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A Literal
Translation?

Personal
and Social Morality
in a Religious Context

The LDS Response
to Teton Dam
Disaster

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Readers' Forum

Subscribed Again

I got a renewal notice in December, but I thought my subscription had expired sometime back, so I just thought I'd let it go. But, last week I got a new issue of your magazine, and it impressed me so much I am sending in my money again. Your project is getting better all the time. Good luck.

Richard Popp
Ronan, Montana

Recaptured Attention

Your publication is very much improved from the period of time when I decreed that it would no longer be in our home. Being very interested in history and people you have certainly recaptured my attention.

I still stand slightly amazed at the challenges to Mormonism from such renowned men as: Dr. McMurrin and Dr. Cummings. It seems that they have not ventured out into the branches of the Church. Having done so or even having studied with a more open heart the teachings of the Savior in the New Testament, they would realize there is no stereotyping of the members, but that the truth is simple and complete. There is Order and not confusion. In my travels throughout the world, the Mormon Religion stands clear on issues and does not waver, but has never detracted from the cultural origins of the people except when in conflict with the teachings of the gospel. This is very much like the early Christians in Israel and Rome.

Having been a recent convert of the Church, and having been asked not to attend several other churches before joining, I do not see myself either restricted or limited in my questioning of Doctrine. In fact the opposite is true, this is the only church where I have been able to find that expression, this being the reason of my not being invited back by other religions, (asking too many questions). I feel the only ones who have this identity crisis are those who forget the correct way to approach a problem, or who are looking to prove wrong answers are in fact correct.

In 1957 I started my search for the Church defined in the Bible. I was ridiculed, made to look anti-religious,

thrown out of many churches, told that I had no right to question various teachings, etc. In 1974 upon being baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, this has all stopped, even from my many non-member friends.

Charles J. Ingerson
Rochester, New York

The Moral

Regarding article "Christmas" in your latest issue: Author Susan B. Packard indicated she could not quite find the moral to the story. I spotted the moral almost instantly:

Aparrotly one cannot illustrate as accurately as toucan.

Gwen Sandberg
Cedar City, Utah

Christ at the Periphery

In response to Prof. Bassett's article ("Knowing, Doing & Being: Vital Dimensions in the Mormon Religious Experience") I should like to comment that overemphasis on "grace" (or Christ, it is the same, i.e. negating the value of personal moral effort as the primary criterion for personal religious progress) does the following: (1) cuts the heart out of the Mormon plan of salvation; (2) distorts the gospel away from the works-oriented morality inherent in the true purposes of life and erroneously toward the dishonest receipt of "something for nothing" (grace); (3) psychologically diverts the individual from pursuing the knowledge/action essential to his own personal salvation/exaltation; (4) perverts the morality of free will (the doctrine of the "Two Ways") by changing it into an amoral mysticism ("One Way"—sole focus on Christ); and (5) falsely focuses on the *person* of Christ rather than correctly focusing on the *teachings* of Christ.

Free Will, The Heart of the Gospel

I agree that "faith" is the first principle of the gospel, but I do so reluctantly and only in a "negative" sense. Knowledge is clearly more valuable than faith, but faith is the "necessary evil" supporting life's enterprise during the many stages thereof wherein knowledge is imperfect. Faith honestly sustains us in

gospel inferences until experience/study give us knowledge of the line between truth and error. If faith were *above* knowledge of truth (defined as information consonant with reality), a rank fideism would result, placing the premium on the desire for truth rather than its actual attainment. A chat with a typical "born again" Christian at once demonstrates the superiority of knowledge over faith. He places such a premium on faith that no amount of reasoning nor contrary evidence will dissuade him from his heroin-like addiction to Christ. His trust (faith) is so strong that fact (reality) becomes irrelevant to him. That kind of "faith" is simply self-deception. I deny, therefore, Bassett's assertion that faith is "first in the order of importance." I deny also that there are different categories of "knowing." We know either truth or error.

Now, if knowledge is superior to faith—although faith sustains our numerous knowledge gaps—knowledge is but the handmaid of action, for it is, as Bassett correctly notes, action ("works") which is an "integral aspect of the principle of faith." "Faith and works are not separate aspects of the gospel. . . ." But "works" (or lack thereof) produce the character ("being") Bassett would have us develop by means other than good works. It always disturbs me when authors correctly articulate the non-separability of faith and works then proceed to sever "internal" from "external" works, emphasizing solely the former. The finest motivations alone are merely good intentions. And you know what Hell is paved with?

Prof. Bassett has good cause to fear "a partial loss of one's individual initiative" from his advocacy of the "imitation of Christ." (Does he really advocate following a full "life style similar to that of Christ," including unmarried, nomadic wandering?)

It is precisely "individual initiative" (free will) which is the center of the purposes of life. I speak not merely of "kingdom building." Mormon theology teaches that the antemortal war in Heaven was waged precisely over this issue. Bassett expressly notes, "the well established fact that we will ultimately be judged by our works," but then adds, "and the term 'works' has come to connote only external activism." I deny the latter statement. The whole purpose of *James 2*—cited by Bassett—is to destroy the dichotomy of internal vs. external (faith vs. works) by demonstrating the all-inclusiveness of "works". This may place *James 2* at odds

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with *Moroni 7*, but it need not. External works ("things done in the body . . ." 2 Cor. 5:10) include study, prayer, and all things—spiritual and non-spiritual—which occupy man's time.

Bassett's whole exegesis of the scriptural word *gnosis* ("knowledge") as mystical (or "empathetic") union with Christ is simply false. *Gnosis* in the New Testament generally refers to precisely what Mormons call "a testimony of the gospel." Any Mormon who thinks I Cor. 13 refers to something other than the apostasy is seeing milk where he should see meat. *Gnosis* involves Christ, as the plan of salvation involves Christ, but there are more important aspects of the plan of salvation than Christ. Free will is more important to the plan of salvation than is the person of Christ. This is not because Christ's role (person) is unimportant, but because, like gravity, it is constant. Individual spiritual progress does not depend upon Christ nor His "grace." It depends upon our "works", in Bassett's phrase "individual initiative"—honest efforts, including honest mistakes. Therefore, knowledge (cerebral or otherwise) is always subordinate to free will, the choices we make with it, including the time devoted to its acquisition. Sterling McMurrin is correct when he states we need to have intellectual foundations for our testimonies. And, ironically, it is Bassett's suggestion that we study "the problems of mankind" (literature of existentialism)—not the person of Christ—which may give us testimonial appreciation of the plan of salvation. The ability of the Mormon plan of salvation (as distinct from false or fragmentary gospels, including the gospel of Christ only) to answer the Great Questions of life is the ultimate criterion of its truthfulness.

The Mormon plan of salvation—found in the *teachings* of Christ, not the Person of Christ—teaches us that mankind is by nature good. Man's very "being" is a child of God, and although godhood is not automatic (as adulthood automatically follows mortal childhood) yet man by following his honest motives and wise choices will be inevitably led to the experiences of life (joys and sorrows, gifts and catastrophes) which make for godlike character ("being").

The development of that godlike character is likely retarded by too great a dependence upon the person of Christ or his "grace." Humans are more apt to misread their misfortunes as divine punishments when they assume Christ's absolute sovereignty in their personal lives. Mortal life is designed

with looseness so that man's independence will truly reflect his individual free will—for good or ill.

Scripture As Misleading

Prof. Bassett's injunction to study only scripture and especially the "milk" thereof is misleading. (The fault is not Bassett's but inherent in the present defective form of the New Testament and some of its erroneous notions carried inadvertently into other Mormon scriptures.) Modern textual criticism is making it clearer that the New Testament was composed on the basis of a creed, the creed of Christ crucified, which in my opinion placed erroneous emphasis upon the *person* of

Christ, rather than correctly emphasizing the substance of his *teachings*, the plan of salvation. I do not disparage the important part Christ plays in the plan of salvation, but it is only a part, not the whole, as Bassett appears to assume. (More needs to be written in Mormon circles about the parallel and exalted role of Adam in the same plan of salvation.)

Bassett's primary error, I feel, is his falling victim to the "creed of Christ crucified," the ancient and canonical unifying principle used to squelch contrary Christian "gospels" and to suppress some *teachings* of Christ in deference to the *person* of Christ. These

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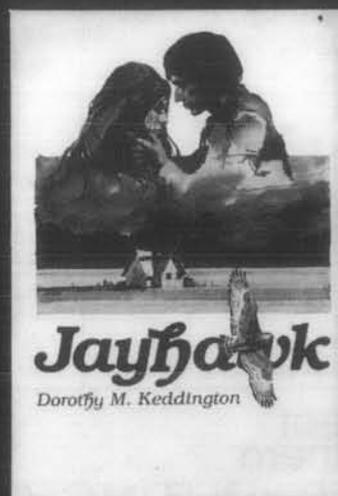
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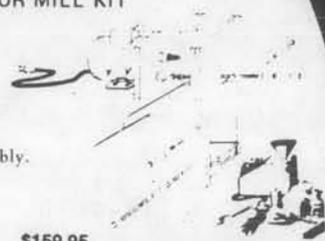
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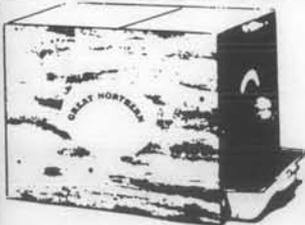
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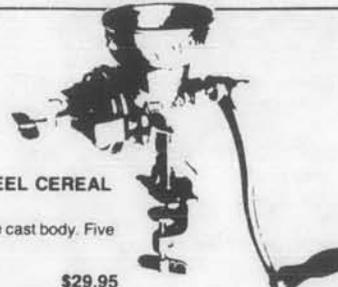
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suppressed teachings of Christ (including such teachings as pre-existence, free agency, and polytheism as understood by the Mormons) have recently been discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt. The *Gospel of Thomas* contains 114 "sayings" (*Logia*) of Christ. About 80% of them were already known and contained in canonical sources. But 20% are heretofore unknown; they include the aforementioned "Mormon *logia*". If the latter come—as *Thomas* clearly shows—from the mouth of Christ as part of His original teachings, why were they suppressed from the New Testament? They were suppressed by the growing "creed of Christ crucified," extolling—precisely as does Barrett—the inordinate efficacy of the person and Passion of Christ.

"The basic pattern of the genre of gospel which determined the canonical gospels [Matthew, Mark, Luke, John] has already been discussed. A quite remarkable feature in the evolution of this genre is its power to digest gospel literature and traditions of a different type and christological orientation, and to make these subservient [i.e. suppress them] to its own creed of Jesus' death and

resurrection. It was, indeed, this orthodox creed and its further development which provided the basic criterion for the growth of the canonical gospel.

At the same time, this expansion of the creed and of the gospel reflects at every stage the explicit or implicit controversy with different christological options. These different options are suggested by Christian factions which adhere to the 'other gospels,' or simply by the challenge to incorporate such other gospels into the established frame of the canonical gospel."

H. Koester, "One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels," *Trajectories Through Early Christianity* (Fortress Press, Phila., 1971), pp. 198-199.

The plan of salvation "creed" (pre-existence, free will, Final Judgment) of Christ's *teachings*, restored by the *Gospel of Thomas*, is a "creed" of equal validity and more primitive origin than the "creed of Christ crucified" reflected in the canonical gospels.

"These gospels of the church have become the true criterion of faith, because they are understood as the legitimate expressions of the creed, to which they correspond in form and structure—not, however, because they are found to record the works and words of Jesus accurately. The honor of having continued and developed the tradition about Jesus' original works and words must go to the more primitive gospel sources and to the apocryphal gospels. The continuation of Jesus' teaching is present in the gospels which

preserve and expand his sayings (Q and *Thomas*).

Ibid., p. 203.

The suppression of the original words and teachings of Jesus by the growing creed of Christ crucified (Passion/resurrection) very probably distorted primitive Christianity away from the *ideas* taught by Jesus and toward the *role* and person of Jesus therein. Thereby the plan of salvation (as Mormons understand it, wherein salvation is primarily the reward for individual moral merit) was changed from an emphasis upon individual responsibility toward exaltation of the person, Passion, and grace of Christ as the sole means of salvation.

Prof. Bassett well perpetuates the erroneous emphasis on Christ's person.

The "anchor" is simply not Christ, although Christ is pilot of the vessel which ferried the plan of salvation to this planet. Evangelical orthodox Christianity in its present apostate form is similar to Bassett's philosophy of Christ-praising. One who assumes Christ-praising to be man's fundamental purpose in mortal life misses many of the real purposes of mortality.

Gerry Ensley
Los Alamitos, California

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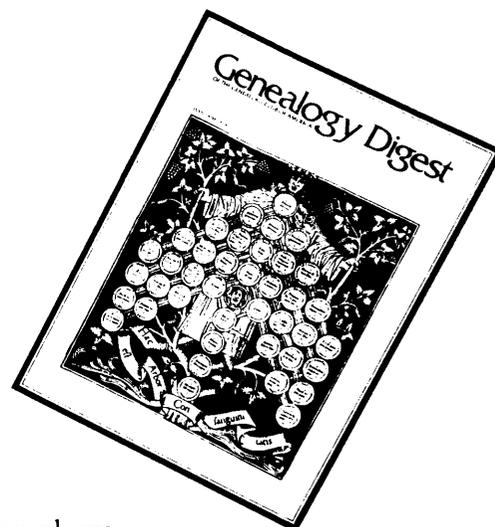
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Update

Mormons and ERA in the Media

In an article for the Knight-Ridder newspapers, Vera Glaser claims that the Mormon Church is facing a "historic rift" over the Equal Rights Amendment and freedom of speech. The article which was carried in early January was not published by any Utah newspapers.

According to the article, "Interviews with dozens of excommunicants, members attempting to withdraw and members in good standing reveal that the church, through its lay clergy in the wards, or neighborhood churches, had been quietly excommunicating ERA advocates for months before the Johnson case drew national attention." A perusal of the 5000 letters, telegrams, and financial contributions sent to Sonia Johnson turned up about 200 with enclosed copies of letters to President Kimball requesting excommunication or withdrawal, according to Glaser. Mrs. Johnson also reported a flood of requests for membership in Mormons for ERA, which now has about 1000 members and, according to Mrs. Johnson, many "closet" supporters.

The article quoted a number of other people, both in and out of the Church, about their reactions to the present controversy. Some examples of these comments follow.

A 47-year-old educator: "I paid my tithes. I never made a secret of my support for ERA. I was removed from the Church positions in which I worked with young women. I refused to come before the Bishop's court. They excommunicated me anyway."

Marilee Latta, President of the Utah Equal Rights Coalition and a Mormon in good standing: "Anyone who says there are not pressures on ERA supporters is not speaking the truth. . . . The pressures are tremendous. . . . ERA supporters are ostracized by other ward members. They are badgered by employers who happen to be Mormon." Despite the atmosphere of fear, according to Latta, organizations in her coalition, without exception, have experienced a surge of new members and financial support since the Johnson excommunication.

A faculty wife at BYU and supporter of

the ERA who refused to be interviewed: "It would cost my husband his job."

A Mormon member of the media: "We have to read out-of-state clippings. . . . The Deseret News and Provo papers published only anti-Sonia letters."

Joyce Slechta, an ERA supporter in Mission Viejo, California: "A year ago I became co-founder of the women's center in San Juan Capistrano. I conducted rap sessions. I was called to the Bishop's office and asked about my connection with the center and was I associating with lesbians. I am married, have five children, and will be a grandmother in March, so my choice of lifestyle is clear. I was totally intimidated and frightened. I believe in Mormonism. I don't want to be excommunicated. . . . I could belong to Mormons for ERA, but if I did anything too actively to promote it I would be reprimanded. At the same time they kept saying you can freely do what you want."

Dr. Reba Keele at BYU: "I have seen women in this valley with PhDs who have been deans, who have suffered discrimination because they are women and have been fighting for women's rights all their lives. I have seen them go absolutely schizophrenic when the prophet's statement came out and suddenly become the fiercest fighters against ERA."

J.D. Williams, professor of political science at the University of Utah: He sees the Church in "increasing jeopardy" of losing its tax-exempt status because, in his view, it is violating the separation of church and state as mandated in the U.S. Constitution. "One of the toughest things for me as a Mormon is to see the regularity with which they (church authorities) are involved in politics. . . . They are almost always on the wrong side. They just fall on their face in politics." The Johnson trial was a "source of enormous heartbreak" to him. "I don't believe in heresy trials. I have a feeling that when organizations become afraid of criticism, they are in real difficulty. . . . When the Church gets involved in the

unrestrained way it has engaging in subterranean techniques, channeling contributions through a front organization to defeat the ERA, they are acting more and more like a political body."

Anti-LDS Clause in Idaho Constitution

The Idaho House of Representatives has unanimously endorsed a proposed constitutional amendment that would eliminate language intended to discriminate against Mormons.

The constitution, drafted in the last century, prohibits persons "living in what is known as patriarchal, plural, or celestial marriage" from voting or holding civil office. The language has long been ignored. The state's governor and many members of the legislature are Mormons.

The constitutional amendment now goes to the Senate for consideration. If both houses approve the proposal by a two-thirds vote, it will be placed on the next general election ballot.

Past efforts to delete the section have been unsuccessful.

Latter-day Saints and Cancer

A University of California researcher has confirmed that Mormons contract cancer less often than other Americans.

Dr. James E. Enstrom, cancer epidemiology researcher for the School of Public Health at UCLA, published the results of a recent study in an American Cancer Society journal.

His study was specifically with groups that have previously been identified as low-risk for cancer. Members of the LDS and Seventh-Day Adventist churches were included in the study. Both churches promote abstinence from cigarette smoking and support comparatively healthy lifestyles.

Mormons in Utah have a cancer death rate about 75 percent of the American total, his study showed. Statistics derived from 360,000 LDS people in California from 1968 to 1975 show a cancer mortality ratio of 66 percent for males and 81 percent for females.

The most striking findings of his study, Enstrom said, were among the males who hold the offices of High Priest and Seventy. These men, likely to be among the most active in the Church, have a mortality rate only 50 percent of the U.S. average.

In this group, the life expectancy is eight years longer than among peers in the United States at large, Enstrom's study reported. (*Deseret News*, 25 January, 1980.)

Over one hundred and fifty years have elapsed since the prophet Joseph Smith completed his translation of the Book of Mormon, and during this period numerous hypotheses have been forwarded in an attempt to explain how he did it. That such speculations have been possible may be at least partially attributable to the fact that the two persons most directly involved in the translation of that scripture, the prophet and Oliver Cowdery, said very little about their methodology. At first the prophet refused to even discuss it. At a conference in 1831 when his brother Hyrum suggested that he recount "the coming forth of the Book of Mormon" to the elders, it was reported that Joseph Smith declared "that it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and also said that it was not expedient for him to relate these things."¹ Later in a letter to a Mr. Wentworth the prophet simply commented: "Through the medium of the Urim and Thummin I translated the record by the gift and power of God."² Oliver Cowdery is reported to have made almost exactly the same statement.³

But most current assumptions about the actual pro-

cess of translation are based on second-hand statements made from memory some fifty years *after* the Book of Mormon was printed. A summary of the recollections of 88-year old Martin Harris asserts that

by aid of the seer stone, sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, "Written," and if correctly written, that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraved on the plates, precisely in the language then used.⁴

David Whitmer, also very late in his life (about 80 years old), claimed that the prophet used the seer stone as a translation aid (which had to be placed in a hat to exclude external light) so that

in the darkness the Spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to



THE BOOK OF MORMON

-A LITERAL TRANSLATION?

Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God and not by any power of man.⁵

In addition, Emma Smith Bidamon's statement, made in 1879 when she was 78 years old, has been adduced to describe the manner in which her late husband translated the Book of Mormon:

I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close to him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in.⁶

Because the above accounts are so far removed from the event, they stand a good chance of not accurately reflecting what actually transpired. The fact that to a large extent they do not is indicated by the following considerations.

If the prophet had translated the Book of Mormon in the manner indicated by Martin Harris and David Whitmer, the resultant translation would have been a mere mechanical recitation of divine words which appeared in the seer stone (or the urim and thummim). Elder B. H. Roberts, one of the most knowledgeable scholars of Mormon history, wrote rather extensively about this problem, vigorously objecting to the above conclusion, rightfully noting that the grammatical errors which peppered the text would then be due to "a divine instrumentality" which he concluded would be "assigning such errors to God." That was not only "unthinkable," but "blasphemous." He continued:

Also, if it be concluded that the language of the Book of Mormon, word-for-word, and letter-for-letter, was given to the prophet by direct inspiration of God, acting upon his mind, then again God is made responsible for the language errors in the Book of Mormon—a thing unthinkable.⁷

Additional problems which he discerned in the so-called "accurate" or word-for-word translation hypothesis were the

impossibility of such a thing as a word-for-word bringing over from one language into another. Such a procedure could only result in producing an unintelligible jargon—a fact well known by those who are at all acquainted with translation.

He next pointed out that the language of the Book of Mormon translation reflected the English of New England in the early 1800s but that it did not show any effect from the "idiom of an ancient language"; finally, he observed that the type of grammatical errors found in the Book of Mormon are the very ones which would be expected from someone who was "unlearned in the English language."⁸

If Joseph Smith had mechanically read a divinely-inspired English text from either the urim and thummim or the seer stone, then such errors would have originated with God. Further, if every word of the original text were inviolate, then how could the prophet even have dared to revise it twice (in 1837⁹ and 1840¹⁰) and commence a third revision (beginning in 1841¹¹) which he was unable to complete before he was murdered? Clearly, it was the message, not every word of the text, which Joseph Smith considered to be divine. Nor have later editors of the text thought that it was word-for-word from God, because as of today there have been nearly 4,000 changes made in it.¹² Those who claim every word of the text of the Book of Mormon is of divine origin thus obligate themselves to the assertion that the original manuscript is the only text which is acknowledged by God, because it would be the most "accurate,"—every grammatical error or unintelligible idea must remain so, because that is how God intended it to be. Not only that, Joseph Smith would have been a fallen prophet, having tampered with a divine document.

That is in fact just what David Whitmer claimed. He felt that the seer stone was the only means through which the prophet received revelations from the Lord,¹³ and that when the latter gave it to Oliver Cowdery in the spring of 1830, he no longer had the capability to obtain divine revelations.¹⁴ Whitmer was convinced that the



Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society

Emma Smith Bidamon was 79 years old when she described how her late husband translated from the plates.

Then God is made responsible for the language errors in the Book of Mormon—a thing unthinkable.

prophet's revisions of the revelations which were received from the Lord through the medium of the seer stone (he did not consider those received without it to be divine) proved that Joseph was not a prophet.¹⁵ But apparently he was unaware that the Book of Mormon had already been revised in 1837—which would have been quite understandable, because the wording in the preface of that edition only refers to corrections of typographical errors, even though in fact numerous textual revisions were made¹⁶—and by the time of the 1840 revision he had already left the Church.¹⁷ Therefore, he held to the belief that the Book of Mormon was true, because it was an “accurate” text which originated with God, for “God gave to Brother Joseph the gift to see the sentences in English, when he looked into the hat in which was placed the stone.”¹⁸ Had he realized that the Book of Mormon, as well as the Doctrine and Covenants, had been revised by Joseph Smith, he certainly would have found another proof that Joseph was not a prophet.

In summary, David Whitmer's declaration and the almost identical one produced by Martin Harris imply that absolutely no textual changes were possible in the Book of Mormon, for such revisions would reflect the word of man, not inspiration from God. In that way, their statements actually constitute a condemnation of the divine prophetic calling of Joseph Smith, who felt perfectly free to revise revelations and scriptures alike.



Courtesy Utah State Historical Society

Martin Harris' recollections of the translation process were written when he was 88 years old.

At this point it is germane to discuss what the term “translate” actually meant to Joseph Smith for it is true that he used the term in a sense not commonly understood. Possibly the best evidence of that comes from his description of facsimile number two of the Book of Abraham in which the prophet expressly avoided any of the portions which contained written text, confining his descriptions to the vignettes. He called the interpretations a “translation.”¹⁹ In fact, evidence from elsewhere suggests that the prophet never actually required a physical text from which to translate. For example, he “translated” a record which was written “on parchment” and hidden away by the ancient apostle John that he saw only through the medium of the urim and thummim.²⁰ His revision of the Bible was consistently termed “translations” even though he “did not at any time use any biblical manuscripts,” with the result that it should therefore “be more appropriately interpreted to mean ‘revision.’”²¹ Furthermore, the recent evidence of the Joseph Smith papyri has demonstrated that there is no

evidence that Joseph Smith knew Egyptian, in fact, [there is] evidence that he did not, and when we read descriptions of his translating which came as inspiration rather than efforts to understand a foreign language, we are hard pressed to see the connection between the papyri and the Book of Abraham.²²

Thus, Emma's declaration that her husband often did not even use the gold plates while he translated the Book of Mormon does not seem to be as fantastic as one at first may think, because it closely fits the prophet's methodology elsewhere. Indeed unlike the accounts of Whitmer and Harris, the earliest known contemporary description of the Church (18 June 1830) implies that

it was actually the impressions of the Holy Ghost to Joseph Smith which provided the translation. Thus, the English translation with all its awkwardness and grammatical chaos, was according to contemporary reports, a product of spiritual impressions to Joseph Smith rather than an automatic appearance of the English words.²³

That conclusion very well matches the Lord's description of the translation process which is found in Doctrine and Covenants 9. Once again it must be emphasized that Joseph Smith's translation processes, in the words of one scholar, “have limited relationships to manuscripts and dictionary meanings. They have much to do with basic ideas and doctrinal relevance to a modern world.”²⁴

Indeed, that is what the prophet himself declared in 1834 about revelations which he received: “We did not think so much of the orthography [spelling] and manner, as we did the subject matter . . .”²⁵ Thus, it has been concluded that the predominant

characteristic of the Prophet's literary experience was his willingness to overlook proper form in an effort to

Joseph Smith felt perfectly free to revise revelations and scriptures alike.

communicate main themes. Numerous of his publications, starting with the Book of Mormon, reveal an *urgency to disseminate important ideas, even before obvious grammar and spelling errors had been corrected*, a characteristic that encumbered many of his writings with insignificant distractions and necessitated almost immediate revision.²⁶

It is understandable, therefore, that to a large extent the Book of Mormon reflects the literary language of Joseph Smith and that it does not closely reflect Egyptian and/or Hebrew. It has been instructive to compare the Book of Mormon with ancient Egyptian and Hebrew texts in an effort to ascertain if their syntax and style match the very distinctive syntax and style of the Book of Mormon: incomplete sentences, an abnormally frequent use of circumstantial gerund phrases, numerous digressions which often develop into a chain of digressions before returning to the main text, and an extensive use of adverbs and conjunctions which frequently incorrectly function to draw relationships where none are possible according to context.

Ancient Egyptian or Semitic texts known to this writer do not display those characteristics. Instead, they tend to be "tightly" structured and concise (a necessary prerequisite for a period of time in which writing materials were scarce and very expensive). Incomplete sentences are not characteristic (except in lacunae) nor is a high frequency of circumstantials. Numerous digressions of the type in the Book of Mormon do not occur, and the adverbs and conjunctives are used with a specific syntactic pattern intended. On the other hand, the salient characteristics of the syntax and style of the Book of Mormon also tend to be the prominent features of the other literary efforts of the prophet—viz., the 1832 history which he wrote and dictated,²⁷ the Doctrine and Covenants,²⁸ and the Pearl of Great Price. That fact tends to illustrate that the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and the 1832 manuscript history of the Church were all filtered through the same mind.

Then how does one account for the biblical archaisms in the text? B. H. Roberts has maintained that the prophet Joseph Smith dictated the Book of Mormon in his own language

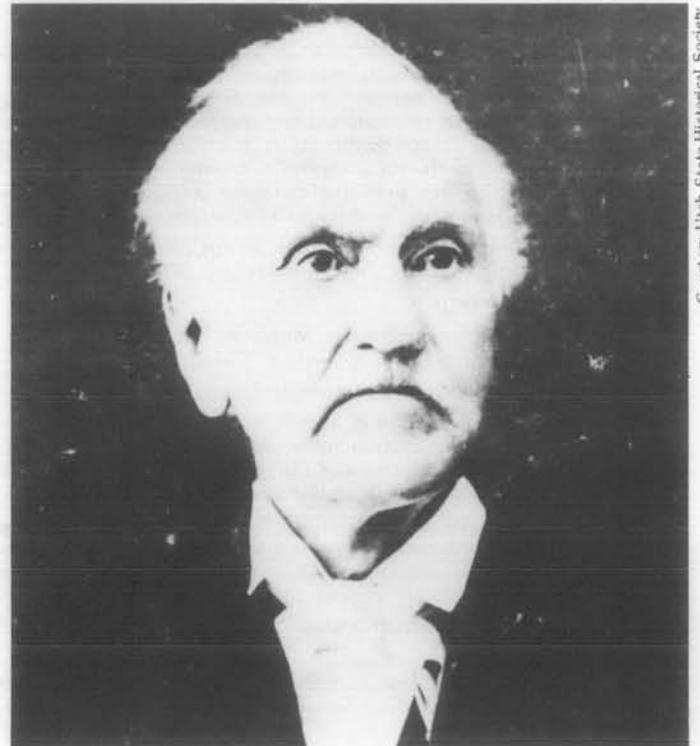
modified, of course, by the application of that phraseology to facts and ideas in the Nephite Scriptures he was translating—ideas new to him in many respects, and above the ordinary level of the Prophet's thinking; and also the phraseology was superior to that he ordinarily used, because of the inspiration of God that was upon him.

This view of the translation of the Nephite record accounts for the fact that the Book of Mormon, though a translation of an ancient record, is, nevertheless, given in English idiom of the period and locality in which the prophet lived; and in the faulty English, moreover, both as to composition,

phraseology, and grammar, of a person of Joseph Smith's limited education; and also accounts for the sameness of phraseology and literary style which runs through the whole volume.²⁹

Certainly one of the best ways to account for the hundreds of New Testament phrases which occur in the Old Testament portions of the Book of Mormon³⁰ lies in a realization of the prophet's intimate familiarity with biblical terminology from his early home environment.³¹ Thus, when translating what to him was to be regarded as sacred scripture, it would only be natural to use the scriptural language with which he would be most familiar—King James English—and in that way the text which he produced would reflect much the same Semitic base as would the King James Bible. Otherwise it must be assumed that the Nephites somehow were privy to the exact same figures of speech that would not develop in the Old World until New Testament times.³²

What *did* the prophet mean then when he declared that the title page of the Book of Mormon was literally translated from the original? Did he mean that it was a word-for-word, or formal transmission? Or (in accordance with virtually all of his other translation work) did he mean that it was a literal rendering of the "subject matter" which he perceived? The evidence is squarely behind the latter. Joseph Smith's major concern was not formal (word-for-word) accuracy but rather the intelligibility of the message.



Courtesy Utah State Historical Society

When about 80 years old, David Whitmer described how Joseph had used a seerstone as a translation aid.

We did not think so much of the orthography and manner,
as we did the subject matter.

Notes

1. *History of the Church* 1:220 note.
2. *History of the Church* 4:537.
3. *Deseret News*, 13 April 1859. For additional statements attributed to the prophet and Oliver Cowdery, cf. *Ensign* (September 1977) 79ff.
4. A quotation from the *Evening News*, 5 Sep. 1870 in an article by Edward Stevenson printed in the *Millennial Star*, 44 (1882): 86f.
5. David Whitmer, *An Address to all Believers in Christ* (Richmond, 1887), 11, quoted in B. H. Roberts, *Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, I, (Salt Lake City, 1907), 256. Richard L. Anderson has effectively demonstrated that David Whitmer's statements were based on his tendency to understand revelation as being the very word of God and thus not to be revised or changed in any way. (R. L. Anderson, "By the Gift and Power of God," *Ensign* (Sep. 1977), 84.
6. From a conversation with her son Joseph Smith III in an addendum to E. W. Tullidge's *Life of Joseph the Prophet* (Plano, 1880), p. 793.
7. B.H.Roberts, *Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, I. (Salt Lake City, 1907) p. 278f.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 277f.
9. Preface to the Second Edition of the Book of Mormon (Kirtland, 1837).
10. Title Page to the Third Edition of the Book of Mormon (Nauvoo, 1840).
11. *History of the Church* 4:494.
12. Even so, there still exist many errors and omissions which must be considered.
13. Even then, Whitmer believed that Joseph could have received a revelation from either man or devil through the seer stone, so that it was not an infallible source (David Whitmer, *An Address to all Believers in Christ* 31).
14. Whitmer, *Address* pp. 32,42 passim.
15. Whitmer, *Address* pp. 56ff.
16. That part of the preface reads: "Individuals acquainted with book printing, are aware of the numerous typographical errors which always occur in manuscript editions. It is only necessary to say, that the whole has been carefully re-examined and compared with the original manuscripts, by elder Joseph Smith, Jr. the translator of the book [sic] of Mormon, assisted by the present printer, brother O. Cowdery, who formerly wrote the greatest portion of the same, as dictated by brother Smith." (Second Edition of the Book of Mormon [Kirtland, 1837]).
17. Whitmer affirms that God told him "by his own voice" to leave the Church in June, 1838. (Whitmer, *Address* pp. 27f.)
18. Whitmer, *Address* p. 37.
19. "A Fac-simile from the Book of Abraham, No. 2," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 10 (15 March 1842): opposite p. 720.
20. Heading to Doctrine and Covenants 7.
21. R.C. Durham, *A History of Joseph Smith's Revision of the Bible* (Provo, unpublished dissertation submitted to Brigham Young University, 1965) p. 24. Cf. Matthews, *A Plainer Translation* (Provo, 1975), p. 234 for a contrasting view about "revision" vs. "translation."
22. Eric J. Olson, "An Approach of the Book of Abraham," a paper presented at the Symposium of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology, 25 Sep 1976 (unpub.) p. 12.
23. D. Michael Quinn, "The First Months of Mormonism: A Contemporary View by Rev. Diedrich Willers," *New York History* 54, vol. 3 (July 1973): 321.
24. R. L. Anderson, "Joseph Smith's Insights into the Olivet Prophecy," *Pearl of Great Price Symposium* (22 Nov 1975), pp. 50f. (Italics added.)
25. Dean C. Jessee, "The Reliability of Joseph Smith's History," *Journal of Mormon History*, 3 (1976): 28f.
26. *Ibid.* (Italics added.) Joseph Smith's major concern with the content—not the form—of the Book of Mormon (and other scriptural) messages was perpetuated by the prophet Brigham Young, who was also primarily concerned about "doctrinal relevance to a modern world" (see note 24 above):

Should the Lord Almighty send an angel to re-write the Bible, it would in many places be very different from what it now is. And I will even venture to say that if the Book of Mormon were now to be re-written, in many instances it would materially differ from the present translation. (JD 4:311. Italics added.)

Unfortunately some Latter-day Saints have naively assumed that such a view is "liberal" (i.e., unorthodox and wrong). Instead of thoroughly investigating the issue, they have chosen to believe David Whitmer's and Martin Harris's conflicting, 50-years-after-the-event memory accounts because the latter tend to support certain assumptions which they have made about language and translation. It is regrettable that such a position be taken, especially because of its implications: Joseph Smith and Brigham Young (as well as a host of authorities and scholars) are now flagrant "liberals!" Also, as noted in the text above, in this naive view Joseph Smith could be nothing but a fallen prophet, having altered a divinely-received text. If, however, one considers the evidence, he quickly becomes convinced that the prophet Joseph indeed concerned himself with "subject matter," not with formal translation. Consequently, the prophet could feel free to alter the text when it did not properly convey the "subject matter." And he did just that with the Book of Mormon on three separate occasions.
27. Cf. Dean C. Jessee, "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," *BYU Studies* (Spring 1969), pp. 278ff.; Dean C. Jessee, "The Reliability of Joseph Smith's History," *Journal of Mormon History* 3 (1976): 31; Paul R. Cheesman, *The Keystone of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973), 113ff. It is interesting to note that the practice of placing the heading before major sections in the Book of Mormon was also followed in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price.
28. An exception would have to be made in connection with those sections for which the prophet was not as primarily responsible.
29. Roberts, *Defense of the Faith*, p. 265.
30. H. Michael Marquardt, "The Use of the Bible in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 2, no. 2 (1978): 95-136.
31. Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1977), pp. 45, 47.
32. Unfortunately the most critical studies on the Book of Mormon text have emphasized possible "Hebraisms," while there has been a dearth of research which adequately treats the influence of the King James Version on the prophet's literary language; it is suggested that this alternative be more thoroughly explored because if its promising nature. An excellent foundation has already been laid by John C. Alleman, "Problems in Translating the Language of Joseph Smith," *Conference on the Language of the Mormons* (Provo: Brigham Young University Language Research Center, 1973), pp. 22ff. Perhaps it is the "facts and ideas in the Nephite Scriptures" that form the basis for the statements of translators of the Book of Mormon into Arabic and Modern Hebrew that the text seems to flow so naturally into those languages.
33. It is true that formal translation accurately reflects the syntax and style of the original text, but usually at the expense of the intelligibility of the message, while a dynamic translation tends to alter the syntax and style of the original—just as Joseph Smith did—while the message is clear in the target language. Translators must always bear in mind that it is the *message* of the Gospel which is to be shared—not its grammar and syntax.

EDWARD H. ASHMENT received his BA from BYU in history and is a PhD candidate in Egyptology at the University of Chicago.

What did the prophet mean when he declared that the Book of Mormon was literally translated from the original?

Under each day ran a silent chill, just beneath the surface.
He should have seen it before.

Editors' Note

This story received an Honorable Mention in the Sunstone Fiction Contest.

I

Sixteen hours. As he hung up the phone Richard tried to say "Oh God" but his mouth merely formed the words. Yet even for this soundless blasphemy he was ashamed.

He walked dazedly down to his room. Vic was in that water sixteen hours. He had only been dead two hours when they found the boat. A shiver started at the back of Richard's jaw, spread over his temples and across his forehead. For several seconds he thought he would be sick.

Until the phone call it had been one o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon, with an hour before he had to report to the warehouse. A normal, stuffy August day that would make unloading the railroad car a sweaty operation. For most people it was still a normal Wednesday; the disc jockey on the radio was saying, "We're over the hump; it's downhill to the weekend."

But it hadn't been normal. It never was normal, any more than yesterday or Monday. Under each day ran a silent chill, just beneath the surface. He should have seen it before. Some people must have seen.

Richard turned off the radio. If dawn had only come two hours earlier...but it had not. And there wasn't any such thing as normal.

The fact was slipping away from him, so he slammed it down in the front of his mind: Vic was dead. How had Vic looked when they pulled him out of the water? Richard thought he could guess. They must have found him with his head limp, torso hanging beneath the surface, arms outstretched. His eyes must have stared at them with the haggard, vacant gaze of the drowned.

Richard jumped up and ran into the skinny yellow bathroom. Afterwards he rinsed his mouth, came back, and sat heavily on the cot. The room looked grey and smaller than it was. Vic had said he didn't understand why Richard took a room like this; nobody should live like this. Vic had borrowed money and bought a house. He rented out the upstairs and basement, and with the rents made his house and tuition payments, living on a

loan. You have to think big, he said, the implication guilelessly intended.

Vic's father was vice-president of a bank. Not that Vic flaunted it. He worked hard and made good grades, and Richard liked him in spite of his implications. There was a basement room in the house available to Richard any time at half-rent plus yard work.

But not any more. Richard could not assimilate this truth. He tried to picture Vic's round, ebullient presence weighted down with defeat. This, too, was impossible. He could picture Vic the moment he realized the girl was in trouble and dove in for her. He could imagine the girl getting to the boat and the other couple trying to steady the craft. But then, the unforeseen: not one of those squalls for which the lake was infamous but a mere wind, a quick little wind that never died down. They threw out the anchor and paddled with their wrists, but the boat drifted further, leaving Vic behind. The friend dove once and nearly drowned as well. Richard could see Vic's steadiness when Vic realized he could no longer hear their voices.

Probably Vic never knew he was going to drown. Probably he hadn't drowned. Even without the jacket and the ski he could have gone into deadman's float. He would have held it indefinitely—unless a current had taken him and the jacket under. But a current didn't. Because after fifteen and a half hours he was still alive. He didn't drown. He died of exhaustion.

Richard stood and shook his head like a wet dog. He hadn't eaten the previous evening because it took effort to cook potatoes and he had no money for a can of spaghetti. He took the peeler from the single kitchenette drawer and scooped several slices of potato. This disgusted him; he threw potato and peeler into the sink and went back to his cot.

Vic could have made it. He knew the technique. He was stubby and tough and could have lasted half the night on technique alone. He might have found a drifting log when his life jacket became soaked—they hadn't recovered the life jacket. He wouldn't have fought. He'd have been sly in the same way he put the Sunday School manual away and composed his own lessons. He had grit. He had medical school ahead and a girl he ad-

Rebecca Cornwall

The Drowning



Fear would have crept into him against his will, cool, relentless
as the lowering of his body temperature.

mired. He would have aimed for shore and swam and rested, swimming only to the point of diminishing endurance. His endurance would have been twice as long as Richard's.

Richard thought of the carload. He ought to call the warehouse; they still had time to get someone from Manpower. But he needed the money—he'd go down himself.

What did Vic do when, after an hour, the cursed wind was still against him and he was no closer to shore? Fear would not have grabbed Vic as it might somebody else. It would have crept into him against his will, cool, relentless as the lowering of his body temperature. How would his face have looked, four hours into the night out on that lake?

It was impossible. Richard couldn't picture Vic's face.

II

Richard looked at the clock through the bend of his arm. They needed him on the dock in twenty minutes. He took the stairs three at a time, running around the corner of the house and up into the foyer where the phone table stood. He waited on the last digit to be sure of his voice.

"D & R Warehouse."

"This is Richard. Listen, I..." His voice broke.

Florence's voice was instantly alarmed. "Is something wrong?"

"My—friend drowned."

"The student? We heard it on the news. I'll tell D.R. you can't get down. He'll understand."

"Thanks." Richard replaced the telephone, returned deliberately to his room, and lay stomach against the cot.

III

When he awoke there was a pallor over the room. He remembered, laid back the blanket, swung his legs slowly over the edge of the cot. He looked at the clock. Could it have been only two hours since he'd learned? Stiffly he donned and tied his tennis shoes. His shoulders ached.

He locked the door; med books were expensive. From the landing he heard dishes rattling through the window of the Houstons' apartment. He tapped on their door.

"Hello, Rich—" Bob stopped on seeing his face.

"Could I borrow a dollar?" Richard asked.

"Hey, sure, I owe you a buck. If we got change. Sally, you got a dollar?"

Sally came out of the kitchen. She was brown, plain, and pregnant. "I think so. Hi, Richard," she said with careful nonchalance. She disappeared into the short hall and came back with her purse and a handful of coins.

"Thanks."

"Sure," Bob said. "Sorry we hadn't gotten back to you. Just got paid yesterday."

"It's okay. See you later."

"Sure." Bob followed him onto the landing. "Say, fella, you all right?"

"Yeah." Richard paused on the bottom step, turning toward him. "Vic Moyer drowned."

Bob's lower lip fell an inch beyond its usual droop. "Vic—Moyer?"

"This morning in Utah Lake."

"Good G—"

"He got separated from the boat. When they got to him at daylight he was barely dead."

Bob stared in stupid astonishment. Richard left him on the landing. He walked briskly toward the quickie market, feeling a grim pleasure at Bob's shock. Halfway down the block he kicked a beer can across the street.

He looked for a cheap brand of soup. Between cans he saw Vic's friends in the boat, calling repeatedly to keep contact in the dusk. In the waves Vic conserved energy while they all searched the boat, searched the water, for a way to get to him, but nothing came to them. They prayed for the wind to die down and it blew steadily.

The blonde cashier smiled. Her smile pierced Richard; the skin about his face and down his back turned shivery and he longed for someone to touch him the way his grandmother used to stroke the back of his neck when he was a boy getting sleepy in Sacramento Meeting. He hung his head, following the cashier's movements with his eyes as she bagged his soup and newspaper. Then he hurried out.

Swiftly he walked not towards his room but east toward the administration building. Walking helped, dissipating some of the mass in his chest. Three-twenty classes had just let out and the walks were fairly crowded. He kept his eyes lowered. In the basement of the administration building he bent over a marble drinking fountain. He could feel four hallways converging on him.

With his two remaining quarters he popped a sandwich from the vending machine, unwrapping and gulping it down with several swallows of water. Then he strode out of the building and continued east, across a massive, half-deserted parking lot. At last, at its furthest fringe, there were no more people.

He became aware that it was damnably hot. His levis chafed at the crotch. He swatted at the perspiration along his forehead. What was the matter with the friends? They should have tried harder—they could have gotten in the water and kicked the boat to him! They should have taken off their clothes and made a lifeline! Why had the sheriff taken so long to search?—did they think Vic would be dead? They should have phoned someone who knew! They should have phoned Richard!

A fraternity stud passed by in a yellow Porsche. Richard set off running. In a minute he was across the bend and halfway up the road. Where another road cut across and down into Federal Heights he stopped running and took a dozen deep breaths. He had been along this road, but coming the other way, many times. He took it periodically to break the monotony of the route through the campus. Occasionally he would ride through Federal Heights on his bicycle and stare at the big sedate homes and mildly envy the people who lived in them. Today the houses looked seedy.

Near the country clubhouse he started jogging,

Where was mercy to toy with a person like that?

slower this time to save breath. He wanted to make it to the hills before slowing down. He needed to get into the mountains.

Finally he was on a real slope. He would go to the lime kilns; not a soul would be there. Walking was easier when he reached the road to the university letter. The road ended twenty yards short, but he climbed to the top of the large white "U," sitting knees bent, the paper bag between his legs, his gym shoes braced against the concrete. Below, the city spread in orderly, tree-muted plots like the sea of an aerial photograph. Holy Cross Hospital was an island of red tile and white plaster.

Closer to the hills was the Federal Heights chapel. Once he had taken a girl to a fireside there. She hadn't been full of giggles and arm-hanging—why hadn't he called her again? She must be married by now. She had talked some, looking at him with eyes that estimated.

Heat bounced off the whitewash of the letter and hit him in the face. Over the Great Salt Lake a layer of air wallowed in the heat. He looked behind him and up to where the rise met blue and dropped into nothing. It made him wince.

Richard slid to the side of the letter and onto earth, shuffling down the slope to where it was not so steep and he could walk north again. Clusters of goldenrod seemed to shrivel in the sun.

From a small hollow the kiln trail started up the canyon. This wasn't a canyon really, not even a gulch, but a place between two hills. No respectable trees, but scrub oak whose leaves were half-eaten in ragged fancy patterns by some infestation. He'd have to walk fast. It was nearly five o'clock and he would have to be out by dusk. For now he felt the urgency to get as far into the canyon as possible.

When once he looked over his shoulder, the sun was already lower.

By the time he reached a junction his pace had slowed. One path continued up the gully, another wound to his right. He turned right toward the kilns, which he expected to find half-buried in the hillside, abandoned, and deteriorating. Two hundred feet away, in sight of the brick cylinders, he heard voices. Two men, one in a hard hat, talked and pointed.

Richard swung and marched back to the junction. On the way he stumbled on a pebble which, bending wearily, he snatched up and threw at the mountain, wrenching his arm.

Higher up the trail, far out of sight of the kilns, he sprawled in a patch of grass, heaving for breath. From here the entrance to the gully was obscured. Only the town of Magna was visible, halfway up the Oquirrh range which lined the west valley. The hurt gradually moved from chest to head. He slapped at a longfly buzzing his ear; it flew off into a bush.

He could not get his breath, and he thought of Vic. For Vic the night was interminable, the waves bellowing at him again and again. Vic had had ten hours of that. Richard's eyes ached from the unfairness of it. He made a long, careful attempt to get air.

Then it came. Against Richard's will, 'though it had hovered nearby all the way up the trail. Bringing anger and yet not anger but something deeper and far more frightening:

WHY? WHY IN HOLY HEAVEN SLAP A GUY ABOUT IN THE WATER LIKE THAT, 'TIL HE WAS BLUE IN THE GROIN AND NUMBED OUT OF HIS MIND? WHERE WAS MERCY TO TOY WITH A PERSON LIKE THAT?

Richard muttered these last words, and they startled him. His hair was wet, and he was embarrassed but also defiant. It hadn't been hovering just this afternoon but much longer. For a long, long time he had lived with it stashed away in a closet, permitting it out in careful moments which had become fewer as he became more and more careful. Now he was tired of it. It was choking him and he was weary to death of it.

WHY? WHY WOULD GOD DESERT HIS FRIEND, RICHARD'S FRIEND?

And why would He abandon Richard? For Richard had been floundering. Not just today but many days. On the outside he had a regulated life, a dedicated prim life, while inside he fought to keep the turbulence in check. For what purpose? It hurt to think how hard he tried and how futile it was. WHAT KIND OF LIFE WAS THIS, TO BE STRUGGLING ALL THE TIME JUST TO KEEP FROM GOING UNDER?

This was foolishness. He struggled in his mind. There was never anything real.

But it was real. He knew it, and God knew it. As far back as he could remember there had been the danger, only he couldn't have defined it if his life depended on it. He saw the tension in his mother's shoulders and the sullenness on his father's face. Now, as the faintest of breezes came up the grass, he felt suddenly close and cold. A dryness entered his throat, notch by notch, warning. It was an old feeling, so ancient it hugged him, and behind it, as the breeze died, there crept into his stomach a sensation of utter bleakness.

He took a deliberate breath. In his mind he ripped open his shirt, thrust his face skyward, and yelled. He did not really do it. Instead he sat up, unclenched his fists, and stared at them. For several minutes he sat, legs Indian-crossed, clenching and unclenching his fists. Then he wrapped his arms across his chest, squeezing



Allowed to thrash about in that water, desperate, angry,
alive—undenied, uninterrupted, unabridged.

his shoulders, and began to rock back and forth, moaning quietly, "Oh God. Oh God, why?"

IV

It was six hours since he'd heard. The sun was nearly to the horizon. He thought of a night he'd spent working in the emergency room, a test they gave fledgling med students to scare off the weak-blooded. A girl had been in a wreck. They had tried valiantly, but she died on the way. Richard had watched as the interns worked over her body. Her face was flawless, with not a single external bruise. Her boyfriend had been brought in with her. During the night his leg was removed, but he lived. Maimed.

"Oh, but there is a purpose to everything," murmured somebody in his mind, sweetly, a woman in one of those done-up brunette hairdos. "Each of us has a time." But her faith was pointed, chiding, and it made him defensive, silly as it was, since the lady was only a fantasy.

She denied him something. Something precious and only his, not describable but something he could taste. He could see Vic flailing in the water—flailing now, not cold-headed. For another maybe four hours allowed to thrash about in that water, desperate, angry, alive—undenied, uninterrupted, unabridged. It was not so horrible a death.

Richard was weeping now. His weeping became torrential. He had to stop rocking so that he could weep in large, heaving sobs.

V

The sun was touching the Great Salt Lake when he started down the canyon at eight-thirty, his buttocks sore from the rocking and sitting. Fortunately it would be dark by the time he reached civilization, for his eyes were swollen.

He picked his way carefully down the path. He ached under the ribs. Breathing came consciously.

Gone was the anger. There was a wryness left. The friends had done right. Undoubtedly they had tried—he would ask. The sheriff had done right. Richard could picture their faces as vividly as if he'd been present when the coroner announced Vic had been dead only a while. It was a fluke. Everything about it, as if somebody had arranged it. Vic must have had a ferocious will to survive.

In his room the clock read ten. Richard emptied the can of soup into his lone pan and set it on the burner. He wished for some juice or soda. Maybe he'd ask Sally—no. There were ice cubes in the little box freezer.

He ate languidly. It was not easy to devour canned soup. He had eaten canned soup three dinners a week for two and a half years. A great repugnance filled him: for the soup, for this scroungy gray room with its pink, slat-doored kitchenette, for the stingy yellow bathroom with paint peeling around the tub. He looked over to his cot and dresser in the corner. Never before had he cared that the walls were bare. Never had he bothered to put anything on them except the calendar by his desk. The calendar was a Rhode's Pharmaceutical glossy, very nice classical reproductions. No one could say he was without a finer sense.

Jokes did not remove the repugnance for this room, for two and a half years of getting up in it, brushing his teeth in the yellow bathroom, gobbling peanut-buttered bread in the pink-slatted kitchenette, going to classes, going to the warehouse, coming back here and studying until two or three or four a.m. Often he studied at the library. Sometimes he went to Mutual. Occasionally, very occasionally, he went on a date, but it had to be a Church party with ice cream afterwards; he simply had no money. Sunday he went to Priesthood Meeting and then came here and studied until Sacrament Meeting; after that he came again and studied late unless there was a fireside with a promising speaker. He studied with a passion which now seemed utterly meaningless.

He stripped to his underclothes and crawled onto the cot. He thought of Vic lying not in the oak post-bed bought at an auction, but in the mortuary where they were dressing him to make it easier for the survivors. But Vic's mother had already seen him. She'd have gone to the coroner's as soon as possible, identified the body, driven back to the Cottonwood holding her husband's hand, gone into her bedroom and cried privately. She would, at the viewing, take Richard's hand into her gloved one and look inquiringly into his eyes; she would pat his hand and smile a gentle, dignified smile, and he would walk toward the coffin, comforted.

Twice in the night he awoke. Once from a dream but, awake, he could not recall it. There was the oppression of the clock ticking. He sat up to orient himself, then lay back. With his eyes closed, air seemed to press upon him in currents until he could feel himself floating ceiling-high above the bed. Finally he arose, took a swig of water, returned to his cot and fell asleep.

At three o'clock he awoke, having dreamed it was raining. Outside water drops splintered on the wooden stairs and puddled in the cement bottom of the stairwell.

He lay in the dark listening to the splash of an occasional car. Light from the upstairs porch glistened on the raindrops outside his window. The glass was wet and shimmering.

He awoke finally at five a.m. It had been sixteen hours. The heaviness had subsided. He felt cleansed for now, but knew it would return. For a while it would return. He felt sorrow for the days and weeks ahead.

He looked at the bare gray wall above his bed. Today he would get a poster for that wall.

He arose and walked into the yellow bathroom and pushed the plug into the basin. In the mirror he saw a thin face with the black haggard shadow of a beard. He stared at the hazel eyes. The skin about them was slightly puffed, but they looked back at him, chastened. He looked steadily into them as a fullness entered his breast. His eyes grew wet. He stood at the mirror, tasting the tears and the fullness a minute before turning water into the basin.

REBECCA FOSTER CORNWALL received a BA in history from the University of Utah and did graduate work at the University of Utah and the University of New Hampshire in American studies and creative writing. She has published poetry, theater and book reviews, and historical research. Mother of two sons, she is married to an architect, Kenyon S. Cornwall.

Editors' Note

This article was given at the 1979 Sunstone Theological Symposium held in August.

Individually and collectively Mormons must be among the most optimistic and confident people on earth. Begrudgingly they may concede that "the natural man is an enemy to God," but the eternal truth upon which virtually every Mormon will wax eloquent is the Mormon distillate, "As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become."

The collective corollary is "As earth is, heaven once was; and as heaven is, earth will become." Heaven on earth is Zion, and Mormons are, if possible, even more confident of Zion, or collective salvation, than they are of their own personal salvation. As enunciated in the 1979-80 Sunday School manual, "At the very beginning of this last dispensation the Lord made it abundantly clear that through the tribulations and calamity that he foresaw and foretold and that we now see coming upon us, there would be a people who, through acceptance and obedience to the gospel, would be able to recognize and resist the powers of evil, build up the promised Zion, and prepare to meet the Christ and be with him in the blessed millennium. And we know further that it is possible for every one of us, who will, to have a place among those people." (Marion G. Romney, October 1966 General Conference, cited in *Doctrine & Covenants and Church History*, 1979, p. 4.)

Those people, of course, are the Latter-day Saints, to whom has been given the responsibility of establishing Zion on earth. As Brigham Young put it:

The Lord has done his share of the work; he has surrounded us with everything with which to build up, beautify and glorify the Zion of the last days, and it is our business to mould these elements to our wants and necessities, according to the knowledge we now have and the wisdom we can obtain from the Heavens through our faithfulness. In this way will the Lord bring

again Zion upon the earth, and in no other.

... There is not one thing wanting in all the works of God's hands to make a Zion upon the earth when the people conclude to make it. We can make a Zion of God on earth at our pleasure, upon the same principle that we can raise a field of wheat, or build and inhabit... What we shall be, depends upon ourselves... When we conclude to make a Zion, we will make it.

(JD 9:282, 23 February 1962.)

The theme of the coming year's Sunday School course is establishing Zion, and as the manual notes, Zion has not yet been fully established on earth. That, it is said, will be realized when Church members conform their lives to the principles of the Gospel as taught by the Church. It will not be the product of any political, economic, or social reforms achieved outside Church direction, for the keys of the Kingdom have been committed to the Church and its Priesthood leadership. Thus, collective, as well as personal salvation is mediated by the Church. As one recent General Conference speaker declared, salvation "comes only through the Church itself as the Lord established it."

It was the Church that was organized for the perfecting of the Saints.

It was the Church that was given for the work of the ministry.

It was the Church that was provided to edify the body of Christ, as Paul explained to the Ephesians.

Therefore it was made clearly manifest that salvation is in the Church, and of the Church, and is obtained only through the Church. (Mark E. Petersen, 8 April 1970.)

Christ having once wrought the infinite and eternal atonement, the Church now assumes the central role in the salvation history of individuals and of the world. And inasmuch as the earthly mediator of salvation seems much more accessible than our heavenly mediator, the Church is often the determinative factor in

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL MORALITY IN A RELIGIOUS CONTEXT: Reinhold Niebuhr and the Mormon Experience

Scott Kenney



Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society

the moral decisions of its members. The Holy Spirit may not always speak with indisputable clarity, and Church pronouncements are often more definitive. Whether it be a question of homosexuality, ERA, liquor by the drink, right to work laws, where to give charitable contributions, what type of literature and art ought to be available—in virtually every field of moral concern, the Church has the answers. Often more answers than there are questions.

And in this age of uncertainty, answers are at a premium, which may help explain the popularity of Mormonism and other conservative churches in our day. The number of converts rises steadily, new stakes are organized weekly, and new missions quarterly. Who knows how many temples are presently planned or under construction? Genealogy, family home evening, sports and entertainment and political celebrities keep Mormonism constantly in the public eye. By most standards, Mormonism is "successful."

But all is not well in Zion. I understand that a recent unpublished survey conducted by the Church revealed that fully half of its baptized members *never* attend Church. Fewer than half of Mormon marriages in the United States, where temples are most available, are performed in a temple. (Arrington & Bitton, *The Mormon Experience*, 1979, p. 189.) And for all its emphasis on the family, the percentage of temple marriages declines and the Mormon divorce rate rises. (Ibid.)

While it is often claimed that growth is the Church's biggest problem, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the Church has its share of social problems—homosexuality, drug abuse, mental illness, teenage pregnancies, juvenile delinquency, battered spouses, and abused children.

One would be hard pressed to demonstrate that to-

day's Saints are any closer to perfection individually than were the Saints who pushed handcarts across the plains more than a hundred years ago. Or that as a people, we are any closer to the true Zion than were the participants of Zion's Camp or the citizens of the State of Deseret.

Why? If, as Brigham Young asserted, we have been given everything we need to make Zion ourselves, *why*, a hundred and fifty years after the founding of the Church, are we still struggling to prepare a righteous people worthy to receive the Lord?

Traditionally, the response has been to emphasize areas of improvement, encourage members to ever-higher levels of personal behavior, with a gentle reminder that the Lord does things in his own time and his own way. All of which may be right and proper, but still there is something lacking. That something, I believe, is the unwillingness to consider the *human* nature of the Church and deal realistically with the forces inherent in it as a social institution. To say that the Church may be part of the problem is not to deny the divinity of its mission nor the inspiration of its leaders. It is only to recognize that any program, however inspired, will be flawed to the extent that it requires human participation. And, as Brigham Young pointed out, Mormonism requires a great deal of human participation.

Mormons, of course, are not the only Christians oriented towards establishing the Kingdom of God on earth. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Social Gospel movement cut across denominational boundaries to initiate social welfare programs in the inner cities, organize unions, urge political, economic, and social reform, and in general promote social justice and Christianity. Like Mormons, the social gospellers were optimistic about human nature and the

However commendable, obedience to Priesthood authority could not absolve any individual of personal responsibility.

Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society



ability of humankind to establish a righteous society.

It was not until 1932 that the theological assumptions underlying the Social Gospel optimism (and by inference, the Mormon "Zion") were seriously challenged. In that year Reinhold Niebuhr, former pastor of a church in the slums of Detroit and professor of religion at Union Theological Seminary, published his classic *Moral Man and Immoral Society*.

Niebuhr's thesis in a nutshell: Individual human beings are capable of considering the interests of others above their own self-interest. But it is much more difficult, if not impossible, for *groups* of individuals to recognize a good higher than their own. Individuals may sacrifice their own interests for the sake of others, but institutions will always act in their own self-interest, often to the detriment of others.

Niebuhr's observations are astute, his logic compelling: Human beings are finite beings. Their very existence is contingent on forces of nature and history beyond their control. Their physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual powers are limited. Yet they do have the ability to transcend themselves. Standing outside themselves, as it were, and viewing their own limitations and ultimate death, human beings become anxious. They do not want to die, do not want to be so restricted in capacity, so selfish in perspective.

Thus, much of human endeavor can be seen as an attempt to deny or overcome the finiteness of the human condition. That impulse takes many forms. At one extreme is the Nietzschean will to power that seeks to endow the self with ultimate importance, good, and power. The self is indulged in amassing vast fortunes, great political or military power, or in the cultivation of personal skills and knowledge. At the other end is the loss of self through identification with some "higher

accomplishment, of pride and self-righteousness secretly seduce the giver. Or the private act becomes public and the fame, honor, and glory corrupt the most generous until "they have no reward."

But these are problems of personal morality with which we are all familiar. It is in the nexus of personal and social morality that Niebuhr makes his most astute observations, and it is at this point that his critique becomes relevant to the Mormon enterprise of building Zion.

Social institutions are formed to serve the needs and interests of their constituents. Labor unions exist to advance the security and welfare of workers. Corporations are formed to promote the financial interests of stockholders. Nations are to protect and advance the welfare of their citizens. Churches fill the spiritual and social needs of their members.

Through coordination of individual effort, social institutions provide far greater resources than are at the disposal of the solitary person. That increase in power, of course, may be used for good or evil purposes. And it is Niebuhr's contention that institutions are much more vulnerable to the temptations of immoral behavior than are individuals.

For in spite of their greater size and strength, institutions, like individuals, are finite and contingent. No institution has all power, wisdom, or goodness, and no institution is immune from attack from without, decay from within, and eventual death. Hence the tendency of institutions, like individuals, to work for ever-increasing power, prestige, and dominion.

However, unlike individuals, institutions lack the power of self-transcendence. It is not the nature of institutions to sacrifice their own interests for the "higher good." What government agency has ever volunteered

To say that the Church may be part of the problem is not to deny the divinity of its mission nor the inspiration of its leaders.

good" such as a political cause, a religious movement, humanitarian enterprise, or artistic creation.

Thus, in the attempt to overcome the limitations of their own finite existence, human beings engage in countless activities ranging from the most selfish and immoral behavior to the highest planes of moral and altruistic life. Niebuhr's concern is not so much with the blatantly immoral renegades as with the moral but flawed human beings who discover, like Paul, that "the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." (Romans 7:19.)

When moral individuals step back and view the world with self-transcending eyes, they see that *good* goes beyond self-interest, in fact often requires the sacrifice of short-term selfish interests for the long-range benefit of others. But when the moral individual leaves the realm of contemplation and engages the actual world, it turns out that the purest motives are often mixed with self-interest. The alms and service given in secret soon become known, and the feelings of ac-

to cut its budget, reduce its staff, or curtail its scope of operations to make government more efficient? What union has asked for less than it thought it could get to help curb inflation? What nation will freely cut back on its own consumption of materials in order to reduce demand and lower the price of commodities so that less developed countries can afford them? Lacking the power or the will to sacrifice its own interests for a greater good, an institution will always act selfishly, often to the detriment of others.

Secondly, institutions are much more susceptible to self-deception than are individuals. The corporate self provides a convenient alter ego behind which the selfish interests of individuals can hide. A President argues that what is good for the President is good for the presidency, is good for the country. Therefore, the good of the country requires destruction of justice. It is much easier for the President to condone his own illegal activities if he can persuade himself they are in the "national interest." A Senator receives campaign contribu-

tions from a foreign government which he knows to be corrupt and a gross violator of human rights. That nation also happens to be anti-communist. Is the Senator's support for the regime motivated by self-interest, national security, or some higher good? The interests of the institution often provide an excuse for otherwise "moral" individuals to feather their own nests.

Finally, the corporate self is vulnerable to attack from within as well as from without. This provides the occasion for the suppression of dissidents and the oppression of minorities. Thus, freedom of expression in the Soviet Union is a privilege which must be subservient to the "higher good" of social stability and national security. In many neighborhoods of this country the rights of a minority to purchase a home must be circumscribed by the "higher good" of neighborhood property values.

To recapitulate: Institutions as moral agents are more prone to immoral behavior than are individuals because lacking the capacity for self-transcendence, they will always seek their own self-interest, often to the detriment of others. Since the institution is perceived by its members as a "higher good," its actions will be more readily excused than similar selfish actions performed by individuals. And when personal and corporate interests coincide, the opportunities for moral self-deception are multiplied.

What application can be made of Niebuhr's critique to the Mormon quest for Zion?

As a missionary, I was once asked to chauffeur the mission president and a visiting General Authority to the airport. En route, the president evidently decided to demonstrate how thoroughly his elders understood the order of the Priesthood. "Elder Kenney, if your mission president asked you to do something you didn't agree with, would you do it?" It made me uncomfortable, but

Church. The president was very emphatic about that." "But I don't belong to the such-and-such group." "Well, that's all right. The Church is not to be implicated in any way."

I checked with friends and discovered that similar calls were being made throughout the valley, and in every case the instructions were the same. Pornography would be stamped out, even if it involved wholesale deception to protect the Church from controversy.

Similarly, many were appalled by the behavior of some LDS women at the Utah IWY convention. In the apparent belief that obstruction and disruption had been instigated by Church leaders, these women engaged in outrageous behavior. Though the International Women's Year posed no threat to them personally, the belief that it was a threat to the Church or some other "higher good" inspired them to extreme measures.

For a time I served as coordinator of activities for the Young Special Interest groups in forty-five stakes in the south end of the Salt Lake Valley. We had several thousand active single women between twenty-five and forty, but only a handful of men. As young couples moved to the suburbs and divorced, the husbands would leave their former wives and children in their homes and move back to the city. Thus, we had a great number of single mothers.

A valley-wide, two-day conference was held for single parents and divorcees, offering seminars and lectures on every aspect of single life, parenting, and remarriage. Well-attended and well-received, this conference was far and away the most significant Church-sponsored event I have ever witnessed for single persons.

Permission was requested to write up the conference to publicize the ideas presented there throughout the

But who best serves the king—those who conform and pile praise on top of adulation? Or those who urge him to put something on?

I knew the expected answer and gave it. "Even if you knew it was wrong? Why?" "Because even if the president was wrong, the Lord would honor his Priesthood and somehow make it turn out for the best."

Fortunately, my mission president never asked me to do anything I thought was wrong. I could not forget that following their Priesthood file leaders, Mormons once helped massacre over a hundred men, women, and children at a place called Mountain Meadows, and I could not repress the feeling that however commendable, obedience to Priesthood authority could not absolve any individual of personal responsibility.

Then one night, three or four years ago, I received a telephone call from my elders' quorum presidency. It was when theaters showing pornographic movies were being picketed in Salt Lake City. "The stake president has given us the assignment of providing eight elders to picket this Tuesday. Can you be there from 7 to 8? The signs will be provided, and if you are asked who you represent, say you are from the such-and-such citizens' group. We are not supposed to say we are from the

country. Down through channels came the negative reply. The Church does not wish to publicize a problem.

Divorce and single parenting are not part of the Church program. The never-married, the homosexuals, the drug-abusers, the mentally disturbed are embarrassments. They are the minorities we wish would just go away.

Recently, my elders' quorum president berated the quorum for its low statistics in home teaching. Perhaps rhetorically, he asked why were we so lax? Perhaps imprudently, I answered. "I think we don't do it because it doesn't work. We are not trained in family counseling. In all my life I have never had a significant experience as a home teacher. And I would be interested to know if anyone else has."¹ There was an uncomfortable silence, then a torrent of defensive reactions. The gist of it amounted to, "If you had the spirit of your calling, you would be a good home teacher and see the benefits of the program."

I felt much like the first boy who cried out, "Look, the King has no clothes."

"Why, of course the King is wearing clothes! And aren't they grand?"

"If you had any sense at all, you would be able to see them."

But who best serves the King—those who conform and pile praise on top of adulation? Those who berate others for their lack of faith? Or those who urge him to put something on?

If we learn anything from the Mormon experience, it is that however divine its mission, however pure its doctrines and inspired its leaders, the Church is a human institution. Like all other human institutions, the Church has a tendency to seek its own self-interest first. Thus, in the name of Zion, the "pure in heart" become the agents, not only the victims, of intolerance, oppression, guilt, and domination. To maintain the "purity" of Zion we ostracize the troubled and cast out the wayward. To protect the image of Zion and ensure its tranquility, we ignore criticism from abroad and suppress challenge from within.

It is as true today as it was in 1839 that "it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, [to] immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion." Not because men and women are inherently and irreversibly selfish, but because it is so easy to use the welfare of the Church, or the establishment of Zion "to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, and our vain ambition." (D&C 121:39,37.)

We revel in self-righteousness, forgetting that strict obedience to the Law brought not salvation, but condemnation to the Pharisees. How much better then will fare our modern Pharisees, by virtue of their mindless obedience to Priesthood authority, if they ignore the purposes for which Priesthood was given?

I am a Mormon. The faith of my fathers is indelibly impressed on my being. I suppose that I am by nature an optimist. I believe in the goodness of human beings. I believe in the ability of the Church to bring individual and collective salvation. I believe that Zion can be established. Not when the number of stakes reaches 1500 or even 5500, but every time an individual is turned from sin and liberated from the burden of guilt; not merely when tithing receipts are doubled or even trebled, but every time the poor and the destitute are offered a seat at the economic banquet table; not merely when members become involved in every single Church program, but every time an individual is given an opportunity and an inspiration to use his or her own peculiar gifts to their fullest potential.

Finally, I believe *not* that Zion will be established when every person on earth is converted to the Church, but *is* established every time a person yields ultimate allegiance to none other than God. It is not the Church, but God we are called to worship; not the Church, but God, that is our end; not the Church, but God, the source of our salvation. On recognition of that, the gates of Zion swing open.

Note

1. I do not contend that *no one* has *ever* had a significant home teaching experience. Obviously, *some* people's lives have been blessed through the program, and no doubt many home teachers are more effective than I. But on the *whole*, it is my belief that the ratio of time and energy expended to positive results is so overwhelming as to justify the conclusion that home teaching is a *basically* ineffective, inefficient, and often counter-productive program.

SCOTT G. KENNEY received a BA and MA in music from the University of Utah and did doctoral work in American religious studies at Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California. He is a member of the Utah Symphony and a free lance historical researcher in Salt Lake City. He is former editor of *Sunstone*.



Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society

To protect the image of Zion and ensure its tranquility, we ignore criticism from abroad and suppress challenge from within.

Editors' Note

This article was given at the 1979 Sunstone Theological Symposium held in August.

When I was growing up in Morgan during the twenties and thirties, we seldom if ever heard such expressions as "Yield yourself to the Spirit" or "Let the Spirit guide you" or "You've got to lose yourself wholly before the Spirit can speak to you." We were, of course, exhorted to pray for the guidance of the Spirit, to listen to the still small voice, to seek the companionship of the Holy Ghost. But emphasis on the Spirit simply was not central to our Mormon experience. Our ward chapel was central. "Attend your meetings" was, "Magnify your callings" was, "Follow the Brethren" was, "Get your ward teaching done early" was, and late in the thirties "Go to the welfare farm" became central.

I think that my memories are more or less accurate and my experiences more or less typical of the Church at the time. Morgan was a small town of about 1,000 and somewhat isolated up in the Weber valley. But it was only a little over twenty miles from Ogden, forty-five from Salt Lake, and in those days nearly every quarterly conference was graced by a visit from one of the General Authorities. We usually had two two-hour sessions on Sunday, a Saturday night Priesthood session, and I vaguely remember some general sessions on Saturday. The visitor usually spoke for nearly an hour at each meeting. So we couldn't have strayed too far from the central teachings of the Church, or from its central emphases. Assuming my memories are accurate and my experiences typical, then the emphasis on the Spirit which a Mormon sees and feels all around him today is comparatively new and must surely represent one of the most significant theological and spiritual developments in the Church in our time.

My title almost commits me to demonstrate that it is both "new" and "mysticism." But I am going to shirk partially two serious responsibilities of the scholar: to define tightly his terms and to document thoroughly his ideas and impressions. I think most of mine are documentable. But even if what I am describing is neither new nor mysticism, I trust that my analysis would still be essentially valid. And today I am after implications. My paper therefore becomes more personal than scholarly.

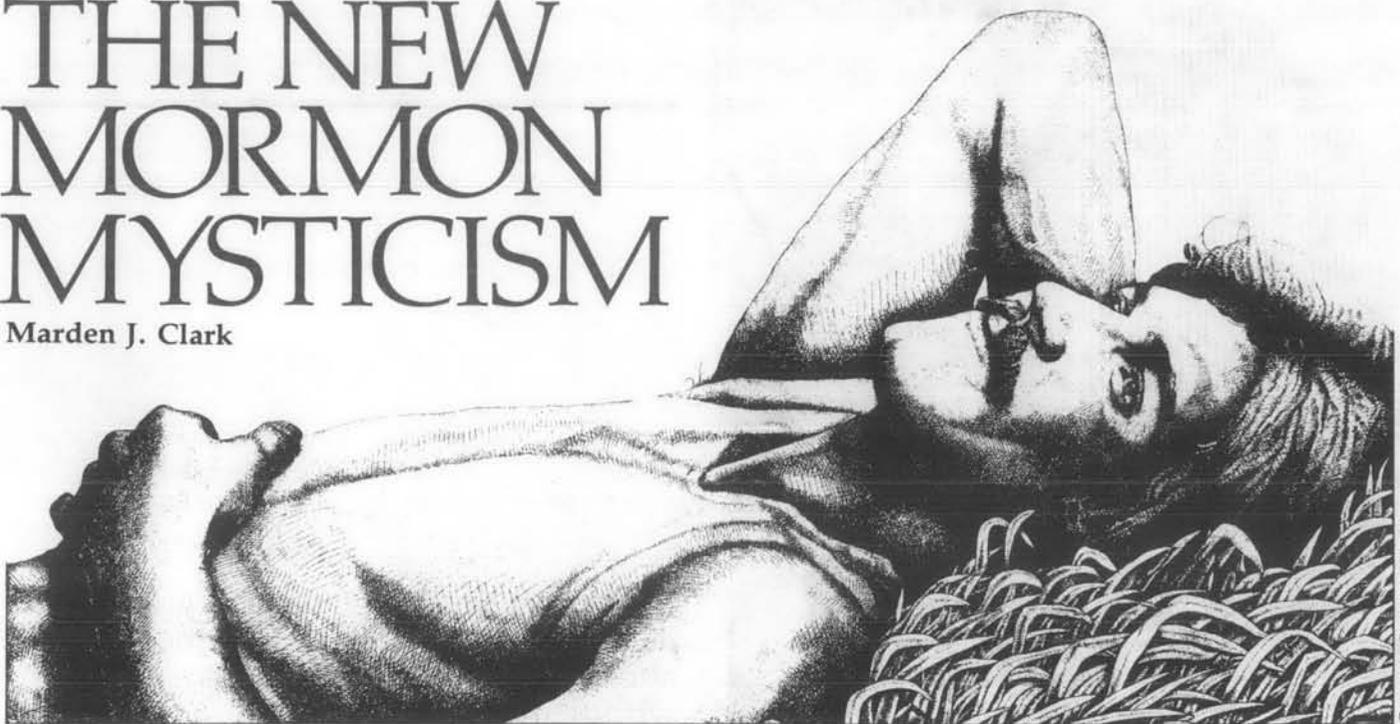
In calling it "mysticism" I risk something: neither the word nor the concept has a good feel for Mormons. We like to think we are practical people and the Gospel a way of life. We certainly do not think of ourselves as mystics. Besides, Fawn Brodie and others have tried to explain Joseph Smith—or explain him away—by defining him as mystic, largely in the tradition of the oriental or medieval mystic. For both of these, the mystic experience was private, interior, and finally ineffable—a total communion with the Brahma or with the Spirit. I use the word hoping it will carry only a little of that suggestion. All I really want it to suggest is a heavy reliance on the Spirit in our seeking of knowledge or religious experience. I would rather use the word "spirituality"; it comes close to what I wish I were describing and has almost no negative connotations. But my reservations about what I actually am describing make me willing to risk the word.

In calling it "new," I want simply to distinguish it from the rather passive emphasis of my growing up years, an emphasis which I take to be fairly typical—minus the passive—of Joseph Smith and the early Church (in spite of the Pentecostal experience in the Kirtland Temple, [recorded in DHC, II, 428, and other places] of the outpourings of the Spirit).

Neither "new" nor "mysticism" will help much to distinguish it, as I want to, from a nature mysticism,

THE NEW MORMON MYSTICISM

Marden J. Clark



Courtesy Oxmoor House

close to pantheism, that we sometimes hear in the Church when we hear emphasized the universality of the Light of Christ or the sense of Spirit as light and life infusing all of creation or God as "in all things" and "through all things."

Again, the crucial point is not whether it is really new. Let me simply use as a kind of definition the expression "Give yourself wholly to the Spirit" and as a representative statement the thesis of Peter Anderson's Valedictory address at BYU's commencement last April: "One must open his life to the Holy Spirit." "Open his life" is not the same as "give himself wholly." Even so, I can hardly imagine it as the thesis of a valedictory address at the BYU that I first attended in 1935, though one might possibly imagine it as a valedictory thesis of the School of the Prophets.

A whole series of fascinating paradoxes develops out of this theological/spiritual emphasis on the Spirit. And the paradoxes give rise to both serious questions and significant strengths. I want to explore in the rest of this paper first the paradoxes, then the questions, then the strengths.

The first of the paradoxes is perhaps the most troublesome: Because it is *the* Spirit it would presumably always be the same and totally consistent, and yet we are all aware that it can speak differently and manifest itself differently to different people at different times. Any one who has sat much in Bishops' councils or other councils of the church has experienced the wide variances in how the Spirit is evidently moving in the members of the council. True, most such councils usually arrive at something close to unanimity after discussion and prayer. But it is sometimes a very painful process, in which one man's version of the Spirit may vary significantly from another's. Human beings, sometimes even those notably closest to the Source, are notoriously individual and sometimes weak and variable receivers of the Spirit.

The problem is complicated by a certain amount of confusion, or at least inconsistency, in our own identifying of the Spirit: Are we talking about an attribute of God and Christ ("Let thy Holy Spirit be with us") or about Deity itself (the Holy Ghost)? Some of us distinguish with real assurance among the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Light of Christ, and the Holy Ghost. Others of us don't even try to make such distinctions, feel little or no practical difference in any given experience of the Spirit. If or when the Spirit speaks or guides or heals, it is the fact of the Spirit and the fact of its closeness, its availability, and involvement in our lives, that is important, not the question of its precise identity.

A second and closely related paradox: We are exhorted to obey the commandments and follow the Brethren and at the same time to seek the guidance of the Spirit and follow it. Presumably there will be no conflict. And to a remarkable degree there is none. So far at least, Mormons are managing this potentially explosive paradox better than did our Puritan ancestors with their parallel paradoxical emphasis on strict moral and spiritual rule by the community and on the Inner Light,

which was the final guide in interpreting the final authority, the Bible. The reason for our comparative success may possibly be that we seek the Spirit more for confirmation of our spiritual decisions and directions than for initiating actions or decisions. The formula the Lord gave Joseph Smith for translating the Book of Mormon—that he should work it out in his own mind and then ask the Spirit for confirmation—has been a very widely accepted formula in Mormonism.

One need only look at the growing number of fundamentalist splinter groups and individuals, however, to realize how potentially troublesome this paradox can be. Nearly always the rationale of people who leave the Church to join such movements or simply to practice polygamy or other forms of individualism is that "the Holy Spirit moved me." I understand it was the original rationale that led to conferring the Priesthood on a Black member in Seattle, a move that set off one of the most widely publicized overt challenges to the authority of the Church in recent years. From what I know of the John Singer case, it was almost certainly part of the rationale behind the actions and attitudes of Singer that eventually led to excommunication. The Spirit can presumably move a man to order himself and his whole family to jump from a seventh-floor window. Or, a bit further from home, move a whole community to suicide. Some probably use the Spirit to justify or explain actions and beliefs already determined. But one can hardly talk to most of them without sensing a deep, even intense, sincerity in their feeling that the Spirit has been guiding them—even though they fail to see how deep can be the gulf between what the Brethren say and what people feel the Spirit is saying.

Third, and following from this second paradox: The new mysticism ought to result in the strongest possible sense of order and unity within the Church, yet it carries powerful seeds of individualism. The order and unity would result, of course, if all heard the voice the same or if it always spoke the same to all of us. Again strong forces are at work to increase the sense of order and unity through the Spirit. Perhaps the most important is the increasingly strong emphasis on hierarchy within the Church. Yes, we all hold the same Priesthood, yet we all know that we are usually ordained to offices within that Priesthood in orderly, sometimes almost mechanical progressions. An Apostle is an Apostle. Yet we all know or can know, the exact ranking of any member of that quorum, and we all know that it functions under the direction of the First Presidency, itself obviously a hierarchy, and that below it is the First Quorum of Seventy whose new organization is apparently following exactly the system of hierarchy of the Quorum of Apostles. Organization and hierarchy are constant reminders to the Church of both need and fact of order and unity and in this way are powerful counters to incipient individualism. In addition, one could hardly be an active Mormon without having heard repeatedly in the last few years that the Spirit works through and in total harmony with this hierarchy. The President of the Church is the only man who can receive revelation/

A whole series of fascinating paradoxes develops out of this theological emphasis on the Spirit.

inspiration for the Church as a whole, an Apostle can receive it as it pertains to his quorum work, a Seventy as it pertains to his, a Stake President can receive it for his stake, a Bishop for his ward, a quorum president for his quorum, a Relief Society president for her Relief Society, a father for his family, and any individual for himself. And when we do hear stories of people who claim to have received revelation for the Church, the answer is always, "Would the Lord—or Why would the Lord—send His revelations through you and not through His prophet?"

In spite of all this, the seeds of individualism find fertile soil in the new mysticism. If one hears that voice or feels that calm reassurance strong enough, even limited to confirming of decisions or actions, it increases his faith in the Spirit, as it should do. But the stronger the faith in the Spirit the greater the danger if one hears the wrong voice or feels the wrong sense of confirmation. Perhaps this is simply to repeat that one who has a testimony can be in graver danger, because more exposed, than one who has not. Regardless, we are stuck with the fact that one hears the voice as one hears it. And in that fact lies potential individualism.

Those seeds of individualism profoundly involve a fourth and crucial paradox: Mormons glory in their free agency and yet the new mysticism would ask them to give themselves wholly to the Spirit. We may not accept—or even be aware of—the awesome responsibility free agency implies. But we like to think that we are responsible for our decisions, even for what we are. But if one has really yielded himself wholly to the Spirit, presumably the Spirit will direct in all things. One has no need of free agency except to listen for and carry out what the Spirit tells him. To be sure, as I have heard it argued, that first decision to yield oneself may be the ultimate expression of will. But, in theory at least, it would be the last essential act of will. Even listening for the Spirit and carrying out its promptings would be mostly passive: presumably the Spirit would furnish both light and energy.

A fifth paradox: The new mysticism is at once a very easy and a most difficult approach to the spiritual life. It is easy because one can transfer one's burdens of choice and responsibility to the Spirit. If one gives oneself up wholly, then presumably the Spirit will guide one's decisions, give one strength to carry them out, and even take the responsibility if the decision should turn out wrong. Beyond this, most of us enjoy the satisfactions of certainty that the Spirit gives. Most Mormons would hardly admit this list of implications, at least not stated thus boldly. But one needs to listen to only one of the many weekly evangelical services on television to realize that these are the very points stressed in convincing a congregation that they should listen to the Spirit, transfer all their burdens to Jesus, and come forth to be born again. Mormons seldom get that kind of straight emphasis though it is often implied.

But if it were this easy, we would probably have a great rush, not just a gradual shift, to the new mysticism. It is at the same time a most difficult approach to

the spiritual life because it involves giving up so much of what we have considered ourselves. We Mormons have always gloried in our individuality (as distinguished from individualism). Yes, we are all sons and daughters of God. We sing in joy of the relationship. But we also glorify whatever it is that makes us different from one another, difference that we trace back through eternities and forward into eternities: we have always had our separate and unique personalities. And we will always have them. If we are to give ourselves wholly to the Spirit, then we would seem to be giving up a great deal of our identity.

Following from this, a sixth paradox: To give oneself up to the Spirit is attractive in theory but frightening in practice. Attractive for the reasons that make it easy but also for a higher reason: We immediately recognize a higher level of spirituality in living wholly with the Spirit than we usually sense in our ordinary approach to our religious lives. And we know well enough that we are supposed to lose ourselves if we are to find ourselves. But to really lose ourselves, to really give ourselves up! Aye, as Hamlet would say, there's the rub. The highly publicized identity crisis of our century would hardly prompt us to give up what little identity we feel some certainty about for some abstract life of the Spirit. We rather cling tenaciously to that individuality we do have than fly to that other one we know nought of, to what T. S. Eliot calls "A condition of complete simplicity/ (Costing not less than everything)."

And finally, such dependence on the Spirit is subject to the worst kind of cheapening, and yet it requires the greatest faith, the highest expression of our spirituality. It can become the means of cheap judging ("You haven't really let yourself be guided by the Spirit," or "Have you really prayed about this?"—positive in come contexts but sly and cutting when asked in the wrong tone.) Or it can be the source of a cheap arrogance ("I'm positive about this—as you cannot be—because the Spirit has testified it to me.") Or it can be the kind of cheap evasion of responsibility for both decision and action, the negative side of what I have already discussed.

Even without such dangers—and they may not be very great for the true seeker after the spiritual life—to really give oneself up wholly is an ultimate act of faith, an ultimate expression of spirituality. It must be, or those words of the Master would not ring so resonantly, so centrally to our religious sensibility: "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." The first and great commandment may subsume all the others, but to lose oneself for His sake must surely be a kind of final evidence that one loves God completely, that one has made the ultimate leap of faith.

Such a system of paradoxes could hardly help raising serious questions, most of them already suggested: When is it really the Spirit talking? How can I know? Just how does the Spirit talk? What do I do if or when the Spirit at different times seems to be giving me differing, even opposing, responses? What happens when the Spirit speaks differently to you than to me? What if I

The stronger the faith in the Spirit the greater
the danger if one hears the wrong voice.

don't—or you don't—hear that Spirit at all or hear it only so still and small that it doesn't really tell me anything? Is whether I hear it or not primarily a matter of worthiness? Of surrendering myself wholly? How do I really go about giving myself up to the Spirit? Wouldn't such yielding simply make me something of a puppet of the Spirit? Or, at best, part of a homogeneous larger group? Such questions probably need little elaboration here. They are built into the paradoxes I have outlined. They tend to be the questions asked by individualistic members of the Church even without the new emphasis on the Spirit. All of the questions—and more that I have not raised—can be answered. They often are, with a sweeping and sometimes scornful answer (one that I have heard more than once): “But you're not really giving yourself up. You're not really exercising faith. You're not really paying the price of total loss of self. The very asking of the questions—perhaps even the writing of this essay—is the proof that you're not.” But such an answer is no answer, merely an indirect *argumentum ad hominem*. The questions remain, not alone for me but for many committed Latter-day Saints.

Fortunately, on the other side of such questions lie significant strengths. One is that the very attempt to recognize and know the Spirit, to give oneself up to the Spirit, moves—or should move—toward spirituality, toward a deeper religious life. Whatever reservations we may have about such a generalization (I have already indicated some), it *ought* to be true. One can, I suppose, seek the Spirit and not find it, or find it misleading, or find the wrong spirit. (In Mormon eyes, the obvious examples are again the fundamentalist groups.) And it is possible to not seek and have the Spirit find. The Spirit followed Jonah deep into the ocean when he was

anything but seeking. It turned Paul from a most vigorous persecutor to a most vigorous disciple. (As Saul he is an ultimate example of a man misled by the Spirit or led by the wrong Spirit.) Francis Thompson, in a marvelous poem, projects himself as running from the persistent affection of the Hound of Heaven. And nearly all of Flannery O'Connor's Christ-ridden characters are running from a Spirit that can resort to the most bizarre methods to bring them to him. But most of our scriptures, our religious history, and our own experiences tell us that we find only if we seek, that the more intensely we seek the deeper we experience. It may have been explicitly wisdom that led Joseph to the grove to pray. But wisdom in spiritual things and the Spirit itself are not easily distinguishable. That he should be rewarded by experiencing almost the total embodiment of the Spirit evidences the depth of his seeking. Moses scaled Mt. Sinai to experience the same kind of embodiment of the Spirit—the finger writing on that table must surely imply the totality of Jehovah's presence. Not many of us have to—or get a chance to—wrestle with God all night for the blessing of a new name that makes us Israel. The Lord has not asked most of us to go through quite the agonies of a dark night of the soul recorded by St. John of the Cross—a true mystic in the traditional sense—in order to experience the Spirit. But presumably we all can and should seek the Spirit with something of the same intensity. He does ask us to seek.

A second and closely related strength: The sense of dependence on the Spirit becomes an expression of the kind of humility that Christians are exhorted to by the Master, that we have always paid lip service to, that I have always had difficulty with myself, and that I see far too little of in most Mormons. We love to feel that we are



Courtesy Oxnmoor House

It is sometimes a very painful process, in which one man's version of the Spirit may vary significantly from another's.

humble, but even if we really seek humility and find it, we often find ourselves in the paradoxical trap that Benjamin Franklin defined for himself: we become proud of our humility. Or we forget how nearly synonymous are the right kind of humility and the right kind of pride, and we trap ourselves in the correspondingly synonymous wrong kind of pride and wrong kind of humility. But again, the very attempt to give oneself to something outside oneself is at once a recognition of and homage to something larger than the self and a denial of the self—or of the absolute primacy of the self. In other words, a move toward humility. Even the actual experiencing of the Spirit *can* be, I suppose, merely a boost for the ego. At least I have seen people for whom the experience seems to be merely that—an excuse to talk about how close one is to the Spirit. But fortunately most of the people I know who really have been able to give themselves to the Spirit have achieved a kind of humility, and a corresponding dignity and pride, that reassures me. I think of a woman with a remarkable gift for metaphor and hence for poetry, who often reports having found herself in deep communion with the Spirit through this process of giving herself up, of losing herself. She still finds herself a little in awe of herself: that *she* should have such experiences. That she has them I have no doubt; that they lead her to genuine humility I sense every time she tells me of them.

Which leads to a third significant strength: The struggle to lose oneself to the Spirit can mean a deeper communion with the Spirit. Here I can only be personal. The times when I have felt the Spirit working most intensely in my life have been times when I have been intensely seeking, intensely needing. But they have been experiences not of overt guidance, overt reprimand, overt messages of any kind, but of deep comfort, love, and communion. Such experiences ought to be available to us almost constantly. One would expect them especially during the Sacrament, during prayer, during the temple ceremony. But most of my experience with these, and the experience I observe or sense or hear about in others, is of a kind of formal, ritualistic participation rather than of deep communion. Ask any group of Mormon teenagers or even college students the reasons for prayer. Communion will be almost the last one mentioned. But the deep desire to give oneself to the Spirit can transform the ritual of sacrament or prayer into the experience of deep communion. I have had it do so.

The fourth strength may be largely practical, though with deep spiritual significance: The giving of ourselves to the Spirit can possibly transform the way we teach and learn. Most of us know that even at our best, at our highest pitch, we use only a fraction of the theoretical capacity of our minds. If that potential is there, if we really are what our theology tells us we are, potentially almost infinite in our capacities, then the most significant educational questions can have little to do with how to get more money for education or how to keep the federal government from gobbling up the system or even how to help students find their own identities.

They can have to do only with how to exploit that unused potential. I hope it won't seem merely simplistic to suggest that the answers might lie—perhaps have to lie—in our enlisting somehow the power of the Spirit. If the formula that I have been using for the new mysticism, giving ourselves up to the Spirit, is the way to enlist that Spirit, then the new mysticism would have almost infinite significance for education.

I have heard hints and suggestions of such significance many times in recent years. But the nearest I have come to seeing it in action is in the remarkable experiments by Clayne Robison, Reid Nibley, and others at BYU in the teaching of voice and music-listening. I have talked with Clayne at length about this. He refuses both *new* and *mysticism* to describe what they are doing. They don't talk at all about the Spirit, and certainly they don't tell the students that they are after any mystical experience. What they do is to get the students to teach each other to sing and to take the responsibility for their own learning. They insist that the students can recognize Quality in performances, in each other, and in their own voices, whether they can define Quality or not. (Any one familiar with *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* will recognize some echoes.) But the most basic instruction they give the students in voice is to forget themselves, to lose themselves in the music, to forget that they are "performing" and quit thinking of or feeling their ego as tied up in their singing, to leave behind their sense of limitations and *sing*. Similarly, in the music-listening classes, the students are told to listen for the genuine, to recognize and beware of the artist for whom the performance is primarily an ego trip, to recognize and love the artist who forgets himself wholly in his music. Clayne assures me that they now have sufficient objective evidence (before-and-after recordings and responses judged anonymously) to show that their approaches get significantly better results than private voice and listening lessons (surprisingly, all the group approaches did) but also significantly better results than any other group approach.

I have already admitted that all this is not direct application of the new mysticism. But the similarity of language—"lose themselves in their singing," "forgets himself wholly in his music"—suggests how close the approach can be. And even Clayne admits that behind their approach would lie the hope that the students would find the Spirit by losing themselves. Certainly in his directing of our ward choir, this is what Clayne is after.

All this applies with even more force to the final strength I wish to discuss: Giving ourselves up wholly to the Spirit could possibly transform the way we create. Here I may be working very much against myself. My writing has always been mostly "conscious and deliberate," in the words of T. S. Eliot. A lingering notion of the romantic "spontaneous overflow" approach to creativity may be what kept me from trying to write poetry or fiction until I was 45. And since then it has been primarily the sweat of the brow and the labor of the file that have been my basic creative tools. I can re-

Wouldn't such yielding simply make me
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member only one line that I did no work for at all: "Where the Big Dipper touches the Sacramento in quiet communion." And this so astonished me when it "came full-blown in the dim-dawn morning" that I finally had to write a poem about it, a poem which ends "One line for me— / Why not an *Odyssey*?" Well, why not an *Odyssey*? I remember my exasperation when Keith Wilson came to BYU from Albuquerque and described for the faculty his creative process: He simply listened to his "Voice" and wrote what it told him. His major problem was writing fast enough to get it all down. I was exasperated. I had no reason to question the accuracy of his account. And I could find no comfort in any shoddiness in his poetry. I could only stand in awe and envy. It didn't help much when, after I had expressed my exasperation around the English Department, Clinton Larson came into my office a few days later and told me, in as stern and poetic-prophetic a voice as I have ever heard Clint use, "You've got to give yourself up to Poesy. You've got to listen to the Muse." Now anyone who knows Clinton Larson very well knows that for him Poesy and the Muse are but conventional names, even if he uses feminine pronouns to refer to them, for the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit. And he has described his own creative processes to me enough to tell me that his varies from Wilson's largely in his sense of the Source of the Voice that speaks to him and hence of the deeper authority and spiritual significance of that Voice.

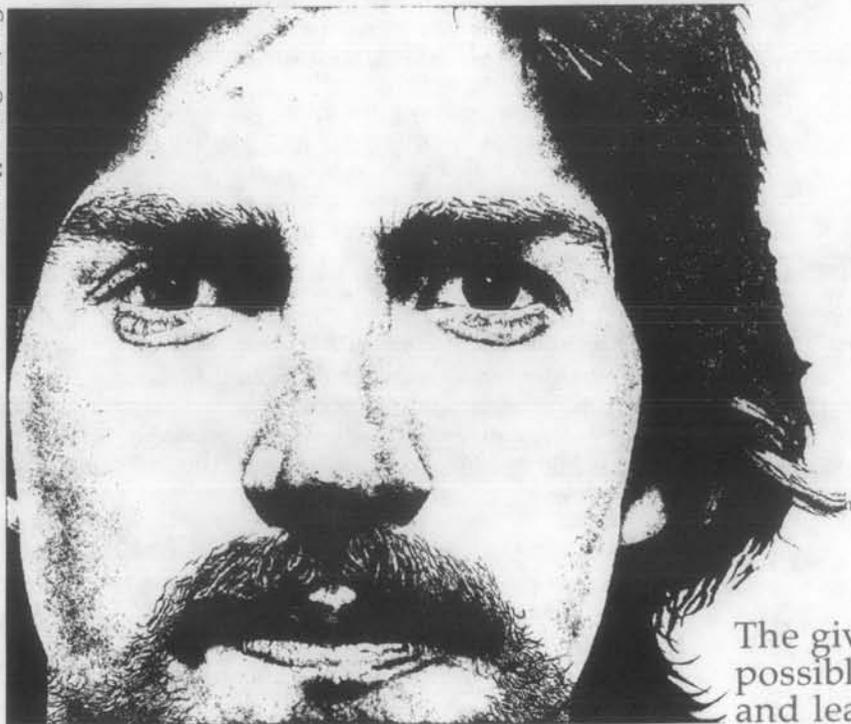
I have tried it. So far with only occasional flashes of success. But why not an *Odyssey*? As Clint and others have told me, if we really believe our own theology, if we really believe what we say about the workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives, then we have available the ultimate source of all creativity. I keep fighting a kind of temperamental resistance in myself, a sense that such seeking of the Spirit, such giving up of myself, would be a kind of cheating, a short-circuiting of the process. But

isn't this exactly what the new mysticism is about: our unwillingness to give ourselves up to the Spirit, and the necessity of doing so? Isn't my real problem that I'm afraid it won't be Clark writing that poem, that I might have to share the credit, if the poem should be worthy of credit? Or on the other hand, is there a sort of fear that the poem would not be worthy—after it had passed through my hands—of such a source? But such reservations are surely the voice of the ego speaking, not of the committed spiritual man willing to trust implicitly in his own theology or his own faith in the Spirit.

I don't know whether I will ever hear that Voice strong enough or long enough to make it a primary part of my creative process. What I do know is that the writing of this paper, the very writing of which may have begun, in the words of that accusatory voice I quoted earlier, as unconscious proof that I was not really giving myself up to the Spirit—what I do know is that the writing of this paper has become a kind of odyssey for me toward that Spirit. I may never learn to give myself up to the Spirit wholly. But what I have learned is that the strengths I have been talking about—the potential in the new mysticism—may help us finally to learn the absolute truth in that ultimate paradox: that we can find ourselves only by losing ourselves. We may learn a new definition of, and experience a higher kind of, free agency: not in the expression of our individuality but in the losing of that individuality in something higher. We may be able to transform the new mysticism, with all its paradoxes and problems, into the new spirituality. We may finally be able to give ourselves up wholly to the Spirit and have Him give us back ourselves transformed into new and higher wholes.

MARDEN CLARK received his PhD from the University of Washington. He is a professor of English at BYU and Bishop of the BYU 29th Ward. He recently published a book of poetry, *Mood: Of Late*, through BYU Press (1979).

Courtesy Oxnmoor House



The giving of ourselves to the Spirit can possibly transform the way we teach and learn.

The Long Walk

Linda Sillitoe

Editors' Note

This story tied for first place in the Sunstone Fiction Contest. Bruce Jorgensen's "Born of the Water" was printed in Volume 5, Number 1.

He hurried along the sidewalk, hardly, thought Cummings, like an old man at all. He was old and knew it, nearly eighty, but he increased his pace gradually until blood surged evenly through his arteries, connecting his brain and heart with his feet, packing his lungs with the bluish spring air. "An old man is someone who chooses the only chair in the room that's by an open window," he liked to tell his nephews and grandson, "and then complains of a draft! I'll never be an old man!"

Cummings walked bent a little to the right and his shoes barely cleared the pavement. His head tilted in line with his spine, but his eyes were keen dark brown behind his glasses. It was still cool and he wore a soft brown sweater which had had years of wear. He would carry it home in the evening. The air was beginning to warm and he increased his speed for a few steps, but a crimp began in his side. His wife was in a nursing home twelve blocks away. He wanted to arrive in time to feed her breakfast. It was unlikely, he knew, that the aides would beat him to it. There were several patients who needed to be fed and they knew he would come to feed Emily. They would probably leave her to last.

A double row of yellow iris stretched toward the sun. Cummings filled his eyes as he passed them. Emily had raised deep purple iris along the back of their vegetable garden in Provo and she edged the sides of the front yard with the palest lavender and white iris. By the time the tomatoes and peppers grew tall in the garden the iris were gone, of course, but Cummings had always liked the way they towered over the seedling plants.

He paused at the corner and breathed deeply for a moment, waiting for the traffic. He remembered Emily as she had been during the thirty years they lived in the Provo house. Sometimes he still expected, coming to their home in Salt Lake, to see her in the yard with her dark hair pulled back, her apron clean and faded. He saw her down on her knees in front of the garden; he remembered her picking up her bag and rushing down the street to patch up a neighbor child; he saw again the graceful arc of the ladle as she scooped soup into their blue, ceramic bowls. He tried to mirror what he saw into her own straightforward, unbelieving eyes.

He was the one with words. She had hands—hands that nursed, massaged, cooked, scrubbed, planted, pulled the words from the air between them and fashioned them into a simple kingdom. He had learned the things hands do although his own flow of words never stopped. Cummings had nursed Emily through the bad times when she lay with her shut face to the wall; and through the better times when the doctor said, "Rest, or you'll lose this one, too," and Cummings took

a leave of absence from the university to let his hands be hers, and their son was born.

"I don't suppose you'll ever want to try *this* again," the doctor said when they brought Emily back from the recovery room.

Her blue eyes flew from Cummings to the doctor, though her voice, when it came was still groggy. "As soon as I can," she said.

Now their son was fifty. In the last six or eight years Cummings had learned still more. How to curl a woman's hair, how to press a dress, how to keep house, although it was only presentable which seemed to satisfy both of them. Several of his friends sent their failing spouses to nursing homes and encouraged him to do the same. But he would not let her go into that anonymity, not Emily. If it had not been for this stroke that laid waste to most of her body she wouldn't be there now. She was much better. Cummings remembered how his heart dropped when he saw her in the hospital bed the first time—white, slack, sagging, unconscious, anyone, anyone.

"Emily, if you can hear me, blink your right eye. Emily! Emily!" He had kept it up until she responded with one eye, staring into his own. He must have disturbed the other patients calling out like that, he thought now. It hadn't occurred to him then. Her left eye still wouldn't open. The sun was warmer on his head now. In a few minutes he would have to remove the sweater. He felt sweat beginning on his back and under his arms and smiled a little.

There was something lovely in the pattern of the traffic at this busy intersection. The left turners entered the intersection, faced each other and paused before smoothly wheeling in opposite directions just before the other cars glided past, fast and smooth. It was like a complicated square dance without a caller, everyone knowing and yet improvising the call. He and Emily had loved square dancing early in their marriage, before the pregnancies.

Cummings shifted the small case to his left hand and flexed his right fingers. He was bringing more stationery and his favorite pen so he could write letters as Emily slept. He had fashioned a small desk out of her night table and used it almost daily. It was off to the right of her bed so she could see him immediately if she opened her eye.

He had to write to Suzanne today. He felt pleasure rise in his chest at the prospect. Suzanne's last letter said that "finally" she had found the man she wanted to marry. He taught at the same Wisconsin university she did. She was in the English department, he in Political Science. There was so much he would tell her now, give her—the keys to the kingdom, he thought suddenly—but it must be condensed, be clear.

He had noticed Suzanne during one of his last semesters at the BYU. She was registered for French literature and sat near the front of the room. She was very quiet,

never raised her hand to ask a question or make a comment although he encouraged both. Her dark hair was short and smooth, covering her ears like sleek wings. She looked up at him a little crookedly from the tops of her eyes, not lifting her head. She reminded him of George, his son, when he was a little boy caught in some misdeed and scarcely able to bear his father's censure. Cummings couldn't stand it, that look.

He asked Suzanne to stay after class. She stood, but her look still tilted up, her chin down. He reached out and lifted her chin.

"Look me in the eye like an equal," he said firmly, though he tried to make his voice gentle. "You mustn't look slantwise at anyone."

They talked for a minute and Suzanne nervously left the room. He found that his knees were trembling.

How he'd hated disciplining George, having to face that look. When George was eleven he and his friends dammed up the creek a half mile away from the house and made a swimming hole. It wasn't a very good one, small and rocky and not very deep, but they loved to drop into it from the trees on August afternoons.

One day as he and Emily drove home from the library, they heard the whoops and cries and looked up to see shining brown bodies dripping from the low branches of trees, plunging with fierce yodels into the water. Emily was frightened and questioned George that night at dinner. She could not bear the thought of him taking such chances and asked him to promise her he would never go there. But occasionally, George and his friends sneaked away to the swimming hole. It was Cummings' responsibility to soothe Emily and explain to his son why he couldn't go—on the grounds that he was unique, in no way replaceable, in every way precious. Cummings noticed as he and George stood in the backyard and talked it over how tanned George was, how free his hair in the wind. He hated clothing him in caution and responsibility but he did it anyway; he tried to make the clothing light.

Two weeks after school began that fall one boy dove into the swimming hole and broke his neck. The three of them fasted and prayed—along with the rest of the ward—as he lay in the hospital in critical condition. When he died they grieved, but Cummings noticed that an unacknowledged tension gradually faded from their home.

Cummings remembered the summer, remembered the look, remembered talking to Suzanne. It could have all happened the same summer, last summer, the summer soon to arrive—it was simply a question of chronology. It was all, somehow, still a part of the present. He remembered how Suzanne began to ask an occasional question and her effort to look at him squarely. He saw the blood rise in her face even before she spoke and tried to encourage her. She came to his office once or twice before the final exam and registered for his advanced French class the next semester. They were friends.

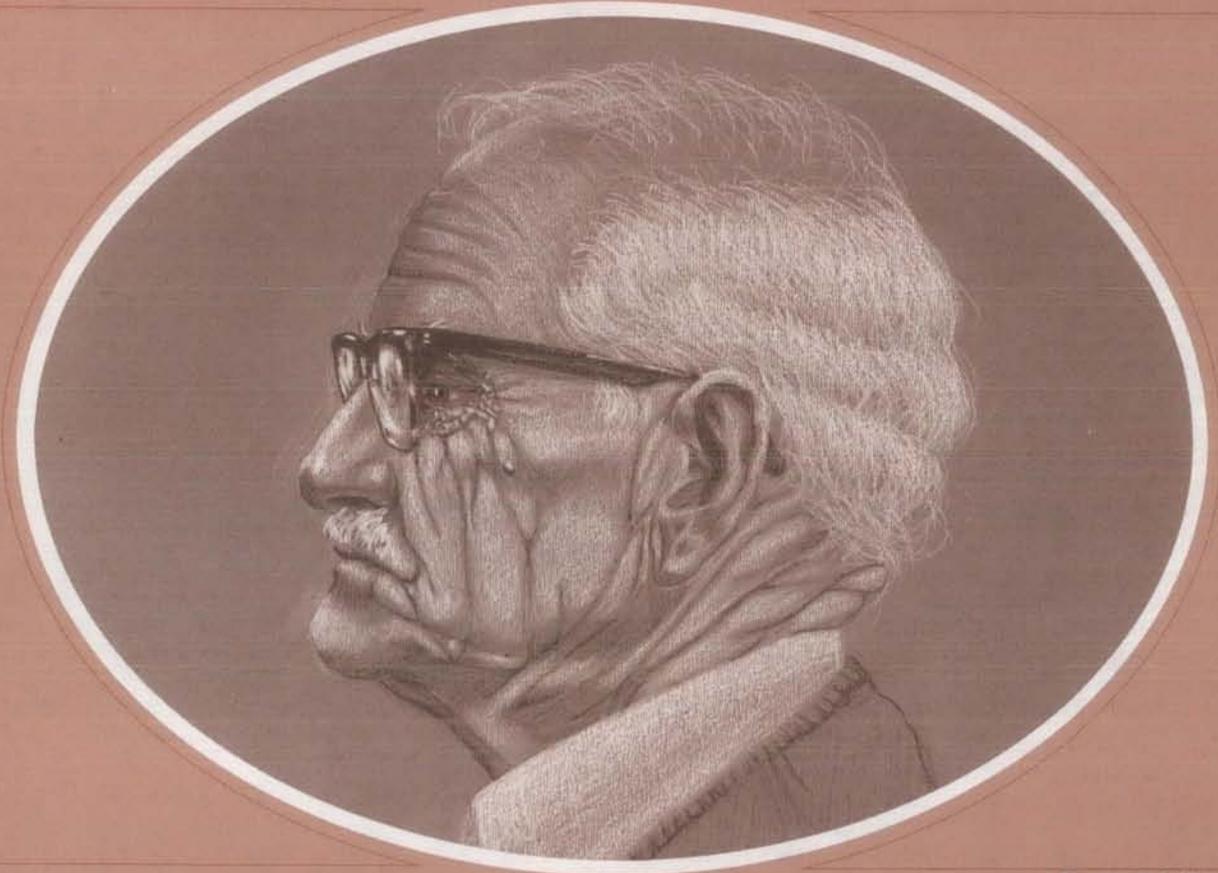


Illustration by Warren Archer

Suzanne was not like Althea, a girl he encouraged years and years before Suzanne. He had been much younger then, in his late forties, although Althea obviously thought him elderly and always treated him with an unconscious condescension which amused and irritated.

Cummings had noticed Althea first by her eyes, too. He could actually see her intelligence sitting just behind the blue of her irises, see the thoughts formulating in her head. "Got it," her eyes would snap as he made a point or added a subtle touch of humor. He found himself glancing at Althea as he lectured to see what was getting through. Althea loved to argue, too, and a couple of weeks into the quarter was perched on the edge of a chair in his office, blond hair tucked behind her ears, books balanced precariously on her knees. The words flew between them, and she fought intensely for her ideas.

One day her arrogance got the best of him. "Why don't you just call me Uncle Bill?" he asked.

Althea wrote a long note and pushed it under the door. The note explained that improprieties of that title and he read it and laughed. She had missed the point but her arrogance seemed a little less after that, her confidence a little more.

He wanted to take Althea home to Emily, but they would not have understood each other. He had taken Suzanne home. Emily loved reading Suzanne's Christmas cards.

Ah, what they would have given for a daughter, he thought, crossing another street and pausing by a maple to catch his breath and remove his sweater. The familiar pain gripped his heart, a claw that had lived there so long he was accustomed to the pain. George was divorced now and had no daughter. His son Paul was grown but still unmarried. But Althea and Suzanne and several others who wrote infrequently, those girls he had discovered when they were past braces and skinned knees, poised at the beginning of womanhood with their shining hair and quick, comprehending eyes—they had been, they were, in a way, his daughters.

But there had been another, he thought, and anger started him walking again. After George, more miscarriages, early, bloody, formless, but then a few years later a pregnancy that seemed to catch hold. For months they held their breaths watching Emily grow, watching her slow, careful movements, the nourishing food she lifted bite by bite, the depth of her sleep. Then one day, suddenly as he was preparing their lunch, the cramps came

hard and strong. He didn't dare move her—she was beginning the eighth month—and the doctor said he would come.

He didn't come soon enough and with Emily's instructions given from between gritted teeth, Cummings lifted from her body a perfectly formed baby girl. He could still remember how little and light that daughter had been in his hands. He could have held her in one hand, had he not been careful to support the tiny, wet head. He did all that Emily told him to do (in a flat, urgent voice), he did all he could think of to do. But when the doctor arrived, that daughter still crouched motionless in his hands, her delicate features closed, her bony chest smaller than his palm still, her curled arms and legs limp. Cummings believed as much as he believed anything that they would possess that daughter in eternity. He could not believe that there could be such brutal waste.

After that he had not been sure for a long time that he could bring Emily back. It had taken almost more patience than he could find, and it was as selfish a thing to do as it was loving.

Once he took her to California. It was ten or twelve years ago and her forgetfulness was becoming impossible to ignore; not just little things that he forgot too, once in a while, but a kind of vagueness. Emily's sister had just lost her husband and Emily was hearty and well for the most part. Cummings thought the trip might be good for everyone, that the change would heighten their senses, and her sister, Anne, would have company.

They stayed with George and his wife at first in the suburbs of San Francisco. Cummings was disappointed, though, that George and Bev had no desire to go to the city. They drove through San Francisco one night very quickly, through China Town, over the Golden Gate Bridge and down the coast. "You wouldn't believe the things in that city," Bev said with a shudder. "We never go there."

"You know, Dad," George added, "you can look around our neighborhood in San Pablo with its neat houses and yards and our garden and almost feel that you're back home in Provo." It was true, Cummings thought. He was not closer to San Francisco, no closer to the sea.

The house was tense although George and Bev were unfailingly polite to each other and warm toward Cummings and Emily. They simply seemed to have nothing that really *needed* saying. They talked about their son, Paul, all the time without realizing they were doing it. They thought they never talked about him because they never said what they were thinking. Cummings was frustrated by the dead-end talk. Emily took to watching the street from the window seat.

Paul had moved out of the house after graduating from high school in the spring. He was house-sitting a beach house down the coast.

"It's just for the summer," George said. "He'll be

starting school in the fall."

"If he registers," Bev added sweetly.

"He'll register!" George snapped and went out to mow the lawn.

Emily's sister developed influenza and Emily cheerfully packed her suitcase and moved over to be with her and care for her. Cummings was now stranded with Bev during the day while George went to work. He thought about taking the bus to San Francisco, but Bev was so alarmed he decided to forget about it.

That night he asked them to drive him down to see Paul. There was no telephone at the beach house and it might be a long time before he returned to California.

The beach house was very simple with bare wooden floors, a small fireplace, windows that faced the ocean, and a porch across the front with steps down both sides. The house stood on stilts although there was fifty feet of rough sand before the ocean. Paul said that during high tide he could feel the slap of the waves under the floor at night. Paul sat on a low stool on the porch, carving. Bev perched on the rail with George opposite her, leaning against the house. Cummings lowered himself to the steps.

The ocean was so loud that conversation was almost impossible and everyone seemed glad of it. George and Bev smiled indulgently at Paul, but Paul looked at them coolly, then stared out to sea. Cummings watched Paul's sensitive fingers moving on the wood, noticed how sand glinted in the squints around his eyes.

"I don't suppose you'd mind having a little company," he said tentatively, ready to turn it into a joke. He had to shout it again, though, to make them hear. Bev almost fell off the railing when she understood what he said.

"Oh no, Dad," George said, clapping him on the shoulder. "What would you do here?"

"And the damp!" Bev added, sounding crushed. "You'll stiffen up."

"There's not even a lock on this door," George announced. "Those kids just pull their vans and campers right up by the house!" There were a lot of reasons.

"No one's coming by," Paul said. "No one's been by for a week."

Cummings felt his breath catch. "I wouldn't be in the way," he said diffidently. "I like the sea."

"Okay," Paul said, and his parents stared at them both, unbelieving. The next day George brought Cummings' things. Cummings hadn't dared the long drive back to San Pablo, afraid they would talk him out of it, or he would have second thoughts, or Paul would.

It was easy to remember the sea, for the morning traffic filled his ears. There the sea was a constant fact of life. It didn't disappear at night like the traffic did. It never turned off, it was never quite the same, it talked through his dreams.

Eventually the conversations, lectures, theories, that

spun through his head like tape on a recorder all gave up and were still. All he heard was the sea. He walked beside it alone or sometimes with Paul. They ate hand to mouth. They slept when they wanted to. They didn't talk very often but their silence was not embarrassed. Paul whittled part of every day and Cummings, for whom words were all, was amazed at Paul's skill. He was carving a series of seals, smooth, sleek, supple, rising from the rough wood. In the house Cummings frequently stood before the mantle looking at his favorite piece—a gull just touching down on a twisted piece of driftwood. Balance was the thing, he thought, the balance between air and wood.

The night before Cummings had to leave, he began to talk. He didn't feel like Paul's grandfather now. He didn't feel as if he had those sorts of titles at all. He felt solitary, and yet in his mind his hand reached out and touched, one by one Emily, Paul, and others, forming connections that were *chosen*, suddenly newborn.

So he wondered aloud about Emily, George and Bev, his sister-in-law. He was beginning to go back, his thoughts first, making the transition with words. At last he fell silent.

"About Emily," Paul said then. He was sitting a few feet away on the steps. His knife and his hair shone in the moonlight he followed around the porch so that he could see to carve. Now, thinking back, Cummings was startled that Paul had said Emily, not Grandmother. It had not seemed strange then.

Cummings waited. "About Emily," Paul said again, shifting a few inches closer and watching the breakers. "You still *love* her?"

The question stayed there between them sustained by the night mist and Cummings didn't know what to say. All the words of his life deserted him, were shouted down by a new line of breakers rushing in like a mob of children, breaking and dissolving on the dark sand. They both took a breath, both let it out like the sigh of the waves retreating. Then Cummings leaned forward suddenly in his chair and grasped Paul's right wrist as it hovered over the wood.

"Like this hand!" he exclaimed, his fingers gripping the wrist so hard it trembled. "Like you love this hand."

He let go in a minute and sat back. Paul set down the wood and the knife carefully, nodded, and stood up. The moon caught him again as he passed the corner of the porch. His face shone with tears.

It wasn't until Cummings completely unpacked at home with Emily that he found it wrapped in paper towels, tucked into the bottom of his suitcase—the gull lighting on driftwood.

Two more blocks and he would be with her. Andrew, their nephew, would be by this afternoon. Andrew came to see them every few weeks before Emily's stroke. The last time, he and Andy had talked for an hour or so as

Emily smiled at them from her soft chair. Then Cummings suggested to her that she go to the store for some ice cream.

"What if she falls?" Andrew exclaimed after Emily left. "Anything could happen." He was almost angry.

Cummings tried to hide his anxiety. "She's only around the corner," he said calmly, shifting his chair. "She did fall early last winter, though, when we went downtown to have her glasses adjusted. We were walking to the bus stop when she fell flat. No one seemed to be around. Of course I couldn't lift her."

"So you went for help?"

"No, we managed. I got down on all fours. She was able to put both her hands flat on my back and lift herself to her knees. Then I stood and helped her to stand."

Cummings changed the subject then. When Emily's loud breathing and dragging steps sounded on the porch, Andrew was startled. He stopped talking and whirled around. But Cummings had heard those steps as soon as they turned on to their walk, and he relaxed as he sat listening, counting, giving thanks.

Today he would guide her hand to endorse her medicare check. He could do it himself, of course, but it was her check.

The pain was beginning again, gnawing at the lower part of his spine with every step. He was grateful it had not started before. Now he was nearly there and could sit in a straight chair and stretch his legs out to relax those muscles around the pain. Last night he had slept soundly—that sleep was a rare gift. Almost as many nights as not now, he lay awake with the pain and the radio.

After the years of caring for Emily off and on, he was grateful to discover pain for himself—to understand what it does to you, how it wears you down. How it fills up the room and hides under the bed and slaps down your fortune on a card table in the corner.

Lying there alone he remembered the meals he cooked for Emily and the nights he sat up. He remembered the times he shut his mouth tightly and walked quickly into another room to clean something briskly, struggling to keep back the hard, uncomprehending words. He feared his pain, too, not for how it could hurt him, but for the potential it had to stop him.

Still, the pain was slight enough now. He walked—almost trotted—down the curved driveway to the back door of the nursing home like a young man on any spring morning. He felt the wrapped wooden carving shift in his briefcase. Despite the promise in his back of a wakeful night, the blood sang through his veins like sunlight and he felt immortal; capable of lifting Emily and her dear, impossible weight high in his hands like something small, newborn, and kicking.

LINDA SILLITOE has published poems, investigative articles, reviews, and short stories. She is the mother of three children.

THE LDS RESPONSE TO THE TETON DAM DISASTER IN IDAHO

Bruce D. Blumell

Just before noon on Saturday, June 5, 1976, the Teton Dam in southeastern Idaho collapsed, releasing eighty billion gallons of water down the Teton River. The surging water entered the Snake River and was finally trapped several days later at the American Falls reservoir west of Pocatello, Idaho. In the course of an 85-mile rampage this torrent spread out in some places up to eleven miles, engulfing the communities of Wilford, Sugar City, and Rexburg. In Wilford, for example, 120 of the 154 homes were destroyed almost immediately, and most of the others were severely damaged.¹ Down stream the communities of Ennis, Menan, Roberts, Idaho Falls, and Blackfoot were partly flooded. Fortunately, only six people drowned. However, this deluge wreaked havoc with all kinds of construction and machinery, killed about 11,000 head of livestock, damaged or ruined approximately 90,000 acres of crops, destroyed an estimated 5,000-10,000 acres of land, and damaged or destroyed approximately 360 businesses, more than 4,000 homes, and at least as many farm structures. The total loss in property was estimated at close to \$1.5 billion.²

In sudden, highly visible, severe, and widespread natural disasters, such as the Teton flood, most people spontaneously react with a sense of altruism, according to disaster research by social scientists.³ But communities normally do not maintain this almost utopian mutual concern and generosity past the first few days unless there has been an unusual indoctrination of such values and goals.⁴ Pre-disaster behavior and values are, therefore, the best predictors of behavior during and after a disaster;⁵ people tend to react differently as the norms of their respective groups differ.⁶ Fully 80 percent of the victims of the Teton Dam disaster lived in the twenty-mile swath between the mouth of the river canyon in Wilford and Rexburg. Nearly 95 percent of these people at the time of the flood were LDS. Rexburg, an LDS center because of Ricks College, served as the major hub of relief efforts.⁷ Because so many of those affected were Mormons and because so much of the relief effort in the Rexburg area was directed by Mormon leaders, the Teton Dam disaster provides a unique opportunity to examine how a particular set of values and institutions affected responses during an extreme emergency.⁸

The teachings of Mormonism's founder Joseph Smith and his successor Brigham Young urged return to a sacral and organic society distinct from the secular and individualizing modern world.⁹ Numerous writers, both scholarly and impressionistic, have described the willingness of Mormonism's adherents to sacrifice individual concerns for group interests and to defer to all Church officials in order to fulfill obligations and re-

sponsibilities within the Mormon commonwealth.¹⁰ Authority in the Mormon sense did not mean the power to dominate by compulsion, but instead it was a kind of moral and spiritual authority based on trust and faith in the destiny of the movement.¹¹ Church members felt that their leaders when called were divinely imbued with essential leadership qualities. In 1903 the well-known economist Richard T. Ely said that "the organization of the Mormons is the most nearly perfect piece of social mechanism with which I have ever, in any way, come in contact, excepting alone the German army."¹² This efficient structure was further elaborated, particularly during the Depression, by the development of the multi-faceted welfare system which buttressed the Church's long-standing commitment to care for the temporal welfare of its membership.

The Teton Dam disaster initiated the most extensive testing since the 1930s of these values and institutions. From the first hours after the dam broke, responses based on such teachings as respect for authority and the primary value of the group tended to help the relief effort. For example, almost to a person the people accepted the warning to evacuate, even though most thought the flood would not be nearly as devastating as it turned out to be. In contrast, later in the summer police complained that many people caught in the roaring flood waters in the Big Thompson Canyon in Colorado had belittled the warning of impending disaster.¹³ Respect for authority seemed to be an important factor in the success of the evacuation in Idaho.

Significantly, the Latter-day Saints also had a ready and tried hierarchical structure through which to organize, direct, and channel the altruistic impulses often present immediately after such a disaster. Through the Latter-day Saint lay priesthood structure the people were immediately organized to receive the needed material and psychological assistance and to begin the cleanup and reconstruction. LDS leaders, primarily stake presidents and bishops knew without question their responsibility was to act and lead. And the people almost instinctively sought and followed the direction provided for them. The government also organized and funneled some of its assistance through this structure. Such organized activity, according to federal disaster officials, was contrary to the quiescence among victims they usually find when they arrive at the scene of disasters. The success and scope of the Church response would thus seem to illustrate that certain group characteristics, historically important, are still prominent among the faithful.

Meeting Immediate Needs

Most people left the flood area with little more than the clothes on their backs and the vehicles they were

The Latter-day Saints had a ready and tried hierarchical structure through which to organize, direct, and channel altruistic impulses.

driving. Those in the Rexburg and Sugar City region generally headed for the hill in the southeastern part of Rexburg where Ricks College is situated. As the torrent of water swept through, it was obvious that the people who lived below the flood line would not be able to return to their homes; Ricks College, under the direction of President Henry B. Eyring, became a home for the homeless. The higher elevation of the campus prevented loss of the water supply and permitted use of the sewage system. In addition, the electrical plant maintained by the college was not damaged by the flood.

Towards evening of the first day the food services director and his staff set up a soup line and in addition passed out milk and bread. The next day they began serving three meals a day for all who needed them with special attention given to nutritional needs and sanitation. While most meals were served in the Manwaring Student Activities Center, the food service staff also delivered hot meals to other places and passed out sack lunches. The day after the flood they provided 10,000 meals and by the middle of the first week were serving 30,000 meals per day. When the program concluded shortly after mid-August the total number of meals supplied had reached nearly 400,000 or an average of just over 5,200 each day.¹⁴ This food was provided from various sources, with most of it ultimately coming from the LDS Church Welfare Department.¹⁵

Before the first afternoon was over people began asking where they could get baby food and diapers. The college administration immediately set up a baby center and put out calls on citizen band radios for the necessary commodities. Soon people were bringing in disposable diapers, bottles, baby food, and even such things as goat's milk and goats for infants needing special formula. Infant supplies were also included in the welfare goods trucked in from Salt Lake which began arriving the day after the flood.

The first night of the disaster everyone obtained



Water breaking through Teton Dam.

lodgings. Some people stayed with relatives or friends in communities outside the flood area. However, most flood victims were able to find places in Rexburg, either in homes not flooded or in the college dormitories. The first night the dormitories admitted 1,600 or 1,700 individuals, and this soon rose to the maximum 3,000. Extra state police and Utah Power and Light personnel were allotted 160 beds for several days. The Adjutant General of the Idaho National Guard, General James Brooks, said it might have been necessary to substantially evacuate the community of Rexburg had not the college been available to feed and house people.

Early attempts by priesthood and Relief Society leaders to organize the allocation of housing proved unnecessary. In most cases those in need who did not go to college housing simply gravitated to homes on higher ground. Many homes accommodated more than one extra family, and in some cases as many as half a dozen families moved into one residence that first night. One lady reported that her family stayed in a home which housed a total of fifteen children, with four babies in diapers. This pattern was followed throughout the flooded area, though of course with less crowding than in Rexburg.

On June 6, the day after the flood, the stake presidents organized a special conference in the college fieldhouse to encourage Church members, give them counsel and advice, start the accounting for missing persons, and commence organizing the people to combat pressing problems. After this the stake presidents met with the bishops daily, then after several weeks less frequently. Each bishop was asked to meet daily if possible with his ward so he could pass on information, build morale, assess needs, and correlate the programs providing assistance. The bishops also made strenuous efforts, with the help of their counselors or other priesthood leaders, to visit each family individually. One bishop, with his elders quorum president and secretary, visited every home in the ward each day for two weeks.

At the ward level most of the work of answering questions, passing out information, giving encouragement, organizing, and providing assistance fell upon the bishops. In the crisis the people generally looked to their bishops for guidance and help. These men suddenly were propelled into roles comparable to those of the all-encompassing early pioneer bishops. While there were some exceptions, most bishops were reluctant to ask their priesthood subordinates for administrative assistance, especially if these subordinates had suffered flood damage themselves and seemed deeply involved with their own problems. The bishops sometimes neglected their own needs and finally were instructed by their stake presidents to take care of their own homes. After the first couple of weeks the bishops began to delegate more responsibility to the various quorums and ward and stake Relief Societies.

The stake presidents and bishops were able to draw upon several Church resources. In addition to Ricks College a special bishop's storehouse was set up at the college physical plant by stake president Mark Ricks and the Church Welfare Department. Trucks from Salt Lake arrived regularly with a great variety of food items, infant supplies, mattresses, bedding, furniture, clothing,

and cleaning items such as buckets and mops. When the operation was concluded in late August the cost of these supplies plus the cost of the provisions for Ricks College amounted to about \$1,000,000.¹⁶ The stake presidents and bishops authorized all requisitions for goods in the storehouse to Mormons and non-Mormons alike. The reverend of the community Protestant Church was given a bishop's order book for his parishioners. Interestingly enough, several inactive Mormons went to the reverend for bishop's orders.

Two other arms of the Church welfare system furnished assistance. Deseret Industries in Idaho Falls provided clothing and furniture to flood victims. People who generally think of Deseret Industries as little more than a depository for worn out clothes and junk were amazed at the abundance, quality, and variety of clothing, which came clean, sized, and mended.¹⁷ President Ricks used several professionals from LDS Social Services to provide counseling. However, there was not a great need for the service. By the end of 1976 about 320 hours of professional counseling had been called for.¹⁸ Regular worship services and auxiliary meetings tended to fill the psychological, social, and spiritual needs. President Spencer W. Kimball's visit to Rexburg for special conferences eight days after the flood greatly boosted the morale of members as they began the difficult task of cleaning and rehabilitating the area.

Private and government agencies supplemented these immediate relief efforts by the LDS Church. Most significant were the Red Cross, which utilized numerous LDS volunteers, and the government food stamp program.¹⁹ Some members were hesitant to utilize these two programs because of long-standing advice from Church leaders that members should rely upon Church relief rather than government assistance insofar as possible. Apparently confusion arose when several priesthood leaders indicated that food stamp assistance, for example, would be permissible in this case since the federal government was responsible and liable for the flood damage (it was a federal dam which had failed). Some of the flood victims felt that they were hurried through the government service centers so quickly with so many papers placed in their hands they did not fully comprehend what had happened until later. Local Church leaders finally asked the First Presidency for instructions to resolve the controversy. The reply, which was read in the various wards, indicated that loans and assistance from the government for rebuilding should be accepted but that items which the Church could readily provide such as food and clothing should be refused.

Sufficient evidence is not available to ascertain the percentage of LDS flood victims who followed this counsel. Quite possibly a majority or even most did, at least after the initial allotment of food stamps and Red Cross certificates were used. Some of the families never used the stamps and certificates they received. In at least one family the parents decided not to use the Red Cross funds for clothes, but the teenage children did use their share. One bishop counseled his members to use the initial allotment of stamps but to keep track of their worth and deduct that amount from any government reimbursement for damage. In any case, both the food stamp and Red Cross programs closed the special dispersal outlets

The success of the Church response seems to illustrate that certain group characteristics, historically important, are still prominent among the faithful.

about a week and a half after they opened.
Coordination of Church and Government

Although there often appears to be a high value placed on organizational autonomy by the various groups involved in American disasters, generally some kind of loosely coordinated action gradually emerges among the diverse organizations, officials, and people responding to the situation.²⁰ However, this cooperation tends to break down with time as organizations compete to insure recognition of their efforts, thus reducing the potential output of the disaster relief system.²¹ In contrast, closely coordinated efforts quickly developed after the Teton dam break, competition, though present, was minimized, and government efficiency was greatly increased.

The day after the flood county commissioners and stake presidents met and decided in almost theocratic fashion that the commissioners would be the unit of government through which to coordinate the efforts of other local, state, and federal agencies. They further concluded that all agencies with programs relating directly to people should work through the stake presidents. As a first step they concluded that restoring roads, bridges, canals, and utilities—services which affected the whole community—was the highest priority. Church leaders agreed to assume responsibility for meeting the immediate needs of victims which would in turn free the county commissioners, as well as city officials in Rexburg and Sugar City, to devote their efforts to the repair of public facilities. The fact that these Church and community leaders were all committed Latter-day Saints facilitated cooperation.

Within several days of the flood, county officials and Church leaders had worked out a schedule of holding daily "correlation" meetings, based on the Church model, to coordinate the efforts of all those involved in the relief and rehabilitation efforts.²² State and federal representatives were amenable to this and joined in an arrangement which seemed to be particularly productive



Man with remains of home

Courtesy of LDS Welfare Department

The stake presidents told bishops to assume as much responsibility for assisting non-LDS within ward boundaries as for members.

and effective. These daily correlation meetings continued for two and a half months; thereafter they occurred weekly. Commencing in January 1977 they were held monthly. A month after the flood, government officials indicated they were "two weeks ahead of what they normally would be if they didn't have the Church to work through," and within close to four months they exclaimed that they were a "couple of months ahead of schedule."

Two declarations set in motion the state and federal components of the coordinated effort. Immediately after the dam broke Governor Andrus officially declared an emergency. Later that night he requested that President Gerald Ford declare the five Idaho counties in the path of the flood a federal disaster area; this was done the next day.

General James Brooks of the Idaho National Guard and chief of the state Bureau of Disaster Services directed state efforts. First, he mobilized the National Guard in eastern Idaho and directed its emergency efforts. He also coordinated the activities of other state agencies in the flood area. The local LDS Church leaders expressed nothing but the highest of praise for the way he conducted his responsibilities and the way he cooperated with them. General Brooks was likewise deeply impressed with the response of the Church and its people. In summing up his comments he explained that he thought "the Church organization functioned marvelously under these kinds of [disaster] conditions, and I would have to say more effectively than most anything I've seen."

The federal government likewise responded quickly and effectively to the disaster. In situations such as the Teton flood the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (FDAA) is responsible for calling in, funding, and coordinating the work of other needed federal agencies. In this particular crisis the FDAA established a disaster field office in Idaho Falls and conscripted the services of eleven different agencies. For example, the FDAA asked

both the Corps of Engineers and the Soil and Conservation Service to work on debris removal, the Bureau of Reclamation to work on restoration of canals, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide temporary housing. Each of these agencies directed and carried out its work with its own personnel and in addition hired private subcontractors or individuals for many specifically designated jobs. The FDAA also cooperated with the Idaho State Bureau of Disaster Services in creating what they called one-stop service centers in four locations throughout the flood zone [St. Anthony, Rexburg, Idaho Falls, and Blackfoot.] In these centers representatives of all federal and state agencies which render service to disaster victims set up booths where people were able to apply for the various kinds of assistance and loans available.

The most serious difficulty was the problem of providing temporary housing until damaged homes could be repaired or new homes built. This was the responsibility of HUD, which would pay a disaster victim's rent for one year, make minimal repairs to the damaged home if feasible, or provide a mobile home. Because of the destructive force of the flood about two-thirds of the families declared eligible for HUD assistance needed mobile homes. HUD employed about 300 truckers to haul the trailers in from various staging areas around the country where they had been refurbished for use. There were, of course, many families who were able to fix their damaged homes without applying for the HUD program.

The Church organization greatly facilitated the work of HUD. Normally the problems of communications between HUD and the applicants would have been very difficult, especially with people not living in their own homes and with telephones out. However, HUD was able to work through the bishops and other priesthood leaders to contact people and carry out its inspections, etc. In each ward a HUD inspector with a priesthood representative went up and down the streets visiting each house to decide if the homeowner was eligible for minimal repair or a mobile home. In one ward the process was completed in two days instead of several weeks. HUD completed its inspection weeks ahead of schedules based on other disasters. HUD also used the bishops to find applicants after the initial inspection and even to decide sometimes in what order people would receive trailers. The stake presidents told their bishops to assume as much responsibility for assisting the non-LDS within their ward boundaries as for their members. The HUD director of applicant assistance felt very positive about working through the Church organization to help make his program serve the people better, and he declared that it had made HUD's work easier than in other disaster situations.

Volunteer Cleanup Efforts

The massive effort to mop up the damage left in the wake of the flood involved every family struck by the calamity and thousands of volunteers who donated labor. One of the bishops in the Rexburg North Stake estimated that it took 400 man-hours just to clean the muck and debris out of a single house in his ward, which illustrates the immensity of the problem. Local Church leaders believed it important to clean up as quickly as possible because this would get some families



Flood victims at Ricks College

Courtesy of LDS Welfare Department

back into their homes, prepare the way for reconstruction, keep the people occupied, and greatly relieve psychological depression associated with the tragedy.

Numerous people, many of them friends and relatives of disaster victims, flocked in to lend assistance.²³ In addition, LDS Church leaders around the area and beyond quickly volunteered help. Some non-Mormon volunteers, most notably a Mennonite contingent which remained in the area for several months, helped. In virtually all disasters to which people can travel such mass convergence takes place. Yet generally there is not a very effective use of the volunteers. In the fairly recent but already classic study of disasters, *Communities in Disaster*, it is suggested that "perhaps the most important single device for improving the effectiveness of volunteer labor would be collaboration between the mass public's informal rescue-relief work and that of organizations The proper kind of organizational framework could have a multiplier effect on the output of mass activity."²⁴ This was essentially the result in the Rexburg region of the Teton Dam flood.

Two organized systems emerged to bring in help from the outside. The first system, which commenced operating the week after the flood, developed under the sponsorship of President Ferron Sonderegger for his Rexburg North Stake. Under this plan each of the six flooded wards within his stake was given a neighboring unaffected stake, generally from the Idaho Falls area, to act as a helper. This method of coordinating the needed assistance was orderly and efficient, but the need of labor was much greater in each ward than a single stake could provide over a period of weeks.²⁵

The second system commenced shortly after the first and soon encompassed all stakes requiring help. Church welfare leaders and the area welfare director President Ricks asked President Harold Hillam of the Idaho Falls South Stake to request and coordinate volunteers. President Hillam then regularly contacted the various area leaders or regional representatives in Idaho and northern Utah, who arranged for the laborers through the regional welfare leaders under them. From there the chain of command went through stake presidents, bishops, and priesthood quorum leaders.

In the Rexburg region President Ricks assigned this coordinating responsibility to President Keith Peterson of the Rexburg East Stake. He had the bishops report the number of helpers they could use in their respective wards each day, and then as the busloads arrived these helpers would be allocated to each bishop who would distribute them in his ward. Within two weeks of the flood the bishops became so exhausted that they finally delegated more of this responsibility to the priesthood leaders under them.

During this period the Relief Society and Primary organizations of the only slightly flooded Rexburg East Stake conducted a nursery for the children of the flood victims. The purpose was to keep these infants and youngsters out of the unsanitary conditions in the flooded homes during the day and allow the parents to concentrate their efforts in cleaning, repairing, and rebuilding.

On Saturday, June 19, approximately 5,000 Church volunteers went into the flooded area to help in the

Many volunteers left their own homes as early as 3:30 a.m. with lunches and cleaning utensils such as mops, rakes, buckets, and shovels.

cleanup. This was the largest single contingent. In the five days previous about 3,000 people each day journeyed in to work. During the rest of June the size of the volunteer work force daily varied from 1,000 to 3,000 individuals, and then it started to taper off in July. Also after June 19 leaders selectively requested skilled laborers such as electricians along with the regular volunteers. Many of the volunteers left their own homes as early as 3:30 or 4:00 a.m. with lunches and cleaning utensils such as mops, rakes, buckets, and shovels. By the end of July when this program was virtually brought to a conclusion at least one million hours of labor had been contributed.²⁶

People in the region expressed gratitude and praise for the volunteer help and commented on how it raised their spirits and gave them renewed strength and optimism. One lady announced with obvious satisfaction that her basement was in better shape after the volunteers had cleaned it than it was prior to the flood. Hugh Fowler, the FDAA Deputy Director, stated that the efforts of both the volunteers and victims had "speeded . . . up immensely" the work of the government. President Peterson declared only a month after the flood and three weeks after the program commenced: "These people have literally lifted us up out of the mud and set us on our feet again . . . Without them we never would have made it!"

Conclusion

Near the end of August 1976, about two and a half months after the dam broke, the crisis period of the response to the disaster was over. The cleanup had been virtually completed, public utilities had been restored, flood victims were either back in their own homes or else in HUD mobile trailers, those who lost employment were generally back to work, and schools were starting. However, the long process of rebuilding was just commencing. The following month the federal government provided \$200 million to begin the long process of rebuilding, and eventually promised to pay for the replacement



Former farm land

Courtesy of Susan Oman

Local priesthood leaders intimated that the Lord may have provided a trial run for other great problems which are to appear prior to the Apocalypse.

value of all flood losses,²⁷ in effect accepting responsibility for the flaws in its dam.

Many of the flood victims are now better off materially than they were before the flood because of this policy, and some people have been able to rebuild residences much larger or more elaborate than they previously owned. While the LDS response to the disaster was quite exceptional and unique during the two and a half month time of crisis, it appears from casual observation by several that during this period of longer-term reconstruction Mormons have acted the way one would expect other Americans to act in this materialistic, consumer-oriented society.²⁸

Committed Mormons in the disaster area tended to assess the flood in terms of its religious significance.²⁹ They did not blame God for the disaster but simply indicated, with their still strong millennialist orientation, that he may have allowed it to happen when it did as a sign of the last days and to test and train his people and his Church. They noted that the collapse of the dam, if necessary, happened at the most opportune time of the day and year when people could be warned and most easily provided for. They also saw the hand of God in small, personal, and seemingly miraculous events. Numerous Latter-day Saints believed the loss of material possessions had taught them anew that their religion and their families were of supreme value. These expressions were common in Rexburg region where the flood was cataclysmic, but toward the end of the flood route where the danger of lost life was missing and the flood was closer to a terrible nuisance instead of a major catastrophe, the religious element was more generally missing from the commentaries.

Local priesthood leaders believed there were lessons to be learned from the disaster experience not only by the victims but also by the Church. They intimated that the Lord may have provided a trial run for other great problems which are to appear prior to the Apocalypse. These

local Church leaders pointed specifically to a number of examples where lessons could be derived.

For example, throughout the length of the flood route they complained about the lack of communications once the flood waters destroyed telephone lines and cut roads. Several noted that citizen band radios had helped, but not all leaders had access to them, and for those who did a schedule of emergency channels had not been worked out in advance. One stake president suggested the creation of some type of organized Church CB system. Church leaders soon began considering the possibilities of installing a combination short-wave and CB arrangement to improve communications in emergencies, and by the spring of 1979 the Church was in the process of implementing such a system.³⁰

In order to complement this communication improvement and react more quickly to disasters, Church leaders have authorized the Welfare Department to create two emergency response units which can be placed either on a large truck or an airplane to take to the disaster area. These will contain tents, medical supplies, a system for distilling water, and other supplies to help people through the first several days of a crisis. One unit will be kept in Salt Lake City and the other probably on the west or possibly the east coast.³¹

Another example pointed to was that Church members in some cases were reluctant to receive assistance from the Church. One stake president commented that the Church in the past may have "overkilled" in teaching its members to be independent. The lesson has been taught so forcefully, he explained, that a few very committed Mormons would not take Church assistance. Many others found it difficult to receive help even though they had always been willing to fulfill the large monetary and time commitments the Church asked of them.

In the confusing aftermath of this disaster, communication between local priesthood leaders and local Relief Society presidents sometimes broke down. Because of this the Relief Societies did not often have input in the planning meeting and did not always receive instructions on what their role should be. Consequently a significant resource was at times under-utilized throughout the area. One of the stake Relief Society presidents felt as if she were kind of a "fifth wheel." This may be a reflection of the male priesthood dominance within the Church. In spite of the problems, ward Relief Societies functioned and filled vital roles in the response to the flood. Since that time the Church Relief Society president has taken steps both to define more clearly the role of the Relief Society in the total Church welfare program and teach Church members that role to minimize recurring problems in future crises.³²

A welfare policy of the Church is to have its members store stocks of food for emergencies. In this case virtually all flood victims immediately lost their food storage. However, Church members on the perimeter were able to draw upon their own supplies to assist the families who moved in with them. Since the flood the Church Welfare Department and the Relief Society have jointly recommended that all LDS families create a small emergency supply of goods which could easily be taken with only a moment's notice and which could serve all



Damaged business after flood

Courtesy of LDS Welfare Department

basic needs for several days if necessary. They also suggested that important family documents be kept together with this supply to prevent their destruction in an emergency.³³

The response of stake presidents and bishops appeared close to Church expectations in such situations, but leaders below the level of bishop generally did not respond as effectively during the first two weeks, in some cases because authority and responsibility were not delegated to them.³⁴ Of course there were exceptions, particularly in wards where the flood covered only part of a ward and left some of the lower echelon leaders free from personal family responsibilities.

Several of the leaders stressed that training of all the priesthood must take place before a disaster strikes, a response which reflects reinforced commitment to the system of hierarchical priesthood structure within the Church. Leaders must be willing to delegate authority to subordinates, allowing them to gain the needed experience for crises such as flood disaster.³⁵ The Welfare Department has also prepared a disaster manual to help local leaders determine responsibilities.³⁶

Local Church leaders may have been a little too wary of outside government and private agencies at first, and as a result some representatives of outside agencies initially believed the Mormons did not appreciate the service they were rendering. Part of the problem was that Church members and leaders in the area at first were not certain what help Church headquarters could provide. They were, therefore, unsure what help to accept and what to forego.³⁷ The federal and state disaster representatives were very sensitive to the religious situation in the area and were willing to work through the local Church leadership. The overwhelming dominance of the LDS population and the feeling that the federal government was responsible for the dam break may have had something to do with this. In any case, these representatives soon recognized the increased efficiency the comprehensive Church structure made possible.

In any disaster or poverty situation the same questions about Church and government programs arise. In general many Church members seem to lack a complete understanding of the full role or reasons for Church welfare. Mormons sometimes see their own welfare programs as a needless duplication of government programs—in essence a wheel within a wheel. However, in this disaster the viability and importance of the Latter-day Saint welfare programs were reinforced and strengthened by the success of Church responses at the local and central levels.

In comparing this disaster to others in which he had been involved, FDAA Deputy Regional Director Fowler believed there were fewer “people problems” associated with the Teton flood and was amazed at the people’s patience, which again may illustrate respect for authority. He felt it had been easier to work in this particular disaster than some others which were smaller in scope. He credited this to state officials such as General Brooks, to the general Church influence and its welfare programs, and to local LDS political and Church officials.

The lay priesthood leadership structure and the respect which Church members felt for these men, the direct Church assistance provided, and the Latter-day

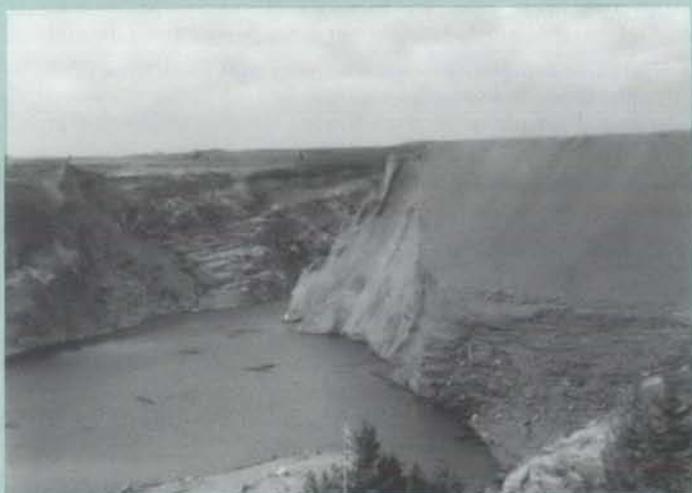
In this disaster the viability and importance of the Latter-day Saint welfare programs were reinforced and strengthened.

Saint impulse for cooperation among themselves during the crisis were significant factors in mitigating the effects of this calamity. The Teton, Idaho, flood demonstrated that these characteristics have not significantly eroded away within the modern Mormon Church and because of them the Church was able to make a successful response to a major disaster.

Notes

The basic source of information for this paper was thirty-eight tape-recorded interviews conducted by the author, Bruce Blumell, with residents in the Teton flood area, including local LDS Church and government leaders. The author also conducted several interviews with outside government, Red Cross, and LDS Church representatives. Twenty-nine of these interviews were held in the devastated region about one month after the flood. Most of the others took place during the next nine months. These interviews have been transcribed and fill 700 single-spaced pages bound into three volumes, and comprise the Teton Flood Oral History Collection in the LDS Church Archives. *Sunstone* has a complete list of the footnotes but in the interest of space decided not to publish them. Following is a list of the interviews.

Mark G. Ricks, president, Rexburg Stake; Keith L. Peterson, president, Rexburg East Stake; Ferron W. Sonderegger, president, Rexburg North Stake; C. Kay Wilkins, bishop, Rexburg Third Ward; K. Merle Jeppesen, bishop, Rexburg First Ward; Keith G. Larsen, high counselor, Rexburg Stake; Harry J. Brian, elders quorum president, Rexburg Twelfth Ward; Ila H. Agren, president, Rexburg Stake Relief Society; Arlene M. Klingler, president, Rexburg Third Ward Relief Society; Diana R. Godfrey, counselor, Rexburg Third Ward Relief Society; T. Bardell Klingler, county commissioner, Madison County, and counselor, Rexburg Stake presidency; John C. Porter, mayor, Rexburg; Lyle H. Moon, mayor, Sugar City; Zeruah H. Belnap Moon; Henry B. Eyring, president, Ricks College; Steven “Pat” Price, director of food services, Manwaring Center, Ricks College; Gary Olsen, director Manwaring Center, Ricks College; Johnny R. Watson, Rexburg resident; Irene Watson; Edward P. Evans, Sugar City resident; Lowell Wasden, Rexburg resident; Harold G. Hillam, president, Idaho Falls South Stake, coordinator of volunteer labor effort; Richard Barth, Church Welfare Services Department; Harold Brown, Church Social Services Program; James Brooks, commander, Idaho National Guard and chief of Idaho Bureau of Disaster Services; Hugh Fowler, Federal Disaster Assistance Administration; Carlos Renteria, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Robert Smith, president, St. Anthony Stake; George L. Stone, bishop, Wilford Ward; Diana Leslie H. Stone; Eldon P. Romrell, counselor, St. Anthony stake presidency;



Teton Dam, one week after the flood.

Courtesy of Susan Oman

Delray Holm, bishop, Roberts Ward; O. Dallas Raymond, bishop, Menan First Ward; Dale L. Christensen, president, Firth Stake; Robert M. Kerr, Jr., president, Blackfoot Stake; Allan F. Larsen, president, Blackfoot West Stake, and Speaker of the Idaho House of Representatives; Barbara B. Smith, general president of the Relief Society; S. Corry Tanner, disaster coordinator, Golden Spike Division, American Red Cross.

¹All of the oral history interviews cited on this paper were conducted by myself and are contained in the Teton Flood Oral History Collection, 3 vols., 1976-1977, The James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

²*Tragedy: A Chronology of the Teton Dam Disaster*, compiled by the staffs of *The Blackfoot News* and *The Standard Journal* of Rexburg (Blackfoot, 1976), p. 22; *Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, June 29, 1976, July 16, 1976, July 17, 1976, September 27, 1976, January 27, 1977, May 16, 1978, p. B1; A Documentary of the Teton Flood, KUTV Channel 2, Salt Lake City, June 5-6, 1977.

³Thomas E. Drabek, "Sociology of Natural Disasters: Major Findings of Methodological Dilemmas," Paper presented at the Twelfth National Colloquium on Oral History, San Diego, California, October 1977, pp. 6-8; Allen H. Barton, *Communities in Disaster: A Sociological Analysis of Collective Stress Situations* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 206-207, and pp. 216-179, passim.

⁴Barton, *Communities in Disaster*, p. 305.

⁵E.L. Quarantelli and Russell R. Dynes, "Response to Social Crisis and Disaster," *Annual Review of Sociology* 3 (1977): 34.

⁶Barton, *Communities in Disaster*, p. xxi.

⁷Bruce D. Blumell, "The Latter-day Saints Response to the Teton, Idaho, Flood, 1976," *Task Papers in LDS History*, No. 16 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department of The Church of Latter-day Saints, 1976), pp. 4-8.

⁸Drabek, "The Sociology of Natural Disasters," pp. 3-8; Barton, *Communities in Disaster*, p. 49.

Social scientists have often conceptually divided post disaster responses into two or three sequential phases in order to provide some systematization for their research. The first phase focuses on the immediate and relatively unorganized emergency reactions; the second on the more organized response and longer term relief of victims and the restoration of their lives and property to a semblance of order; and the third sequence on the permanent reconstruction of housing and services, etc.

⁹For good expositions of this see Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean I. May, *Building the City of God: Community & Cooperation Among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1976); Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958); and Richard L. Bushman, "Mormonism as a Sacral Society," unpublished paper in the possession of the author.

¹⁰The most comprehensive scholarly account illustrating this is Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*; see also Richard T. Ely, "Economic Aspects of Mormonism," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 56 (April 1903).

¹¹For a fine examination of the idea of this kind of authority as it has developed throughout western civilization see Leonard Krieger, "The Idea of Authority in the West," *American Historical Review*, 82, no. 2 (April 1977).

¹²Ely, "Economic Aspects of Mormonism," p. 668.

¹³The Madison County Civil Defense Director said there were so few deaths in the Teton Dam disaster "because people believed their leaders and followed an effective evacuation plan," quoted in the *LDS Church News*, Salt Lake City, September 11, 1976, pp. 4, 12; Wayne Boss, conversations at the time with police officers on duty in the Big Thompson Canyon area during the flood disaster, 1976.

¹⁴Statistics compiled by Steven "Pat" Price, the director of Ricks College

food services, in his possession and in the possession of the author of this paper.

¹⁵Janet Thomas et al., eds., *That Day in June: Reflections on the Teton Dam Disaster* (Rexburg, Idaho: Ricks College Press, 1977), pp. 172-74; 182-87, 189; Statistics compiled by the LDS Church Welfare Department in its possession and in the possession of the author of this paper.

¹⁶Statistics compiled by the Church Welfare Department in Salt Lake City, in its possession and in the possession of the author of this paper.

¹⁷The Rheim Jones family reminiscence, unpublished typescript, copies are in the possession of the LDS Church Relief Society Department, Salt Lake City, and in the possession of the author of this paper.

¹⁸Statistics compiled by the LDS Church Welfare Department in its possession and in the possession of the author of this paper.

¹⁹Rheim Jones family reminiscence, p. 1.

²⁰Drabek, "The Sociology of Natural Disasters," p. 7; Barton, *Communities in Disaster*, pp. 181-83, 284-85.

²¹Barton, *Communities in Disaster*, pp. 130, 161-62, 181, 182, 284, 294-95.

²²Ricks and others, "Basic Madison County Disaster Correlation Plan and Flow Chart," (June 17, 1976), in the possession of the author of this paper.

²³Ruth Barrus, "Teton Saga," an account of the first month in Sugar City, Idaho, following the breaking of the Teton Dam, June 5, 1976, in the possession of Ruth Barrus in Sugar City, and a copy is in the possession of the author of this paper.

²⁴Barton, *Communities in Disaster*, pp. 184, 188-93, 197.

²⁵By their actions of organizing a massive volunteer effort other priesthood leaders in effect indicated which system they thought best in that particular situation.

²⁶Harold Hillam to Bruce Blumell, telephone conversation, March 21, 1977.

²⁷*Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, September 7, 1976, August 25, 1976, September 28, 1976.

²⁸Conversations with Brooke Derr, and Richard and Susan Oman.

²⁹Rheim Jones family reminiscence, p. 6; Marilyn Sonderegger, "The Summer of '76—A Pilot Study for These Latter-days," unpublished typescript, copies are in the possession of the LDS Church Relief Society Department, Salt Lake City, and in the possession of the author of this paper; see also Janet Thomas et al., eds., *That Day in June*, passim, in which numerous people express a religious interpretation.

³⁰Lowell Wood Oral History, interviewed by Bruce Blumell, 1979, pp. 58-59, typescript, The James Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 59.

³²Minutes of Meeting of Stake Relief Society Presidents in the Rexburg, Idaho, area and President Barbara B. Smith, July 27, 1976, LDS Church Relief Society Department, Salt Lake City; Harold Brown, "The Teton Disaster: A Study of the Event with Recommendations," unpublished typescript, LDS Welfare Department, Salt Lake City.

³³Barbara Smith, "She is not Afraid of the Snow for her Household . . ." *Ensign* (November 1976): 121-22.

³⁴Brown, "The Teton Disaster: A Study of the Event with Recommendations."

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶Conversation with Richard Barth of the LDS Welfare Department during March 1977.

³⁷Brown, "The Teton Disaster: A Study of the Event with Recommendations."

BRUCE BLUMELL received his PhD in history from the University of Washington. Formerly a Research Associate in the LDS Historical Department, he is now a law student at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada.

Reviews

A Clash of Interests: Interior Department and the Mountain West, 1863-1896

Thomas G. Alexander
Brigham Young University Press, 1977
256 pages, \$11.95



A Clash of Interests was written originally as a doctoral dissertation by Dr. Alexander at the University of California at Berkeley in 1965. Although traces of the academic paper remain, the book is a

well-written, abundantly documented discussion of the relationship between the U.S Congress and the states of the

Mountain West from the time of the Civil War to the turn of the century. The points of issue in the *Clash*, are the hopes of exploitive interests, Indian saviors, inept and/or corrupt congressman and bureaucrats—the same conflicts which are with us today in increasing intensity. In fact, *A Clash of Interests* would be valuable reading for present day advocates of the Sagebrush Rebellion.

One persistent theme in the book is the awful misunderstandings upon which congressmen based decisions regarding Indian and public land responsibilities. The author argues for decentralization and reflects his regional bias with statements about freedom and rights to the land. The truth of his statements is real enough, but most of the rights of the nation are illusory and transient; and

only when the subjects of government demand their rights, do they get them. After 1877, efforts in Utah to demand those rights seem pitiful and fruitless. It is difficult to quarrel with the evidence of government high-handedness amassed from an impressive variety of sources.

Dr. Alexander organizes his discussion both chronologically and developmentally. Government agencies fit comfortably into this format. The final chapter is entitled "The Peak of Cultural Imperialism," referring to the blind and insensitive approach the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) took in dealing with Indian treaties and tribal policy. In fact, the BIA's high-handedness is shown to be a reflection of the majority culture's true feelings about its Indian neighbors, even if the author is too much of a

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gentleman to say so openly.

Another theme in the book is the lack of understanding all parties had regarding the land—the intensity with which land could be used and still be in harmony with long-term management of natural resources. For example, settlers did not foresee the disastrous floods and fires which resulted when watersheds were over-grazed and over-cut.

The harsh environment of the West imposes an economy of scarcity upon those who choose to live here. A survival orientation can be identified in people who live in small towns and rural areas as contrasted with urban dwellers. The belief that “we live on the edge of culture and have only ourselves to rely on” is often heard expressed. The people with this frame of reference live close to the land and have difficulty thinking of long-term economic considerations such as conservation of water and land resources or scientific planning of land use.

Members of Congress knew little about the relationship between water and land in arid climates. The agents acting to implement the policies legislated by Congress knew little more and thus much mismanagement and many bad feelings occurred on both sides.

The West was ultimately made over into a string of model states resembling Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, Dr. Alexander informs his readers. Apparently laws must be passed to fit the norm. Even if this all sounds familiar, one wonders if the situation today is still the same. Are local users justifiably indignant or are they looking for a cheap way to compensate for lack of planning? Are federal employees as unfeeling as they are made out to be, or have they been trying conscientiously to do their jobs and have only caught avaricious local politicians and developers with their hands in the cookie jar? Is Congress really as stupid as it seems, or are they trying to encourage us to do what we should have been doing all along—considering the long-term implications of wasteful use of natural resources. All of these questions occurred as I read *A Clash of Interests* by Thomas G. Alexander.

Jay Haymond

JAY HAYMOND is a librarian-historian employed by the Utah State Historical Society. He is active in numerous historical and archival professional organizations and is currently chairman of the Conference of Intermountain Archivists. Dr. Haymond is a graduate of Brigham Young University and the University of Utah.



WHATEVER WAS (a villanelle)

Dawn Baker Brimley

I move alone among the rooms today
Deciding nothing darkly in the light;
The best, the worst, were never meant to stay.

How far away the sound of childrens' play,
How long ago we reached the sweetest height.
I move alone among the rooms today.

How close against the house late roses lay,
Young in the last of summer, and still bright;
The best, the worst, were never meant to stay.

The briefest sorrowing rain came yesterday
Colliding with the flower-blooming night;
I move alone among the rooms today.

The splash of summer slides, then slides away,
An aspen by the gate is stark and white.
The best, the worst, were never meant to stay.

In darkness like the wind you eased away;
Whatever was went with you in the night.
I move alone among the rooms today;
The best, the worst, were never meant to stay.

DAWN BAKER BRIMLEY studied at BYU and has published poetry in *Dialogue*, *the Ensign*, and *Mountainwest*. She teaches Children's Literature part-time at BYU.

Nothing Very Important and other stories
 Bela Petsco
 Meservydale Publishing Company, 1979
 209 pages, \$7.95



I haven't been on a mission. And I don't feel bad (momentary foot shuffling, only) when I say that I never wanted to go on a mission. But Bela Petsco's *Nothing Very Important and other stories* makes it clear that a

mission presents peculiar opportunities, not only for spreading the word but also for thinking about it.

The questions Petsco's characters think about aren't all that new. Bob Elliot's *Fires of the Mind* and Christy Ackerson's *Tales from a Tracting Book*, for example, explore more thoroughly dilemmas of faith and fact, obedience and integrity, love and labels. And other LDS fiction writers have also confronted the particular problems of mission politics, seduction, dishonesty, homosexuality, and insensitivity.

What, then, is my delight in *Nothing Very Important*? It has little to do with plot and a lot to do with feeling. A reader's feelings about himself, his friends, and his beliefs when he's through with a book are not an irrelevant standard,

despite their subjectivity. And by that standard, this is an unusual book. The mood that emerges from Petsco's understated, almost off-hand prose allows me to face—without guilt—the cultural vagaries I assume by virtue of my membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And that's a major accomplishment. There is no Mormon past haunting Petsco's characters—no lingering odor of blood atonement or decaying hometowns or unacknowledged indiscretions. Through Elder Mihaly Agyar, Hungarian convert from Brooklyn, we have in each day a refreshing present reality. He shows it's possible to be committed but also free of the Mormon self-consciousness, collective or personal.

Sufficient to the day are the problems Agyar encounters, of course. A fellow missionary—a friend—who commits suicide. A single woman he admires with her own particular tragedy, "overly ordered," like her front yard. The young Utah mother of five who escapes to California. Her husband, who sends flyers (complete with photograph) through the wards there to locate her.

But eighty-two-year-old Lena Gill knits her way into Agyar's missionary life, too, as, while visiting with him, she

recollects her past without rancor. And there is the Mormon woman who stands by her man. And the little, fortunate coincidences. "A mission is a mixture," says Agyar in his homecoming report, "something to be experienced. . . ."

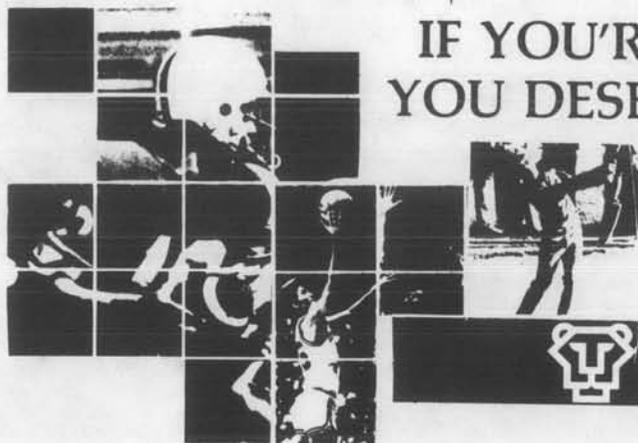
I guess what I'm saying is that this is a book about converts—about perpetual rebirths. Even the missionary is a convert. And liberally laced throughout the book are characters who keep us hoping.

What Petsco makes of the mission is kind of a second second-estate, with ambiguity and sensitivity the lessons to be learned—or, in gospel terms, faith and love. But there is no Sunday School epigram. From the title to the last line of the last story, the book modestly eludes simplification.

Despite its title, despite its understated style and tone, despite its impressionistic vignette structure, *Nothing Very Important and other stories* accumulates an intensity that is almost cathartic by the book's end. Like a Bartok folk song, it is quick and clear and complex and renewing. In the words of Elder Agyar's mother, "I feel ever so better today because of it."

ELIZABETH SHAW is a magazine editor in Salt Lake City.

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Sunday School Supplement

POLYGAMY: THE PERPLEXITIES, THE PERSECUTIONS, AND THE PROPHETS

With the possible exception of Joseph Smith, more has been written in the field of Mormonism upon the subject of polygamy than any other issue. An examination of written works dealing with polygamy reveals that much of it is either too polemical or too antagonistic to be of much scholarly value. Many needed facts still remain obscure or hidden from recorded history. Diaries are missing, or possibly they were never kept. Polygamy was not just the marital system for the Church hierarchy but for many lay members as well. It was the heartthrob as well as the heartache for many years of early Mormon history. Recent scholarship is making important steps towards the description and interpretation of Mormonism's involvement with polygamy (actually polygyny) and the doctrine of plural marriage.

In the preparation of this supplemental section, the research material surveyed has been divided into the following areas:

1830-1861	The Origins and Growth of Polygamy
1862-1890	The Persecution of Polygamy's Patriots and Their Defense of the Doctrine
Fall—1890	Issuing the Manifesto
1891-1933	Post-Manifesto Problems and The Withdrawal of Polygamy
1934-1980	Fundamentalists and The Modern Era
plus	The Sociological Aspects of Pioneer Polygamy

Due to the wide variety of topics addressed, it was decided to present this information in the form of questions and answers. Some questions might be answered by a set of conflicting opinions. This is to be expected with a subject where many facts await discovery and the possibility for different viewpoints still exists. A bibliographical note follows in conclusion.

The Origins and Growth of Polygamy

Did the Prophet Joseph Smith ever teach polygamy?

"In the month of April, 1843, I (Lorenzo Snow) returned from my European mission. A few days after my arrival at Nauvoo, when at President Joseph Smith's house, he said he wished to have some private talk with me, and requested me to walk out with him. It was toward evening. We walked a little distance and sat down on a large log that lay near the bank of the river. He there and then explained to me the doctrine of plurality of wives; he said that the Lord had revealed it unto him, and commanded him to have women sealed to him as wives; that he foresaw the trouble that would follow, and sought to turn away from the commandment; that an angel from heaven then appeared before him with a drawn sword, threatening him with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the commandment.

"He further said that my sister Eliza R. Snow had been sealed to him as his wife for time and eternity. He told me that the Lord would open the way, and I should have women sealed to me as wives. This conversation was prolonged, I think one hour or more, in which he told me many important things.

"I solemnly declare before God and holy angels, and as I hope to come forth in the morning of the resurrection, that the above statement is true."

Affidavit of Lorenzo Snow as found in Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, n.d.), pp. 67-68.

How early did Joseph receive the doctrine of plural marriage?

"Lyman Johnson told his missionary companion, Orson Pratt, that 'Joseph had made known to him as early as 1831 that plural marriage was a correct principle,' but he said it was not yet time to teach and practice it. George Q. Cannon said that Smith learned 'in an early day' that 'it was to obey God's will' that the ancients had plural wives 'and he probably learned, also, that his servants in those (Kirtland) days would be commanded to carry out this principle.'

"President Joseph F. Smith, nephew of the Prophet, made an interesting claim

relative to his uncle's understanding at that time. In 1882 he spoke at the funeral services of Elizabeth Ann Whitney, the daughter of Newel Whitney and plural wife of Joseph Smith. His remarks were misquoted by a local reporter. So the next day in a letter addressed to the editor of the *Deseret News* he made the following clarification:

'What I did say was to the effect that when the Prophet Joseph Smith received the revelation in relation to the eternity of the marriage covenant, which includes plural marriage, in 1831; the Lord showed him those women who were to engage with him in the establishment of that principle in the Church, and at that time some of these women were named and given to him, to become his wives when the time should come that this principle would be established.' "

Danel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith," (M.A. thesis, Purdue University, 1975), pp. 56-57.

How extensive was the practice of polygamy in the Church?

"The great majority of Mormons have had no direct experience with polygamy. Considering that the Church is approximately 150 years old, that polygamy was in effect for about one-third of that time, and that at the maximum less than one-fifth of the Church population lived in polygamous families while the principle was in effect, then less than one-fifteenth of all Mormons have been so involved. But even that figure fails to consider the geometric growth of the church. Just as most of the scientists who have ever lived are alive at the present moment, more than half of those who have been Mormons were baptized since 1950. Thus the percentage of all Mormons from the beginning to the present who were parents or children in plural households is something less than one percent."

Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), p. 185.

The Persecution of Polygamy's Patriots and Their Defense of the Doctrine

What were the legal punishments upon conviction of polygamy?

"Passage of the Edmunds Act in 1882 launched an all-out crusade against Mormon polygamy. The law provided a \$500 fine for those found guilty of polygamy and a prison sentence of up to five years. Nominal polygamists, those convicted of unlawful cohabitation, could be jailed for six months and fined

\$300. Prosecutions in the courts eventually jailed more than thirteen hundred men and a few women in prisons in Arizona, Michigan, South Dakota, Idaho, and Utah."

Melvin L. Bashore, "Life Behind Bars: Mormon Cohabs of the 1880's," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47:1 (1979): 23-24.

What kind of conditions were the Utah cohabs submitted to in the penitentiary?

"The most bothersome hindrance to a good night's rest was the pesky bed bugs. One man suggested renaming his bunkhouse the 'Bug house.' (Hiram) Clawson said 'a man could write his name with the blood of bugs by pressing his finger against them as they crawled along the wall. . . . Newly whitewashed walls soon told an awful tale of blood and carnage.' . . .

"The nightly raid of bugs was met with stubborn resistance by the men. The bugs attacked James Kirkham in one final rampage on the eve of his release. He records that 'such a night I shall never forget we spent the whole of the time fighting bedbugs. We killed by actual count 249.' . . .

"The men were discouraged by the prison fare and found the dining room filthy, with lice sometimes crawling on the tables. Before mealtime conversation was prohibited, the noise and confusion attending the meals was 'simply bewildering.' . . .

"The water, brought by bucket from Parley's Creek, was often muddy and unfit to drink. Complaints and protests against stale meat and maggoty soup brought sporadic improvements. The bread was the single item on the menu that was universally acclaimed. Despite their complaints, most of the men left the leisurely life of the prison heavier than when they entered."

Melvin L. Bashore, "Life Behind Bars: Mormon Cohabs of the 1880's," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47:1 (1979): 30-34.

Did anyone ever die upholding the principle of plural marriage?

On a tombstone in Parowan, Utah are the following inscriptions:

"Inscribed on the east panel is the scriptural passage:

'And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How Long, Oh Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?'

Revelations 6:10

"The north side carries this poetic cry: Here lies a victim of a Nation's blunder, Which many to untimely graves hath

brought,
It nature's holy ties hath torn asunder,
And, untold suffering, woe, and
anguish wrought,
By ruthless hand this man crossed
death's dark river,
His was the sacred blood of innocence,
The taker of the life will meet the giver,
Before the Tribune of Omnipotence.

"On the west side of the monument you read:

In memoriam
EDWARD MEEKS
DALTON

Son of Edward & Elizabeth
DALTON

Born, Parowan, Utah,
August 25th, 1852

DIED

December 16th, 1886,
34 Yrs, 3 Mos, & 21 Das.

"And on the south side are the words they always quote in Parowan:

He was shot and Killed December 16th, 1886, in cold blood by a deputy United States Marshall, while under indictment for a misdemeanor under the Edmunds Anti-polygamy law."

Fae Decker Dix, "Unwilling Martyr: The Death of Young Ed Dalton," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 41:2 (1973): 165-166.

Issuing the Manifesto

What attitudes preceded the way for the issuing of the manifesto?

" . . . the first of the steps which indicated that the church was yielding its position in the late 1880's (was) the adoption of an anti-polygamy constitution for Utah during the early summer of 1887. By agreeing to adopt a constitution which prohibited and punished polygamy, the leaders of the church offered a concession to the federal government on the polygamy issue. Such a concession involved a major shift in the church's policy of coping with the federal anti-polygamy campaign. While the adoption of the constitution did not indicate that the church had surrendered to the government or that it was ready to abandon the practice of plural marriage, it did suggest that the attitude of church leaders had undergone a significant change. Recognizing the need for settling the polygamy issue with the government, they were now willing to make concessions to reach such a settlement. Such an attitude made the complete surrender of polygamy much more likely."

Henry J. Wolfinger, "A Reexamination of the Woodruff Manifesto in the Light of Utah Constitutional History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 39:4 (1971): 330.

"Little effort is required to appreciate the

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helplessness felt by the Mormon Church in the summer of 1890. Hundreds of its leading elders were in prison. Hundreds were in exile. Its real and personal property was in the possession of the United States Government. The constitutionality of the escheat laws had been upheld by the courts, and with this judicial action, the last avenue to relief had been blocked. The Cullom-Struble Bill, which would have disfranchised all members of the Mormon Church, was pending in Congress. Every attempt to secure statehood had failed. The Saints were weary of harrassment; the running and hiding and the searches and seizures had worn them down, and many were questioning the practicability and value of maintaining patriarchal marriage in the face of such seemingly insurmountable odds. Their non-Mormon friends counseled abandonment. On September 25, 1890, 'after praying to the Lord and feeling inspired,' President Wilford Woodruff issued the (Manifesto). . . ."

Orma Linford, "The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases," *Utah Law Review* 9:3 (1965): 582.

Post-Manifest Problems and the Withdrawal of Polygamy

What problems were associated with the

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withdrawal of polygamy?

"Mormons believed polygamy to be a divine commandment, and they taught and practiced it for a half-century. Following Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto of 1890, church members experienced a difficult transition period as they were forced to abandon the principle of polygamy in practice, if not technically in doctrine. The Manifesto, originally intended to demonstrate church adherence only to certain aspects of the anti-polygamy laws, was later interpreted to include full compliance with all such laws. Later, church leaders petitioned for amnesty that resulted in the granting of pardon to all who would follow the laws. Despite these measures, many church members, including several of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, failed to comply readily and fully with the anti-polygamy laws."

Kenneth L. Cannon II, "Beyond the Manifesto: Polygamous Cohabitation among LDS General Authorities after 1890," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46:1 (1978): 24-25.

"The transition was painful, resulting in many members' excommunication from the church and others' leaving the United States in order to continue

practicing polygamy. Some of the ramifications of polygamy, such as the continued practice of the principle by certain apostate groups, remain to the present day. The church's position on polygamy changed slowly and gradually. After 1890 its official position was forced to coincide with the anti-polygamy laws, but the actual practice of the church leaders failed to coincide with the established laws. Many General Authorities continued living with, and fathering children by, their plural wives, thereby breaking the laws against polygamous cohabitation. Through a process of federal investigation, increased social pressure, and stricter church disciplinary sanction, the church leaders and members finally complied not only officially but also factually with the country's anti-polygamy laws."

Ibid, p. 36.

Fundamentalists and the Modern Era

By what claims do modern

"fundamentalists" continue their practice of polygamy?

"Although the struggle was intense, for some of the Saints a relinquishment of the practice was unthinkable. Consequently, when Wilford Woodruff announced the suspension of the practice in 1890, his action was received with disappointment by some of the Saints. And although the Church in general was convinced that the suspension of plural marriage was accomplished by the same power that introduced it, a few were determined to continue the practice irrespective of the consequences.

"Despite ecclesiastical and civil sanctions against it, the practice of polygamy is advocated to this day by small coteries of zealots dedicated to a belief that the action of the Church in 1890 was not universally applicable. More specifically, their contention rests upon the following premises:

(A) A special dispensation of priesthood authority operating independent of the Latter-day Saint Church has been perpetuated from Joseph Smith to the present day, by which sanction of the practice of plural marriage has continued.

(B) Since the practice of plural marriage is an irrevocable law of the Gospel and essential to the highest exaltation in the world to come, authorization for its continued practice was guaranteed in 1886 when a select group of individuals were chosen to continue the principle independent of the Church.

(C) Resulting from a policy of

compromise, and dictated at the behest of a few non-Mormon territorial officials, the Manifesto was advocated as a revelation from God only after a spirit of rebellion arose among the members of the Church following its issuance.

(D) At the time of the issuance of the Manifesto, it was tacitly understood by the Church leaders that legislation favorable to a resumption of the practice of plural marriage would be introduced following statehood. However, after the turn of the century, this policy was abandoned and the Church undertook a campaign to eradicate from its society those who continued to foster the fundamental tenets of Mormonism."

Dean C. Jessee, "A Comparative Study & Evaluation Pertaining to the Practice of Plural Marriage," (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young Univ., 1959), pp. 1-2.

What sources are available to those who wish to understand these points from the LDS point-of-view?

Note: An authoritative, non-partisan study is yet to be written on this phase of polygamy; however the following pro-LDS sources might be helpful to the questioning Latter-day Saint:

Anderson, J. Max. *The Polygamy Story: Fiction and Fact*. Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1979.

Reimann, Paul E. *Plural Marriage Limited*. Salt Lake City: Paul E. Reimann, 1974.

Richards, Henry W. *A Reply To "The Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Times."* Salt Lake City: Henry W. Richards, 1965.

Wyatt, Clair L. "... some that trouble you..." Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1974.

The Sociological Aspects of Pioneer Polygamy

Is it true that Mormon polygynous men had large harems as indicated by the large number of wives married to such well-known early church leaders as Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball?

"Information on seventy-five husbands and their polygynous wives has been collected. The most frequent number of wives that existed in a plural family was two, although the average number was 4.9. The range was from two to forty-five wives. Almost 70% of the men had less than five wives, while only 10% had ten or more. It seems that the large family was the exception rather than the rule."

Vicki Burgess-Olson, "Family Structure and Dynamics in Early Utah Mormon Families, 1847-1885" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1975), pp. 128-129.



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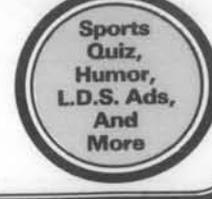
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- "Spencer W. Kimball, The Athlete," by Andrew and Edward Kimball. A delightful article about our beloved Prophet and leader and his love for sports, by his son and grandson.
- "From Grandpa's Pond to Moscow," by Henry Marsh. Read how Henry's life was saved because his grandfather (Henry D. Moyle) lived a righteous life. Learn of Henry's rise to world class athlete and Pan Am Gold medal winner.
- "When You're Down, Get Up and Try Again," by Curt Brinkman. This is an inspiring story of courage and faith by one of the world's great wheelchair athletes.
- "Decision Confirmed in Red China," by Devin Durrant. BYU's basketball player makes an all-important decision and tells how it was confirmed while touring Red China.
- "Cindee Secrist, M.V.P.," by Hugh Hilton. Read of Cindee's honors as M.V.P. in softball in Southern California.
- "Training," by Paul Cummings. How to begin a serious training program by America's 1500 meter record holder and Olympic hopeful.
- "Fitness for Life," by Dr. Phil Allsen. Why we should stay fit by a nationally known fitness expert.
- "The Pride of Utah Valley," (Orem's Track Team) by Rollie Bestor (BYU Assist. Swim coach). Orem High dominated the Utah track scene last year, and most are back again.
- "The Best Event of My Life," by Bruno Gerzeli. Read how this world famous soccer player found something more important than just playing soccer.
- "Dad Sold His Business," by Mark McGregor (BYU swimmer and Returned Missionary.) Mark tells of his father's total support of his children's endeavors and their resulting success.
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How did women fare in the pioneer period of polygamy?

"Brigham Young insisted that women should be self-supporting, starting with his own wives. He even urged girls to take the lead in showing impractical young men how they could support themselves, and thus overcome their reluctance to take a wife. He said that women 'make just as good mathematicians and accountants as any man,' and could 'do the business of any counting-house.' Many of the women plied their own trade. A work on the Mormons dated 1874 wrote that, in some respects, 'you would think these people the most forward of the age. They close no career on a woman in Utah.' "

John Cairncross, *After Polygamy Was Made A Sin: The Social History of Christian Polygamy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 191-192.

How might a young girl look upon polygamy?

The Marriage Proposal

O Susan, wilt thou come with me
In sweet community to live?
Of heart and hand and home I'll give
Of all the love that swells my breast,
Of all the honor of my name,
Of worldly wealth by me possessed,
A sixteenth portion thou shalt claim.

Nay, tell me not to share the blessings
That I now offer thee
Thou'lt find but fifteen others there.
A household happy, gay and free,
A mod'rate household, I may say,
My neighbor has as many more,
And Brother Brigham, o'er the way,
Luxuriates in forty-four.

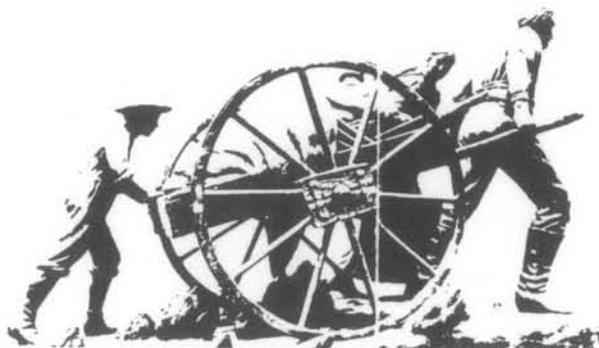
I'll give thee whatso'er thou wilt,
So be it but a sixteenth part.
'Twould be the deepest part of guilt
To slight the rest who share my heart.
Then wilt thou not thy fraction yield
To make complete my perfect bliss?
Say "Yes" and let our joys be sealed
With just the sixteenth part of a kiss.

Lester A. Hubbard, *Ballads and Songs From Utah* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1961), p. 415.

A Bibliographical Note

Much valuable information is contained in the full texts of the sources already cited. In addition, an excellent review of sources on polygamy is found in Davis Bitton's "Mormon Polygamy: A Review Article," *Journal of Mormon History*, 4 (1977): 101-118. (*The Journal of Mormon History* is published annually by the Mormon History Association, P.O. Box 7010, University Station, Provo, Utah 84602. The *Journal* is distributed to members upon payment of the \$5.00 annual dues.)

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