the amateurs' disdain for academic credentials and methodologies; they fear that amateurs "may do more harm than good."⁴ On a related note, orthodox scholars have lamented that the Saints display a general lack of critical thought⁵ and a susceptibility to "superstitious fad[s]" such as *The Bible Code*.⁶

The notes for this sidebar appear on page 55.



JEANNETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN CHARLES DUFFY

*Self-published research by a scholar with a degree in dairy science
has concluded that this is the exact site where Nephi*

and Warren Aston.¹⁶⁷ The crowning achievement in this area is Terry L Givens's recent Oxford University Press publication, *By the Hand of Mormon*, which provides a history of LDS scholarship about the Book of Mormon. Givens denies that his aim is to establish the Book of Mormon's authenticity; nevertheless, his discussion is slanted against revisionism, while he describes recent discoveries as "corroborating Book of Mormon historicity."¹⁶⁸ Orthodox intellectuals have hailed Givens's book as a sign that mainstream academic venues are opening up to orthodox scholarship. "We are nearing the point," Noel B. Reynolds believes, "when it might be acceptable for non-LDS academic presses to publish academic books on Book of Mormon topics that would be written from a faithful perspective in the language of standard scholarship."¹⁶⁹

In my view, such optimism is misplaced. Orthodox intellectuals are naïve if they imagine they can persuade non-LDS scholars to seriously consider the possibility that the Book of Mormon is an ancient document.¹⁷⁰ As Jan Shippo has observed, "Literal acceptance of the Book of Mormon automatically turns people into Latter-day Saints (whether they join the Church or not)."¹⁷¹ Outside of a relatively small number of academics who may convert to Mormonism following exposure to orthodox scholarship, I believe the most that orthodox scholars can hope for in the long run is tolerance, not persuasion. Orthodox scholars may be able to forge alliances of convenience with other scholars on the margins, such as the alliance that John Sorenson has cultivated between FARMS and non-LDS scholars who champion diffusionism (the view that pre-Columbian transoceanic contact between the Old and New Worlds was more common than most anthropologists currently accept).¹⁷² And orthodox scholars may receive an initially warm welcome from non-LDS scholars who see connections between FARMS scholarship and their own work (as Patai was intrigued by Book of Mormon narratives that coincided with his interest in ancient Jewish seafaring).¹⁷³ Initial enthusiasm will wane, however, once scholars realize that accepting the Book of Mormon's antiquity also means coming to terms with LDS claims about Joseph Smith's access to supernatural powers and thus, by extension, about his prophetic vocation and the divine origins and authority of the LDS Church.

Mainstream scholars may be polite about their skepticism, given Mormonism's status as a formerly persecuted religion; but in the end, I predict that orthodox scholars will find mainstream skepticism insurmountable. Given the difference in paradigms, I believe it is inevitable that most non-LDS academics will see orthodox scholarship as analogous to much that falls under the rubric of "creation science." Others may even view it as lightly as much of the literature that flourishes on topics such as Atlantis, the Grail, extraterrestrial contact, or the paranormal.¹⁷⁴ That is to say, non-LDS academics will relegate orthodox scholarship to the category of "pseudo-scholarship." I reiterate that this label represents a political judgment rather than an objective assessment of orthodox scholarship's quality or truth value. Still, the political reality is that orthodox scholarship falls outside the pale of academic credibility.

PROGRESSIVE ORTHODOXY
*Orthodox intellectuals are accommodating
of worldly wisdom.*

[Do] we square the revelations of God with the theories of men, or test the theories of men against the revelations[?] . . . If we try to square religion with science, and this has been done plenty of times, we simply say that the language of the revelation doesn't mean what it says it means.

—JOSEPH FIELDING MCCONKIE¹⁷⁵

Many Latter-day Saints will have to change their thinking markedly to adjust to the dimensions [for a limited Book of Mormon geography] we have discussed. . . . [B]ut that would only be a manifestation of our healthy correction of former error.

—JOHN L. SORENSON¹⁷⁶

DESPITE WHAT SOME Saints may hope, orthodox scholarship will not result in mainstream academics taking LDS faith claims seriously. But the flourishing of orthodox scholarship does show how seriously a segment of the LDS population takes mainstream scholarship. Orthodox intellectuals want their faith to have scholarly credibility—at least in their own eyes, if not in the eyes of outsiders—and they are willing to revise traditional faith claims in order to achieve that. In other words, orthodox intellectuals are willing to judge the truth of traditional faith claims by how well those claims coincide with conclusions yielded by scholarship. This willingness distinguishes orthodox intellectuals from Saints of a more dogmatic stripe, who, like Christian fundamentalists, insist on judging the truth of scholarship by how well it coincides with traditional faith claims.

We can see this difference in the relative openness that orthodox intellectuals display toward organic evolution. There is, of course, a strong tradition within Mormon orthodoxy of denouncing evolution as inconsistent with scripture. The most prominent representatives of the anti-evolution tradition have been President Joseph Fielding Smith and his son-in-law Elder Bruce R. McConkie; Joseph Fielding McConkie continues to champion this tradition.¹⁷⁷ Among orthodox intellectuals, however, we find voices that are less dogmatic. According to Daniel Peterson, at least one member of the FARMS Board of Trustees is "a convinced evolutionist;" Peterson himself professes to be undecided but open to "some modified form of evolution."¹⁷⁸ A presenter at one of the FAIR conferences has proposed such a modified scenario, hypothesizing that Adam and Eve were transplanted to the Garden of Eden from an existing early human society.¹⁷⁹ Michael Ash, creator of the apologetic website Mormon Fortress, dismisses as "myth" the belief that evolution is inconsistent with LDS faith.¹⁸⁰ And the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* establishes the credibility of an LDS geneticist by citing his published work on "walking sticks that re-evolved the ability to fly 50 million years after losing it": apparently the *JBMS* editor did not anticipate that

readers would find this reference to evolution problematic.¹⁸¹

A clearer example of orthodox intellectuals' willingness to rethink traditional faith claims is the limited geography of the Book of Mormon. Orthodox intellectuals acknowledge that among the Saints, the prevailing understanding of Book of Mormon geography is the hemispheric model: the view that Book of Mormon history spanned the entire Americas and that indigenous peoples throughout the two continents—as well as peoples of the Pacific—are descended from Lehi.¹⁸² This view has played an important role in shaping the religious identity of Latter-day Saints in Latin America and Polynesia,¹⁸³ it even enjoys quasi-canonical status, appearing in the Introduction to the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon.¹⁸⁴ Notwithstanding, orthodox intellectuals reject the hemispheric model because they see it as scientifically untenable. BYU geneticist Michael F. Whiting has decisively declared the model to be “incorrect” on the grounds that “current population genetics suggests that Native Americans (presumed by some to be the direct genetic descendants of the Lamanites) have an Asian genetic signature.”¹⁸⁵ Orthodox intellectuals prefer a limited geography, such as that championed by John Sorenson,¹⁸⁶ because they see that model as consistent with the evidence yielded by scholarship. In other words, a limited geography allows orthodox intellectuals to affirm the antiquity of the Book of Mormon without having to maintain an account of Native American origins that lacks academic credibility.

Revisionists have seen the new preference for a limited geography as intellectually dishonest—a desperate ploy to evade damning evidence.¹⁸⁷ Admittedly, orthodox scholars have made some moves that lend themselves to cynical interpretation. If studies had turned up genetic markers that lent plausibility to the idea of a Semitic colony in Mesoamerica, I find it hard to believe that LDS scholars would be making statements such as, “DNA evidence does *nothing* to speak to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon” (my emphasis).¹⁸⁸ And Apostle Dallin H. Oaks's frank preference for a limited geography because it makes the Book of Mormon impossible to disprove sounds lawyerly.¹⁸⁹ It's not difficult to see why revisionists would accuse orthodox scholars of trying to create an unfalsifiable hypothesis.¹⁹⁰ Still, orthodox intellectuals are doing what, in principle, all scholars do: adjusting their theories to new discoveries, within the frame provided by the paradigm to which they are committed. For orthodox intellectuals, that frame includes a bedrock conviction that the Book of Mormon is an ancient text. They make sense of new evidence in light of that conviction—and in the process, they promote a new understanding of the Book of Mormon.

Latter-day Saints could react differently to such contrary evidence: they could have simply dismissed DNA evidence that militates against the traditional hemispheric model. A precedent for this more dogmatic approach can be found in the writings of Joseph Fielding McConkie. For instance, citing LDS teachings that Latter-day Saints are “literally Abraham's seed,” McConkie declares that individuals who are not literally descended from Abraham experience upon baptism “an actual change in their blood.” He believes this even though, he

ORTHODOX SCHOLARSHIP AS ANTIDOTE TO DOUBT

THEIR commitment to mainline scholarship leads orthodox intellectuals into a non-LDS world. This can be disorienting and challenging: looking through the lenses of scholarship, Latter-day Saints are brought to see their faith, at least to some degree, the way outsiders see it. No doubt Daniel Peterson speaks for many orthodox intellectuals when he describes how his studies in Cairo with a prominent Catholic scholar of Islam led him to doubt the credibility of LDS faith claims: “At a certain stage in our relationship, I was overcome by a feeling of inferiority before the vast and ancient intellectual traditions Father Anawati represented—both Islamic and Catholic. How improbable it suddenly seemed to me that God's true church resided in the arid Great Basin of the American West, among a relatively unsophisticated people with a very short history.”¹

Catholic cardinal Avery Dulles once wrote that apologetics has become “a dialogue between the believer and the unbeliever in the heart of the Christian himself.”² In other words, apologetics is less important as a means of convincing outsiders than as a means of reassuring the converted. Christians in the contemporary West live in a secular milieu, which shapes their values and worldview to a considerable degree; apologetics assures such Christians that the claims of their faith are consistent with the secular criteria of credibility they have internalized.

Orthodox scholarship serves a similar function for intellectually inclined Latter-day Saints. As intellectuals, they have internalized to a great degree the criteria for credibility that prevail in contemporary scholarship. LDS faith claims do not fare well by these criteria: hence the doubt Peterson experienced in Cairo, his sudden sense of the provinciality and implausibility of his faith. Orthodox scholarship provides an antidote to doubt. It reassures orthodox intellectuals that their faith is credible by scholarly standards. Outsiders remain unconvinced, which is to say that orthodox scholarship enjoys little success as an apologetics *ad extra*, for the persuading of skeptics; but it does succeed as an apologetics *ad intra*, for the strengthening of believers.³

The notes for this sidebar appear on page 55.

writes, “I have been repeatedly told that this statement is genetically and physiologically indefensible. That may well be the case, but then, so is the promise of a resurrection. I, for one, believe in both.”¹⁹¹

I do not know where McConkie stands on the questions of Book of Mormon geography or Lamanite descent. However, his defiant attitude toward science—his readiness to embrace a belief that “is genetically and physiologically indefensible”—points toward a potential response to the DNA controversy very different from that embraced by orthodox intellectuals. Latter-day Saints with an outlook similar to McConkie's could take

the view that if scientific evidence appears to disprove the hemispheric model, then science must somehow be wrong. Perhaps, the Saints could argue, the curse of the dark skin altered the Lamanites' DNA, causing Semitic genetic markers to disappear. Or perhaps, they might argue, geneticists have been deceived by Satan.¹⁹²

The fact that orthodox intellectuals have not reacted in these ways shows that their outlook is not so dogmatic. Orthodox intellectuals are not content with the position that if the scriptures say a thing must be so, then it must be so. Others *have* taken that position. Surprisingly, perhaps, given his reputation as a scientist, Apostle James E. Talmage took the more dogmatic position in regard to the claim that horses did not exist in the Americas prior to the arrival of the Spanish. For him, the matter was simple: "The Book of Mormon states that Lehi and his colony found horses upon this continent when they arrived; and therefore horses were here at that time."¹⁹³ Contrast Talmage's approach to that taken by John Sorenson in *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*. Sorenson does not discount the possibility that horses preceded the Spanish; he cites archaeological evidence supporting that possibility. But Sorenson is also prepared to argue that the Book of Mormon uses the word horse to refer to New World animals for which the Nephites had no name.¹⁹⁴ Where Talmage, like McConkie, simply reasserts a traditional understanding of the Book of Mormon in spite of scholarship that militates against it, Sorenson and other orthodox intellectuals are prepared to reshape their understanding of the Book of Mormon to accommodate contrary evidence. Their new understanding is orthodox inasmuch as it affirms the historicity of the Book of Mormon; but it is a more progressive orthodoxy than that of McConkie or of Talmage (at least in the case examined above), an orthodoxy more accommodating to "the wisdom of the world."

This progressive outlook can be seen not only in orthodox intellectuals' relationship to mainstream academia, but also in their relationship to mainline Christianity. Orthodox intellectuals seem to share mainline Christian sensitivities in ways that Saints from earlier generations did not. For example, some orthodox intellectuals, like Mormonism's evangelical critics, appear scandalized by the idea that God the Father had sexual intercourse with Mary the mother of Jesus. They therefore distance themselves from earlier LDS teachings to this effect, insisting that those teachings are not doctrinally binding and that the Saints' official beliefs about the virgin birth and Jesus's divine Sonship are entirely in accordance with the Bible.¹⁹⁵ Probably the most famous example of an orthodox scholar having a theologically progressive influence on Mormonism is Stephen Robinson's successful promotion of an LDS discourse emphasizing grace—a concept the Saints have traditionally associated with apostate Christianity.¹⁹⁶

In his interfaith dialogue with evangelical Craig Blomberg, Robinson champions various ideas that might be labeled "liberal"—ideas that contradict traditional LDS understandings of scripture as articulated, for instance, by Joseph Fielding McConkie. Robinson maintains that the removal of plain and

precious truths from the Bible, spoken of in the Book of Mormon, refers to the exclusion of certain books from the canon, not—as a more traditional view would have it—to the alteration of books in the canon.¹⁹⁷ He believes that the Joseph Smith Translation "should be understood to contain additional revelation, alternate readings, prophetic commentary or midrash, harmonization, clarifications, and corrections of the original as well as corrections to the original."¹⁹⁸ He is prepared to accept the Book of Abraham as scripture even if it was not literally translated from the Chandler papyri.¹⁹⁹ He defines the parameters of official LDS doctrine very narrowly: he claims that only statements issued by the First Presidency or the Quorum of the Twelve are doctrinally binding, a definition which could serve to legitimize dissent in the Church.²⁰⁰ There is a similarly subversive potential in apologists' explicit rejection of selected statements by past Church leaders,²⁰¹ which Saints of a more dogmatic stripe might characterize as presuming "to judge the prophets of God."²⁰²

Notwithstanding verbally aggressive exchanges with some countercultists, orthodox intellectuals' attitude toward other denominations is less hostile than the "anti-sectarian" sentiments expressed earlier in the Saints' history.²⁰³ While the Church's official rhetoric about other faiths has since become more diplomatic, a hard-line attitude toward "false churches" persists in the LDS community's more conservative sectors. This attitude is most visible today in the still widely read writings of the late apostle Bruce R. McConkie, who was convinced that "believers in the doctrines of modern Christendom will reap damnation to their souls."²⁰⁴ Joseph Fielding McConkie carries on this hard-line tradition when he expresses bemusement that some of his LDS students deem him "intolerant" for insisting, "We believe all other churches to be false."²⁰⁵ Joseph Fielding McConkie, like his father before him, is unapologetic about his conviction that "faith [cannot] be found in other than the true church" given that "faith cannot be exercised in principles that are false. . . . To pray to a god concocted from the speculations of philosophers is no different from praying to a god carved from wood or chiseled from stone."²⁰⁶

By contrast, orthodox intellectuals use a discourse that, without relinquishing the LDS Church's exclusive claims to priesthood authority or the fullness of the gospel, legitimizes the faith and spiritual experience of mainline Christians. A cynic might see this tolerant discourse as an ploy to seize the moral high ground over combative fundamentalists; a more generous take is that orthodox intellectuals are trying to extend to mainline Christians the partial acceptance (without compromising fundamentals) that they wish mainline Christians would extend to Latter-day Saints. Orthodox intellectuals moving in this vein emphasize that the First Vision's condemnation of creeds should not be understood as condemning individual members of other churches nor the churches themselves.²⁰⁷ One LDS scholar even maintains that Christians outside the LDS Church can be spiritually reborn—

(Continued on page 42)

SUNSTONE GALLERY

PIONEER

My people were Mormon pioneers.
Is the blood still good?
They stood in awe as truth
Flew by like a dove
And dropped a feather in the West.
Where truth flies you follow
If you are a pioneer.

I have searched the skies
And now and then
Another feather has fallen.
I have packed the handcart again
Packed it with the precious things
And thrown away the rest.

I will sing by the fires at night
Out there on uncharted ground
Where I am my own captain of tens
Where I blow the bugle
Bring myself to morning prayer
Map out the miles
And never know when or where
Or if at all
I will finally say,
"This is the place,"

I face the plains
On a good day for walking.
The sun rises
And the mist clears.
I will be all right:
My people were Mormon pioneers.

"Pioneers,"
by CAROL LYNN PEARSON

"Where truth flies you follow, if you are a pioneer."

COULD any phrase better capture the life and spirit of Carol Lynn Pearson? For following truth's feathers is what she does—even when they don't land softly.

Descended from both ship Brooklyn and Mormon Battalion ancestors, pioneering does course within Carol Lynn's blood. But while their frontiers were water and prairie, Carol Lynn's have been the border territories of identity, heart, spirituality. Many of the truths dropped into her life's path have been exceptionally challenging: the loss at age fifteen of her mother, marriage to a homosexual husband, the death of a daughter, Katy, to cancer. Yet, unbroken, she insisted on rising above the landscape in what she calls her "spiritual helicopter," assessing the territory from a higher perspective, and mapping out what she saw in words that have blazed bright trails for others.

MOTHERLESS on earth, Carol Lynn found and then taught others of the Heavenly Mother. Through poetry, essays, and performances of her one-woman play, *Mother Wove the Morning*, femaleness found a divine face.

Denied the happiness of a partner who could fully give himself to her, Carol Lynn was able still to love courageously even in the extremity of his death to AIDS. Her story of their time together, *Goodbye, I Love You*, continues to shine as a beacon to struggling families.

Searching the skies with eyes and mind and wit sharpened by her years on the experiential frontier, Carol Lynn has now turned to trying to capture the subtle truths that fall featherlight in dreams and synchronicities. Carol Lynn's ongoing connection with Katy has been blessed by surprising hints often carried on butterfly wings. Now with her recent book, *Consider the Butterfly*, and other projects still unfolding, Carol Lynn is exploring and teaching about spirit, the connectedness of all in all.

MICHAEL Schoenfeld was inspired to photograph Carol Lynn from below. He has perfectly captured the image of a pioneer: a strong base; ageless hands that bear witness to a lifetime of work and love; and wisdom's smile and gaze as she faces even more uncharted ground, "plains, on a good day for walking." 



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL SCHOENFELD

an assertion which pulls against the doctrine that priesthood ordinances are required for salvation.²⁰⁸ Other LDS intellectuals might see this as stretching the limits of orthodoxy too far: Robinson's *How Wide the Divide?* has been criticized for that reason by contributors to the *FARMS Review*.²⁰⁹ These critics—including Daniel Peterson and William Hamblin—are not willing to go quite as far as Robinson in redefining orthodoxy. Still, in their attitude toward other faiths, they resemble Robinson much more than they do McConkie.

Orthodox intellectuals might resist the characterization that they are, as my title says, “rethinking the faith.” They might also resist the label “progressive.” But outsiders—revisionists as well as evangelicals—have recognized the shift in Mormon thought represented by FARMS scholarship and the new LDS apologetics: evangelical Craig Blomberg, for instance, describes Robinson as belonging to Mormonism’s “progressive wing.”²¹⁰ Progressive orthodoxy needs to be distinguished from “liberal Mormonism,” since liberal often denotes a willingness to question the historicity of faith claims and to challenge teachings of contemporary Church leaders, neither of which is characteristic of orthodox scholarship. (Although there is subversive potential in the narrow definitions of binding doctrine offered by apologists such as Robinson, apologists show no inclination toward developing that potential). Nevertheless, orthodox intellectuals are progressive in the sense that they champion new understandings of the faith in an effort to accommodate outside standards of credibility.

THE MIXED SUCCESS OF ORTHODOX INTELLECTUALS

They've failed to convince outsiders, but progressive orthodoxy is on the rise within the Church.

The Book of Mormon shows so many striking similarities to the Mesoamerican setting that it seems to me impossible for rational people willing to examine the data to maintain any longer that the book is a mere romance. . . .

—JOHN SORENSON²¹¹

Not a single person, place, or event that is unique to the Book of Mormon has ever been proven to exist. Outside the fanum of true believers, these tales cannot help but appear to be the product of fantasy and fabrication.

—FR. RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS²¹²

ORTHODOX INTELLECTUALS OCCUPY a kind of borderland between LDS tradition and two other spheres of mainstream thought: academic and mainline Christian. Like liberals and revisionists, orthodox intellectuals have advanced beyond the narrower brand of orthodoxy represented by, for instance, Joseph Fielding McConkie. But unlike liberals and revisionists, orthodox intellectuals have not crossed the borders of orthodoxy. Rather, they push to expand the borders, bringing new ideas and understanding into the pale of orthodoxy.

This project makes orthodox intellectuals at once accom-

modating and defensive. They are accommodating inasmuch as they are willing to redefine orthodoxy to make it more closely resemble non-LDS thought in certain ways. But they are defensive inasmuch as they are still concerned with maintaining a clear boundary between orthodoxy and heterodoxy and with championing distinctive LDS claims in the face of outside skepticism.

Indeed, their position on the borderland makes it inevitable that orthodox intellectuals will serve as the front line of defense against skeptics and detractors. Joseph Fielding McConkie can afford to adopt a stance of non-engagement toward skeptics because he is far removed from the borderland. His orthodoxy is provincial: realms outside the dogmatic traditions espoused by his father and grandfather hold no attraction for him. By contrast, as orthodox intellectuals extend the borders of orthodoxy to encompass new territory, they inevitably encounter resistance: evangelicals who insist on excluding Mormonism from the pale of Christianity, or academics whose accounts of Mormonism rest on naturalist assumptions at odds with Mormon faith claims.

The more that orthodox intellectuals try to “colonize” Christianity and academia—laying claim to a Christian identity and introducing orthodox scholarship into academic forums—the more that they will be resisted by mainline Christians and academics who have concerns of their own about boundary control. Increased resistance from evangelicals can already be seen in recent publications such as *The Mormon Puzzle* and *The New Mormon Challenge*.²¹³ Secular academics are not as intensely preoccupied with boundary control as are evangelicals, so there has not yet been a direct scholarly challenge to orthodox scholarship (aside from revisionist publications within the Mormon world). But I predict that scholarly resistance will come, probably in the form of quietly shutting orthodox scholarship out of mainstream venues. Evangelical and academic resistance will lead to further apologetic activity, yielding an ongoing cycle.

As I have explained already, I do not anticipate that orthodox intellectuals will persuade mainstream academics to take LDS faith claims seriously, nor do I anticipate that they will convince mainline Christians to stop challenging LDS claims to the Christian label.

However, orthodox intellectuals have been remarkably successful at promoting their progressive orthodoxy within the Church. Terryl Givens has argued—correctly, I believe—that the incorporation of FARMS into BYU represents a “stamp of approval” for orthodox scholarship and intellectualism that reverses the “studied caution” Church leaders maintained through most of the twentieth century.²¹⁴ Despite the lingering reference to the hemispheric model that appears in the 1981 Introduction to the Book of Mormon, limited geography has become the Church’s preferred model, as reflected in Church art and film.²¹⁵ A page at the Church’s online newsroom citing the work of FARMS scholars in response to the recent DNA controversy gives an unprecedented degree of official recognition to orthodox scholarship and progressive orthodoxy.²¹⁶ Mormonism’s anti-contention and anti-intellectual tradi-

tions—which had their heyday in the dogmatic writings of Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie—appear to be waning.

In the end, I have mixed feelings about the rise of orthodox scholarship. As someone who does not believe in the historicity of the Book of Mormon, I dismiss *a priori* much of the work FARMS scholars have done around the book.²¹⁷ Like Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert Millet, I frown on apologetics in missionary work; and I wish that the verbally aggressive polemics of some apologists would be roundly denounced by their peers. At the same time, my assessment of LDS apologetics is complicated by the realization that Mormonism’s anti-contention tradition (with which I sympathize) is bound up in the anti-intellectual tradition (which I reject). As someone who values the life of the mind, I look favorably on orthodox intellectuals’ desire to integrate faith and intellect, though I do not take their particular approach to that problem; and I believe that orthodox scholarship has not received due credit as an important site of intellectual activity within Mormonism. Notwithstanding the polemic excesses, and despite the paradoxically conservative nature of their mission to defend the kingdom, apologists exercise a progressive influence on the way the Saints understand their faith and their relationship to the world—and ultimately, I believe that is for the good. ☞

NOTES

1. William J. Hamblin, “An Apologist for the Critics: Brent Lee Metcalfe’s Assumptions and Methodologies,” *FARMS Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): 439–40.
2. “FARMS Is Honored by Invitation from President Hinckley and BYU Board of Trustees,” *Insights*, October 1997, 1+; Noel B. Reynolds, “FARMS Will Publish More Books,” *Insights*, October 1997, 4.
3. FARMS scholars have insisted that their work is not primarily apologetic in its aims, while recognizing that it may serve apologetic ends. This is a significant distinction, about which I say more later in the body of the article; for now, it suffices to note that FARMS has been a key site of apologetic discourse or producer of apologetic resources, even if that is not the organization’s *raison d’être*.
4. This periodical has also been known as the *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* and the *FARMS Review of Books*. For simplicity’s sake, I will always cite it as the *FARMS Review*.
5. Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Answers: Straightforward Answers to Tough Gospel Questions* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 55–56.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “Come, All Ye Sons of God,” *Ensign*, August 1983, 69.
7. Marvin J. Ashton insists, “We have no time for contention. We only have time to be about our Father’s business.” “No Time for Contention,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 7; see also Marvin J. Ashton, “Pure Religion,” *Ensign*, November 1982, 63.



JEANNETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY HUGO OLAIZ

—Is he going to show us DNA evidence?

—No, the latest Book of Mormon limited geography model.

Carlos E. Asay describes responding to detractors as a “waste [of] time and energies” and exhorts the Saints not to “be swayed or diverted from the mission of the Church.” “Opposition to the Work of God,” *Ensign*, November 1981, 68. Boyd K. Packer makes the same appeal: “We have a work to do. Why should it cease while we do battle with our enemies?” (69). Joseph Fielding McConkie echoes these General Authorities when he writes: “Few falsehoods deserve response. The adversary will often use such things to divert our attention from the greater labor of declaring our message” (*Answers*, 56).

8. Marvin J. Ashton recounts meeting with missionaries who had seen anti-Mormon literature circulating in their area and “were eager to plan retaliation” (“No Time for Contention,” 7). In connection with an anecdote about a protester outside Temple Square, Ashton reminds the Saints that “the gospel of Jesus Christ reminds us that we are not to retaliate nor contend. . . . [W]e encourage all our members to refuse to become anti-anti-Mormon” (“Pure Religion,” 63). In exhorting the Saints not to contend with detractors, Carlos E. Asay warns that if we “strike back,” we will be “resort[ing] to Satanic tactics” and thus will lose the Spirit, ensuring our “ultimate defeat” (67–68).

9. Quoted in “Leaders Urge Positive Reply to Critics,” *LDS Church News*, 18 December 1983, 2.

10. Steve F. Gilliland, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, September 1986, 58–59.

11. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Sustaining and Defending the Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), viii–ix.

12. *Ibid.*, chaps. 1–3, 8.

13. Stephen E. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christian?* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991).

14. Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

15. *Ibid.*, 56.

16. *Ibid.*, 16–19, 74, 86–87, 130–33, 146–47.

17. *Ibid.*, 11; Robinson, *Are Mormons Christian?* viii–ix, 9–10.

18. McConkie and Millet, *Sustaining and Defending*, viii.

19. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christian?* viii. While Robinson frowns on contending with critics outside the Church, he has contended rather hotly against Mormon revisionists, whom he regards as enemies within: Stephen E. Robinson, review of *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel, *FARMS*

A SELECTED "WHO'S WHO" OF ORTHODOX SCHOLARS

JOHN GEE: Ph.D., Egyptology (Yale); specializes in faithful scholarship related to the Book of Abraham.

TERRYL L. GIVENS: Ph.D., comparative literature (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill); author of *By the Hand of Mormon*, an Oxford University Press publication slanted toward faithful scholarship.

WILLIAM J. HAMBLIN: Ph.D., history (University of Michigan); specializes in Near Eastern history; a frequent contributor to the *FARMS Review*.

LOUIS MIDGLEY: Ph.D., political science (Brown); a fierce champion of historicity as a bedrock principle for orthodox LDS faith and scholarship.

DANIEL C. PETERSON: Ph.D., Near Eastern languages and cultures (UCLA); founding editor of the *FARMS Review*; director of ISPART's Middle Eastern Texts Initiative.

NOEL B. REYNOLDS: Ph.D., political science (Harvard); past president of FARMS and current executive director of ISPART.

STEPHEN D. RICKS: Ph.D., Near Eastern religions (University of California, Berkeley); past president of FARMS, founding editor of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*.

JOHN L. SORENSON: Ph.D., anthropology (UCLA); creator of the limited model for Book of Mormon geography most widely accepted among orthodox scholars.

JOHN A. TVEDTNEs: M.A., Middle East studies (University of Utah); began but did not complete a Ph.D. in Egyptian and Semitic languages at Hebrew University; currently senior resident scholar at ISPART.

JOHN W. WELCH: M.A., classical languages (BYU); J.D. (Duke); founding director of FARMS; first to study chiasmus in the Book of Mormon.

Review 3 (1991): 312–18.

20. Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Of Polemics," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): vii.

21. *Ibid.*, v.

22. "Elder Eyring Inspires F.A.R.M.S. Workers and Friends at Annual Banquet," *Insights*, November 1994, 1. There is some ambiguity in Eyring's remarks: Does he mean that FARMS writers should seek to "invite" the Church's critics instead of trying to "vanquish" them, or does he mean that FARMS should seek to "invite" some and "vanquish" others? Contentious apologists might favor the second interpretation.

23. Packer, 69.

24. See Matthew Roper, "A Black Hole That's Not So Black," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): 160 n. 7; Matthew Roper, "Unanswered Mormon Scholars," *FARMS Review* 9, no. 1 (1997): 89–91.

25. Maxwell himself has not made this statement in print, but it was cited in Gilbert W. Scharffs, "I Have a Question" *Ensign*, January 1995, 62; also, Gary Bowler, "What Is FAIR, and Why Are You Apologizing?" March 2002, <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/brochures/AboutFAIR.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004).

26. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christian?* viii.

27. Michael R. Ash, "Who's Who on the 'Web' in regards to Mormon Apologetics," <http://www.mormonfortress.com/who1.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

28. Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): viii.

29. Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction" *FARMS Review* 7, no. 2 (1995): viii; Daniel C. Peterson, "QnA," *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): xxi.

30. Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word: How Anti-Mormons Play Word Games to Attack the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Aspen, 1992): 178–79.

31. *Ibid.*, 180–81; Daniel C. Peterson, "P. T. Barnum *Redivivus*," *FARMS Review* 7, no. 2 (1995): 63–66.

32. In *Offenders for a Word*, Peterson and Ricks tell of an institute instructor who attended an anti-Mormon rally that he said made him feel like a Jew at a Nazi rally (180). On other occasions, Peterson expresses alarm over a fundamentalist boycott of an LDS-owned business. Peterson sees the boycott organizers as making "an absolutely perfect argument for segregation, for a 'Christian' crusade to exile all Latter-day Saints, however innocent or secular their businesses, whether they are physicians, accountants, or paperboys, into an economic ghetto. (Welcome to the Balkans!) This is, sadly, not the first such case that has been brought to my attention. And I am forcefully reminded of the fate of Jewish businesses in 1930s Germany." "Skin Deep," *FARMS Review* 9, no. 2 (1997): 141. Later, of this same boycott, Peterson writes, "It grows eerily reminiscent of the Nazis' *Kristallnacht* . . ." "Shall They Not Both Fall into the Ditch? What Certain Baptists Think They Know about the Restored Gospel," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): 94–95. See also *Offenders for a Word* (83), where Peterson and Ricks quote Martin Niemoeller's famous statement, "In Germany, they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist . . ." If the fundamentalists have their way with the Mormons, Peterson and Ricks ask, who might they go after next?

33. Persecution is a prominent theme of LDS apologetic discourse. Louis Midgley appears to regard apologetics as a fulfillment of Joseph Smith's charge to document the persecution of the Saints found in D&C 123. "On Caliban Mischief," *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): xxxv. Contributors to the *FARMS Review* compare Michael Quinn's *Same-Sex Dynamics* to "the dishonest and lurid 'exposés' of the past" and therefore conclude that the book is "a form of persecution." George L. Mitton and Rhett S. James, "A Response to D. Michael Quinn's Homosexual Distortion of Latter-day Saint History," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): 261. Another *FARMS Review* contributor suggests that trying to pass out literature to Latter-day Saints on their way to general conference infringes on the Saints' freedom of religion. Russell C. McGregor, "Letters to an Anti-Mormon," *FARMS Review* 11, no. 1 (1999): 257. The SHIELDS website dedicates a whole page to what are meant to be inspiring quotes about persecution from nineteenth-century Church leaders. "Quotables: Persecution," http://www.shields-research.org/General/Quotables_Persecution.htm (accessed 1 April 2004). Inevitably, perhaps, in a post-9/11 world, one apologist has taken persecution rhetoric to another level, equating anti-Mormonism with spiritual terrorism: see <http://www.geocities.com/ldsbeliefs/antimormonterroristnetwork.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

34. Midgley characterizes that approach as "plac[ing] one's head in the sand" ("On Caliban Mischief," xxxv).

35. On someone having "happened to wander into a Christian bookstore" (and then disagreeing with the proprietor over whether or not *naunoo* is really a Hebrew word), see "Ask the Apologist," *FAIR Journal*, June 2002, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/journal/FJ200206.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). For a reference to Saints who "run across" anti-Mormon material, see Scott Gordon, "Dealing with Difficult Issues," <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/misc/misc28.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). Daniel Peterson makes the same kind of move when he tells readers of the *FARMS Review* that he recently "happened (as I occasionally do) to tune in" to an anti-Mormon radio program. Along similar lines, Robert Millet writes that he once read anti-Mormon literature "out of sheer curiosity"; cf. the fictional elder in Russell McGregor's "Letters to an Anti-Mormon" who "admit[s]" that he is corresponding with a countercultist because "missionaries have just as much curiosity as everyone else." Peterson, "Editor's Introduction," *FARMS Review* 7, no. 2 (1995): viii; Robert L. Millet, "Knowledge by Faith," in *Expressions of Faith: Testimonies of Latter-day Saint Scholars*, ed. Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1996), 91; McGregor, 237. I am struck by how these writers have chosen phrasing that represents their engagement with anti-Mormonism as passive or casual: I propose that, wittingly or not, these writers are reacting to pressure from the anti-contention tradition, which frowns on active engagement with anti-Mormonism.

36. "Jim Valentine/Malin Jacobs Correspondence," <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/JValc01.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). Jacobs reports that he had "several long conversations" with Valentine on the rationale that "any time Mr. Valentine spent with me could not be spent handing out tracts or talking to those

who came to the open house out of genuine interest in the church.” The interaction did not end there, however: Valentine subsequently sent Jacobs a paper (they had apparently swapped addresses), for which Jacobs researched and wrote a rebuttal.

37. That each apologist seeks, in fact, to challenge his correspondent becomes clear as the correspondence unfolds. By the end of his email exchange with Ron Rhodes, Bickmore admits, “I AM questioning your character,” which earlier he had only hinted at. Email to Ron Rhodes, 28 July 1999, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/RftSM_Rhodes_Bickmore01.htm (accessed 1 April 2004). Midway through his correspondence with James White, Midgley acknowledges his effort to “demonstrate” that White has made an untrue claim. Nevertheless, Midgley wants to keep insisting that he seeks information, not a quarrel. When it becomes simply implausible for Midgley to deny that he is engaged in an argument, he accuses White of having “bait[ed]” him—to which White retorts that it was Midgley who initiated the correspondence. A sarcastic bent becomes clear when Midgley asks White, “How come you love to label Professor Peterson as ‘childish’ and so forth, and yet never accuse me of those kinds of behavior. Do I somehow fail to measure down?” The Midgley/White correspondence is archived at http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_02.html (accessed 1 April 2004).

Midgley seems invested in denying that he has contentious motives; note that he likes to end his correspondence, “Grace and peace.” Yet even among admirers, Midgley has a reputation for being “feisty”: see Ross Baron, “Feeding the Multitudes: Being Fishers of Men,” <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/conf/2001BarR.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). The dynamic we see in Midgley’s correspondence with White—denying contentious motives while providing contrary indications—can also be seen when we contrast two documents connected to a confrontation with Sandra Tanner that resulted in Midgley’s being thrown out of the Tanners’ store. In a letter to Tanner, Midgley professes to be “at a loss to figure out what I might have said to you that warranted our being tossed out of your bookstore. . . . I do not recall either feeling or expressing hostility towards you in any of our conversations.” Louis Midgley, to Sandra Tanner, 2 July 1997, electronic copy at <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannerIn.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004). Yet in an account of the confrontation written for SHIELDS, Midgley describes himself as having “teased Sandra Tanner” and boasts that he was able to lead her along until she was “caught in her own little trap.” “Standards of Proof,” <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannrIn2.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).

38. Peterson, “Skin Deep,” 99–100. Although in this issue of the *Review*, Peterson professes to find apologistics “wearisome,” by the very next issue, readers find him chortling about “the fun of it all.” See “Editor’s Introduction: In the Land of the Lotus-Eaters,” *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): v.

39. Peterson, “In the Land of the Lotus-Eaters,” ix.

40. D. E. Neighbors, “Fifth Annual FAIR Conference Will Be Hard to Top,” *FAIR Journal*, August 2003, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/journal/FJ200308.html>; D. E. Neighbors, “Fifth Annual FAIR Conference: The First Day,” *FAIR Journal*, September 2003, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/journal/FJ200309.html>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

41. Daniel C. Peterson, “A Modern Malleus maleficarum,” *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 231.

42. The material they were listening to was Arthur Conan Doyle’s Mormon-themed story, *A Study in Scarlet*. Peterson, “In the Land of the Lotus-Eaters,” vii.

43. *Ibid.*, xix, xxiv.

44. Michael R. Ash, “Apologeez: The Language of LDS Apologetics,” <http://www.mormonfortress.com/gloss2.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

45. Peterson, “QnA,” xxi.

46. Louis Midgley, “Playing with Half a Decker: The Countercult Religious Tradition Confronts the Book of Mormon,” *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 140.

47. Daniel C. Peterson, “Chattanooga Cheapshot, or The Gall of Bitterness,” *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 1. Cf. Matthew Roper, “Right on Target: Boomerang Hits and the Book of Mormon,” <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/conf/2001RopM.html> (accessed 1 April 2004), where Roper recounts visiting the Tanners’ bookstore because he “had to acquire some materials for a research project.” Ezra Taft Benson once instructed religious educators not to purchase materials from anti-Mormons on the grounds that this will merely “help sustain their cause” (quoted in Scharffs, 62).

48. I have already mentioned the LDS “fan base” for the countercultist tabloid *The Utah Evangel* (see note 39, above). Midgley mentions receiving at least one anti-Mormon newsletter at home (“Playing with Half a Decker,” 140).

49. William Hamblin and Wade Englund have both posted to the “Recovery from Mormonism” board and have subsequently been banned. “Their ‘Little Corner of Cyberspace,’” <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/antis/exmo01.html>; Wade Englund, “Why We Left Stories,” <http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/stories.htm>. Michael Ash reports that the webmaster of the Utah Lighthouse Ministry Message

Board has been dubbed “Web-Nazi” by apologists for deleting their posts: see the alphabetical listing for “Webguy” at <http://www.mormonfortress.com/who1.html>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

50. Daniel C. Peterson, “Editor’s Introduction: The Worst Herry Man Can Preach,” *FARMS Review* 12, no. 1 (2000): xx. See also note 42, above, for a reference to Peterson playing anti-Mormon tapes for his children.

51. Peterson and Ricks, *Offenders for a Word*, 179–80.

52. Midgley, “Playing with Half a Decker,” 141 n. 51.

53. For email correspondence with countercultists, see the archives at SHIELDS’s “Critics Corner,” <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004). For mention of Peterson’s phoning a countercultist in Atlanta, see Daniel C. Peterson, review of *Mormonism*, by Kurt Van Orden, *FARMS Review* 8, no. 1 (1996): 95.

54. Peterson refers to an instance in 1992 when he questioned Ed Decker on air while the latter was speaking on AM radio (“P. T. Barnum *Redivivus*,” 56). In 1998, Hamblin called in to confront countercultist James White on air, leading to a very lengthy email correspondence, archived at http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_01a.html (accessed 1 April 2004).

55. Peterson, “Editor’s Introduction: Triptych (Inspired by Hieronymus Bosch),” *FARMS Review* 8, no. 1 (1996): xi.

56. Peterson, “Editor’s Introduction,” *FARMS Review* 7, no. 2 (1995): 104–05. This is not quite as bizarre as it may sound if it’s the same instance Malin Jacobs recounts at <http://www.shields-research.org/Humor/Q&Q.html> (accessed 1 April 2004), in which LDS apologist Van Hale took Decker to lunch, as was customary, after Decker had been a guest on a talk show Hale co-hosted. Still, if one takes seriously Peterson’s claims that fundamentalists like Decker pose a threat to Mormonism comparable to Nazi persecution of the Jews, then Hale’s lunch with Decker becomes equivalent to a Jewish talk show host sitting down to eat with late neo-Nazi leader William Pierce.

57. “An Incident at the Utah Lighthouse Ministry Bookstore,” <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannerIn.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).

58. “Update,” *SUNSTONE*, December 2002, 76. For Midgley’s own account of the incident, see Louis Midgley, “Prying into Palmer” *FARMS Review* 15, no. 2 (2003): 365–410, especially the section beginning on page 403.

59. Dominic A. Infante, *Arguing Constructively* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1988), 7; Dominic A. Infante, “Teaching Students to Understand and Control Verbal Aggression,” *Communication Education* 44 (1995): 52–53.

60. Researchers Mark A. Hamilton and Paul J. Mineo have challenged Infante’s claim that teaching students to be argumentative (that is, to attack issues) will decrease verbal aggression: Hamilton and Mineo conclude that, in fact, argumentation training tends to “enhanc[e] the motivation to argue” and thus “increas[es] the level of verbal aggressiveness in society.” “Argumentativeness and Its Effect on Verbal Aggressiveness: A Meta-Analytic Review,” in *Interpersonal Communication Research: Advances through Meta-Analysis*, ed. Mike Allen et al. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002): 284. Hamilton and Mineo thus challenge Infante’s distinction between argumentativeness (good) and verbal aggression (bad), though they concur with Infante that verbal aggression is undesirable.

That latter notion—that verbal aggression is necessarily undesirable—has been challenged by some researchers of “flaming” (verbally aggressive communication online). These researchers argue that communications of a kind Infante would probably type as aggressive in fact serve positive functions: educating others, disciplining Internet users who violate the protocols of online communication, or helping individuals become “more tolerant of negative criticism.” Hongjie Wang and Yan Hong, “Flaming: More Than a Necessary Evil for Academic Mailing Lists” (ERIC Document Reproduction Service no. ED 385261), 7; online at *Electronic Journal of Communication* 6, no. 1 (1996), <http://www.cios.org/www/ejcv6n196.htm> (accessed 2 April 2004). See also Heidi McKee, “YOUR VIEWS SHOWED TRUE IGNORANCE!!!” (Mis)Communication in an Online Interracial Discussion Forum,” *Computers and Composition* 19 (2002): 411–34. In light of the comparison I make between LDS apologists and Danites (see article text and note 64, below), I am especially interested in Susan Herring’s suggestion that flaming functions for men as “a form of self-appointed regulation of the social order, a rough and ready form of justice on the ritual frontier.” “Bringing Familiar Baggage to the New Frontier: Gender Difference in Computer-Mediated Communication,” in *CyberReader*, ed. Victor J. Vitanza (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1996), 151.

61. A Catholic writer approvingly quoted by a *FARMS Review* contributor aptly expresses the argumentativeness of apologists, i.e., their predilection for making arguments: “We all like a good argument. We like the give-and-take, and we enjoy watching one party score a point and the second return the favor. A good argument, particularly on an important theme, stimulates our minds and helps us

draw our own conclusions.” Quoted in Barry R. Bickmore, “A Passion for Faultfinding: The Deconversion of a Former Catholic Priest,” *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): 280.

62. Dominic A. Infante, “Teaching Students,” 53. Cf. Wang and Hong, whose definition of flaming (verbal aggression online) includes “venomous remarks” and “sarcastic barbs,” as well as a tendency to “admonish, rebuke, reprimand, and reproach” to a degree that would be considered impolite in analogous face-to-face interactions (3).

63. Ash, “Apologeez.” Though Ash does not identify Peterson as the apologist referred to, the pun on Peterson’s name (Danibal) is unmistakable.

64. For a historical introduction to the Danites as a kind of independent militia with an avowed intent to protect the Saints from mob violence, see Leland H. Gentry, “The Danite Band of 1838,” *BYU Studies* 14, no. 4 (Summer 1974): 421–50. My comparison of LDS apologists to Danites is not a sensationalist metaphor: I am literally proposing that the same impulse toward violence which produced Danites in the nineteenth century produces hostile polemicists today. See the last paragraph of my callout essay, “Hostility and Contempt in LDS Apologetics,” on pages 26–27 of this article. Lest I be misunderstood, let me add that the comparison to Danites is not intended as a pun on Dan Peterson’s name.

65. Dominic A. Infante, “Teaching Students,” 55–56.

66. For example, in the wake of Elbert Peck’s resignation from Sunstone, I wrote a verbally aggressive letter to the editor of which I have since been ashamed: John-Charles Duffy, letter to the editor, *City Weekly*, 12 July 2001, 4; quoted in Gary James Bergera, “Only Our Hearts Know”—Part 2: SUNSTONE During the Elbert Peck Years,” *SUNSTONE*, July 2003, 34.

67. Leaders of FAIR have said that the organization eschews “personal attacks,” “bashing,” or efforts to “destroy detractors.” Kathryn Richards, “Leaders of FAIR Organization Seek BYU Involvement,” *BYU NewsNet*, 18 January 2001, <http://newsnet.byu.edu/story.cfm/12952> (accessed 1 April 2004).

68. Major FARMS scholars who appear generally to shun polemics include Noel Reynolds, Stephen Ricks, John Sorenson, and John Welch. Although John Tvedtnes has written polemical, even satirical, essays in response to anti-Mormons, he seems to abstain, as a rule, from actually corresponding with anti-Mormons—unlike William Hamblin, Louis Midgley, and Daniel Peterson, who debate anti-Mormons directly. (I make this judgment based on the correspondence and essays archived at the SHIELDS website.)

69. Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Here We Stand* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995): 119.

70. Davis Bitton, “Anti-Intellectualism in Mormon History,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 3 (Autumn 1966): 111–34. Recently Bitton wrote a self-deprecating review of this essay, in which he chastises himself for oversimplifying Mormon attitudes toward intellectualism: “The lines of the ‘anti-intellectualism’ thesis are firm and simple, but, lacking shading and coloration, the result is a caricature. . . . Something as multifaceted as Mormonism across more than a century of time is neither intellectual nor anti-intellectual. . . . it is both/and.” “Mormon Anti-Intellectualism: A Reply,” *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): 61. To me, the 1966 essay is quite clear in explaining the both/and nature of the phenomenon, so I’m not sure why Bitton felt the need to write what appears to be an effort at self-rehabilitation.

71. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 119. McConkie’s reading of 1 Corinthians echoes that of his father: *Doctrines of the Restoration: Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, ed. Mark L. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 278.

72. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 88, 183. “Why have those of the Bible-believing world not read the words of Isaiah, Ezekiel, the Savior, and the Revelator and found themselves saying, My goodness, these passages are speaking of the Book of Mormon—we had better get hold of the Mormon missionaries! . . . The answer is simple: revelation. . . . We are confident in professing the meanings of those texts because we have a revealed understanding of them, and were it not for that revealed understanding, we would probably not see any more in them than



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“I thought you were driving?”

do our sectarian friends" (88).

73. McConkie and Millet, *Sustaining and Defending*, 80.

74. "Latter-day Saints have fought many a valiant fight on the wrong battlefield. Our message concerns living prophets, the restoration of all truths, and answers that have been revealed anew; our commission is to get that testimony into the hearts of people. We are to get them to read the Book of Mormon with a prayerful spirit. We are to testify to our friends and neighbors of Joseph Smith, and then when they have that testimony we can show them the revelations of the Restoration wherein the Lord has given the answers to their questions" (McConkie and Millet, *Sustaining and Defending*, 110–11). Cf. *Here We Stand*, where McConkie writes that trying to persuade others of LDS doctrine by arguing from the Bible "short-circuits the conversion process" (184).

75. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume 2, Jacob through Mosiah* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), xiii.

76. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 119. Cf. Millet, "Knowledge by Faith": "There are times when faith requires us to act in the face of what the world would consider to be the absurd" (96).

77. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 120.

78. *Ibid.*, 114, 120; McConkie and Millet, *Sustaining and Defending*, 83; Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume 1, First and Second Nephi* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987): xv; Millet, "Knowledge by Faith," 93–94, 100. Despite the disclaimers, in the end, Millet is content to be called anti-intellectual: "Ultimately, doctrinal truth comes not through the explorations of scholars, but through the revelations of God to apostles and prophets. And if such a position be labeled by some as narrow, parochial, or anti-intellectual, then so be it. I cast my lot with the prophets" ("Knowledge by Faith," 100).

79. Millet, "Knowledge by Faith," 96.

80. Nathan Oman, "'Out of Zion Shall Go Forth the Law' (Isaiah 2:3)," *FARMS Review* 12, no. 1 (2000): 132.

81. McConkie, *Answers*, 171–72. On this point, McConkie contradicts his father, who held that "there is no . . . conflict . . . between true science and true religion." Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 681.

82. McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary*, vol. 2, xiii.

83. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 120–21.

84. Monte S. Nyman, "To Learn with Joy: Sacred Preaching, Great Revelation, Prophesying," in *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1990), 207.

85. Marvin Folsom, review of *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon*, by Lynn Matthews Anderson, *FARMS Review* 7, no. 1 (1995): 15. McConkie and Millet likewise use either/or rhetoric when they ask, "In our search for truth ought we to turn to prophets or scholars, temples or universities?" (*Sustaining and Defending*, 77).

86. Stephen D. Ricks, "Fides quaerens Intellectum: The Scholar as Disciple," in Black, *Expressions of Faith*, 173.

87. Louis Midgley, review of *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vols. 1 and 2, by Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *FARMS Review* 1 (1989): 96–97.

88. J. Michael Allen, review of *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume 3, Alma through Helaman*, by Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *FARMS Review* 4 (1992): 150.

89. Bryan J. Thomas, review of *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., *FARMS Review* 8, no. 1 (1996): 49.

90. Allen, 151.

91. In direct response to the either/or language used by Monte S. Nyman (note 83, above), Scott Woolley protested, "If we have to choose one approach only, of course we would be foolish to ignore the Book of Mormon itself in favor of external matters. Luckily, we do not have to make such a choice . . ." Review of *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 116.

92. Mack C. Stirling, review of *The Book of Mormon: Helaman through 3 Nephi* 8, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., *FARMS Review* 7, no. 1 (1995): 218.

93. Thomas, 47; Thomas is quoting Hugh Nibley. Cf. Mack C. Stirling's complaint that a collection of Sperry Symposium proceedings included papers "relatively devoid of insight, originality, or scholarship." Review of *Doctrines of the Book of Mormon: The 1991 Sperry Symposium*, ed. Bruce A. Van Orden and Brent L. Top, *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 304.

94. Under "By Study and Also by Faith," <http://farms.byu.edu/>

[aboutfarms.php](http://farms.byu.edu/) (accessed 1 April 2004).

95. Statement on the back inside cover of *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 1 (2001).

96. John Gee and Stephen D. Ricks, "Historical Plausibility: The Historicity of the Book of Mormon as a Case Study," in *Historicity and the Latter-day Saint Scriptures*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2001): 63–98.

97. Leonard J. Arrington, Truman G. Madsen, and John W. Welch, foreword to *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, by John L. Sorenson (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985): xi.

98. "FARMS through the Years, Part 1: A Conversation with John Welch and John Sorenson," *Insights*, November 1999, 7.

99. Hamblin, "An Apologist for the Critics," 498.

100. Warren P. Aston and Michaela Knoth Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 3.

101. John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: The F.A.R.M.S. Updates* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), xiii.

102. Lance Starr, "Why Apologetics?" 22 July 2001, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/WhyApologetics.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004).

103. Noel B. Reynolds, preface to Black, *Expressions of Faith*, xiii; Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins* (Provo: FARMS, 1997), 3.

104. McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary*, vol. 2, xiii.

105. Austin Farrer, "The Christian Apologist," in *Light on C. S. Lewis*, ed. Jocelyn Gibb (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1965), 26.

106. "FARMS through the Years, Part 1," 7.

107. Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins* (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982), 1.

108. Scott Gordon, "Message from the President," *FAIR Journal*, December 2003, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/journal/FJ200312.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). Former mission president and MTC president Ed Pinegar has said that "F.A.R.M.S. materials were especially invaluable to him" during his mission presidencies. See "Fund-raising Committee Is Expanded," *Insights*, March 1991, 5. Following the recommendation of his own mission president, John Hatch subscribed to the *FARMS Review* so that he and other missionaries would know "how to handle an investigator who had encountered anti-Mormonism." John P. Hatch, "Why I No Longer Trust *FARMS Review of Books*," paper presented at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 2001; online at <http://www.signature-books.com/sigstories2.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).

109. Baron, "Feeding the Multitudes." Though Baron dislikes to have his presentations called "missionary firesides," they are popularly referred to as such. See the FAIR gateway page, under "What Every Mission Leader Should See," <http://www.fair-lds.org> (accessed 1 April 2004); J. Cooper Johnson, "Are Mormons Christians? One Way to Get Your Community's Attention," *Meridian Magazine*, <http://www.meridianmagazine.com/missionaryjournal/020418christians.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

110. FARMS scholars have spoken at firesides in various parts of the United States, as well as in Austria and Switzerland. Some of these have been "directed specifically to less-active members and those not of the LDS faith," as well as to missionaries. "Denver Stakes Host Symposium on Book of Mormon," *Insights*, January 1997, 5; "FARMS Provides Speakers for Several Recent Firesides and Conferences," *Insights*, October 1997, no page number. FARMS scholars attending the annual joint meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature have taken the opportunity to speak at firesides in the locality. "BYU, Institute Continue Presence at Scholarly Conference," *Insights* 23, no. 1 (2003): 1+.

111. Aston and Aston, 3–4. Barry Bickmore likewise uses empiricist rhetoric when he writes: "Mormonism claims to be a restoration of the apostolic Church. I test this hypothesis by trying to find doctrines and practices similar to those of the LDS Church in early Christianity." "Barry's Homepage," <http://www.geocities.com/afmjock> (accessed 1 April 2004).

112. David Rolph Seely, review of *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch, *FARMS Review* (1993): 313–14. Seely refers specifically to an *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* article which takes a FARMS scholar's "very tenuous" speculations about the Hebrew origin of the name Mulek and presents them as if they were "unquestioned facts."

113. John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, xiii. Welch is quoting Joseph Smith at this point; as we will see shortly (note 119, below) Welch is elsewhere reluctant to speak of proving LDS faith claims. However, Welch endorses Smith's notion of "circumstantial evidence": "Thus, to probe and ponder the circumstantial evidences of the scripture's truthfulness is one of the purposes of Book

of Mormon research" (xiii).

114. Reynolds, *Book of Mormon Authorship*, 3.

115. Reynolds, *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, 3.

116. "FARMS through the Years, Part 2: A Conversation with Stephen D. Ricks and Noel B. Reynolds," *Insights*, December 1999, 6.

117. Carl Mosser and Paul Owen, "Mormon Scholarship, Apologetics, and Evangelical Neglect: Losing the Battle and Not Knowing It?" *Trinity Journal* 19 (Fall 1998): 179–205.

118. "FARMS through the Years, Part 2," 6.

119. Reynolds, *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, 3.

120. Welch protests that FARMS has been "misunderstood" as trying to "prove the Book of Mormon true"; in fact, "our methodology is aimed more at understanding and appreciation" ("FARMS through the Years, Part 1," 7). Likewise, Sorenson insists that his work on Book of Mormon geography aims not to "test" the book's truthfulness but to cast light on "the intricate, human, historical process that is the backdrop to its main spiritual message" (*Ancient American Setting*, xvi, xviii). FARMS reports that its objective is to help readers "more fully appreciate and better understand" LDS scripture. Look under "Work Done in the Name of FARMS," <http://farms.byu.edu/aboutfarms.php> (accessed 1 April 2004).

121. "FARMS through the Years, Part 3: A Conversation with Daniel Peterson and Daniel Oswald," *Insights*, January 2000, 7.

122. "FARMS through the Years, Part 1," 7.

123. The *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* was founded in 1992 to complement the *FARMS Review*, which at that time published essays only under the form of the book review, not under the form of the scholarly paper. In 1998, John Sorenson took over as editor of *JBMS*, immediately transforming it from an academic-type journal into a glossy magazine for a lay intellectual audience. This transformation reflects Sorenson's special concern for making orthodox scholarship accessible to readers without academic training. "An Interview with John L. Sorenson," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11, no. 1 (2002): 84.

124. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne, eds., *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991); John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely, eds., *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem* (Provo: FARMS, 2004).

125. FARMS's involvement in producing the Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Reference Library was touted as "the first major contribution of the LDS community to the larger world of Christian and Jewish scholarship on the Bible and related literatures." "Joint F.A.R.M.S.-BYU Project Will Create Dead Sea Scrolls Database on Computer," *Insights*, November 1993, 1. In addition, at least four LDS scholars have participated on the International Dead Sea Scrolls Editing Team (Mosser and Owen, 189). In 1997, FARMS announced the creation of a Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART), which has produced electronic images of documents in Beirut and the Vatican library, among other places. "New Center Created to Preserve Ancient Religious Texts," *Insights*, December 1996, 1+; "CPART Assesses Manuscript Archives in Beirut, Vatican," *Insights*, April 1999, 1+; see also <http://cpart.byu.edu>. ISPART, the umbrella institution that now houses FARMS, also houses the Middle Eastern Texts Initiative (METI), headed by Daniel Peterson, which translates Islamic, Graeco-Arabic, and Eastern Christian texts for academic use: see <http://meti.byu.edu>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

126. Terry L. Givens reports that FARMS "has a subscribing audience of many thousands." *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (Oxford, Oxford UP, 2002): 121.

127. Arthur R. Cohen, Ezra Scotland, and Donald M. Wolfe, "An Experimental Investigation of Need for Cognition," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 51 (1955): 291; John T. Cacioppo and Richard E. Petty, "The Need for Cognition," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 42 (1982): 116; John T. Cacioppo, et al., "Dispositional Differences in Cognitive Motivation: The Life and Times of Individuals Varying in Need for Cognition," *Psychological Bulletin* 119 (1996): 199.

128. Ralph C. Hancock has complained that when the media speak of Mormon intellectuals, "they are not talking generally about members of the LDS Church who are well-educated, or who have advanced degrees, or who love learning. They are talking, rather, about Mormon dissidents." "What Is a 'Mormon Intellectual?'" *This People*, Fall 1994, 23 (emphasis in original). This complaint has been echoed by FAIR's Juliann Reynolds and SHIELD's Malin Jacobs. Juliann Reynolds, "Critics in Wonderland: Through the Liberal Looking Glass," *FAIR Journal*, April 2003, <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/misc/misc24.html>; "Malin L. Jacobs," http://www.shields-research.org/Authors/MLJ_Bio.htm. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

129. By lay intellectual, I mean individuals interested in scholarship and apologetics but lacking formal training in relevant academic disciplines. As noted

earlier (note 122, above), Sorenson has been especially concerned about serving the needs of lay intellectuals among the Saints.

130. Contributors to the *FARMS Review* have complained about devotional works that lack "newness or originality" or that fail "to dig below the surface for any novel insight." Brian M. Hauglid, review of *The Book of Mormon: Alma*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 199; Amy L. Livingstone, review of *Timely Truths from the Book of Mormon*, by Allan K. Burgess, *FARMS Review* 9, no. 1 (1997): 4. Bryan Thomas endorses Hugh Nibley's endeavor to always "dig up hidden mysteries, new things, for my hearers" (Thomas, 47; emphasis in original).

131. "It continues to strike me how incurious many of our people are, how they want to hear the same thing over and over again. Too much of our scripture 'study' is like a bedtime story where, if we get one syllable wrong, the child says, 'Oh, that's not the way it goes.' . . . The first thing we need is an opening up of curiosity, a willingness to accept that it is okay to be curious, it is okay to try to learn something new." "An Interview with John L. Sorenson," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11, no. 1 (2002): 85.

132. Thomas, 49.

133. *Doctrines of the Restoration*, 283–93. On a scale of one to ten, McConkie rated the importance of various tools for understanding the scriptures as follows: knowing Greek and Hebrew, one; learning local customs and traditions, two or three; studying passages in context, two or three; using the King James Bible, five or six; using the Joseph Smith Translation, eight or nine; using modern scripture to interpret ancient scripture, ten or more. McConkie instructed listeners to "forget" other translations of the Bible (288); as for commentaries on "historical and geographical matters[,] they drop off the scale to a minus ten, a minus one hundred, a minus one thousand, depending on the doctrine" (285).

134. Stirling, review of *The Book of Mormon: Helaman through 3 Nephi* 8, 218.

135. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, xvii–xviii.

136. "FARMS through the Years," 8.

137. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), 24.

138. D. James Croft, letter to the editor, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14, no.1 (Spring 1981): 6–7. Brent Lee Metcalfe draws a similar distinction: for critical scholars, "methods lead to conclusions," while for apologists, "conclusions lea[d] to methods." "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions about Book of Mormon Historicity," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 156.

139. Representatives of Signature Books have referred to FARMS materials as "pseudo-scholarly." Quoted in Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Questions to Legal Answers," *FARMS Review* 4 (1992): x; and in Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): v.

140. Edward H. Ashment, "Reducing Dissonance: The Book of Abraham as a Case Study," in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990): 231.

141. Edward H. Ashment, "A Record in the Language of My Father: Evidence of Ancient Egyptian and Hebrew in the Book of Mormon," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993): 375.

142. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998): xxix. Note that Quinn uses the term polemicist in the same pejorative sense that other revisionists use apologist.

143. Ashment, "Reducing Dissonance," 230; Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, rev. ed., 403 n. 248.

144. "[FARMS scholars'] sometimes less-than-civil manner of responding to naysayers also suggests an undercurrent of insecurity, if not desperation." Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe, *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002], viii. For a similar statement by Quinn, see *Early Mormonism*, rev. ed., 403 n. 248. On the deceitfulness of apologists, Quinn writes: "Aside from their verbal viciousness, polemicists often resort to any method to promote their argument. . . . Moving beyond apologist persuasion, LDS polemicists furiously (and often fraudulently) attack any non-traditional view of Mormonism. They don't mince words—they mince the truth" (*Early Mormonism*, rev. ed., x).

145. See the callout essay, "Hostility and Contempt in LDS Apologetics," on pages 26–27 of this article.

146. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, rev. ed., 420–21 n. 104; 422 n. 126; 429 n. 214. For another, similar situation, see *Early Mormonism*, rev. ed., 499–504 n. 108, where Quinn accuses John W. Welch of deliberately withholding from readers information which undermines his claim that Joseph Smith could not have known about chiasmus. Welch responds implicitly to this accusation in "How Much Was Known about Chiasmus in 1829 When the Book of Mormon Was Translated?"

FARMS Review 15, no. 1 (2003): 63–64. There Welch acknowledges that his past work contained regrettable—but unintentional—“misinformation.”

147. In Quinn’s defense, I can think of various reasons why he might assume malicious motives. Quinn has spent years studying under-the-table LDS operations such as the Council of Fifty, post-Manifesto plural marriages, the Benson-Wilkinson spy ring at BYU, and efforts to conceal the centrally organized nature of the Church’s campaign against the ERA. D. Michael Quinn, “The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945,” *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (Winter 1980): 163–97; D. Michael Quinn, “LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 9–105; D. Michael Quinn, “Ezra Taft Benson and Mormon Political Conflicts,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 1–87; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 373–402. Behind-the-scenes actions by LDS apostles factored into Quinn’s own resignation from BYU and his excommunication. D. Michael Quinn, “On Being a Mormon Historian (and Its Aftermath),” in *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History*, ed. George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books: 1992), 69–111; see also “Six Intellectuals Disciplined for Apostasy,” *SUNSTONE*, November 1993, 65–73; Lavina Fielding Anderson, “DNA Mormon: D. Michael Quinn,” in *Mormon Mavericks: Essays on Dissenters*, ed. John Sillito and Susan Staker (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002) 329–63. And Quinn himself is alleged, during his time at the Church Historical Department, to have written a booklet that allowed the Church to anonymously rebut the Tanners while feigning to ignore them. “Quinn and Controversy,” *Salt Lake City Messenger*, April 1997, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no92.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004). For Quinn, this pattern of arguably underhanded activities may lend ready plausibility to the premise that Robinson and Welch are acting underhandedly as well.

148. Massimo Introvigne, “The Book of Mormon Wars: A Non-Mormon Perspective,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 2 (1996): 6–9.

149. Louis Midgley, “The Myth of Objectivity: Some Lessons for Latter-day Saints,” *SUNSTONE*, August 1990, 54–56; Louis Midgley, “The Acids of Modernity and the Crisis in Mormon Historiography,” in Smith, *Faithful History*, 189–225; David B. Honey and Daniel C. Peterson, “Advocacy and Inquiry in the Writing of Latter-day Saint History,” *BYU Studies* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 139–79; Oman, “Out of Zion Shall Go Forth the Law.”

150. Kuhn, 76.

151. *Ibid.*, 175.

152. *Ibid.*, 152–53. On religious convictions affecting a scholar’s openness to a particular paradigm, see Kuhn’s claim that Kepler was drawn to the heliocentric model of the universe because he was a sun-worshiper (152).

153. The terms rhetorical and political are my usage, not Kuhn’s. To say that scholarship is rhetorical means that it is shaped by persuasion: scholars accept as true what they are persuaded is true, but whether scholars find an idea persuasive has nothing to do with whether the idea is objectively true. To say that scholarship is political means that scholarship is shaped by ideology and by competitions for prestige and influence: when proponents of one idea manage to beat out competitors, that idea secures the status of truth for a given community—but again, this has nothing to do with whether the idea is objectively true.

154. Vogel and Metcalfe, ix.

155. Edward H. Ashment, “Making the Scriptures ‘Indeed One in Our Hands,’” in Vogel, *The Word of God*, 251.

156. On the role of paradigms in assigning relevance to facts, see Kuhn, 15; on setting aside inexplicable problems for future solution, see Kuhn, 84.

157. *Ibid.*, 5.

158. This statement is complicated by the fact that Quinn, whom I have been calling a revisionist, professes to believe in the supernatural world postulated by Mormonism. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), xx; see also D. Michael Quinn, “The Rest Is History,” *SUNSTONE*, December 1995, 50, 55 n. 2, where Quinn responds to my skepticism about his profession of faith.

159. Kuhn, 110.

160. “Journal of Book of Mormon Guidelines,” <http://farms.byu.edu/publications/jbmsguidelines.php> (accessed 1 April 2004).

161. “FARMS, Oxford University Press, and E. J. Brill Join in Publishing Venture,” *Insights*, April 1996, 1+.

162. Donald W. Parry, Stephen D. Ricks, and John W. Welch, *A Bibliography of Temples of the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean World* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991); John L. Sorenson and Martin H. Raish, *Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography*, 2 vols. (Provo: Research Press, 1990).

163. Most of the texts I have in mind have been produced as part of ISPART’s

Middle Eastern Texts Initiative, <http://meti.byu.edu> (accessed 1 April 2004). FARMS has also helped to digitally preserve Maya murals and has published its own translation of the Popol Vuh. “New Center Created to Preserve Ancient Religious Texts,” *Insights*, January 1997, 1; Allen J. Christenson, trans., *Popol Vuh: The Mythic Sections—Tales of First Beginnings from the Ancient K’iche’-Maya* (Provo: FARMS, 2000).

164. Mosser and Owen, “Mormon Apologetics.”

165. “LDS Scholarship at SBL,” *Insights*, February 1998, no page number; “Institute Scholar Speaks at Congress of Jewish Studies,” *Insights* 21, no. 9 (2001): 1.

166. John M. Lundquist, “Biblical Seafaring and the Book of Mormon,” appendix to *The Children of Noah: Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times*, by Rafael Patai (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1998), 171–75.

167. Grant Hardy, ed., *The Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Edition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 687.

168. Givens, 121. A low-key apologetic slant can be detected when Givens writes, “The naked implausibility of gold plates, seer stones, and warrior-angels finds little by way of scientific corroboration, but attributing to a young farmboy the 90-day dictated and unrevised production of a 500-page narrative that incorporates sophisticated literary structures, remarkable Old World parallels, and some 300 references to chronology and 700 to geography with virtually perfect self-consistency is problematic as well” (156). For Givens’s denial that his book seeks to establish the Book of Mormon’s authenticity, see the “Author’s Note” (no page number). For his discussion of revisionism, see chap. 6.

169. “FARMS through the Years, Part 2,” 6.

170. John A. Tvedtnes claims to know one non-LDS scholar who has “acknowledged” the Book of Mormon to be an ancient text and another who is “very open” to its being a translation from Hebrew. “Hebrew Names in the Book of Mormon,” paper presented at the Thirteenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 2001; online at <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/HebrewNames.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004). I would be interested in knowing more about this, but I am skeptical that these scholars understand the religious implications of assenting to the Book of Mormon’s antiquity or Hebrew provenance: see my comments in note 173, below.

171. Jan Shipps, “An ‘Insider-Outsider’ in Zion,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 143. Louis Midgley concurs with Shipps’s assertion in his “No Middle Ground: The Debate over the Authenticity of the Book of Mormon,” in Hoskisson, *Historicity*, 158.

172. *Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography*, coauthored by Sorenson and published by FARMS, is intended to serve diffusionists outside LDS circles. Also, Sorenson sits on the review panel of a diffusionist journal, *Pre-Columbiana: A Journal of Long-Distance Contacts*. “Journal Devoted to Questions of Ancient Transoceanic Contacts,” *Insights*, April 2000, 9. For another allusion to Sorenson’s connection to the broader world of diffusionist scholarship, see John L. Sorenson, *Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life* (Provo: Research Press, 1998), 16.

173. Patai’s interest in the Book of Mormon was accompanied by a serious misunderstanding about what the book professes to be. Despite having visited BYU, Patai (now deceased) was under the impression that the Book of Mormon gives an account of Mormon origins—that is, Patai thought that Mormons believed themselves to be descended from Israelites who sailed to the New World (*Children of Noah*, xiii, 21). This may explain why Patai was open to the possibility that the Book of Mormon is grounded in historical fact: he may have imagined that the book contains traditions handed down to the Mormons from their remote ancestors. Had Patai understood what the Book of Mormon actually professes to be, would he have been so open to claims for the book’s historicity?

174. Givens complains that mainstream scholars categorize the Book of Mormon with legends about Atlantis (145–46). But that categorization is inevitable given the current politics of knowledge in academia. Givens himself acknowledges that “the double burden of prevailing paradigms in anthropology and the Book of Mormon’s insistent claims to supernatural provenance do not bode well for any change soon in the general scholarly neglect” (149–50). Still, Givens appears to hope that “a critical mass in [the] volume and quality” of orthodox scholarship can “force a serious engagement on the part of academics” (145), and he holds open the possibility of “an increasingly persuasive Book of Mormon apologetics” (175). As I’ve said, I judge this hope naïve.

175. McConkie, *Answers*, 157.

176. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 16, 95.

177. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man: His Origin and Destiny* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954); Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 247–56; Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Answers*, 158–62.

178. Daniel C. Peterson, “Editor’s Introduction: Doubting the Doubters,”

FARMS Review 8, no. 2 (1996): vii–viii, x.

179. Trent D. Stephens, “Evolution and Latter-day Saint Theology: The Tree of Life and DNA,” paper presented at the 2003 FAIR Conference, Orem, Utah, August 2003; Stephens’s talk is summarized in Neighbors, “Fifth Annual FAIR Conference: The First Day.” Note that Stephens’s rethinking of traditional LDS beliefs about the historical Adam and Eve recalls John Sorenson’s rethinking of traditional LDS beliefs about Book of Mormon geography: in both cases, a scriptural narrative is reconceived as unfolding in the midst of other societies whose existence had not previously been imagined.

180. Michael R. Ash, “The Mormon Myth of Evil Evolution,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 19–38.

181. “Editor’s Notebook,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 3.

182. The hemispheric model is also known as the global hypothesis: see Michael F. Whiting, “DNA and the Book of Mormon: A Phylogenetic Perspective,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 27. For an admission that the hemispheric model “is still held by most [Church members] today,” see D. Jeffrey Meldrum and Trent D. Stephens, “Who Are the Children of Lehi?” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 40.

183. This, of course, is a problem for proponents of the limited geography. In *Ancient American Setting*, 269, John Sorenson delicately addresses the challenge his Mesoamerican geography poses for Polynesian claims to Lamanite identity. More recently, Meldrum and Stephens have suggested that native American peoples not literally descended from Lehi can be considered Lamanites inasmuch as that term refers to everyone non-Nephite, as the term Gentile refers to everyone non-Jewish (51). Meldrum and Stephens also seem to suggest (the argument is not clearly articulated) that non-Lehite peoples may be Lamanite by virtue of a kind of spiritual adoption, similar to that by which all baptized Saints become the family of Abraham and are assigned to a lineage in Israel. Sorenson had anticipated this latter move (Lamanites by spiritual adoption) in *Ancient American Setting*, 93–94.

184. The Introduction states that the Lamanites “are the principal ancestors of the American Indians” (no page number). Predictably, detractors have made much of this statement, either to put FARMS scholars in the uncomfortable position of appearing to contradict Church teaching or to embarrass the Church for making a statement from which it now seems to want to move away.

185. Whiting, 28, 31.

186. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*; see also John L. Sorenson, “Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and Its Scripture,” *Ensign*, September 1984, 26–37; John L. Sorenson, “Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and Its Scripture, Part 2,” *Ensign*, October 1984, 12–23.

187. See Vogel and Metcalfe, who describe the limited geography as “a last gasp of Book of Mormon apologetics” (viii) and “an *ad hoc* hypothesis designed to shield a central hypothesis from adverse evidence” (ix). Though I have not seen anyone say so in print, I sense that some Mormon liberals resent seeing orthodox intellectuals “get away with” championing ideas that contradict widely held LDS beliefs, while liberals have been viewed with suspicion—even disciplined—for doing the same thing.

188. Whiting, 33. This statement appears in a callout box, so it may represent an editor’s summary of Whiting’s position instead of Whiting’s own views.

189. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Historicity of the Book of Mormon,” in Hoskisson, *Historicity*, 238–39.

190. Vogel and Metcalfe, xiii.

191. McConkie, *Answers*, 182–85, 201.

192. Anecdotally, I have heard of an individual standing up in testimony meeting to denounce “those who are preaching that DNA evidence shows that the Book of Mormon isn’t literally what it says it is.” Is this individual denouncing revisionists? Or is he denouncing proponents of the limited geography? Does he recognize a difference?

193. Quoted in Givens, 110.

194. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 295–96.

195. Blomberg and Robinson, 135; Gary Bowler, “Does The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Teach That God Had Sex with Mary?” February 2002, <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/brochures/GodMary.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004).

196. Stephen E. Robinson, “Believing Christ,” *Ensign*, April 1992, 5–9; Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ: The Parable of the Bicycle and Other Good News* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992). Though Joseph Fielding McConkie welcomes an LDS discourse on grace, he points out that such discourse is not traditional for the Saints: “During my growing-up years in the Church, I cannot remember a single Sunday School, priesthood, or seminary lesson on the subject of grace. Nor do I remember anyone speaking on the matter in sacrament meeting. Grace was generally thought to be a Protestant doctrine, and Latter-day Saints

knew that all blessings were predicated upon obedience to gospel laws” (*Answers*, 59–60).

197. Blomberg and Robinson, 63. Robinson believes that “informed Latter-day Saints will affirm with me that the present books of the Bible are the word of God . . . and that the texts are essentially correct in their present form.” I imagine this statement must irk Joseph Fielding McConkie, who in fact does not affirm Robinson’s view. McConkie holds to the notion that the original biblical texts were altered by “evil and designing men,” requiring the Lord to make “textual restorations” through Joseph Smith (*Answers*, 202).

198. Blomberg and Robinson, 63–64. Like Robinson, Joseph Fielding McConkie sees the JST as providing “additions to and clarifications of the King James Version.” However, McConkie differs from Robinson—and adheres more closely to an earlier tradition—in emphasizing the idea that the JST restores material “taken from the Bible by evil and designing men” (*Answers*, 203–04).

199. Blomberg and Robinson, 65.

200. *Ibid.*, 140. Earlier, in *Are Mormons Christian?* Robinson had asserted that the sustaining vote of the membership is required to make documents binding on the Church (13–14). This statement has even more subversive potential than that from *How Wide the Divide?* The statement is also absurd, since the Church makes no effort to count the “votes” of members not physically present at general conference. I am therefore not surprised that Robinson dropped the stipulation about members’ votes when he defined official doctrine for *How Wide the Divide?*

At the recent conference of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology (SMPT) held 19–20 March 2004 at Utah Valley State College in Orem, Utah, BYU religion professor Robert Millet used an approach very similar to Robinson’s in *How Wide the Divide?* to clarify which doctrines are and aren’t binding on Latter-day Saints. Millet, who currently holds BYU’s Richard L. Evans Chair in Religious Understanding, says he teaches this principle of doctrinal latitude during “An Evangelical and Latter-day Saint in Dialogue” series he and Reverend Greg Johnson, a Utah-based Baptist pastor, give around the United States.

201. Examples include orthodox intellectuals’ rejection of past statements about Book of Mormon geography, the method of Jesus’s conception, or the reasons for denying the priesthood to blacks. Naturally, orthodox intellectuals understand these statements to represent the “opinions” or “speculations” of leaders rather than revealed doctrine. Still, the very act of distinguishing one from the other has subversive potential: if past leaders can preach their own opinions or attitudes from the pulpit, how do we know that contemporary Church leaders are not doing the same when they teach, for instance, about traditional gender roles?

202. Neal A. Maxwell, *Sermons Not Spoken* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 53. Cf. Ezra Taft Benson: “The learned may feel the prophet is only inspired when he agrees with them; otherwise, the prophet is just giving his opinion—speaking as a man.” *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 138.

203. Brigham Young once declared that “the sectarian world [are] infidels” and that “the divines of that day, when they have graduated from the schools, seminaries and colleges, so far as their knowledge of heavenly things goes, are a bundle of trash and ignorance” (*Journal of Discourses* 14:159–60). John Taylor pronounced Christians to be “the veriest fools,” “imbecile,” and “as ignorant of the things of God as the brute beast” (*Journal of Discourses* 2:25; 13:225). Along these lines, one may think of the satirical representation of a Christian minister that formed part of the temple drama until as recently as 1990.

204. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 177. My claim that Bruce R. McConkie’s writings are the “most visible” manifestation of the hard-line attitude toward false churches is based on a search of the CD-ROM *GospelLink 2001* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001). Searching for the term “false churches” yields seventy-seven hits, of which forty-one come from works by Bruce R. McConkie.

205. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 6.

206. *Ibid.*, 152–53.

207. Blomberg and Robinson, 61, 161; Michael R. Ash, “Does Mormonism Attack Christianity?” 20 November 2002, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/LDSattack.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004).

208. “I believe sincerely that many of my evangelical Christian friends, and countless others like them, have been reborn spiritually also. The fact that their hearts are changed through faith on his name” (Moses 5:7) is clear in their honest efforts to show the example and teachings of Jesus in their lives.” Kent P. Jackson, “Am I a Christian?” *FARMS Review* 14, nos. 1–2 (2002): 134. Jackson clarifies in a footnote that he believes the priesthood ordinances of baptism and confirmation are necessary to “fully activate” the new birth “in the most complete sense” (134 n. 6).

209. Benjamin I. Huff believes that Robinson “arguably goes too far in minimizing differences” between Mormonism and evangelicalism: “How Polemicalism Corrupted Latter-day Saint Apologetics,” *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): 309. See also William J. Hamblin and Daniel C. Peterson, “The Evangelical Is Our Brother,”



JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN CHARLES DUFFY

“And deep down inside, he knows what he’s saying isn’t true!”

FARMS Review 11, no. 2 (1999): 186–87.

210. Blomberg and Robinson, 25.

211. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 354.

212. Richard John Neuhaus, “Is Mormonism Christian?” *First Things*, March 2000; accessed online at <http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0003/public.html> (accessed 1 May 2004).

213. *The Mormon Puzzle: Understanding and Witnessing to Latter-day Saints*, kit containing manuals, video, and pamphlets (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1997); Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen, eds., *The New Mormon Challenge: Responding to the Latest Defenses of a Fast-Growing Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

214. Givens, 5, 152–53.

215. *Book of Mormon Stories* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997) depicts Book of Mormon societies as simple and occupying what looks like ancient Mexico. The Church’s feature-length film *The Testaments: Of One Fold and One Shepherd* (2000) sets its Book of Mormon narrative in a racially diverse society in a tropical landscape with art and architecture that call to mind the Maya.

216. “DNA and the Book of Mormon,” 11 November 2003, <http://www.lds.org/newsroom/mistakes/0,15331,3885-1-18078,00.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). While the articles are prefaced by a disclaimer that they “are not official Church positions or statements,” the fact that they are cited on the Church website at all validates the articles to a significant degree.

217. For a more complete view of how I understand the Book of Mormon as

scripture even as I doubt its historicity, see my short essay, “What Makes Scripture ‘Scripture?’” *SUNSTONE*, November 2001, 16–17.



NOTES TO SIDEBAR ESSAYS

Notes to “Hostility and Contempt in LDS Apologetics” (pages 26–27)

1. Quoted in Richard Lloyd Anderson, review of *Joseph Smith’s New York Reputation Reexamined*, by Roger I. Anderson, *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 80, emphasis in original.

2. Non-LDS observers Richard N. and Joan K. Ostling describe *FARMS* as “shrill in its rhetoric, an odd pose for an organization that seeks to win intellectual respectability for the church.” *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999), 376. Jan Shipps, writing of the controversy provoked by John L. Brooke’s *The Refiner’s Fire*, says it was predictable “that the most extended, scathing, and downright ugly reviews . . . were written by scholars connected with” *FARMS*. *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 205.

3. Vern Anderson, “Book of Mormon Scholars Unleash Salvo of Barbs,” *Deseret News*, 22 March 1994, B5.

4. See footnote 68 of the main essay (page 46).
5. K. Codell Carter and Christopher B. Isaac, "One Response to a Singularly Worthless Genre," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): 117.
6. Louis Midgley, "A 'Tangled Web': The Walter Martin Miasma," *FARMS Review* 12, no. 1 (2000): 386.
7. William Hamblin quotes the Tanners' explanation that they use underlining so much in their published materials because they "have found that the average reader cannot read a page of material and digest it to come out with the most important point." Hamblin comments: "This provides a very interesting insight into the Tanners' opinion of the intellectual capacity of their intended audience—an insight which I find no reason to question." Review of *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 252–53. Reviewing LDS author Michael Griffith's response to several countercultists, K. Codell Carter and Christopher B. Isaac declare that the countercultists "are even stupider than Griffith makes them out to be" (115).
8. See the cartoons at amateur apologist Kerry Shirt's website, Mormonism Researched: <http://www2.ida.net/graphics/shirtail/cartoons.htm>. Similar depictions of anti-Mormons by cartoonist Greg Kearny appear at the FAIR website: <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/humor/humor07.html> and <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/humor/humor08.html>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
9. A joke at the SHIELDS website hinges on the idea that anti-Mormons are so stupid they have to have things explained to them three times. "Jokes," <http://www.shields-research.org/Humor/Jokes.htm>. Elsewhere on the SHIELDS site, an animated graphic of an ape shakes its head at anti-Mormon absurdity. "The Anti-Mormon Crusade," <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/AMC-ASco.html>. At his Mormon Fortress website, Michael Ash writes "that those who are engaged in an enterprise to destroy the LDS Church . . . do not have all the facts, do not have a full six pack, or do not have the little plastic thing which holds the six pack together. AND GUESS WHAT? I'M GOING TO POKE FUN AT THEM!" "Fun Stuff," <http://www.mormonfortress.com/fun2.html>. One of the ways Ash pokes fun at anti-Mormons is placing a link on his site labeled, "Anti's Enter Here"; when you click the link, a message informs you—falsely—that your hard drive is being reformatted. "Apologetics: Defending the Faith," <http://www.mormonfortress.com/apolog1.html>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
10. While corresponding with countercultists, Peterson adopts at times the persona of a teacher speaking to a slow student. He calls his correspondence with one countercultist a "tutorial." Emails to Doug Harris, 29 July 1998, 1 August 1998, 3 August 1998, 4 August 1998 http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm. To another countercultist he writes condescendingly, "I will explain . . . Please try to follow the steps." Email to James White, 15 April 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_03.html. Similarly, Wade Englund comments in the course of an email to a non-LDS correspondent, "I doubt that you will be able to grasp this obvious fact." Email to Robert Schmidt, 25 April 2000, <http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/inane.htm>. Malin Jacobs concludes his correspondence with one countercultist by praying, "Lord, forgive him, for he hasn't a clue." Email to Lane Thuet, n.d., http://www.shields-research.org/General/LDS_Leaders/1stPres/Joseph_Smith/Response_to_56-Year_criticism.htm. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
11. Daniel Peterson accuses representatives of Reachout Trust ministry of knowingly making a false claim about Mormon beliefs (that is, persisting in the claim even after Peterson and others have told them it's false): see the email correspondence archived at http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm. He makes the same kind of accusation against Utah Missions, Inc. "Shall They Not Both Fall into the Ditch? What Certain Baptists Think They Know about the Restored Gospel," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): 51–52. Similarly, Mark D. Ellison has accused Jerald and Sandra Tanner of "deceptively omitt[ing] material" from quotations used in their book *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality*. Email to "LDS Apologetics," 26 October 1999, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/ULM_Ellison01.htm. (Electronic materials accessed 1 April 2004.)
12. Robert L. and Rosemary Brown, *They Lie in Wait to Deceive*, 4 vols. (Mesa, AZ: Brownsworth Publishing, 1981–1995); see vol 1, chap. 1; vol. 2, chaps. 2–3, 5; vol. 3, chaps. 1–3. See also "Phony Academic Credentials," http://www.shields-research.org/Phony_degrees.htm (accessed 1 April 2004).
13. Michael Ash posts to his website the allegedly true confession of a woman who, as a member of a countercult ministry, pretended for years to be a member of the Church in order to undermine the faith of new converts and tape-record the endorsement. "Conversion of an Anti-Mormon," <http://www.mormonfortress.com/anticonv.html>. SHIELDS has posted a similar report of countercultist Loftes Tryk posing as an investigator. Scott Spendlove, email, 18 December 1997, <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/Trykback.htm>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
14. Worst of the Anti-Mormon Web is an online archive of anti-Mormon discourse that Novak finds particularly outrageous; the site, Novak explains, "is intended to mock the worst of the anti-Mormon sites." Novak no longer maintains the site, but its archives can be reached from the SHIELDS website at <http://www.shields-research.org/Novak/Novak.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). Peterson recommended Novak's site to readers of the *FARMS Review*: "Editor's Introduction: In the Land of the Lotus-Eaters," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): xxiv.
15. Wade Englund, "Anti-Mormon Fallacy Alert!" <http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/fallacya.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).
16. Daniel Peterson announced his plans to create this award in "In the Land of the Lotus-Eaters," xxiv–xxv. The award was actually given for three years by SHIELDS, complete with a certificate for the "recognized" anti-Mormon writer. See <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/Awards/Awd-Philastus.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).
17. Peterson professes to be concerned for the reputation of countercultist James White: emails to James White, 16 April 1998, 17 April 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_03.html. Malin Jacobs makes a similar move: email to Dennis A. Wright, 10 April 1998, <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/UMI-4.htm>. Midgley claims to want to help one anti-Mormon ministry avoid the embarrassment of publishing false claims: email to Dennis A. Wright, 12 January 1998, <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/UMI-2.htm>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
18. For example, writing to Concerned Christians, Inc., about a claim they had made on their website, Peterson says, "Your claim is utterly, completely, false and baseless, as even a cursory bit of research would have shown you. I will be checking back to see that you have removed it and apologized for your error." Electronic post to "Concerned Christians" website, 4 January 1999, copy at <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/CC02.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).
19. Mike Parker writes to Reachout Trust, "I sternly warn you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that LIARS do not inherit the kingdom of God." Email to Doug Harris, 15 July 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_MP.htm. Peterson similarly calls his correspondent at Reachout Trust to repent—"Repent. Now. Cleanse your soul of falsehood"—but he also writes that he does not "have any great expectation that you will repent and begin to tell the truth. . . I have too much experience with anti-Mormonism to expect integrity from you. Rather, I have been discharging my duty to warn you of your folly and your sin. If you do not change your ways, I will be a witness against you." Emails to Doug Harris, 29 July 1998, 1 August 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
20. I say "quite" bluntly because Peterson makes the accusation as part of a satirical list titled "Ten Reasons Why We [Reachout Trust] Believe That to a Mormon Joseph Smith is Equal to Jesus Christ." In other words, Peterson makes the accusation while writing as if he were the people at Reachout Trust: "We are doing the bidding of our infernal Master, the well-known father of lies." Writing in the first person plural ("we"), the accusation is not as pointed as if Peterson had made it in the second person ("you"). Still, the gist is the same. Email to Doug Harris, 4 August 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm (accessed 1 April 2004).
21. "Most anti-Mormons are motivated by a deep, intrinsic core of insecurity." L. Ara Norwood, review of *Mormonism*, by Kurt Van Gorden, *FARMS Review* 9, no. 2 (1997): 200. Midgley characterizes anti-Mormons as people who "seem very anxious to find ways of making Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon go away"—the implication being that their conscience condemns them. "Playing with Half a Decker," *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 171. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet take a similar view: they recount an anecdote which suggests that apostates who challenge the faith are rationalizing their unwillingness to keep the commandments. *Sustaining and Defending the Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 116.
22. Daniel C. Peterson, "Skin Deep," *FARMS Review* 9, no. 2 (1997): 143.
23. In the SHIELDS archive of correspondence between apologists and countercultists, I can find only three instances (out of nearly thirty) where the last message is not written by the apologist. In one case, when the countercultist tries to end the correspondence with a parting allusion to Ephesians 5:15–16, apologist William Hamblin secures the last word by firing back with his own list of scriptures: see email to James White, 24 June 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_01f.html (accessed 1 April 2004). In another instance, when the countercultist refuses to cede control of the argument, apologist Ross Baron backs out but saves face by insisting that the countercultist wasn't addressing his arguments and therefore "the conversation was going nowhere." See the note affixed to the end of "Ross Baron/Gary Wilson Correspondence," http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/Baron_Wilson_correspondence.htm (ac-

cessed 1 April 2004). This need to have the last word perhaps accounts for the phenomenon of Hamblin's writing a critique of Stephen E. Thompson's critique of the *FARMS Review's* critiques of Brent Metcalfe's *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*. William J. Hamblin, "The Latest Straw Man," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 82–92.

24. The clearest example of this is Peterson's email correspondence with representatives of Reachout Trust, with whom Peterson becomes patently angry when he cannot get them to retract their assertion that Mormons hold Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith in equal esteem. The correspondence is archived at http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm (accessed 1 April 2004). Consider also the following example of an apparently emotion-fueled passage from Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Fictionary," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 2 (1998): vi–vii. Note how adverbs and parenthetical asides—including asides within asides—give the language an intense, surging momentum beyond the already scornful tone of what Peterson has to say:

I will admit that my first reaction to Howsepian's article was a somewhat angry one. The piece is clever, but fundamentally and, I think, obviously wrong-headed. Indeed, maliciously wrong-headed. Not only do I find it sophistic—*sophomoric* struck me initially as the more appropriate, and etymologically more precise, term—but I think its anti-Mormon motivation, though evidently sufficiently well hidden to get past the (perhaps naïve) editors of *Religious Studies*, manifests itself in unmistakable ways. (all emphasis in original)

25. Peterson tells countercultist Dennis Wright that he's "disappointed" not to have received a response; he tries to draw Wright into debate by informing him that their correspondence is being forwarded to other apologists and it looks as if Wright is afraid to respond. Emails to Dennis A. Wright, 15 December 1997, 16 December 1997, <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/UMI-1.htm>. Malin Jacobs also appeals repeatedly to Wright for a reply: when Wright finally sends a brief message promising a longer response as opportunity permits, Jacobs can contain himself no longer and delivers a series of missives, none of which Wright ever engages with. Jacobs/Wright correspondence archived at <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/UMI-4.htm>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

26. Peterson speaks of LDS polemicists such as himself as being engaged in a work "of criticism and, occasionally, of demolition." "Editor's Introduction: Of Polemics," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): viii. Grant Hardy describes LDS apologists—disparagingly—as trying to "scor[e] rhetorical points" at their opponents' expense. "Speaking So That All May Be Edified," *FARMS Review* 12, no. 2 (2000): 83.

27. For example: Peterson derides Sandra Tanner at some length for asserting (in his words) that "Latter-day Saints [are] more Hindu than Christian" or that "the faith of the Latter-day Saints is as much Hindu as Christian." Since when, Peterson retorts, have Mormons worshipped Vishnu, revered the Vedas, or taught karma and reincarnation? ("Skin Deep," 100–01; "In the Land of the Lotus Eaters," vi). But Tanner never said that the religious content of Mormonism resembles that of Hinduism. Rather, she asserted that Mormon "theology is as close to Christianity as Hinduism"—i.e., that Mormonism, like Hinduism, should be viewed as a non-Christian religion (quoted in Peterson, "Skin Deep," 100). Either Peterson is knowingly mischaracterizing Tanner to his readers for the sake of scoring points at her expense, or his eagerness to ridicule her has clouded his ability to recognize what she is actually saying.

28. Example: In response to Douglas F. Salmon's critique of Hugh Nibley's "parallelomania," Hamblin accuses Salmon of misreading Nibley: "Salmon first insists that Nibley claims that the seventh-century *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* contains 'perhaps the oldest Adam traditions.'" To show that this is a misreading, Hamblin then quotes Nibley, who wrote: "Perhaps the oldest Adam traditions are those collected from all over the ancient East at a very early time, which have reached us in later Ethiopian and Arabic manuscripts under the title of '*The Combat of Adam and Eve against Satan*.'" Hamblin continues: "From Nibley's entire statement in context, it is quite clear that Nibley recognizes that the Ethiopian and Arabic *Combat* is not itself the oldest tradition but is in part a collection of earlier Adam material, a fact on which all scholars agree." But Salmon didn't say that Nibley claimed *Combat* "is . . . the oldest tradition" (my emphasis). Salmon said, in Hamblin's words, that Nibley claimed *Combat* "contains 'perhaps the oldest Adam traditions'" (my emphasis)—a perfectly accurate paraphrase of Nibley as quoted by Hamblin. I have to conclude either that Hamblin is misrepresenting Salmon (and perhaps also Nibley) for the sake of appearing to have made a sound rebuttal, or that Hamblin's zeal to defend Nibley has led him to make what he sincerely, but mistakenly, believes is a sound rebuttal. William J. Hamblin, "Joseph or Jung? A Response to Douglas Salmon," *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): 95–96.

29. See note 23 (above), where Peterson "admit[s]" that Howsepian's article

made him angry. Similarly, Robert Millet reports that his first reaction to the revisionist scholarship of the Jesus Seminar "was a form of quiet rage: How dare they? Who do they think they are? What audacity to suppose that they know enough about our Lord and Savior to set us straight, to tell the world what Jesus said and what He did not say!" In Millet's case, rage gives way to condescending pity: "How unfortunate it is that basically good men and women, people who have at least an affection or an admiration for holy writ, should wander so far afield." "The Historical Jesus: A Latter-day Saint Perspective," *Historicity and the Latter-day Saint Scriptures*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2001), 173.

30. To a countercultist who accused him of being "an angry and intemperate character," Peterson writes: "Actually, as anyone who knows me could tell you, I am a relaxed, good humored fellow who very rarely gets upset and certainly is not angered by incompetent scoundrels such as you have revealed yourself to be. I am not even angry about this most recent insult. Sorry if that disappoints you. I have already shared it with a rather large number of friends, who will very likely chuckle and shake their heads, as I have, at the pathetic quality of your message." Email to Mike Thomas, 14 August 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm. Similarly, Louis Midgley and John Tvedtnes deny feeling hostile or angry toward the Tanners. Louis Midgley, to Sandra Tanner, 2 July 1997, electronic copy at <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannerIn.htm>; John A. Tvedtnes, "Great and Specious Arguments: Jerald and Sandra Tanner on FARMS," http://www.shields-research.org/Reviews/Tanners_and_FARMS_a_review.htm. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

31. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), x.

32. Hamblin, "The Latest Straw Man," 84. Cf. Peterson's protest that he cannot stop sending "nastigrams" because he does not write such things: email to James White, 24 June 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_03.html. Similarly, Wade Englund tells one critic, "It is not that I am being 'vicious,' it is just that self-proclaimed 'anti-mormons,' such as yourself, take the truth to be hard, and 'kick against the pricks.'" Email to April Tappana, 27 August 2000, <http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/inane.htm>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

33. Example: "What Signature Books affects to disdain in F.A.R.M.S. as 'immature,' 'tasteless,' and 'infantile,' is, I think, simply the tendency of some of us to drollery (occasionally at their expense). And inviting them to 'lighten up' will probably have no effect." Daniel C. Peterson, "Text and Context," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): 536 n. 41. And again: "Let me simply say, in passing, that, if we have occasionally been guilty of levity at the expense of some of our critics, this has been because they tempted us with irresistible targets. It isn't our fault." Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Triptych (Inspired by Hieronymus Bosch)," *FARMS Review* 8, no. 1 (1996): xxxvii n. 98. When countercultist James White protests Peterson's aggressive style, Peterson replies that he was merely "having fun. (You know, teasing somebody who responds in satisfying ways to such teasing)." Email to James White, 17 April 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_03.html (accessed 1 April 2004). For another example of an apologist recommending that outraged critics "lighten up," see Matthew Roper, "On Cynics and Swords," *FARMS Review* 9, no. 1 (1997): 146. On the other hand, Peterson remarked after the announcement of FARMS's incorporation into BYU: "FARMS has often had a polemical edge and we are curious to see how or whether that will be accommodated. . . . The minute I write something offensive, we'll see if I get a call." Quoted in Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Group Trying to Prove LDS Works Joins with BYU," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 November 1997, B1.

34. Wade Englund responds thus to a critic: "If you think that softening is needed, you may wish to first approach those who, without provocation, have launched their baseless attacks on my faith. Second, given your own harsh rhetoric (loath, pity, etc.) you may want to follow the edict of Christ, and remove the beam from your own eye before attempting to remove the supposed mote from mine." Email to Seth Mitchell, 9 March 2000, <http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/inane.htm>. Similarly, after a confrontational correspondence punctuated with sarcasm and digs, Peterson tells James White, "I have never sent you an insulting post. You, on the other hand, have insulted me repeatedly and without provocation." Email to James White, 8 June 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_03.html. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

35. Eugene England, "Healing and Making Peace—In the World and the Church," *SUNSTONE*, December 1991, 38; Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Questions to Legal Answers," *FARMS Review* 4 (1992): xiii, xxviii–xxix.

36. "Hoaxes: Mormon Soldier Killed in Iraq," http://www.shields-research.org/Hoaxes/Mormon_soldier_killed_in_Iraq.htm (accessed 1 April 2004).

37. "I have a really low regard for Foster as an historian. And they could have

added, as a person as well. . . . Incidentally, Foster now argues that Joseph Smith can be explained in psychological terms—he was bi-polar. But so was Jesus and just about every large figure in the history of religion. If we had only had lithium, we would not be troubled with religion. What an idiot.” Louis Midgley, “Standards of Proof,” <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannrIn2.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004). Midgley apparently made this statement in an email intended to circulate among apologists; when communicating directly with non-Mormons, Midgley adopts a very different tone.

38. Anderson, “Book of Mormon Scholars,” B5; “F.A.R.M.S./Signature Feud Continues with Attack on Metcalfe,” *SUNSTONE*, June 1994, 78–79.

39. John P. Hatch, “Why I No Longer Trust *FARMS Review of Books*,” paper presented at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 2001, online at <http://www.signaturebooks.com/sigstories2.htm>; Daniel C. Peterson, “QnA,” *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): xi–xxvi. For the variations on the word hatch, see Peterson, xii (“escape hatch”), xiii (“hatched”), xxi (“hatchery”), and xxiii (“hatchlings”). For anonymous allusions to Hatch’s presentation, see Peterson, xi n. 1; xx.

40. In his response to the Signature publication, *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, Peterson suggests “that Korihor may have been a homosexual whose theology flowed directly from his and his followers’ need for self-justification” (“Text and Context,” 539 n. 48). In this same vein, Peterson provides five pages of historical examples of individuals whose liberal theology or irreligiosity coincided with sexual immorality, including, particularly, homosexuality (536–41). Peterson concludes, “It must be clearly understood that I am not charging any particular individual, at Signature or anywhere else, with sexual immorality” (541)—a protestation which sounds sly under the circumstances. What looks like another homosexual-related dig appears two years later when Peterson says that some *FARMS* reviewers “may have been born that way, with the nastiness gene” (“Editor’s Introduction: Triptych,” xxxvii). During this same period, Louis Midgley made what strike me as oblique accusations of homosexuality against David Knowlton and D. Michael Quinn: “Atheists and Cultural Mormons Promote a Naturalistic Humanism,” *FARMS Review* 7, no. 1 (1995): 254 n. 60, 259 n. 69.

In subsequent years, Peterson has made direct, disdainful allusions to Quinn’s homosexuality and that of Signature Book’s Ron Priddis. To a countercultist who predicted that Peterson would “eventually go the way of” Michael Quinn and other revisionists, Peterson writes, “I am not sure why you think that I am going to become a practicing homosexual and be excommunicated like Mike Quinn. Have I ever given you any reason to expect something like that? Should I warn my wife?” Email to John L. Smith, n.d., <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/UMI-5.htm>. On another occasion, Peterson informs a countercultist that Priddis “is involved in what we sometimes euphemistically call an Alternative Lifestyle.” Email to Mike Burns, 5 January 1999, <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/CC02.htm>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

41. Daniel C. Peterson, “A Modern *Malleus maleficarum*,” *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 231–32.

42. John A. Tvedtnes, “Shades of Darkness,” *FARMS Review* 12, no. 2 (2000): 435; Allen Wyatt, “Motivation, Behavior, and Dissension,” n. 27, <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/antis/200207.html>; “Their ‘Little Corner of Cyberspace,’” <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/antis/exmo01.html>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.) William Hamblin views the terms *Morg* and *Morgbot*—coined by analogy to *Star Trek*’s the Borg—as equivalent to the anti-Semitic epithet *kike* (quoted in “Their ‘Little Corner of Cyberspace’”).

43. Louis Midgley calls this—approvingly—“a somewhat contemptuous label formulated by Professor Daniel C. Peterson” (“Playing with Half a Decker,” 140).

44. Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word* (Salt Lake City: Aspen, 1992): 4.

45. William Hamblin is credited with coining this term. John W. Redelfs, “Who Are the Signaturi,” <http://www.zionsbest.com/signatur.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

46. Klaus Hansen, “Quinn’speak,” *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): 132–40; William C. Hamblin, “That Old Black Magic,” *FARMS Review* 12, no. 2 (2000): 227. The term appears to have been coined by analogy to “Newspeak,” the language of the totalitarian regime in George Orwell’s *1984*.

47. John L. Sorenson, “Viva Zapato! Hurray for the Shoe!” *FARMS Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): 303.

48. Michael R. Ash, “Apologeez: The Language of LDS Apologetics,” <http://www.mormonfortress.com/gloss2.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

49. Peterson, “Skin Deep,” 144.

50. Louis Midgley, “F. M. Brodie—‘The Fasting Hermit and Very Saint of Ignorance’: A Biographer and Her Legend,” *FARMS Review* 8, no. 2 (1996): 225. George Mitton and Rhett James pick up the term in “A Response to D. Michael

Quinn’s Homosexual Distortion of Latter-day Saint History,” *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): 141. Cf. Midgley’s description of Quinn as “currently a former Mormon intellectual.” “The Current Battle over the Book of Mormon: ‘Is Modernity Itself Somehow Canonical?’” *FARMS Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): 201 n. 5.

51. Against accusations that *FARMS* reviewers use *sic* to highlight minor errors in their opponents’ writing, Tvedtnes protests that *sic* is regularly used to indicate that an error originates in the material being quoted (“Shades of Darkness,” 432). However, *FARMS* reviewers can handle that problem less obtrusively when they want to. See for example John Gee, review of *By Grace We Are Saved*, by Robert L. Millet, *FARMS Review* 2 (1990): 100. Millet had erroneously attributed a Book of Mormon passage to Nephi instead of Jacob; Gee very gently points out the error. And Peterson takes the liberty of simply correcting typographical errors in some documents from which he quotes: see “Editor’s Introduction: Of Polemics,” v n. 2; “Editor’s Introduction: Through a Glass Darkly,” *FARMS Review* 9, no. 2 (1997): ix n. 8. The style guide developed by FAIR instructs that organization’s contributors not to use *sic* in a way that could “make the reader think you are being condescending to the original author.” “FAIR Editorial Style Guide,” 14 August 2001, 6–7, <http://www.fairlds.org/EdStyle.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004).

52. Midgley, “F. M. Brodie,” 178–79; Wyatt, n. 36.

53. John Gee, “‘Bird Island’ Revisited, or the Book of Mormon through Pyramidal Kabbalistic Glasses,” *FARMS Review* 7, no. 1 (1995): 220.

54. “This absurd criticism has been blown away so many times, and has staggered to its feet again so often, that one begins to wonder if one has wandered, by mistake, into a Grade B zombie movie.” Daniel C. Peterson, “P. T. Barnum *Redivivus*,” *FARMS Review* 7, no. 2 (1995): 96. Peterson was so pleased with this metaphor that he used it again in two subsequent issues of the *Review*: “Editor’s Introduction: Triptych,” x; “Skin Deep,” 99–100.

55. Louis Midgley reports that he has tried “to force-feed countercultists” by sending them unsolicited *FARMS* materials. “On Caliban Mischief,” *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): xii.

56. “I am not big on suppression, though I grow very tired of what passes for knowledge these days among those pointing their fingers at the church I love. . . . [I]t amazes me how many times *FARMS* (or anyone else) can spray *Weed Be Gone* on some of the blight. It never dies. Like morning glory, its interlocking roots spread all over the place. Stomp it out here, and it grows over there. What you get is nothing new, just more of the same old weed.” Gregory Taggart, “Mormonism on the Internet II,” *FARMS Review* 10, no. 2 (1998): 201.

57. “[The Tanners] flatter themselves to think that *FARMS* planned to spend millions of dollars to ruin their mom-and-pop business. It would be like using a hydrogen bomb to kill a fly” (Tvedtnes, “Great and Specious Arguments”).

58. Rockwell D. Porter, “A Dancer/Journalist’s Anti-Mormon Diatribe,” review of *One Nation under Gods*, by Richard Abanes, *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): 259–72. In comments about the use of the pseudonym, Midgley explains that “this essay was written by Latter-day Saint scholars from several disciplines, none of whom, for various reasons, are eager to be known as having given attention to” the book (“On Caliban Mischief,” xvi). It’s not clear what that means: Do the authors use the pseudonym because they do not want Abanes to know that they reviewed his book? Or do they not want other Latter-day Saints to know that they read this book?

59. L. Ara Norwood, review of *Covering up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 158; Stephen E. Robinson, review of *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel, *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 312; L. Ara Norwood, “Nehors in the Land: A Latter-day Variation on an Ancient Theme,” <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/conf/2000NorL.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

60. Jane Tompkins, “Fighting Words: Unlearning to Write the Critical Essay,” *Georgia Review* 42 (1988): 589. Tompkins’s description of verbal violence in academia applies well to the hostile polemics of LDS apologists: “withering sarcasm” (589) and “razor sharp” wit (587); ridiculing another’s word choice or “stylistic gaffes” (588); accusing other writers of “stupidity, ignorance, fear, . . . malice, and hypocrisy” (588); writing out of a sense of “righteous wrath” (589); justifying verbal violence on the grounds that opponents’ work “is pernicious and damaging to the cause” (587).

61. Michael McGough, “Pull It Across Your Flow: The Decline of Debate,” *New Republic*, 10 October 1988, 17–19. McGough reports the director of a summer debate workshop at Georgetown University as saying, “Intellectual competition turns [debaters] on. They’re the same kind of kids who would play fantasy games and war games.” McGough then comments: “Debate as ‘Dungeons and Dragons’? It’s not that far-fetched a notion when you consider what debate and D&D have in common: arcane lore, a premium on quick thinking, and the thrill of combat in an imaginary universe” (19).

62. A growing number of women participate in non-polemical arenas such as the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, and women have made non-polemical contributions to the *FARMS Review* since that publication's beginnings. However, polemics (such as the correspondence archived at SHIELDS or the more combative essays in the *FARMS Review*) remains the province almost exclusively of male writers.

63. A highly accessible introduction to this subject is Deborah Tannen, *The Argument Culture: Moving from Debate to Dialogue* (New York: Random House, 1998), chap. 6.



Notes to "Wrestling with Nehemiah" (page 29)

1. Boyd K. Packer, "Come, All Ye Sons of God," *Ensign*, August 1983, 69.
2. The allusion is subtle: "But if we have been commissioned to *build anew the temple* of gospel understanding, then we ought not to spend our time running around putting out theological brush fires." Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Sustaining and Defending the Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 110, my emphasis.
3. Gilbert W. Scharffs, "I Have a Question," *Ensign*, January 1995, 62. This interpretation of Packer's remarks may seem plausible to Scharffs because Packer began with an allusion to a recent temple exposé. However, as I read Packer's remarks, it seems perfectly clear to me that they are meant to be applied more broadly.
4. Matthew Roper, "A Black Hole That's Not So Black," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): 160.
5. Russell C. McGregor, "Letters to an Anti-Mormon," *FARMS Review* 11, no. 1 (1999): 263.
6. John Gee, "One Side of a Nonexistent Conversation," *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): 82.
7. Daniel C. Peterson, "Yet More Abuse of B. H. Roberts," *FARMS Review* 9, no. 1 (1997): 69–70. Peterson professes to be frustrated that replying to anti-Mormon materials "obliges an advocate of the restored gospel to take time off from the pleasant duty of affirmatively teaching the truth. One is tempted to respond much the way Nehemiah did [Peterson then quotes Nehemiah 6:3]. . . . Nevertheless, since Mr. Spencer's arguments are superficially plausible, and since questions and sometimes even concerns continue to surface from those who have been exposed to them, it seems to me advisable (not to say efficient) to respond to Mr. Spencer in print."
8. In deploying this image, perhaps Peterson intends to call to mind similar folklore about the builders of the Nauvoo Temple working "with the sword or rifle in one hand and the trowel in the other." George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses* 14:320.
9. Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Of Polemics," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): viii.
10. "Mistakes in the News," <http://www.lds.org/newsroom/mistakes/0,15331,3885-1,00.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).
11. The Church issued three official responses to Krakauer's book: essays by Mike Otterson, director of Media Relations for the Church, Richard E. Turley of the Family and Church History Department, and Robert L. Millet of the BYU Religion Department. See <http://www.lds.org/newsroom/mistakes/0,15331,3885-1-17125,00.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).



Notes to "Critiques of Apologetics in the Christian Mainstream" (page 31)

1. Alan PF Sell, *Confessing and Commending the Faith: Historic Witness and Apologetic Method* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), 3–4. On the decline of apologetics, see also Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (New York: Corpus, 1971), xv, 244–45.
2. Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1941), 31.
3. Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 72, 80, 83–84.
4. Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl*, trans. Brian

Cozens (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 323–24.

5. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: Macmillan, 1941): 23–24, 28.
6. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 6.
7. Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 81.
8. Niebuhr, 28.



Notes to "Paradigms and Proof: A Hypothetical Case" (page 34)

1. Louis Midgley, "Standards of Proof," <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannrIn2.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).
2. Allegedly, the cactus-fiber cloth on which the Virgin's image is imprinted should have deteriorated 450 years ago; infrared treatments have revealed that the image is not paint; and a digital enlargement of the Virgin's eyes reveal a microscopic reflection of what she would have "seen" when her image was first unveiled in the chambers of Bishop Juan de Zumárraga in 1531. For a brief introduction to this subject, see Zenit, "Science Stunned by Virgin of Guadalupe's Eyes—Engineer Sees a Reflection, Literally from 1531," news release, 14 January 2001; online at <http://www.freerepublic.com/forum/a3a7621e30f75.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).



Notes to "Orthodox Scholars vs. Amateurs" (page 36)

1. Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise: A Scriptural Account with Word Definitions and a Commentary* (Fullerton, CA: Et Cetera, 1989); Delbert W. Curtis, *Christ in North America* (Orem, UT: Delbert Curtis, 1993); Phyllis Carol Olive, *The Lost Lands of the Book of Mormon* (Springville, UT: Bonneville Books, 2000).
2. See, for example, Wade Brown, *The God-Inspired Language of the Book of Mormon: Structuring and Commentary* (Clackamas, OR: Rainbow Press, 1989); H. Clay Gorton, *A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of Mormon* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon, 1997).
3. K. Codell Carter and Christopher B. Isaac review one such work in "One Response to a Singularly Worthless Genre," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): 114–17.
4. Diane E. Wirth, "The Bearded, White God Is Everywhere—or Is He?" *FARMS Review* 12, no. 1 (2000): 8. John Sorenson fears that amateur efforts at Book of Mormon archaeology or geography make it easy for critics to scoff. John L. Sorenson, "Instant Expertise on Book of Mormon Archaeology," *BYU Studies* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 431. Melvin J. Thorne recounts with dismay an encounter with an amateur researcher who failed to see why a graduate degree would be a prerequisite to serious scholarship. "The Role of Amateurs in Book of Mormon Studies," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 2 (1998): 3–4. Though diplomatic in his review of the particular amateur author in question, Stephen D. Ricks warns against "the triumph of the *idée fixe*, where focused attention shades off into monomania and channeled energy becomes a kind of fixation that brooks no alternative explanation and dismisses those who would raise questions as academic or religious obstructionists." "God's Name?" *FARMS Review* 12, no. 1 (2000): 4.
5. Sorenson, "Instant Expertise," 431–32.
6. John A. Tvedtnes, "The Bible Code," *FARMS Review* 14, nos. 1–2 (2002): 335.



Notes to "Orthodox Scholarship as Antidote to Doubt" (page 38)

1. Daniel C. Peterson, "'What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem?' Apostasy and Restoration in the Big Picture," *FARMS Review* 12, no. 2 (2000): xlv.
2. Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (New York: Corpus, 1971), xvi.
3. On apologetics *ad extra* and *ad intra*, see Johannes-Baptist Metz, "Apologetics," *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise "Sacramentum Mundi"*, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 22.