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AN INTERVIEW WITH NEWSWEEK'S KENNETH WOODWARD



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SUNSTONE

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Readers' Forum

Set Record Straight

Although I have not seen the original *Sacramento Bee* articles on which your May-June Update article was based, and while I recognize that you are merely reporting what others have reported, please let me set the record straight.

United Families of America is not based in Salt Lake City, it did not evolve from Pro Family Unity, and it is not an LDS "front" organization or any other kind of LDS organization. UFA was incorporated in Virginia in August 1979, and has members, chapters, and affiliate organizations in many states, including Utah. We have no way of knowing how many of our members are Mormons, but I would be very surprised if our membership justified our being called a "Mormon" organization. We have no ties, formal or otherwise, with BYU, and while some of our board members know Barbara Smith, others do not. On no issue can UFA be said to have "worked closely" with her.

United Families of America is a broadly-based organization, dedicated to the preservation of the traditional function of the family as standing between the individual and the atomizing power of the omniscient state. In that capacity Dallas Merrell (who was our president but resigned to run for the Senate) testified before the White House Conference on Families, we have filed a brief in the Supreme Court on the parental notification before abortion case, we testified on the Ruth Bader Ginsburg nomination to the federal judiciary (the only pro-family organization to do so), and we are currently working to eliminate federal funding for organizations which fund and counsel abortion without parental consent.

Pro Family Unity's history is approximately as you describe it, but PFU has now been legally reorganized as United Families Foundation, a non-profit research foundation affiliated with UFA.

It is unfortunate that "pro-family organizations" inevitably are labelled "single-issue." It is true that many of them spend a great deal of time fighting on the abortion and ERA issues, but their

concerns (and certainly ours) are much broader than that. Family issues today are a cynosure for the basic issue of state power over individuals. The cutting edge of that issue is abortion right now, but it includes such areas as compensation, retirement benefits, control over schools and neighborhoods, the operation of the military, and the legal rights of minors. The question of single-issue politics, and the "traditional family" movement, in fact, is one that might well be worth the formal attention of your fine magazine.

Clifford Cummings
Chairman, UFA
Arlington, Virginia

Serious Error

I would like to make some clarifications regarding your update on the Informed Voters League in your July-August issue. I do not now, nor have I ever had any business relationship with either the Informed Voters League or the Freeman Institute. Any press accounts to the contrary (even in *The Salt Lake Tribune*) are in serious error.

It is true that I left Senator Hatch's staff in May of this year after three years of service. I did so to return to the private sector and to start my own business—C.M. Haddow and Associates—a consulting firm.

I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to set the record straight.

C.M. (Mac) Haddow
Salt Lake City

Appalled

You have undoubtedly already heard from others taking exception to the several errors contained in Edward Ashment's recent "The Book of Mormon—A Literal Translation?" (*Sunstone*, March-April 1980, pp. 10-14), but I was so appalled at the extent of those errors that I have enclosed documentation for the following enumeration of the major ones:

1. David Whitmer was at least 69 (not 80) when he gave his first newspaper interview reporting the substance of a translation method with seer-stone which Ashment finds inaccurate.
2. Emma Smith Bidamon died at 74, shortly after giving her last testimony.

Yet Ashment reports her age as 78, and the caption underneath the Utah State Historical Society photograph adds a year to that! (the RLDS Church Archivist, among others, expresses strong doubt that the photo is even of Emma) Actually, years earlier, at age 65, Emma wrote and signed a description of the translation process verifying the basis of the Harris and Whitmer accounts as well as her own later account. So much for suggestions of senility.

3. Ashment overlooked numerous primary and secondary accounts which virtually dispose of his narrow and arbitrary approach to the translation of the Book of Mormon. The accounts vary no more than is true of the parallel gospel accounts of the life of Christ. I think that they mesh rather well when read critically.

4. Ashment's rigid portrayal of Hebrew and Egyptian grammar is based on traditional, Western deductive appraisal of professional scribal texts, not on the local non-professional engraving of a dead, literary language—as portrayed by the Book of Mormon.

5. Recent wordprint analyses confirm the less complete work of Guerry, Rice, Burgon, and Perry, in showing the Book of Mormon to have been composed in a wide variety of styles, none of which match the style of Joseph Smith or his contemporaries. That such stylistic variety should have come through the translation process indicates that Ashment is quite wrong to doubt its very literal nature. It appears to be at least as literal as the KJV, which cannot be said to be a "mechanical" translation in the manner which David Whitmer apparently understood it.

The evidence I have seen leads me to conclude that both seer-stone and spectacles, though separate instruments, were certainly used during the translation. The former seems to have had an LED display, the latter LCD. Both were analogous to crystalline virtual-state transducers which functioned as teleprompters with psychofeedback. During translation, the source and receptor languages were compared and filtered as much through Joseph as through the stones. Since Joseph left us with no precise description, we are free to speculate, but such speculation ought to accommodate the broadest possible range of evidence. Ashment, I think, has been far too selective, although I can certainly agree with him that the plenary dictation theory is sheer poppycock. The philistine assumptions about the nature of Holy Writ leading to such a theory are detailed in Robert K. Johnston's

Evangelicals at an Impasse (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), a book which all Mormons ought to read with care and introspection.

Robert F. Smith
Independence, Missouri

Church Courts/Another View

I take strong exception to the letter on the Church Court System by Stanley B. Kimball in the May-June issue. Brother Kimball must have slept through his seventeen years of Stake High Council Court experience to so gently bear his testimony as to the very "extreme" fairness given to ALL those it was their "unhappy duty to judge."

I have experienced LDS court justice from the other side of the bench, and have been in close contact with hundreds of others who have voluntarily gone before such courts for the purpose of renouncing our testimonies of the church, declaring and evidencing its false doctrine and teachings, and requesting our names be removed from the records of the church.

However noble and fair in principle these holy courts purport to be, in actual experience, almost every single case was handled in like manner:

1. Although we were told we could bring witnesses—the court would only allow *active* Mormon Priesthood holders who fully supported the 'Authorities'. Other members (even priesthood holders) with similiar feelings or doubts were not permitted. The court had to approve—before testimony—all "defense" witnesses.
2. We had no right to subpoena records or people in any way.
3. Although the court clerk kept records, we could not have someone keep notes for us, tape-record the trial, see, review or obtain a copy of the clerk's notes.
4. Church Witnesses were able to speak on fact, probabilities, insinuations, and discuss our attitudes, loss of testimonies, spiritual decay—all with the pronouncement that it was all "gospel"—any argument on our part was "disagreement with the truth."
5. Anything the court said was truth—what we said was always suspect and handled with the attitude that since we were apostates, we were probably liars, too!
6. Not one of the High Council (let alone six of them) interceded on our behalf. The court always was both accuser and judge.

7. In the event the Apostate was a woman, with a non-Mormon husband, the husband would *not* be allowed to be present. The court acted as if it were the true God given authority of the woman, not the husband.

J. Edward Decker, Jr.
Ex-Mormons for Jesus
Issaquah, Washington



Just an Assertion

"If God knows my every specific act, then I have no freedom." "We must choose which we consider to be more important: the concept of the omnitemporal omniscience of God or the concept of free agency and responsibility." "God cannot know all specific future human acts unless we are willing to abandon a real concept of human freedom."

No matter how many times Kent Robson repeats this assertion, it remains no more than an assertion. After the first time, Brother Robson bolsters the assertion with a quotation from Anthony Kenney (a quotation, by the way, that must be either badly translated or badly transcribed), then assumes that the case is made. It isn't.

There simply is no logical connection between an individual's freedom of action and God's knowledge of the results of that free action. It may make Brother Robson uncomfortable to know that God knows what he is going to do, but since God doesn't tell him, I can't see that any element of compulsion exists at all.

As to how God knows, whether by being outside time or by intimate familiarity with our personalities, I found Brother Robson's discussion interesting, but inconclusive. Back at Stanford, when he and I used to argue some of these same points, I would have found that troubling. I no longer do. As I become less and less sure about the nature of God's foreknowledge, I find that I care less and less about it. After all, it is what I do that is important, not whether or not God knows what I will do.

On one point, however, I have not lost my certainty nor my enthusiasm: the question of free will.

If, as Brother Robson suggests, we have to give up either free will or infinite foreknowledge, then I will keep free will. But simply asserting that we have to give up one or the other does not make it so, and Brother Robson has done no more.

Gordon S. Jones
Springfield, Virginia

Undeserved Swipe

To correct what I think is a slightly distorted image presented by Richard Cracroft in his otherwise perceptive essay on Sam Taylor and Mormon humor, I would like to make a few points.

First, I am offended by the undeserved swipe he takes at *Dialogue* and "its solemn, humorless profundities." *Dialogue* has published so many of Sam Taylor's pieces that he takes up almost an entire column in our ten year index. We have also printed Hugh Nibley's "Bird Island" and Louise Bell's "The Tables Turned," not to mention the famous Rustin Kaufman. Though satirical rather than comic, they are certainly funny in my book! We have contributed many other light and amusing touches throughout the poetry, the stories, and the essays in our 13-year history. In his painful sifting through Mormon belle and not-so-belle lettres, Brother Cracroft just didn't sift long enough.

In his discussion of Mormon literature, he fails to notice that Virginia Sorensen consistently peopled her novels with delightful characters, many with humor. I am thinking especially of Billy Huckabee of *Many Heavens* who votes against the bishop every year for six straight years and plays "Kathleen Mavourneen" for the sacrament meeting. She portrays the old and the young with "all their lovely queerness" with a kindness in her humor.

In his mention of Mormon drama, Cracroft should have noted James Arrington's *Here's Brother Brigham* and the fact that Arrington is putting the finishing touches on a very funny two-actor, 26-character Mormon play called *Farleys Family Reunion*, to be premiered this fall at BYU.

To enlarge on another point: just as a successful joke told to a crowd may fall flat in a small group, so Mormons who are ready to laugh at themselves in small groups are afraid of the vulnerability laughter seems to provoke in the public or the press. Cracroft's discussion of hierarchial humor reminds me that when I was in college, my two brothers toured Salt Lake wards with a funny act

consisting mainly of impressions of General Authorities. They avoided imitating the Prophet's voice, but several General Authorities heard themselves mimicked. The act was in good taste, and my brothers were never called on the carpet for it. It seems to me that the demise of the act coincided with the appearance of General Conference on TV. Awareness of media image is directly inimical to humor. Perhaps we could sell Arrington, Pearson, and Sam Taylor to the national networks? If we could overcome our present PR paranoia, perhaps our humor will blossom forth in song and story.

Despite the above criticism, I want to thank Richard Cracroft for reminding us that humor is the great alleviator of pain. We are going to need it in the days ahead.

Mary L. Bradford
Editor, *Dialogue*

Provide More Facts

I found Reinhold Niebuhr's insights intriguing, but was less than taken by Scott Kenney's. He seems to have found a convenient vehicle under which to merely present several personal grudges against the Church. (It might even have been helpful if he had defined the word "church"—do faults of individual members reflect what the "Church" actually is?)

A blatant example of his bias is his use of the word "chauffeur." Was he really asked to "chauffeur" his mission president or just "drive" him. Of course, any good propagandist knows that "drive" has none of the millionaire-serf connotations of a word like "chauffeur."

Another catchy phrase is that the Church gives "more answers than there are questions." Cute, but I doubt it in fact. In my experience, members actually press for more answers than the authorities are willing to give. Facts, of course, are usually necessary in order to establish conclusions, and the one thing Kenney is in short supply of. The only two tangible ones given seem to be that divorce rates are up and half the church is inactive (is that supposed to surprise us?).

Kenney doubts that "today's Saints are any closer to perfection individually" than former ones. Perfection is hard to measure, but there are statistics that do indicate growth outside of a mere increase in numbers. One, for example, is that statistics from turn of the century testimony meetings indicate that, on the average, about six testimonies were born per meeting, by males in their forties. The situation today is much improved.

Kenney combines two critical priesthood

questions into one: "Would you do something you didn't agree with?" and "Would you do something if you knew it was wrong?"—two separate issues. I, too, do not always agree with home teaching, but I feel it's my duty to obey it. On the other hand, my great-great grandfather was John D. Lee who *did* obey his stake president at Mountain Meadows. Members are always encouraged to seek the Holy Ghost in making decisions about obeying orders they think are morally wrong. God may tell Nephi or Abraham to kill, but he always does it directly and not through some priesthood intermediary. I know of no instance where a member was told to follow a priesthood leader against the will of the Lord, as revealed by the Holy Ghost. Indeed, I have often wondered if the whole point of many seemingly outrageous commands is not to force us back into the questioning, praying, asking activities that may have once been the focus of our lives when we were first seeking a testimony. I am not convinced Kenney gave his president the correct answer.

Kenney is also able to draw all inclusive church-wide condemnations from some personal negative experiences. A squabble in his quorum (five paragraphs, by the way, of Kenney's resentment against home teaching which have nothing to do with Niebuhr's thesis) leads somehow to one logical conclusion: "we [all of us?] ignore criticism from abroad and suppress challenge from within." (Does Kenney really believe all criticism is ignored by the Church?)

Likewise, a single negative reaction that came "down through the channels" (once again, a fact would be nice—who said no? How high did the suggestion reach?) can only mean one thing to Kenney: "The Church does not want to publicize a problem . . . the never married [etc.] . . . are the minorities we wish would just go away."

I am not arguing with Niebuhr's thesis: we probably do so many things on behalf of the Church which we might never do for our own selves. I am glad Kenney has brought this warning voice to us (his IWY paragraph is actually a good example that supports the thesis). I am sure there are some in the Church who may act as agents of "intolerance, oppression, guilt, and domination," but I doubt President Kimball would. (Again, the need for definition of who actually speaks or acts as "the Church").

Kenney certainly shows no more tolerance of certain attitudes than those he criticizes. In neither case is "intolerance" diminished. Indeed, upon

first reading the article, I began to despise Kenney's mission president, and I don't even know his name. I would love to "ostracize" the president—hardly the emotion Kenney is advocating.

The basic premise is interesting and valid. The very fact that I have written only proves Niebuhr's point (I feel Kenney has criticized my "Church" so I react strongly—would I have written as strongly if Kenney had merely attacked me?) Be that as it may, Kenney in no way provides the facts or support for the sweeping negative generalities he concludes with in his final five paragraphs.

Robin Allen
Arcadia, California

Destiny Foreknown

Kent Robson in his article "Time and Omniscience in Mormon Theology" spends four pages of scriptural references and documentation proving that predestination (not in the Calvinistic sense, but in the sense that our earthly acts are pre-determined by our spiritual character that has been forming for an eternity) is a gospel principle, then he backs down from an acceptance of that principle and concludes on purely emotional grounds that God cannot know all our future actions.

Had Mr. Robson tested his conclusion with a few scriptural examples, he would have realized that his conclusion is unfounded and that predestination, as described in the scriptures and as I have defined it, is a true principle. Let us look at two examples from the scriptures to prove my point. The "Professor Charles Anthon Incident" that is prophesied of in Isaiah (Isaiah 29:11 or 2 Nephi 27:18) and the Book of Mormon prophecy (2 Nephi 3:15) about a Joseph, son of a Joseph, who would fulfill an important work in the latter-days, can be explained in only two ways: (1) God knew the persons involved in the prophecies so well that he could accurately predict their future earthly actions or (2) the prophecies are mere "openings" that will be fulfilled by men forced to play the roles that God has written. Of course we must dismiss the second alternative because it rules out the free agency of man. These examples clearly show that a destiny awaited the individuals involved—a destiny based on their own previous actions.

The underlying fact which Mr. Robson has failed to examine is the basis of human action. Certainly our actions are not pre-determined by God, neither are they simple animal reactions to the present environment of earth life, but all

of our actions stem from the pre-mortal character that we ourselves shaped through an eternity of choices. God is well acquainted with those characters so

much so that their futures lie open for him to read, but in no way does his reading of them affect the characters or their agency.

Roger Rope
Salt Lake City

Update

History Division Transfer

LDS Church President Spencer W. Kimball recently announced the establishment of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of Church History at BYU and the transfer of the History Division of the LDS Church Historical Department to the new Institute.

The Library and Archives Division and the Arts and Sites Division will remain under the Historical Department at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City, he noted.

Leonard J. Arrington, managing director of the History Division and holder of the Lemuel Hardison Redd Jr. Chair of Western History at BYU, will be director

of the new Institute. The History Division will remain housed in Salt Lake for the immediate future, but lines of authority and organizational relationships for the new institute at the university are being determined, according to BYU President Jeffrey R. Holland.

Change at BYU

The release of Dallin Oaks as president of Brigham Young University in May has produced a good deal of controversy, as reported in The Front Page section of *Utah Holiday* magazine (August 1980, pp. 11-12). Rumors have surfaced, according to the article, mainly because of the abrupt way in which Oaks was

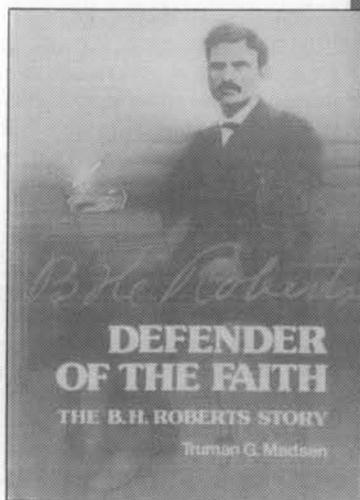
released—Oaks was informed only the day before and thus had made no plans concerning his possible return to law practice or teaching.

The magazine article asks the following question: "Could the church find a more graceful, public relations-conscious way of handling major personnel changes so as to avert criticism, skepticism, and rumors?" According to a Mormon University of Utah professor quoted, "It was the arbitrary way of letting Oaks go that was bothersome. Why? People wondered if he'd done something bad. There was no concern for P.R., let alone his personal feelings. It left people with the feeling that Oaks was getting dumped." Echoes a BYU professor, "The Mormon establishment fell on its face in the most graceless way possible." Oaks explained that the BYU presidency is handled in Church style (a person is "released" from a "quasi-church position") rather than in regular university or government style. This procedure seemed to fuel speculation.

The speculation has centered, according to the article, around explanations tying the event to alleged contentions between BYU's Government Department and President Ezra Taft Benson who had pressured the department to promote

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Written by a member of the Council of the Twelve, here are deep insights and authoritative counsel on the meaning of the temple experience. This outstanding book gives information about temples and temple work for both the living and the dead. Whether or not you have been through the temple, you will find this book enlightening.

conservative politics. There had been conflict, according to *Utah Holiday*, because one instructor had scheduled a guest speaker who claimed to be a Mormon and a Communist. University administrators had also resisted the appointment of conservative Richard Vetterli to the government faculty because they felt there were more academically qualified candidates.

Oaks denied such rumors: "I haven't been involved with any infighting with Ezra Taft Benson, nor with any member of the board. We've had policy disagreements, but I'm not aware of any circumstance of any board member trying to undercut me, nor any circumstance where I have tried to undercut any member of the board. I don't have that kind of relationship with them."

Successor Jeffrey Holland, Church Commissioner of Education for four years before his appointment as BYU president at age 39, wasted no time in taking the reins at the university. Robert K. Thomas, who has been BYU academic vice president since 1967, was named as the first Presidential Fellow at the University. Jae R. Ballif was appointed new academic vice president and also provost and as such will automatically serve as acting president of the university in the absence of the president. W. Rolfe Kerr, president of Dixie College in St. George since 1976, became executive vice president in a merger of responsibilities previously held by Dr. Ballif and by J. Elliot Cameron, former BYU student services vice president and recently named president of BYU-Hawaii Campus.

Two new associate academic vice presidents were announced: Eliot A. Butler, dean of the BYU College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, and Neal E. Lambert, professor of American Studies and English. The two new associate academic vice presidents replaced Chauncey C. Riddle and Leo P. Vernon. Others holding vice-president and assistant-to-the-president positions will continue to serve in the new administration (*BYU Today*, August 1980).

IRS and BYU

The Internal Revenue Service is pursuing its demand that Brigham Young University reveal names of its donors of certain gifts-in-kind and has filed an appeal in Tenth Circuit Court in Denver to a March ruling by the federal district court. U.S. District Judge David K. Winder had ruled that BYU did not have to open its donor records. This overturned the recommendation of U.S. Magistrate Daniel A. Alsup in February.

The case centers around an IRS summons last November ordering the university to turn over the list of donors. The IRS said an audit showed donors had overvalued their contributions by about \$16 million. BYU officials supplied the IRS with the names of donors who contributed mining claims and art objects, types of gifts which accounted for most of the overvaluations the IRS said it had uncovered. But the university refused to release the names of other donors, calling the investigation an "illegal fishing expedition."

Deseret Industries

Deseret Industries will be ordered by the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement to provide back pay to workers in the Deseret Industries' sheltered workshops (Diane Divoky, *Sacramento Bee*, July 1980).

The workshops first came under state scrutiny in June as a result of complaints to state labor officials that employees in the Sacramento operation were paid half the minimum wage. Wages less than the minimum wage are allowed under California state law only if the employing agency has documented that a worker's productivity has been lessened by a handicap. According to the article Deseret Industries employees were routinely paid half the minimum wage although medical records did not demonstrate that the handicapping conditions limited their productivity. For example, the age of an employee or an unnamed "emotional problem" was sometimes the reason for the underpayment.

Blood Indians Vent Anger

In July Blood Indians camped on the northern edge of Cardston, Alberta, Canada, pledging to pull all their money out of banks in the town of 3200 and refusing to purchase anything from Cardston businesses. President of the Cardston Chamber of Commerce, Bill Meyer, conceded that such economic sanctions would hurt since 30 to 40 percent of business is with the estimated 5000 Indians on the reserve nearby.

Anger was directed at Cardston residents and specifically at the Mormon Church. The town was founded by Mormon pioneers and is the site of a temple. This is the latest turn in the dispute over the Bloods' claim to land they say is rightfully theirs—land that takes in the town. Meyer conceded that there is uncertainty about deals made between whites and Indians a century ago.

Blood Indians claimed they have heard racist statements from town residents, been refused service in local businesses,

and been refused treatment in the local hospital. They now plan to take their economic revenge. (*Calgary Herald*, 30 July 1980).

Zion

The Church's sesquicentennial finale characteristically took the form of an historic pageant called "Zion". Written by committee, "Zion" concisely unfolded 150 years of LDS history from Joseph Smith and the pioneer period to modern-day missionary work. Free tickets offered by the Church for this final event guaranteed large and enthusiastic audiences for "Zion's" five-day run at the Tabernacle, September 24-26, 30, and October 1.

Learn—Then Teach

"Learn—Then Teach" was the theme of this year's general Relief Society Meeting held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on September 27 and broadcasted to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Korea, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and throughout the United States. Conducted by President Barbara B. Smith, the meeting included remarks by the Relief Society General Presidency and members of the Board as well as a major address by Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve and a message from President Kimball.

Emphasizing "every woman's responsibility to increase her learning for her own benefit and to bless all those within her circle of influence," the female speakers encouraged the women of the Church to become intelligent, charitable sisters and homemakers. Elder Packer stressed the importance of activity in the Relief Society, even to the point of paring down or abandoning altogether membership and participation in non-Church related organizations. Warning women against being seduced by the philosophies of the world, he stated that the Relief Society not only offers walls of protection, but a means to satisfy every "need" and "yearning" and correct every "abuse" and "neglect."

The tabernacle was decorated with a hand-quilted hanging theme panel and sheaves of wheat, "symbolic of the wheat garnered by Relief Society sisters more than a century ago." After the meeting, an open house was held and selected local women leaders of the community were invited to share "Learning Experiences In Food"—the serving of common foods in an uncommon way, including tables of seasonal menus and table settings. It was hoped that each stake receiving the broadcast would hold their own open house.

Sunday School Supplement

GENESIS AND A SAMPLING OF THE BEST BOOKS

In the D&C it encourages us to "study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people" (D&C 90:15). With this in mind we have chosen excerpts from some of the "best books" on the Old Testament, with an emphasis on the book of Genesis. This is followed by a select bibliography on aspects of the Old Testament. If you have particular areas of interest or questions we encourage you to write to Sunstone with your requests. We will try to handle these through personal correspondence or in future columns of the Sunday School Supplement.

Science and Genesis

It seems unlikely, for instance, that Adam was the first "flesh" on this planet, created before all other forms of

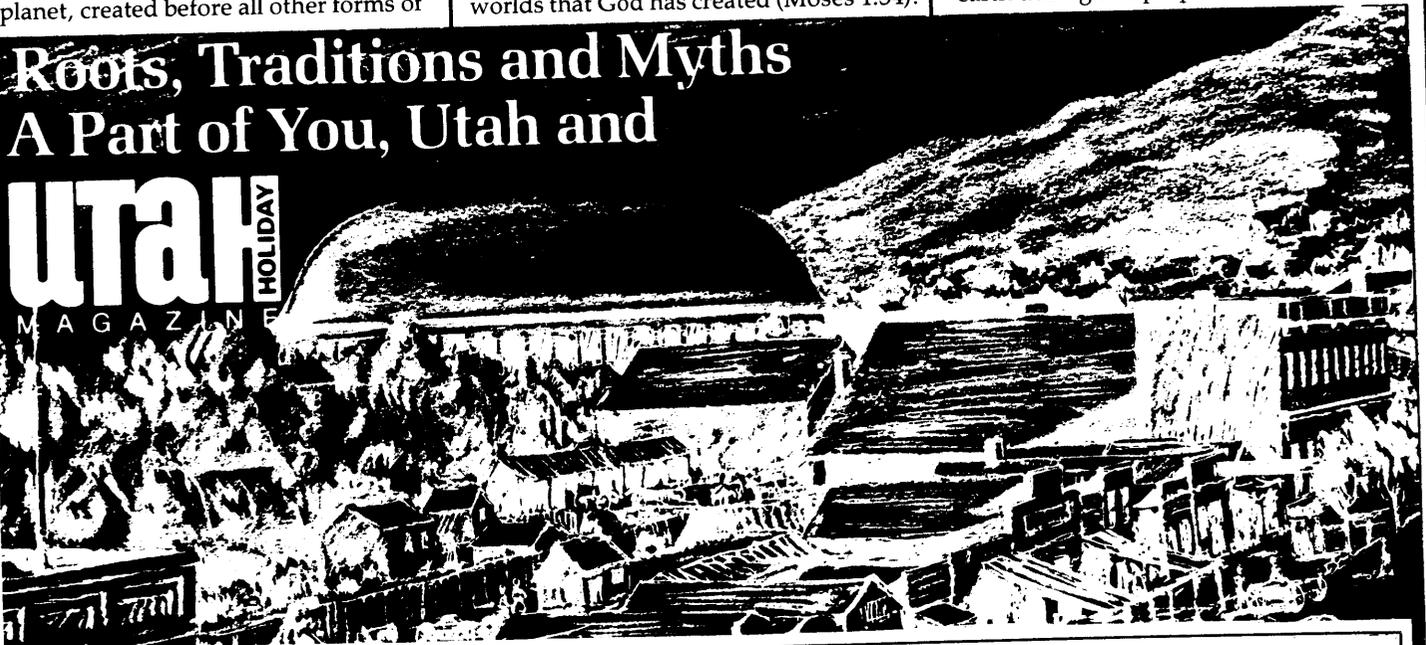
life, as some traditional religious interpretations would insist. It seems also unlikely that Adam was the first bipedal hominid to walk on the earth. Still, we have the scriptural account which clearly states that Adam was the first man on earth. . . . Perhaps what the scripture is really telling us is that Adam was the first to receive knowledge and power from God; perhaps he was the first to receive a spirit that was the offspring of diety; perhaps, as some religionists have suggested, Adam was the first of his particular race, brought here from some other place, though this does not fit easily into the picture that science has of orderly gradual processes on this planet. But whatever the source of his physical body, "Adam" is the name of the person who fills the role referred to in scripture as the "first man"—a role duplicated on all the worlds that God has created (Moses 1:34).

In our view, the questions concerning what happened on this earth before Adam came, the source of Adam's physical body, and the physical relationship of all of Adam's contemporaries to one another are matters which need not upset religious beliefs no matter how they are resolved, any more than the idea that the earth revolves around the sun should have upset the religious beliefs of the people in the time of Copernicus. In our view, the scriptures *symbolize* the Creation and the relationship between God and the connubial pair called Adam and Eve. We know that a spirit son of God called Michael participated in the creation of the earth and later took up the mortal role of Adam, the "first man", and with his wife Eve became the progenitors of those in whom God had a special interest. More than this, the scriptures do not plainly tell us about the identity of Adam and Eve.

It is obvious from our studies that the earth's crust required long preparation before it could provide an adequate supply of minerals, fossil fuels, and soils to support modern life. It is also obvious that man could not have survived on earth during this preparation time. He

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could not for instance, have endured the intensely swampy conditions necessary for the huge dinosaurs that dominated the earth during much of prehistoric times and that are one basis for the fuel that runs our modern machinery. Man had to come in his turn, following the proper development of earth and of life.

The scriptures, having been written as spiritual guides to the posterity of Adam and Eve, are predictably silent about the long preparation period of prehistory and about the manlike inhabitants of the ancient earth. But in fact, none of the writings of mankind were concerned with ancient hominids until their remains were discovered in the earth in modern time. Now the evidence for their existence over very long periods of prehistoric time is undeniable. That these ancient creatures existed is certain. Who they were in an eternal sense and the nature of their relationship to Adam's living posterity is not certain.

There are many unanswered questions to challenge the ingenuity of scientists. As religious scientists who believe in the literal historical existence of two people named Adam and Eve, who believe in the fall of man from the presence of God into mortality, who believe in the atonement of Jesus Christ, who believe in our own kinship with God, we must not be afraid to wonder about the unanswered questions of life. We need not accept the speculations of our colleagues if they insist on denying what we know from modern revelation. But neither can we ignore these speculations or the evidence that leads to them. Ignoring the evidence does not make it go away; ignoring the interpretations made of this evidence does not make our colleagues abandon their interpretations nor does it weaken the impressions these interpretations make on the scientific and lay communities. To have an influence on the outcome, we must stay in the game with our eyes open, playing hard.

So we do not retire to the corner and close our eyes. We accept the challenges of our existence, as we accept its splendors. Assured of God's interest in us and in the earth he created to be our home, we continue to probe in order to understand both the earth and ourselves. Assured of the divine purpose in our own lives, we continue to observe and to synthesize parts of the grand truths of the universe from our limited observations. We have confidence that when the time is right, the limitations to our perceptions will be removed. We believe that if our lives are acceptable to our Father and if our minds are adequately prepared, one day we

will receive and comprehend the truth of all things. We have that promise from God himself.

Ray T. Mathene, "Man's Tie to the Earth: A View From An Anthropologist" in *Science & Religion: Toward A More Useful Dialogue*, Vol. 2, edited by Wilford M. Hess, Raymond T. Mathene, and Donlu D. Thayer (Geneva, Ill.: Paladin House, Publishers, 1979), p. 234-35.

Creation Records

Without actual revelation, we shall probably never fully comprehend the relationship of early man to the scriptural account of man beginning with Adam's family. And since this information is not presently critical to our exaltation, we may never receive revelation on the subject in this life. However, realizing that our Father in Heaven expects us to seek and understand all truth, we have a responsibility to seek as much understanding as we can concerning the presence of the "pre-Adamic man." His presence in an age long before Adam is becoming well established fact. His technological and physical development in time present a remarkable parallel.

There are two records of the creation story, one in the scriptures, and one in the crust of the earth. We know the scriptural account reveals to us why, but not how the creation occurred. Perhaps the crust of the earth is revealing how it occurred. We can be sure of one thing—in the end both accounts, when fully understood, will come together into perfect harmony, for there cannot be two contradicting truths about the creation of the world.

Another thing is also sure—each year more and more information is being brought to light on these problems. While we are waiting for the day when the whole story will be clear, we cannot ignore seemingly contradictory facts.

Bernhart E. Johnson, "Primitive Technology and the Advent of Man and Civilization: A Developmental Parallelism," *Ibid.*, p. 208.

Patriarchal Traditions

The Patriarchal traditions are essentially historical in nature, although there is an admixture of the legendary and mythical, and furthermore these cannot always be disentangled.

David Noel Freedman, "The Real Story of the Ebla Tablets, Ebla, and the Cities of the Plain," *Biblical Archeologist* 41 (December 1978):145. An address delivered at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

At the least, we can say two things about the composers, compilers, and editors of the Book of Genesis: (1) They were seriously concerned to get the story

straight. Like good reporters they were careful about details and preserved the names of persons and places accurately. (2) They had access to authentic historical records, either written or oral or both, but in any case reliable, although minor mistakes, mis-attributions, and the like are to be expected. (*Ibid.*, p. 155.)

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THE ◊ MORMON ◊ CONCEPT ◊ OF ◊ A



MOTHER ◊ IN ◊ HEAVEN ◊

Linda Wilcox

Editors' Note

This paper and response were delivered at SUNSTONE's 1980 Mormon Theological Symposium

The idea of a Mother in Heaven is a shadowy and elusive one floating around the edges of Mormon consciousness. Mormons who grow up singing "O My Father" are familiar with the concept of a Heavenly Mother, but few hear much else about her. She exists, apparently, but has not been very evident in Mormon meetings or writings, and little if any "theology" has been developed to elucidate her nature and characterize our relationship to her.

While nearly all world religions have had female divinities and feminine symbolism, the god of western Judeo-Christian culture and scripture has been almost unremittingly masculine.¹ Still, the idea of a heavenly mother or a female counterpart to the male father-god is not unknown in Christianity. Recently discovered gnostic texts from the first century after Christ reveal doctrinal teachings about a divine Mother as well as Father. In some texts God is conceived of as a dyad, both male and female. There is also a body of writings which identifies the divine Mother as the Holy Spirit, the third member of

MOTHER IN HEAVEN

Here is a Heavenly Mother who is a competent, productive female figure who is also a sexual being.

the Trinity, which then becomes a family group—the Father, Mother, and Son.²

Christianity has also had the elevation of Mary in Catholicism. From first being the Mother of God, Mary eventually became the mother of everyone as she took on a mediating function and became a divine presence to whom prayers could be addressed. This feminization of the divine made possible some further theological developments such as the fourteenth-century thought of Dame Julian of Norwich, who wrote about the Motherhood as well as Fatherhood of God and developed a symbolism of Christ as Mother.³

The nineteenth-century American milieu from which Mormonism sprang had some prototypes for a female deity as well. Ann Lee had proclaimed herself as the feminine incarnation of the Messiah, as Christ had been the male incarnation—a necessary balance in her system since she described a god which was both male and female, Father and Mother. The Father-Mother god of the Shakers and Christian Scientists included both sexes in a form of divine androgyny, as in this prayer by Mary Baker Eddy:

Father-Mother Gôd
Loving Me
Guard me while I sleep
Guide my little feet up to Thee.⁴

By the end of the century Elizabeth Cady Stanton in her *Woman's Bible* was explaining Genesis 1:26-28 ("And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . .") as implying the "simultaneous creation of both sexes, in the image of God. It is evident from the language," she writes, "that the masculine and feminine elements were equally represented" in the Godhead which planned the peopling of the earth. To her, as in the gnostic texts, a trinity of Father, Mother and Son was more rational, and she called for "the recognition by the rising generation of an ideal Heavenly Mother, to whom their prayers should be addressed, as well as to a Father."⁵

Half a century before Mrs. Stanton's *Woman's Bible* the Mormon religion had begun to develop a doctrine of just such a Heavenly Mother—a glorified goddess, spouse to an actual Heavenly Father, and therefore the literal mother of our spirits. While the need for a divine feminine element in religion is perhaps universal, the form it took in Mormonism was particularly well suited to other aspects of Mormon theology. The Mother in Heaven concept was a logical and natural extension of a theology which posited both an anthropomorphic God who had once been a man and the possibility of eternal procreation of spirit children.

Origins in Mormonism

The origins of the Heavenly Mother concept in Mor-

monism are shadowy. The best known exposition is, of course, Eliza R. Snow's poem, "O My Father," or—the title it was known by earlier—"Invocation, or the Eternal Father and Mother." When the poem was first published in the *Times and Seasons* it carried the notation, "City of Joseph, Oct. 1845," but the actual date of composition is not known. (It does not appear in Eliza's notebook/diary for the years 1842-1844.)⁶

Although President Wilford Woodruff gave Eliza R. Snow credit for originating the idea—"That hymn is a revelation, though it was given unto us by a woman."⁷—it is more likely that Joseph Smith was the first to expound the doctrine of a Mother in Heaven. Joseph F. Smith claimed that God revealed that principle ('that we have a mother as well as a father in heaven') to Joseph Smith; Joseph Smith revealed it to Eliza Snow Smith, his wife; and Eliza Snow was inspired, being a poet, to put it into verse.⁸

Other incidents tend to confirm this latter view. Susa Young Gates told of Joseph's consoling Zina Diantha Huntington on the death of her mother in 1839 by telling her that not only would she know her mother again on the other side, but, "More than that, you will meet and become acquainted with your eternal Mother, the wife of your Father in Heaven." Susa went on to say that about this same time Eliza R. Snow "learned the same glorious truth from the same inspired lips" and was then moved to put this truth into verse.⁹ Since Zina Huntington and Eliza were close friends as well, it was also a likely possibility that Zina might have spoken of this idea to Eliza.¹⁰

Women were not the only ones to have had some acquaintance with the idea of a Mother in Heaven during the lifetime of Joseph Smith. There is a third-hand account of an experience related by Zebedee Coltrin:

One day the Prophet Joseph asked him and Sidney Rigdon to accompany him into the woods to pray. When they had reached a secluded spot Joseph laid down on his back and stretched out his arms. He told the brethren to lie one on each arm, and then shut their eyes. After they had prayed he told them to open their eyes. They did so and saw a brilliant light surrounding a pedestal which seemed to rest on the earth. They closed their eyes and again prayed. They then saw, on opening them, the Father seated upon a throne; they prayed again and on looking saw the Mother also; after praying and looking the fourth time they saw the Savior added to the group.¹¹

Church leaders of the nineteenth century, though they did not speak much about a Mother in Heaven, seemed to accept the idea as a commonsense one, that for God to be a father implied the existence of a mother as well. Brigham Young said that God "created man, as we create our children; for there is no other process of creation in heaven, on the earth, in the earth, or under the earth, or in all the eternities, that is, that were, or that ever will be"¹²—an indirect reference to the necessity of a

mother for the process of creation. He also quoted Heber C. Kimball's recollection of Joseph Smith's saying "that he would not worship a God who had not a Father; and I do not know that he would if he had not a mother; the one would be as absurd as the other."¹³

Erastus Snow also used indirect inference in explaining the logic of the Heavenly Mother concept. "Now, it is not said in so many words in the Scriptures, that we have a Mother in heaven as well as a Father," he admitted. "It is left for us to infer this from what we see and know of all living things in the earth including man. The male and female principle is united and both necessary to the accomplishment of the object of their being, and if this be not the case with our Father in heaven after whose image we are created, then it is an anomaly in nature. But to our minds the idea of a Father suggests that of a Mother."¹⁴

Snow was somewhat distinct from other Mormon leaders in that he described God as a unity of male and female elements, much like the Shakers' Father-Mother God.

"What," says one, "do you mean we should understand that Deity consists of man and woman?" Most certainly I do. If I believe anything that God has ever said about himself, and anything pertaining to the creation and organization of man upon the earth, I must believe that Deity consists of man and woman . . . there can be no God except he is composed of the man and woman united, and there is not in all the eternities that exist, nor ever will be, a God in any other way . . . There never was a God, and there never will be in all eternities, except they are made of these two component parts; a man and a woman; the male and the female.¹⁵

To Erastus Snow, God was not a male personage, with a Heavenly Mother being a second divine personage; both of them together constituted God.

This development of theology by means of inference and commonsense extension of ordinary earth-life experience continued on into the twentieth century. In fact, it is the primary approach taken by most of those who have made mention of a Mother in Heaven. Bruce R. McConkie in *Mormon Doctrine*, for example, says that "An exalted and glorified Man of Holiness (Moses 6:57) could not be a Father unless a Woman of like glory, perfection, and holiness was associated with him as a Mother. The begetting of children makes a man a father and a woman a mother whether we are dealing with man in his mortal or immortal state."¹⁶

One reason why little theology was developed about a Heavenly Mother is that the scriptural basis for the doctrine was very slim. But Joseph Fielding Smith noted that "the fact that there is no reference to a mother in heaven either in the Bible, Book of Mormon or Doctrine and Covenants, is not sufficient proof that no such thing as a mother did exist there."¹⁷ One possible reason for this gap in the scriptures is offered by a twentieth-century



Seminary teacher: "Considering the way man has profaned the name of God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, is it any wonder that the name of our Mother in Heaven has been withheld, not to mention the fact that the mention of Her is practically nil in scripture?"¹⁸

The Twentieth Century

In looking now at statements by Church leaders in the twentieth century, I should like to zero in briefly on three time periods. (The examples presented here are not exhaustive, and I suspect that similar ideas on the subject turn up at other times throughout the century.) The three periods are: the first decade of the century, the 1920s and 1930s, and finally the more recent period of the 1960s and 1970s, and I would like to take note of some themes which are apparent in these time periods—themes which may be illustrative of developments in the larger society as well.

For example, right after the turn of the century one noticeable thread which ran through several comments about the Mother in Heaven was an association of that doctrine with the movement for women's rights, a major issue in the last years of the nineteenth century, especially in Utah. James E. Talmage in discussing the status and mission of women spoke of the early granting of the franchise to women in Utah and the Mormon church's claim that woman is man's equal. In this context he then went on to say,

The Church is bold enough to go so far as to declare that man has an Eternal Mother in the Heavens as well as an Eternal Father, and in the same sense "we look upon woman as a being, essential in every particular to the carrying out of God's purposes in respect to mankind."¹⁹

An article in the *Deseret News* noted that the truthfulness of the doctrine of a Mother in Heaven would eventually be accepted by the world—that "it is a truth from which, when fully realized, the perfect 'emancipation' and en-

nobling of woman will result."²⁰ To many, the concept of a Mother in Heaven was a fitting expression of a larger movement which aimed at raising the status of women and expanding their rights and opportunities.

Another theme, evident elsewhere in American thought as well as in Mormonism, was the yearning for a female divinity—the need for a nurturing presence in the universe. A Mother in Heaven thus exemplified and embodied all those maternal qualities which men had experienced as so warm and soul-filling in their own mothers (or which they perhaps had not experienced and so now desperately wanted) and which were generally absent in a male god that perhaps reflected a stern, closed-in image of Victorian manhood. A national article excerpted in the *Deseret News* said that the world was coming to accept the idea of a Mother in Heaven. It spoke of the tendency for human beings to crave, especially in times of grief and anguish, the tenderness, gentleness, and sympathy of a mother-figure which must in some way "be resident in the Divine Being."²¹ And in the *Millennial Star* an article noted how not only small children but also adults need and want a mother figure as a divine personage. "The heart of man craves this faith and has from time immemorial demanded the deification of woman."²²

But also in that first decade the Mormon church's teaching of the Mother in Heaven doctrine was criticized and challenged by the Salt Lake Ministerial Association in 1907 as being unchristian.²³ B.H. Roberts responded by claiming that the ministers were inconsistent. They object to the idea of Jesus having a literal Heavenly Father, he said, but then they also complain because "we believe that we have for our spirits a heavenly mother as well as a heavenly father!"

Now observe the peculiar position of these critics: It is all right for Jesus to have a mother; but it is all wrong for him to have a father. On the other hand, it is all right for men's spirits to have a Father in heaven, but our reviewers object to our doctrine of their having a mother there.²⁴

Two years later the First Presidency of the Mormon Church issued a statement entitled "The Origin of Man." Although much of this message was concerned with explicating a Mormon view of man's (and woman's) earthly origins, the statement also took up the question of man's (and woman's) spiritual beginnings as well. While couching the doctrine partially in abstract generalities such as that "man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents," the statement also made a clear and explicit reference to a Mother in Heaven. "All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother," it said, "and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity."²⁵ By 1909, then, if not before, the Mother in Heaven was an official part of Mormon belief. Joseph Fielding Smith described this as one of (presumably several) "official and authoritative statements" about this doctrine.²⁶

Everlasting Motherhood

In the 1920s and 1930s there seemed to be an emphasis on the idea of "eternal" motherhood or "everlasting" motherhood, with several sermons or articles having titles of this sort or dealing with this theme. Somehow it seemed important to emphasize that motherhood was as

ongoing and eternal as was godhood. Joseph A. Widtsoe, for example, found a "radiant warmth" in the

thought that among the exalted beings in the world to come we shall find a mother who possesses the attributes of Godhood.

Such conceptions raise motherhood to a high position. They explain the generous provision made for women in the Church of Christ. To be a mother is to engage in the eternal work of God.²⁷

Melvin J. Ballard carried on the theme of everlasting motherhood when he noted that "motherhood is eternal with Godhood, and there is no such thing as eternal or endless life without the eternal and endless continuation of motherhood." With more fervor than accuracy, Ballard claimed that there was not one single life form on earth without a mother—hence "there is no life in the realms that are above and beyond us, unless there also is a mother." Perhaps unaware of other strains of Christian thought—not to mention other cultures and religions which worshiped female deities—Ballard called the Mother in Heaven concept a "startling doctrine" which was "so far as I know, never taught before in the history of the world." He also emphasized the noble, goddess-like aspects of the Heavenly Mother. She stands side by side with the Heavenly Father "in all her glory, a glory like unto his . . . a companion, the Mother of his children." She is "a glorified, exalted, ennobled Mother."²⁸

German Ellsworth, who served as mission president of the Northern States, also stressed the theme of "Eternal Motherhood" and noted that finally, after eighty years, the world was coming to accept the doctrine that if we had a heavenly father we must have had a heavenly mother as well. Ellsworth linked this doctrine specifically to the "true mission of women" on the earth, which was to be mothers. In particular, "the women of Zion can rejoice and take heart in the great calling given to them, in being privileged to be the earthly mothers of the elect sons of our Heavenly Father." The Mother in Heaven concept seems important to Ellsworth mainly as a role model for women, who were to help achieve the (by then dying) Progressive ideal by wanting to become mothers and seeking "to build up a better race—to successfully do their part in peopling the earth with a noble and intelligent class of citizens."²⁹ These examples share an attempt to raise the status of the mothering role, or of women specifically as mothers, by pointing out that the Mother in Heaven role is as important and eternal as that of God.

In more recent times we can see some widening out, with a greater variety of images presented by General Authorities who speak about a Mother in Heaven. Joseph Fielding Smith, much like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, quotes Genesis 1:26—"Let us make man in our image after our likeness" (italics his)—and suggests, "Is it not feasible to believe that female spirits were created in the image of a 'Mother in Heaven'?"³⁰ His emphasis implies that a female goddess was involved in the planning and decision making, was part of whatever group of exalted beings decided to create earthly men and women.

H. Burke Peterson in 1974 emphasized the Heavenly Mother's role as producer of spirit offspring. In asking Church members to count the cost of a mother working outside the home, he warned about the danger of be-

The Mother in Heaven was a fitting expression of a larger movement which aimed at raising the status of women.



coming "a mother whose energy is so sapped that she is sometimes neglecting her call from the Lord, a call that will one day prepare her to become an eternal mother—a cocreator of spiritual offspring."³¹ One supposes that by "her call" Brother Peterson means the care of her children and is suggesting that the complex responsibility of nurturing and guiding one's children is the most valuable preparation for eventually becoming an exalted goddess-mother.

Two years ago President Spencer W. Kimball expressed a view of the Mother in Heaven as "the ultimate in maternal modesty" and "restrained, queenly elegance." He also emphasized her great influence on us: "Knowing how profoundly our mortal mothers have shaped us here," he said, "do we suppose her influence on us as individuals to be less if we live so as to return there?"³² Here we have maternal nurturing attributes and also a recognition of an exalted goddess quality in the Mother in Heaven.

At the same conference Neal A. Maxwell presented this version of the role and activities of our Heavenly Mother:

When we return to our real home, it will be with the "mutual approbation" of those who reign in the "royal courts on high." There we will find beauty such as mortal "eye hath not seen;" we will hear sounds of surpassing music which mortal "ear hath not heard." Could such a regal homecoming be possible without the anticipatory arrangements of a Heavenly Mother?³³

One of a Heavenly Mother's duties, it seems, might be to provide an aesthetically pleasing environment with sights and sounds of unimaginable glory to welcome her children home.

"We honor woman when we acknowledge Godhood in her eternal Prototype," says an article in the *Millennial Star*.³⁴ This brief survey of some of the images which have been expressed about a less-than-well-defined entity suggest that one's concept of a Mother in Heaven may reflect one's views about real women and their roles. Those who see women as basically baby factories might tend to emphasize the feminine deity's role as producer of spirit children. Those who consider women to be more

refined and spiritual than men (on a pedestal, so to speak) may emphasize the Heavenly Mother's nobility and queenly attributes—and so forth.

Grass-Roots Attention

What seems to be happening currently as far as development of the Mother in Heaven concept is concerned is that there is an increasing awareness of and attention to the idea at the grass-roots level in the Church—particularly among women, and in informal ways. A sampling of the poems submitted to the last Eliza R. Snow Poetry Contest sponsored by the Relief Society illustrates one strain of such thought.

In the memory of one of the judges, this year was the first in which there were several poems submitted dealing with the subject of a Heavenly Mother. Collectively, these poems picture a Mother in Heaven who is the quintessence of femininity and nurturing motherhood. She has a "radiant face," a "soft firm voice." She smiles a lot, although often her "gentle eyes fill with tears." Her spirit children learn wisdom at her knee. She gives tender goodbye kisses to her daughters as they leave for their earth missions. She passes out advice to set goals, overcome discouragement, take time to appreciate beauty—and in times of despair to call upon one's Heavenly Father and Elder Brother for help and comfort.

She is "the Father's cherished half" who "surely must merit His eternal love." She is described as a "Goddess, a Priestess, and a loving companion" and enough of a noble presence in the celestial realms that perhaps "the heavenly flowers bend with adoration" and "the animals await your caress."

There is speculation in these poems about the Mother in Heaven's role in sending spirit children to earth. One poem has her announcing and justifying the departure times for various spirits. Another, in contrast, has a daughter running to tell the Mother the news of her impending departure. There is also speculation about what the Mother in Heaven's previous earth-life experience was like—and the supposition that it was very much like our own.

Also evident in these poems is a vague sense of not really knowing enough to feel as close as one would like to the Heavenly Mother—wondering about her name and how we might react to it were we to know it, transferring the Father's attributes to her, yet realizing that she can only be apprehended "darkly"—and a resultant feeling of unease and incompleteness.

Although the content and style of these poems is what might be considered traditional or conventional as regards the Mother in Heaven role, the poems themselves are indicative of a wider interest in the concept of a Heavenly Mother among mainstream Church members than has perhaps been usual in the course of Mormon church history.³⁵

A recent cartoon shows a wife asking her husband, "What do you think Heavenly Mother's attitudes are about polygamy, Frank?" to which the husband responds, "Which Heavenly Mother?" A question to which there is as yet no definitive answer—but much speculation—is whether there is more than one Mother in Heaven. The Mormon church's doctrinal commitment to plural marriage as well as the exigencies of producing at least billions of spirit children suggest the probability—some believe necessity—of more than one Mother in Heaven. A Department of Seminaries and Institutes student manual hints at the possibility of multiple heavenly mothers. In a diagram entitled "Becoming a Spirit Child of Heavenly Parents," the individual person (male) is depicted with upward lines to his heavenly parents, the one parent labeled "Heavenly Father" (caps), the other labeled "A heavenly mother" (lower case).³⁶

Lately there has also been increased discussion and speculation about how we can or do relate to our Heavenly Mother (or possibly mothers?). Orson Pratt taught that we are not to worship the mother of our spirits although we worship the father, "for the Father of our spirit is the head of His household, and His wives and children are required to yield the most perfect obedience to their great Head. It is lawful for the children to worship the King of heaven, but not the 'Queen of heaven'." Pratt went on to point out that "Jesus prayed to His Father, and taught His disciples to do likewise; but we are nowhere taught that Jesus prayed to His Heavenly Mother."³⁷ Rudger Clawson, however, pointed out that men as well as women and children crave a Mother in Heaven to worship and "yearn to adore her." He said, "It doesn't take from our worship of the Eternal Father, to adore our Eternal Mother, any more than it diminishes the love we bear our earthly fathers, to include our earthly mothers in our affections."³⁸ Currently there is no encouragement on the part of Mormon church leaders to pray to a Heavenly Mother, and in fact even active discouragement. Whether one can worship or adore her without the mechanism of prayer and/or meditation is an open question.

Still, there has been recently a more evident desire to reach out to Mother in Heaven in some way. A letter to the editor of *Dialogue* about five years ago told of a Mormon woman spending preparatory time in meditation, kneeling privately to pray, and then calling out for the first time, "Mother in Heaven. I believe you may exist. Are you there? We know the Father and the Son, but why have you not revealed yourself?"

"And a wondrous voice clearly answered, 'Good daughter. Until this time, no one asked. The men have not thought to ask.'"³⁹

More women are now wondering and asking. Recently in *Exponent II* Lisa Bolin Hawkins expressed in a poem a prayerful reaching out to ask Heavenly Mother to reveal herself and provide women with an adequate role model of goddesshood:

Another Prayer

Why are you silent, Mother? How can I
Become a goddess when the patterns here
Are those of gods? I struggle, and I try
To mold my womanself to something near
Their goodness. I need you, who gave me birth
In your own image, to reveal your ways:
A rich example of Thy daughters' worth;
Pillar of Womanhood to guide our days;
Fire of power and grace to guide my night
When I am lost.
My brothers question me,
And wonder why I seek this added light.
No one can answer all my pain but Thee.
Ordain me to my womanhood, and share
The light that Queens and Priestesses must bear.⁴⁰

This poem expresses the need which a Heavenly Mother can fill that a male deity cannot and suggests attributes of both nurturance and spiritual power, as in the concept of "ordaining" her daughters and sharing special spiritual light with them.

Other current expressions extend the image of a Heavenly Mother even further. Linda Sillitoe's recent poem is a good example:

Song of Creation

Who made the world, my child?
Father made the rain
silver and forever.
Mother's hand
drew riverbeds and hollowed seas,
drew riverbeds and hollowed seas
to bring the rain home.
Father bridled winds, my child,
to keep the world new.
Mother clashed
fire free from stones
and breathed it strong and dancing,
and breathed it strong and dancing
the color of her hair.
He armed the thunderclouds
rolled out of heaven;
Her fingers flickered
hummingbirds
weaving the delicate white snow,
weaving the delicate white snow;
a waterfall of flowers.
And if you live long, my child,
you'll see snow burst
from thunderclouds
and lightning in the snow;
listen to Mother and Father laughing,
listen to Mother and Father laughing
behind the locked door.⁴¹

Here is a Heavenly Mother who is a full partner and co-creator with the Father (of something other than babies), making riverbeds and seas for the rain he makes, creating

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Also evident is a vague sense of not really knowing enough to feel as close as one would like to the Heavenly Mother.

fire and other elements on an equal basis with him—a competent, productive female figure who is also a sexual being, even outside of the context of bearing spirit children. Images such as this of a Heavenly Mother, reflecting strength, competence, sexuality, and mutuality, are still rare.

So—what can be said about Mormon theology concerning a Heavenly Mother? At present the nineteenth-century generalized image of a female counterpart to a literal male Father God is receiving increased attention and expansion and is becoming more personalized and individualized. The widening “theology” which is developing is more of a “folk” or at least speculative theology rather than systematic development by theologians or definitive pronouncements coming from ecclesiastical leaders of the Church. For the moment, Mother in Heaven can be almost whatever an individual Mormon envisions her to be. Perhaps ironically, we thus set her up, despite herself, to fill the most basic maternal role of all—that of meeting the deepest needs of her children, whatever they might be.

Notes

1. There are a few instances of feminine imagery of God in Christian scripture, such as Isaiah 66:12-13—“Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” and Matthew 23:37—“... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” See also Numbers 11:10-15 and Psalms 91:4. These were pointed out to me by Melodie Moench Charles.
2. See Elaine H. Pagels, “What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity,” *Signs* (Winter 1976), pp. 293-303.
3. See “Dame Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe: Divine Motherhood and Human Sisterhood,” in Elizabeth Clark and Herbert Richardson, *Women and Religion: A Feminist Sourcebook of Christian Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 102-112.
4. Clark and Richardson, p. 164.
5. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible*, pt. 1, 1895-98; reprinted by Arno Press, New York, 1972, in Clark and Richardson, p. 218.
6. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, “The Eliza Enigma: The Life and Legend of Eliza R. Snow,” *Charles Redd Monographs on Western History* 6, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), p. 34; *Times and Seasons* 6 (Nov. 15, 1845), p. 1039.
7. Wilford Woodruff, “Discourse,” *Millennial Star* 56 (April 1894), p. 229 - delivered Oct. 8, 1893.
8. Joseph F. Smith, “Discourse,” *Deseret Evening News*, Feb. 9, 1895. I am indebted to Maureen Ursenbach Beecher for much information regarding Eliza R. Snow and the Mother in Heaven doctrine.
9. Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1911), pp. 15-16.
10. The debate has continued, however. B.H. Roberts spoke of “that splendid hymn of ours on heavenly motherhood, the great throbbing hunger of woman's soul, and which was given to this world through the inspired mind of Eliza R. Snow.” (Perhaps, however, he was referring only to the poem, not the doctrine?) [“Answer to Ministerial Association Review,” delivered at two meetings of M.I.A. Conference, June 9, 1907 (Salt Lake City, 1907), p. 18.] Melvin J. Ballard, however, considered the Mother in Heaven concept a revelation given by Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith. [Mother's Day address in Tabernacle, May 8, 1921, *Journal History*, same date, pp. 1-3.]

Milton R. Hunter in 1945 claimed that the doctrine of a Mother in Heaven originated with Joseph Smith, ascribing to him revelations by which “a more complete understanding of man—especially regarding his personal relationship to Deity—was received than could be found in all of the holy scriptures combined.” Among such new understandings was the “stupendous truth of the existence of a Heavenly Mother” and the “complete realization that we are the offspring of Heavenly Parents.” Hunter said that these ideas became “established facts in Mormon theology” and an “integral part of Mormon philosophy.” [Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages* (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, Inc., 1945), pp. 98-99.]

11. Abraham H. Cannon Journal, Aug. 25, 1880, LDS Church Archives.
12. *Journal of Discourses* 11:122, June 18, 1865.
13. *Journal of Discourses* 9:286, Feb. 23, 1862.
14. *Journal of Discourses* 26:214, May 31, 1885.
15. *Journal of Discourses* 19:269-270, March 3, 1878.
16. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 516.
17. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1960), p. 142.
18. Melvin R. Brooks, *LDS Reference Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), pp. 309-310.
19. James E. Talmage, speech in Tabernacle, Sunday, April 27, 1902, in *Deseret News*, April 28, 1902.
20. “The Divine Feminine,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 4, 1905.
21. George Barlow, “On the Dual Nature of Deity,” *Contemporary Review* 87 (January 1905), p. 83, excerpted in “The Divine Feminine,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 4, 1905.
22. “Our Mother in Heaven,” *Millennial Star* 72 (September 29, 1910), p. 619.
23. “Ministerial Association's Review of Mormon Address to the World,” from text in the *Salt Lake Herald*, June 4, 1907 (Salt Lake City, 1907), p. 8.
24. B.H. Roberts, “Answer to Ministerial Association Review,” delivered at two meetings of M.I.A. Conference, June 9, 1907 (Salt Lake City, 1907), pp. 18-19.
25. First Presidency (Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, Anthon H. Lund). “The Origin of Man,” *Improvement Era* 13 (November 1909), p. 80.
26. Joseph Fielding Smith, “Mothers in Israel,” address delivered at general session of Relief Society Annual Conference, Sept. 30, 1970, *Relief Society Magazine* 57 (December 1970), p. 884.
27. John A. Widtsoe, “Everlasting Motherhood,” *Millennial Star* 90 (May 10, 1928), p. 298.
28. Melvin J. Ballard, address in Tabernacle, May 8, 1921, *Journal History*, same date, pp. 1-3.
29. German E. Ellsworth, “Eternal Motherhood,” *Deseret News*, May 7, 1932, *Journal History*, same date p. 5.
30. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1960), p. 144.
31. H. Burke Peterson, General Conference address, April 5, 1974, *Ensign* (May 1974), p. 32.
32. Spencer W. Kimball, General Conference address, April 1, 1978, *Ensign* (May 1978), p. 11.
33. Neal A. Maxwell, General Conference address, April 1, 1978, *Ensign* (May 1978), p. 11.
34. “Our Mother in Heaven,” *Millennial Star* 72 (September 29, 1910), p. 620.
35. Direct quotes are from the following poems, Sydney Lee Harmer, “My Heavenly Mother;” Nancy Anderson, “Heavenly Mother;” Janet E. Nichols, “The Farewell.” General comments are based on the above poems plus two others—Lynda Jacobs Gardner, “My Heavenly Mother,” and Patricia Michell Sylvestre, “My Mother in Heaven.”
36. LDS Church Department of Seminaries and Institutes, *Book of Mormon Student Manual* (college level), vol. 1, p. 218.
37. Orson Pratt, *The Seer* 1 (October 1853), p. 159.
38. Rudger Clawson was the editor and publisher at the time and so was probably responsible for the unsigned article, “Our Mother in Heaven,” *Millennial Star* 72 (September 29, 1910), pp. 619-620.
39. *Dialogue* 7 (Autumn 1974), p. 7.
40. *Exponent II* 6 (Winter 1980), p. 16.
41. *Dialogue* 12 (Winter 1979), p. 95.

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THE ◊ MORMON ◊ CONCEPT ◊ OF ◊ A MOTHER ◊ IN ◊ HEAVEN ◊ A ◊ PERSONAL ◊ RESPONSE

Grethe B. Peterson

I am pleased to have been asked to respond to Linda's paper dealing with a subject which I consider important theologically, and a subject, that for me is intensely personal. Linda's historical overview provides a lively, well documented, developmental statement of the Mormon concept of a Heavenly Mother. Is this knowledge important? Does it really matter to our belief?

To me, as a committed LDS woman, it is important and it matters greatly. It is important for me to know that Joseph Smith probably taught the principle to Eliza R. Snow inspiring the poetic statement in "O My Father". It is important to know of the variety of statements about a Heavenly Mother made by our leaders throughout the history of the Church. It is exciting to know that Erastus Snow suggested the idea of the male/female unity in God, that was not only remarkable in 1878, but that it is one of the more radical notions being explored by female Christian theologians today. And perhaps, most important of all, Linda's research reinforced for me the continuity and consistency of the Mormon concept of God, which from the beginning accommodated the female principle. Our Heavenly Mother has been with us since the beginning of the Church, but for reasons that are unknown to us at this time, or for reasons that have not yet been explored, she has remained on the "edge of our religious consciousness", (to use Linda's phrase).

For most of my years the concept of a Heavenly Mother was "on the edge of my consciousness" or deep within my unconscious, I'm not sure which. Some years ago, as I was struggling with my own spiritual identity, I experienced a personal confirmation of the existence of my Heavenly Mother, which was and is just as real and important as my knowledge of God the Father and of Jesus Christ. Even though there are no external forms to support her, even though the scriptures do not define her, my Heavenly Mother is an important part of my religious life.

My experience is not unique. As I have shared these feelings with other women, cautiously at first, I have learned of similar feelings and experiences. For some the knowledge of a Mother in Heaven goes back to childhood, taught by a mother or a grandmother. Others speak of spiritual experiences at times of crises when the

Heavenly Mother has manifest herself and provided strength and support for extended periods. Regardless of how or when the knowledge comes, the fact deeply affects personal lives, providing a "new awareness" generating important spiritual strength.

This search for and definition of the female aspect in deity is a major theological concern for women of other faiths. There is a significant body of literature being developed by women exploring their spiritual origins. Linda referred to the discovery of the gnostic texts of Nag Hammadi which Elaine Pagels has researched and written about. Not only does Ms. Pagels point out that we find doctrinal teachings about a divine mother as well as the Father in the first century after Christ, but she goes on to point out that by about 200 AD, virtually all the gnostic sects that included deity as a goddess or as having any female attributes had been omitted from the canonized texts and were branded heretical. She goes on to say that by the time the sorting out of the various writings by the Christians ended, all feminine imagery had disappeared from the Christian tradition.

There is increased interest in understanding the reasons for this exclusion in the doctrine and religious forms of Judeo-Christian faiths, presenting complicated theological problems because the qualities of God as unknowable, omnipotent, immutable and sovereign all seem to fall on the male side of the male/female dichotomy. Where is there room for the female side providing insight, compassion, intuition and love? Speaking about this conflict at the Gilman Lecture Series at Harvard University this spring, Shelia Davancy of the Harvard Divinity School said, "the central problem with this conception of God is that it in turn reinforces and legitimizes the hierarchical ideas in this world from which they sprang." She went on to quote the couplet from Mary Daly, "When God is male, male is God."

Theologically Mormonism does not have this problem. As Linda pointed out, the acknowledgment of a Mother in Heaven goes back to the beginning of the Church. Even though it has not been central to the expounded doctrine, the principle is there and it has found expression in private religious experiences. The Mormon belief on eternal progression and the eternal nature of the

This search for identity and continuity is motivating women to ask questions about their spiritual origins and spiritual models.

family provides a compatible theological base of a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother. However, in the Judeo-Christian faiths, accommodation of the female principle would necessitate an abrupt shift in their concept of God.

It seems to me that the renewed interest in a Heavenly Mother is connected in ways with issues raised in the women's movement, but even more important, it has to do with contemporary concerns about identity and origins. It has to do with the stress many women are experiencing today as a result of dramatic societal role shifts. Women have more options available to them than ever before, demanding a clearer view of values and beliefs. These are essentially issues of identity. Erik Erickson speaks of identity as "that partly conscious and partly unconscious inner sense of 'This is who I am' or 'This is the real me'—which is what a person possesses when feeling most 'real, energetic and confident.'" It seems to me that this search for identity and continuity is motivating women to ask questions about their spiritual origins and spiritual models. For women in the Judeo-Christian faiths it is a search for new forms. For women in the Mormon church it is a re-discovery of an already existing form.

Linda's paper provides us with an important vehicle for that re-discovery. Not only does it represent some solid research on the concept of a Heavenly Mother, but it has helped me to see my own history more clearly, and at the same time, it has raised some important questions about the application of the concept in the institutional church.

It seems to me that the central theological question that the paper raises is one of paradox. Our theology provides for the male/female concept of deity, yet our religious practices do not. Our Mother in Heaven is, and yet she is not. Why, if her existence was taught by the Prophet Joseph and acknowledged by leaders of the Church from the 19th century down to the present, isn't our Mother in Heaven a central part of our religious life and practices?

Another question has to do with the nature and role of our Heavenly Mother. Is the role, as described by most of the leaders of the Church, solely reproductive or is she circumscribed as mortal women are to limited reproductive years, thereby giving her time to be involved with other aspects of creation?

And the sticky question of whether there is more than one Heavenly Mother, as Linda suggested? If that is the case how does one relate to one, or to many, for that matter?

Is it possible that our concept of the role of our Heavenly Mother represents our expectations as to what a woman should be? Is it not equally possible that we define the attributes of our Heavenly Parents by the worldly notions of what is male and what is female?

Is the absence of our Heavenly Mother in our religious

worship a commentary on the culture in which the Church functions? Does her absence imply that women should be on the periphery or in the background? Or does it imply that the earth is not her dominion, and she is not here for good reasons?

And finally, are we so caught up in the worldly male power structure that we are insensitive to the feminine voice? The voice of compassion, conciliation, and peace?

There are no answers for these questions at this time, only speculation and conjecture. This is why the subject is so difficult to deal with in a public forum. If we attempt to answer all the unanswered questions about the role and nature of our Heavenly Mother we may be guilty of constructing our own theology. And yet, it is necessary to explore these questions if we are going to understand ourselves and our beliefs.

But, once again, it is clear to me that we have the mechanism for further definition of the principle through continuous revelation, personally and institutionally. I think that the time has come and that the understanding is coming. Our Prophet is making some important statements about our female spiritual origins, as are the women of the Church, in personal and poetic expressions, as Linda mentions in the poems of Lisa Bolin Hawkins and Linda Sillitoe.

Even though President Kimball has spoken more explicitly and more eloquently than any other of our General Authorities about our spiritual equality and progression, even though he has spoken directly about our Heavenly Mother, we still do not find her in our public prayers or our expounded doctrine. We do not find her in the minds of our little children, or in the hearts of many priesthood holders.

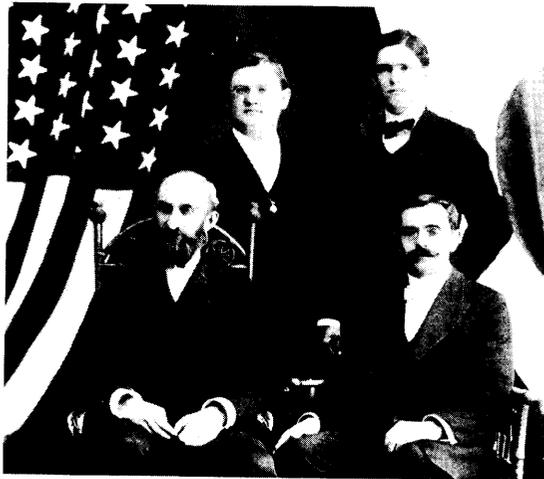
I think we are making some progress, and Linda's paper is an important part of what must be an open discussion and investigation of our feelings and understanding of the female principle in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Up to now, many women feel that the personal knowledge of a Heavenly Mother cannot be shared or even talked about for fear of being misunderstood or for making common an intensely private and sacred knowledge. I understand those feelings, but I have found, as a result of responding to this paper, that sharing is strengthening, and much of the loneliness is gone.

In closing, I keep thinking about the statement made by a dear friend as she was describing her feelings about her personal search for her Heavenly Mother. She said, "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child." Many of us have sensed that feeling of loss, we have been without her for too long. But Linda reminds us that she has always been there, it is time to re-connect and break the silence.

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MORE REFLECTIONS ON THE ROLE OF THE PROPHET



Editors' Note

Last spring we sent over a hundred letters to a cross-section of Mormon thinkers and writers, asking them to submit a short personal essay examining the unique Mormon concept of the

Prophet. We printed five responses in Volume Five, Number Four (July-August 1980) of *SUNSTONE* and are pleased to include six more in this issue.

Mormonism: The Talmudic Phase?

Michael T. Walton

WHILE MANY OF THE ANALOGIES Latter-day Saints perceive between their religion and Judaism are not apparent to scholars of Judaism, one seems particularly relevant to a discussion of Mormonism. Just as Jews came to feel that the Law was fixed and its prophetic supporters were largely phenomena of the past, so Latter-day Saints have come to see a difference between the plenitude of revelation that flowed through Joseph Smith and the administrative efforts of his successors.

The Jewish view that God's revealed way of life was more or less complete in the Law of Moses could have resulted in the ossification and eventual breakdown of the religion. This, however, was not the case. The "scribes," scholars who saw themselves as the heirs of Ezra and his reforms, perceived that the application of the Law was no easy matter. New social circumstances required a fresh consideration of how to live God's precepts. The scribes, therefore, developed a system of learned examination which allowed them to use the Pentateuch, the words of the prophets, and the wisdom of other learned men to adapt the Law to various cultural and political exigencies.

The efforts of the most notable scribes to define the Law were codified as the *Mishnah* by Rabbi Judah ha Nasi (early third century AD). The *Mishnah* in turn stimulated further comment on the Law. In time the most notable commentaries were assembled as the *Gemmara* (sixth century AD). The *Mishnah* and the *Gemmara* make up the *Talmud*, which was the point of departure for the legal studies of medieval Jewish scholars and is the living guide for modern orthodox Jews (though the term is often used to mean the *Gemmara* alone).

Though the legal orientation of Talmudic Judaism has no real analogue in Mormonism, the commentary form and the historically-oriented dynamics of the Talmudic process do. In my opinion, Mormonism has in its brief existence passed from an initial revelation-intensive phase through several stages of commentary on and adaptation of the revelations. In other words, Mormonism has become Talmudic. Joseph Smith, by his own admission, was the Moses of the "last dispensation of the Gospel." As the great prophetic teacher, he revealed the order of God's kingdom on earth. God's plan was set forth in the Doctrine and Covenants, the "Law" of Mormonism.

Joseph, like Moses, was unique in his time. He set forth nearly all the rules and structure necessary for his infant reli-

gion. As Moses' successors were left with a more or less complete religion to administer, so were Joseph's. Joseph also tried so many experiments with communal living, city planning, and political activism that his heirs had a vast reservoir of data upon which to base future decisions.¹ As in Judaism, where Moses, "our teacher," takes precedence over all other prophets, so the Prophet Joseph Smith takes precedence over all other Mormon leaders.

The centrality of Joseph Smith and his thought to Mormonism was established by Brigham Young and his associates and reinforced by second- and third-generation Mormon scribes like B. H. Roberts, James Talmage, Joseph F. Smith, and Joseph Fielding Smith. Roberts crafted a Mormon historiography in which Joseph was rightly considered the root of all Church doctrine and structure. Talmage codified the most important aspects of Joseph's teachings about the atonement and the "last dispensation" in *Jesus the Christ* and *The Articles of Faith*. Joseph F. Smith in *Gospel Doctrine* and Joseph Fielding Smith in works like *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* and *Doctrines of Salvation* continued the structuring of Joseph's teachings both by editing his words and by developing new theological interpretations. The importance of Talmage and

the Smiths to the formation of Mormon theology can be seen in the neat sets of books sold by Deseret Book Company which feature their writings. If Mormonism ever recognizes a *Mishnah*, it may well include *The Articles of Faith*, *Jesus the Christ*, *Gospel Doctrine*, *Doctrines of Salvation*, and *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (and perhaps *The Discourses of Brigham Young*, especially those discourses which illuminate teachings begun by Joseph and not Brigham's "speculations").²

The "Talmudization" of Mormonism since Joseph Smith's martyrdom has affected the way the Church leaders introduce innovations and justify change. To be sure, the prophetic role of the president is still considered to be the same theologically as in Joseph's day. In practice, however, revelations are no longer frequently transmitted by the prophet. He is much more the chief executive and "fine tuner" of Joseph's organization.³ His pronouncements are generally described as "inspired," but they are seldom presented to the Church as revelations to be added to the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price.⁴ Of the three items which have been added to the official canon in this century, all in the last five years, one is a vision described by Joseph Smith, the second a vision seen by Joseph F. Smith, and the third a 1978 revelation extending the priesthood to all worthy males. Even the 1978 revelation is not treated like those of Joseph Smith. It is included in the canon not as a section of the Doctrine and Covenants but rather as an "official declaration."

The quantitative decline in published revelation and the increased reliance on "inspiration" has produced the "fine-tuning" method of innovation in the Church. Fine tuning is the historically-oriented Mormon equivalent of rabbinical reasoning. It is a way of adapting a perception of the revelatory-intense past to a problem or issue in the present.⁵ Church "programs," organizational responses to problems, are excellent examples of the application of this method. Because Latter-day Saints believe the truths revealed to Joseph and his successors are eternal, new ways of dealing with problems must be properly justified. As a result, "programs" are not viewed as leaps into the unknown but as inspired ways of further implementing established Church teachings. The welfare system, for example, is generally treated as an inspired refinement of the bishop's storehouse revealed in the 1830s. (It is even considered vaguely heretical to think of the present welfare system as a response to the social collapse of the Depression, despite the fact that the welfare system underwent a greater reform in the Depression than at

any time since Joseph Smith's day.) The feeling is that inspiration was a sufficient basis for the changes.⁶

Fine tuning is also applied to the Church structure itself. As the duties of the Twelve Apostles became a burden, the President was inspired to create the office of Assistant to the Twelve. In a like manner, inspiration has led to the establishment of a Council of Seventy and an emeritus status for infirm General Authorities, whose life tenure creates leadership problems of its own. Though revelations were cited by Joseph Smith for nearly every change in Church government, today it does not seem necessary to present revelations for what is believed to be only an elaboration of the organization. In regard to Church structure, fine tuning has allowed growth without adding to the canon. A flexibility is thus maintained without disturbing the idea of the unchanging primitive structure of the Church.

Fine tuning extends beyond programs and organization to theology. In the nineteenth century, for example, the Church taught the literal gathering of Israel. This meant not only a gathering to one geographical location but also that those who accepted the gospel were either by birth or adoption of the blood of Israel. Our century has brought changes which preclude all or even many foreign converts from coming to the United States. As a result, doctrinal emphasis has been fine tuned to a gathering of Israel in the stakes of Zion throughout the world. Israel is also defined more as a community of faith than of blood. (No change of doctrine, however, is perceived in this view of the gathering.) What has occurred is seen as an inspired elaboration of the ideas of early Church leaders.⁷

As important as fine tuning is to Mormonism's adaptability and justification of change in terms of the sacred past, it is not, as in rabbinical Judaism, a game which any learned man can play. Only the Church leaders generally and the President specifically can declare what programs will be instituted or how doctrine is to be viewed.⁸ The prophetic authority and the position of absolute leadership developed by Joseph Smith rest with "the brethren." They alone determine how the past and present will mix. Though Joseph and his revelations along with the "Mishnaic" documents described above are central to the Church's concept of itself, Joseph's successors have full authority to make any necessary changes.

Once the leaders have spoken, however, members can in their best Mormon Talmudic style show how Church actions are natural and inspired outgrowths of the revelatory-theological core. Latter-day Saints, therefore, have

freedom to develop exegetical skills and Talmudic wisdom but not to be innovative. Justification rather than innovation is the general role of the Latter-day Saint scholar and his rhetoric reflects that fact. This role places upon the best of the faithful a burden of producing "Gemmaric" tracts which reflect and harmonize both the past and the present. Works like McConkie's *Mormon Doctrine* and his multi-volume study of Christ fall within this ever-developing tradition, a tradition true to the Talmudic dynamics now innervating Mormonism.⁹

But Mormonism has not lost its vitality because its rhetoric and dynamics have changed. Very few scholars would speak of Talmudic Judaism as less vital than the earlier prophetic form. Talmudic rabbis like Hillel and Akiva made it possible for Judaism to adapt to new challenges and yet retain its spiritual meaning and intensity. Why then should similar changes in Mormon rhetoric and dynamics be viewed as indicative of decline? The above examples of "fine tuning" show that present-day Mormonism is capable of growing and adapting from its nineteenth century roots without constant, and perhaps contradictory, additions to its canon of scripture. Its strong intellectual and emotional appeal to both converts and those born in the faith seems to indicate that it retains its power to unify and motivate its adherents. If it finds itself in a period of Talmudization, is that a liability? In my view, Talmudic dynamics are a natural (though not necessary) outgrowth of a strongly revelatory, historically-minded religion. They do not detract from its vitality but enhance it. There is no reason to believe that Talmudic Mormonism, like Talmudic Judaism, will not flourish and fulfill its followers in the future.

Notes

1. Wilford Woodruff wrote in his diary that Brigham Young believed that Joseph had taught the Apostles everything. They, of course, did not remember all of Joseph's words. Brigham stated, however, that the Lord brought them to his mind at the proper time exactly as Joseph had said them. Woodruff further distinguished Brigham from Joseph by calling Joseph a "natural prophet."

2. The selective nature of the editions of Joseph's and Brigham's writings and speeches should be clearly recognized. Much of what Joseph and Brigham taught is not found in the published compilations. Editors have tended to emphasize ideas which history proved to be influential in the development of the Church and its doctrines. Likewise, Joseph F. Smith's *Gospel Doctrine* is a posthumous collection of "some" of his teachings.

3. Church presidents might be called administrative prophets. This distinguishes them from the outsider, social critic role played by so many, but not all, Biblical prophets. Administrative prophets are chiefly concerned with applying God's wisdom and their intelligence to furthering an organization of which they are a part. They do not criticize the organization as freely as did their Biblical counterparts. They work rather to purify it from within.

4. It should be understood that the term "inspired" is treated by the Church as being almost as binding as "revealed." Inspired utterances carry a similar motivative force as revelations and, in fact, may be as deeply rooted in the divine as canonical revelations.

5. The attitudes underlying the process that I call fine tuning are manifest in Harold B. Lee's statement, "keep in mind that the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are divine. Nobody changes the principles and doctrines of the Church except the Lord by revelation. But methods change as the inspired direction comes to those who preside at a given time." *Ensign* (Jan. 1971):9.

6. There is an unverifiable tradition that Heber J. Grant did receive a revelation on the welfare system. As with Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff and others, however, he did not present the reforms in that context. The reluctance of Church presidents to declare revelations is further evidence that they perceive a difference between themselves and Joseph.

7. For a short time in Nauvoo, families were sent to settle in cities and build up the Church. They were not encouraged to return to Nauvoo. This procedure, though short lived, does resemble the modern practice. See *Times and Seasons*, 696.

8. This is not to say that the counsel of members is not sought as to how the Church should deal with problems. Input from knowledgeable Latter-day Saints is important for the formulation of new programs. Only the President, however, makes the final decision.

9. McConkie in the introduction to *The Mortal Messiah* sets himself in the scribal tradition. He writes, "I think I hear his (Talmage's) voice... saying now is the time to build on the foundations I laid..."

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Not Through a Glass Darkly

Irene M. Bates

MY HUSBAND AND I were converted to the gospel in England twenty-five years ago this June. Besides the deepening of our relationship with God, that experience brought other enrichments—and trials—to our life. One of the most important, it seems, has been the awakening of a hunger for truth. This has not been comfortable to live with at times, but initially we were fortunate in associating with missionaries of special caliber, who encouraged the questions and shared in the joys of discovery. Together we enjoyed poetry, music, and philosophy, and on one occasion they introduced us to the poem which begins:

Henceforth, please God, forever I forgo
The yoke of men's opinions. I will be
Lighthearted as a bird, and live with God.
I find him in the bottom of my heart,
I hear continually his voice therein.

Twenty-five years ago those words of Ralph Waldo Emerson lit up the longing that had been born in me to "live with God" and to understand all things. Understanding is still a primary goal in my life and, because there are always new challenges appearing, it is a dynamic and ever-expanding goal. One challenge that has emerged since we moved to the United States, and closer to Zion, has been my own greater awareness of the complexity and the tensions which are part of a fast-growing church. A crucial

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element in my efforts to reconcile those tensions is my view of the role of the prophet.

At the time of our conversion I saw in President McKay someone who did live with God. Meeting him at the dedication of the London Temple underlined that impression as I witnessed his sensitivity towards my blind friend, and others, on that busy day. Further association when my husband was stake president in Manchester only served to confirm those feelings. I saw him as a righteous man whose sacred task in life was to lift and inspire and guide God's children. Later presidents have been no less spiritual giants, but now I realize my earlier view of the prophetic role was simplistic.

I knew that our concept of a "prophet" was not unique. While doing research for a missionary project, I saw that the role of the Hebrew prophet differed little from that of our own leader. He, too, directed the affairs of the Kingdom of God on earth. He preached, explained, and upheld the divine law, and he defined the fundamental principles upon which the Kingdom of Heaven would depend. The real uniqueness of the Mormon prophet, I recognized, rested upon the significantly different conditions under which he exercised his calling. Moving to Utah somehow brought that reality into sharper focus.

Today, for example, for the first time in history, a living prophet of God presides over a world-wide church organization. He leads over four million church members from many cultures with differing values and traditions and with varied systems of government. He is president of a wealthy corporation with large business interests and investments. He is head of a huge bureaucracy, and he is the guiding light behind a public relations system which includes radio

and TV stations as well as newspapers and magazines—all this in addition to being our spiritual leader and the mouthpiece of the Lord.

The difficulty of reconciling these seemingly conflicting demands did not eliminate for me the assurance of the prophet's closeness to the Lord, but it did suggest the obvious need to delegate a great deal of authority to committees, groups, and individuals. And this meant that a vast army of men and women needed equally to be in harmony with their God as they carried out assigned roles and programs.

As a member of a struggling branch in England more than twenty years ago, I realized the possibilities for tension and dilution which are inherent in our system of church government. Although I appreciated the tremendous opportunities for spiritual and intellectual growth provided by the Church, as Primary leader, Sunday School teacher, or Relief Society president, I also became very much aware of my own shortcomings. Because we were all converts then—with no built-in awe of local hierarchies—everyone was subject to challenge, and I found myself slipping easily into the role of moderator in the interests of greater unity. Now, years later and in quite a different setting, I see that the very recognition of our common fallibility—so evident in the mission field—might well be an essential safeguard for the institution itself.

Sometimes, because of the screen of humanity through which a policy or program may be interpreted, we are able to see truth only "through a glass darkly." For example, in some areas when the recent consolidation program was initiated as an experiment, it was introduced at the highest levels as just that, with the obvious inference that

feedback was needed. By the time it reached some local levels it became "revelation" and as such it brooked no critical evaluation. For a Church member who may happen to be present through each state of the transmission process, confronting such a problem becomes unavoidable. Who should be heeded? Bishop, stake president or General Authority?

Then there are the instances when the prophet gives counsel and some overly-zealous followers take it to unintended extremes and the choice of methods employed to further the cause. This has been the case with some anti-pornography and anti-ERA campaigns spearheaded by local leadership. Deviousness, for some, has been seen as a necessary tool in the interests of a "higher good," and the question this raises in my mind is not an easy one to resolve. It was debated for years, I know, by the brothers Niebuhr—both theologian/historians. Reinholdt Niebuhr saw some questionable necessities in life which, nevertheless, he felt should not be given moral justification. Richard, his brother, believed that we simply capitulate to the forces of darkness when we compromise righteousness.

Perhaps the other condition—unique to the environment in which a Mormon prophet serves—can provide the key: the right of all members of the Church who honor fundamental principles to have the gift of the Holy Ghost and the revelation of truth which flows from that source. And perhaps it is when the gift is too narrowly conceived that problems arise. Most of us can bear witness to the reality of the Spirit in connection with individual callings, but the obligation to use it in the wider sphere of Church activity may not be appreciated. Years ago I was faintly surprised to read of Brigham Young's concern:

I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by him. I am fearful they settle down in a state of blind self-security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God in their salvation, and weaken the influence they could give their leaders, did they know for themselves, by the revelations of Jesus, that they are led in the right way (*Journal of Discourses* 9:150).

Today those words find an answering echo inside me. Institutions, as Scott Kenney pointed out last year (*Sunstone* 5:2), are dependent upon the conscience of individuals in preserving institutional morality. Likewise the Church must rely upon the Holy Spirit working within its members. If, therefore, I fail to be true to the responsibility that is inescapably mine—because of free agency and because of the gift of the Holy Ghost—then

I fail the institution. If I sacrifice my integrity to blind obedience maybe I simply contribute in some small measure to an erosion of the collective strength of the Church. Such abdication, too, could place me in the same position as the subjects of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. They were willing to relinquish their free agency because they thought their leaders would then take from them the burden of conscience. Whether I would, in fact, escape my conscience is highly debatable, but certainly a burden could well be placed upon those who lead me.

I can recall quite clearly one day when I was a Primary president in England. I was driving to a faculty meeting and suddenly, in a moment of pure revelation it seemed, I was overwhelmed by a sense of gratitude for the honest input of my counselors and Primary teachers—and even for the open, if disconcerting, responses of the children. This total awareness of their interest and their contributions in terms of widening my perspective somehow lessened the load. Because of their honesty I could see more clearly what I was doing. A branch Primary president is a far cry indeed from a stake president or a General Authority, but the principle remains the same. We all need reliable barometers in our time and place so that we may be more receptive to the promptings of the Spirit.

But now my pathway is clear. When new challenges arise I can follow the scripture: "study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause your bosom shall burn within you; therefore you shall feel that it is right" (D&C 9:8-9). In following this advice I may have to be a caring dissenter at times when something does not "feel right" but will have to be especially aware, too, of my own human frailty, and keep on praying and keep on heart-searching, just to be sure. There will be those occasions too—as there have been in the past—when I will not understand, but when the witness inside urges acceptance. Then I must go along in faith. And there will be the moments when I meet truth face-to-face in joyous or painful recognition, and then there will be the sense of wholeness which is healing.

For me at least there can be no other way without much inner turmoil. I learned that as an investigator. It was just such a pathway that enabled me to become a member of the Church. It is because of the love I gained for the Savior and His teachings, and because I cling to the faith that truth will shine through if sincerely sought, that I cannot be content to see "through a glass darkly." There is still burning within that small flame which was lit twenty-five years ago which compels me to go on seeking the illumination of truth. Without it I may

serve the Lord ill and only add my own small straws to the prophet's burden. But the challenge I face now is two-fold. I must still seek to "live with God" so that I may be able to discern between truth and error but also I must find the courage to speak up for truth, wherever I may find it. And that is not always easy within the church—especially for a would-be "peacemaker."

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A Personal View of a Prophet's Highest Priority

Max H. Parkin

IF THE OBJECTIVE of true religion is to assist men in their mortal advance from the various spiritual levels in which it finds them, what is the principal obligation of a living prophet as he directs the people he has been chosen to lead? The duty to help men become disciples of Christ and—once disciples in practice—to help them acquire the full measure of godliness is what I presume to be the central imperative of a prophet of God. Speaking about this worthwhile goal, the Prophet Joseph Smith stated that it "is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment" (H.C. 2:8). We all need superlative help to pursue this noble state effectively. This assistance, I believe, when insightfully performed constitutes a prophet's greatest personal service to a seeker of righteousness.

To assist men in the ongoing quest for character perfection is also an undertaking of the Restored Church. Early in the Church's development the Lord informed the Saints that a spiritual renaissance was forthcoming wherein "every man might speak in the name of God, the Lord, even the Savior of the world" (D.C. 1:20). This did not only mean that men would speak with priesthood authority, but from other revelations I take it also to mean that men would begin to "speak" by godly living. In their search to overcome evil, however, even committed men need much instruction and good example. Hence, in addition to the otherwise demanding roles of administrator, preacher of God's inevitable judgments, and enunciator of eternal verities, prophets serve men best as insightful teachers of how the sanctified life is achieved and dynamic exemplars of that life.

Since the effectiveness of a prophet as a teacher of religious truths is thus decisive, a study of a prophet's teaching method may be instructive. As teachers,

prophets can be grouped in various ways, but I suggest “prophet-priest” and “prophet-innovator” as instructive categories. A prophet-priest is an inspired teacher who reaffirms the theological and moral truths of former times and teaches each upcoming generation the spiritual wisdom of the past. In doing so he lends stability and direction to society. In fact, whatever else most prophets do, they are foremost teachers of ethics and witnesses to previously revealed theological truths. Because of limited time, gifts, or interests, some prophets can do little more than that. Prophet-priests, therefore, may make few unique contributions to the body of theological or moral truth; nevertheless they stand as consciences for the people, stabilizing and strengthening the spiritual fiber of those who hear them.

Other prophets may be inventive teachers—creative and innovative—as they introduce new perspectives on ethical and theological tenets or as they present old ones in a more useful or pertinent way, perhaps attempting to improve contemporary attitudes and beliefs or to bring about a newly revealed standard of behavior for the people. Nehemiah’s condemnation of a particular type of Sabbath breaking is an example of innovation, albeit a highly legalistic one. He was opposed to the practice of Gentile merchants taking their wares into Jerusalem and selling them there to Jews on the Sabbath. The inspired Jewish leader corrected this problem by proposing the exclusion of Gentiles from the city on the Holy Day (Nehemiah 13:15-22). Lehi shared his dream of the Tree of Life and Nephi his many spiritual struggles with others. Sometimes with a touch of the iconoclast, these prophets expanded the horizons of understanding and obedience.

In our own dispensation, the Prophet Joseph Smith was a prodigious innovator. With his inspired creativity, Joseph produced the hybrid of Christianity called Mormonism. While most of Joseph’s early successors in office were priestly prophets who reaffirmed his teachings and integrated them into Church practice, some were prophet-innovators; most notable to me are Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, Joseph F. Smith, and Spencer W. Kimball.

Whether priest or innovator, a prophet should be an exemplar of righteousness to his people. Though he may not be perfect or infallible, the prophet is a practical example of the virtue achievable in mortality. His good example can be manifested not only in his lifestyle but also in the way he teaches. Since he has arrived at the altar of God, he can teach others how they too can arrive. In fact, it is as an exemplary teacher that he can

best employ his role of prophet-innovator. Through the prophet’s meaningful, honest, and sometimes courageous self disclosure, men not only sense that they are walking with one who has learned how to walk with the Master, but through the knowledge of the prophet’s struggle in arriving, men learn better how to struggle successfully.

Both in the revelations and in the *History of the Church*, the Prophet Joseph Smith spoke freely of his own personal conflicts. One can identify with the sense of futility that brought him to his knees in 1823. (Joseph’s editors, though with good reason, have reduced the vividness of his confession and thereby weakened its impact. Compare Joseph Smith 2:28-29 with *T. & S.* 3:749.) Observe also the piercing words of the Lord’s rebuke to Joseph in 1828: “Yet *you* should have been faithful . . . [for] thou art Joseph” (D&C 3:8-9). In 1831 the Lord again says that Joseph “has sinned” (D&C 64:7) but condemns Ezra Booth for the greater sin of not accepting Joseph’s attempts at reconciliation (See Booth’s seventh letter). These candid reflections strengthen the impact of Joseph’s struggle for self mastery. The same kind of candor is present in President Kimball’s recent biography. Some who have read it have said to me, “It is strengthening and inspiring to know that the prophet has struggled with my kind of doubts and weaknesses and has overcome them.”

By helping men at different levels of preparedness, prophets lead men to Christ. It is in this that Elder Boyd K. Packer’s dictum to “follow the brethren” seems to possess its most vital application. For by following the principles taught by the prophets and their chief supportive officers, past and present, a spiritual metamorphosis commences. The courageous help of the prophets can nudge men forward to personal revelation and divine affirmation of the truths taught by the prophets. Here then is man’s final confidence, his ultimate trust, as President Harold B. Lee stated a few weeks before his death: it is in “God alone.” And in partaking of the truth from its source, man’s loyalty to the prophet is made more certain, for as Truman Madsen has stated, “It takes a prophet to know one.”

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Some Musings on Prophetic Responsibility

Arthur R. Bassett

ON ONE OCCASION the Prophet Joseph was asked by a group of promi-

nent state officials about his idea of the role of a prophet. He responded by quoting from the Apostle John: “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10). I have always felt that this implies that the role of a prophet, i.e. one who has the spirit of prophecy, is somehow tied up with the responsibility of helping to bring all of us to this testimony of Jesus.

I would suggest that there are two steps to this process. One involves bringing mankind to the recognition of the divine role of the Savior, viz. that we accept Jesus literally as the Christ. In this sense one gains a *testimony of the man, Jesus*.

The second implication is that one comes to have a testimony akin to that of Jesus, i.e. that he comes to embrace a system of values embraced by the Savior and brings his life into an accord with those beliefs. In this sense one gains a *testimony of Christlike principles*.

This would imply that the major role of a prophet is to be a special witness of the Savior and of his way of life, a point emphasized in the calling of an apostle outlined in the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 107:23). It also helps to explain why Jesus said that John the Baptist was a great prophet although John was not known to foretell the future (other than the coming of the Master), a phenomenon commonly associated in the minds of many with the word *prophecy* (Matt. 11:11). The importance of a testimony of Christ was emphasized by a modern apostle, Bruce R. McConkie, in an address to a fourteen stake fireside at BYU last June: “Our goal in this life should be to gain the mind of Christ, to believe what he believes, to think what he thinks, to say what he says, to do what he does and to be as he is.”

A prophet becomes a spokesman for Christ to the world in which he lives. The responsibility is awesome and obviously requires spiritual exertion. Though all of the Council of the Twelve and First Presidency are sustained as prophets, the president of the Church as the presiding high priest has additional responsibilities in this respect. Only he can speak ultimately as the Lord’s spokesman for the Church. President J. Reuben Clark stated:

There are many places where the scriptures are not too clear, and where different interpretations may be given to them; there are many doctrines, *tenets* as the Lord called them, that have not been officially defined and declared. It is in the consideration and discussion of these scriptures and doctrines that opportunities arise for differences of views as to meanings and extent. In view of the fundamental principle just announced as to the position of the President of the Church, other bearers of the Priesthood,

those with the special endowment [other General Authorities] and those without it, should be cautious in their expressions about and interpretations of scriptures and doctrines. They must act and teach subject to the over-all power and authority of the President of the Church. It would be most unfortunate were this not always strictly observed by the bearers of this special spiritual endowment, other than the President. Sometimes in the past they have spoken "out of turn," so to speak. . . .

When any man, except the President of the Church, undertakes to proclaim one unsettled doctrine, as among two or more doctrines in dispute, as the settled doctrine of the Church, we may know that he is not "moved upon by the Holy Ghost," unless he is acting under the direction and by the authority of the President.

Of these things we may have a confident assurance without chance for doubt or quibbling. ("When are the Writings or Sermons of Church Leaders Entitled to the Claim of Scripture?" Talk given at Brigham Young University, July 7, 1954, pp. 10, 17.)

President Harold B. Lee seemed to agree:

It is not to be thought that every word spoken by the General Authorities is inspired, or that they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost in everything they read or write. Now you keep that in mind. I don't care what his position is, if he writes something or speaks something that goes beyond anything that you can find in the standard church works, unless that one be the prophet, seer and revelator—please note that one exception—you may immediately say, "Well, that is his own idea." (*The Place of the Living Prophet, Seer, and Revelator*, p. 14.)

Joseph Smith also alluded to the difficulty of that awesome role as God's mouthpiece when he pointed out to a visiting couple from Michigan that "a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such" (DHC V:265) and that a prophet has passions like other men (DHC II:302). Occasionally (these incidents are extremely rare in my opinion) "even the President of the Church in his teaching and preaching has not been 'moved upon by the Holy Ghost'" (Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 10). Such a case appears to have been the so-called "Toronto Journey Incident" (see DHC I:164-165), if one accepts David Whitmer's story of Oliver Cowdery's and Hiram Page's journey to Toronto, Canada, and their failure to obtain the desired copyright for the Book of Mormon in that city.

From these statements by those who have been close to a prophet, it appears evident that the prophet is not simply a megaphone through whom the Lord speaks but rather a sensitive instrument that must be as nearly perfectly in tune as

possible. The task is obviously not an easy one, but rather one that requires constant stretching and exertion on the part of the prophet as he attempts to move beyond the borders of human understanding to receive and communicate the will of the Lord. He deserves and needs the faith and prayers of the Saints in his behalf.

Moses, in a moment of frustration, poured out the feelings of his heart: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them" (Num. 11:24-29). It seems that this is a definite possibility in at least one sense—all the Lord's people could have (and should have) the spirit of prophecy or a testimony of Jesus in both senses mentioned above—believing in him and



The role of the prophet is to be a special witness of the Savior and of his way of life.

sharing his testimony concerning the things that make life meaningful. That is, as Elder McConkie has stated, the goal of the church membership—and also of the Prophet of God.

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The Prophetic Quandary

Richard J. Cummings

ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON'S BYU Devotional Assembly Address of February 26, 1980, on "Fourteen Fundamentals on Following the Prophet" has certainly done more to focus attention on the role of the prophet than anything that has occurred since the announcement on June 9, 1978, of the revelation that blacks could receive the priesthood. Others have already discussed the political and ethical implications of Elder Benson's speech. Therefore I would like to

address myself to the thesis that, theologically and ecclesiastically, what Elder Benson omitted or deemphasized in his remarks is at least as significant—and provocative—as what he explicitly and emphatically stated, and that, similarly, the context of the address is as important as the text.

First, conspicuous by its absence from Elder Benson's fourteen categorical statements concerning the role and function of prophets or the accompanying explanatory and anecdotal commentary is any allusion to the gift of prophecy. After all, one of the earliest, and most unequivocal descriptions of what prophets do occurs in the Deuteronomy 18:22 where we read simply that "a prophet utters prophecies which come true." The same point has been reiter-

ated by Elder Bruce R. McConkie who states in his *Mormon Doctrine* (p. 605) that "prophets in all ages . . . have taken frequent occasion to foretell the future." This in turn raises a question which I shall not attempt to answer in full but which at least deserves to be asked: Is the ability to prophecy, i.e. foretell the future, still a part of the modern-day prophetic calling? Joseph Smith went on record with predictions ranging in accuracy from the remarkable foretelling of the advent and spread of the Civil War in Section 87 of the Doctrine and Covenants to the unfulfilled prophecy set forth in Section 111.

Brigham Young made several attempts to foretell future happenings, but unfortunately the turn of events did not always bear them out. One such unavailing prophecy was enunciated in 1856, when President Young stated that "twenty-six years will not pass away before the Elders of this Church will be as much thought of as the kings on their

thrones" (JD 4:40). This prediction was hardly borne out in 1882 when congressional approval of the Edmunds Act highlighted one of the most devastating periods in the history of the Church. Perhaps a painful awareness of the risks inherent in exercising the spirit of prophecy led Brigham Young to observe in 1869 that "many persons have prophesied without having any Priesthood on them at all. It is no particular revelation or gift for a person to prophesy. . . . To be a prophet is simply to be a foreteller of future events, but an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ has the keys of the Holy Priesthood. . ." (JD 13:144). In any event, prophecy thereafter became less frequent and, when it did occur, much more general and therefore less subject to verification. Indeed, prophetic utterances by Church authorities have in the intervening years been restricted almost entirely to general warnings about the imminence of the Second Coming.

Second, as his sixth fundamental, Elder Benson states that "the Prophet does not have to say 'Thus saith the Lord' to give us scripture" and thus deemphasizes one of the previously acknowledged signs of prophetic authority—speaking directly in the deific first-person singular. All of the Old Testament prophets used this form, and so did Joseph Smith in eighty-seven percent of the revelations he received as set forth in the Doctrine and Covenants—116 of the first 134 sections to be exact.

Elder Benson's summary statement indirectly suggests two crucial questions about deific first-person pronouncements: When was the last revelation uttered in the name of the Lord? Why has there been no such revelation in the meantime? In response to the first question, it can be noted that the last official first-person revelation was received by Brigham Young in January 1847 at Winter Quarters and provided a plan of organization for the migration to the West. The last known unofficial revelation prefaced by "Thus saith the Lord" was given to President Wilford Woodruff on November 24, 1889, in response to his prayerful entreaty for enlightenment in the wake of requests from attorneys to make concessions in court concerning polygamy. Providing an answer to the second question is much more challenging. The official position of the Church is that there has been no need in the intervening years for the Lord to speak in the first-person singular. The Fundamentalists, on the other hand, assert that LDS leaders have not spoken with divine authority for the past ninety years because the heavens were closed when polygamy was abandoned. Others may wonder whether there has been a loss of prophetic nerve since 1889 or

whether Joseph Smith was overstepping the bounds in letting the Lord speak so directly in nearly ninety percent of his published revelations.

Since the case can be made that such changes in form and format are simply an accommodation to the modern temper, I am not arguing that they indicate a diminution in divine inspiration or prophetic authority. Still, I am concerned with what seems to me an important inconsistency. Members are exhorted to accept as scripture every utterance of the living prophet and to give greater credence to such utterances than to pronouncements of past prophets. Yet to my mind such expressions for nearly a century have lacked two of the hallmarks of the "foretelling/forthtelling" function by which true prophets of God have been identified since time immemorial. After all, Joseph Smith himself insisted that a prophet is a prophet only when he is acting as such (DHC 5:265), and that should be true for live prophets as well as dead ones.

This brings me to my third and final point—the context of Elder Benson's address on the prophets. I understand that Elder Benson changed the subject of his talk at the last minute, releasing to the press a copy of the address on the fourteen fundamentals just before delivering it at BYU on February 26. Interestingly, this abrupt change occurred two days after a full-page advertisement appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune* (February 24, 1980) describing Jerald and Sandra Tanner's *The Changing World of Mormonism*, a book claiming to denounce the fallacies of Mormonism. The Tanners' ad drew attention to changes in the Church's position on such matters as polygamy and the granting of the priesthood to blacks and thereby questioned the consistency of the prophetic leadership of the Church. For me Elder Benson's speech reads very much like an impassioned response to the charge of prophetic inconsistency. He dismisses the issue of conflicting past and present policies by declaring that the words of living prophets supplant or make moot the directives of past prophets.

I am disturbed by such statements which seem to diminish the memory of the Prophet Joseph Smith, especially in this the sesquicentennial of the founding of the Restored Church. However, I am encouraged that the statements were neither uttered nor condoned by President Kimball whose unassuming and even handed sense of prophetic calling has always been reassuring to me. I am also heartened by another thought. Several Church leaders in the past—notably President Joseph F. Smith and his son President Joseph Fielding Smith, who as apostles with a deeply felt sense of personal mission restricted themselves to a

narrow range of issues—eventually revealed a remarkable measure of magnanimous balance and breadth after assuming the mantle of the prophet. As Paul makes clear in I Cor. 12:10 and 14:39, every faithful member shares in the prophetic spirit and is, as Elder Bruce R. McConkie so aptly states, "a prophet as pertaining to his own affairs" (Mormon Doctrine, p. 606), thereby providing a system of prophetic checks and balances which preserves the dignity of the office of prophet without doing violence to the sense of individual identity and personal initiative which is the birthright of every member of the Church.

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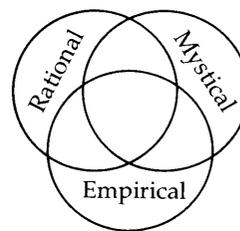
The Role of a Prophet and the Search for Truth

Gerald E. Jones

A PROPHET PROVIDES answers to questions which arise in humanity's search for truth. I will attempt to explore the prophetic process as it relates to three approaches to truth—rationalism, empiricism, and mysticism.

While some people are skeptical of one, two, or all three methods, there are some who rely on one method entirely. It is common, however, for people to use a combination of all three aspects with emphasis on one. A model to help us understand the relationship of these three approaches is drawn from the well-known Venn diagrams (figure 1).

Figure 1.



The empirical approach relies on the five senses. A true empiricist insists a person must see, taste, feel, hear, or smell a given event to believe it. Since we can be deceived by our senses, some reject this method. Some idealists, such as the Platonists, Hindus, and Christian Scientists tend to deny the material world and question the ultimate validity of the experiences of the senses.

Some rationalists reject the reality of an external, material world. They contend that only the mind can give true knowledge. For many people reason and logic are the ultimate tests of truth. Mathematics, for example, is based on a rational foundation. Opponents of the rationalists' view point out that if there is a flaw in the premise, then the logic may

The true prophet is known by his fruits. Revelation can be verified by rational and empirical as well as spiritual tests.

be "true" but not reflect reality.

Some religious individuals rely on a non-human extra-sensory approach to truth. This mystical experience is by definition ineffable, non-empirical, and non-rational. The term mysticism may have negative connotations for many. But even though we substitute terms such as intuition, spiritualism, or revelation, we are still referring to the supra-rational or supra-sensory ways of knowing.

What about the prophets? My thesis is that a prophet uses all three modes of arriving at truth and that mystical revelation is not the exclusive avenue to truth. Though revelation may be primary, a prophet may frequently use reason or empirical means to either explain, support, or even call forth revelation. Thus, one of the problems raised by rationalists and empiricists is premature. They feel that mysticism is not consistent and that the recipients frequently contradict other claimants to revelation. For Mormons the true prophet is known by his fruits. Revelation from the prophet can be verified by rational and empirical as well as spiritual tests.

Reason is a valid process for arriving at truth. Most missionary effort is done by showing the logic and rationality of the "marvelous work and a wonder." The Lord invited Isaiah to "come let us reason together." We are told that a true prophet is to be consistent with the scriptures. A classic volume entitled *A Rational Theology* was written by John A. Widtsoe to emphasize the rational approach to the gospel. Frequently we are told that the Lord leaves the solving of many problems to his children. Only when they exhaust their human resources and are still unable to find a true conclusion will the answer come in a revelatory way.

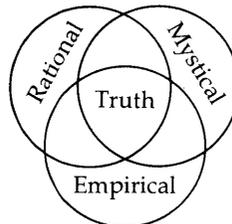
In many instances the solutions to problems are arrived at by reason without need of further verification. Such mundane decisions as what to eat for lunch or what book to read, may be rationally determined. We are frequently exhorted to "study it out in your mind" (D&C 9:8) and then seek a confirming assurance that our reasoning is correct. It has been suggested that President Kimball had difficulty finding a rational way to resolve the conflict between taking the gospel and temple work to all the world and the denial of the priesthood to the blacks. In seeking to solve this dilemma, the answer was given that one of the

premises needed to be changed. The resulting revelation is a position that is true as far as the Lord's current program is concerned, and is also rationally consistent.

Empiricism is often used as the approach to gospel truths. We are told to "do it" and thus gain a testimony of any principle. The Word of Wisdom is supported by considerable empirical evidence. We are admonished to pay our tithing in order to obtain a testimony of its truthfulness. Likewise, if we pray and study about problems, results will follow by obedience to the law of prayer, study, and personal preparation (D&C 130:20-21). Church News editorials frequently utilize results of scientific investigations to support gospel principles.

Returning to our Venn diagrams, it seems that some things may appear to be true only if approached in one way, whether mystical, rational, or empirical (figure 2). But when checked by another method these things are shown to fail the test. Ultimately, if not immediately, what is really true can be verified by all three methods. If this is not possible, we rely on faith, hopefully supported by one or more of the epistemological approaches.

Figure 2.



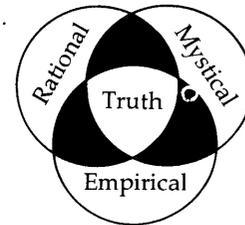
The predominant religious view in the world denies the empirical world and relies on reason and mysticism. Most Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains, for example, as well as Christian Scientists believe this world is illusory. Because the Christian Scientist denies the reality of the material world, he rejects medical doctors and questions sensory experience. Such idealist views are also found in certain monastic orders. Much of the current denial of materialism in the Western world is based on the reasoning of the Greek Platonists, well articulated in Plato's famous description of the Cave.

Another approach tends to deny the rational world and to accept empirical and mystical approaches. This is found in some Protestant faiths such as the Amish. Anti-rational arguments are used among those who feel trust in

man's mind and reason will destroy faith in God. Kierkegaard felt that the more irrational or paradoxical a religious proposition was, the truer it was likely to be. The Zen koans attempted to rid man of his reliance on reason by asking irrational questions.

The approach that tends to deny the mystical or revelatory experience but to rely on reason and empiricism can be found in such philosophies as humanism, communism, and the scientific approach. The Unitarians, demythologizers, and so called higher critics of the Bible also tend to deny supernatural or revelatory intuition.

Figure 3.



We recognize that in each position there are weaknesses as well as strengths. Within the Church we may also find people relying on these same approaches. Some are of a rational bent, some empirical, and others mystical. There is a place for all. In the center we should all agree, but on the periphery we may see things quite differently and thus tend to be critical of one another.

The calling of the Prophet is to point out that which is true to all and to verify and implement the truth by all three means. To some this emphasis may appear to be solely revelatory. To those who do not understand the revelatory process, the Prophet's approach may seem to come from a strictly empirical origin (many accuse the Mormons of being materialistic), or from a rational approach. Some expect the prophetic calling to frequently go counter to reason and logic. Others anticipate strictly pragmatic solutions to the problems of the world. All may be correct to a degree for the Prophet's declaration may rely on all approaches. I feel it would be dangerous to limit our views of the prophetic calling. Mortals are to seek after truth and choose good from evil by those methods which best suit the problems. The Lord may operate in his own way, and it is foolish for us to attempt to set limits to his efforts.

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THE · SOVEREIGNTY · OF · GOD · IN JOHN · CALVIN AND BRIGHAM · YOUNG

Davis Bitton

John Calvin, the great Protestant reformer of the sixteenth century, and Brigham Young, Mormonism's second president and great American colonizer, are far removed from one another geographically, chronologically, and with respect to the universe of thought in which they lived. Calvin's education was so beautifully intensive yet varied, establishing a tripod base in scholasticism, humanism, and law, that some of his followers saw it as providential. Young had virtually no formal education. Calvin was a Christian scholar who only reluctantly allowed himself to be drawn into the political and ecclesiastical leadership role that was his for the last twenty-five years of his life. Young was a practical man, a carpenter, a missionary, a businessman, and a colonizer par excellence who always felt uneasy in the presence of men of words. To establish any influence of Calvin on Young seems unlikely if not inconceivable. If the Mormon leader retained any of his early Protestantism, it was Methodism. Presbyterianism, "puritanism" in the narrow sense, had negative connotations for him. Hellfire, predestination, and the depravity of man were ideas Young mentioned only to reject and scorn them. Yet at the heart of Calvin's theology was his conviction of the sovereignty of God. And in Brigham Young too the sovereignty of God was a recurrent theme. If the two great religious leaders drew different implications from the concept, that fact too helps to illuminate their systems of thought.

Of the centrality of God in the scheme of things there was no question in Calvin's mind. The maker of heaven and earth, God ruled so as to accomplish his purposes: "Herein lies the unfathomable greatness of God: not only did He once create heaven and earth but He also guides the whole process according to His will. Thus he who confesses God as Creator while supposing that He remains tranquilly in heaven without caring for the world, outrageously deprives God of all effective power."¹ This providential care is not readily perceived, certainly not by the unaided natural man. It is the eye of faith that sees. To such an eye it becomes obvious that there is nothing in the world that is not directly under the control of God and subject to His will.

For Calvin, God was not only Creator—a Deist's God who started the world in motion and left it to run on its own—but its protective, ongoing Providence. The "carnal mind," said Calvin, "is satisfied to recognize the Creator; we might say that in such cases there is a verbal, even intellectual, assent, but that it stops there, recognizing no continuous presence in our lives. The man of faith must recognize not only that there is a Creator but also 'a Governor and Preserver.' Easy theoretical acceptance of the idea has little real impact when it is not ac-

companied by a 'relish for that special care in which alone the paternal favour of God is discerned.'"²

Now how far would Calvin carry this idea? To what degree are the events of the world interesting to God, let alone caused by Him? Seldom in our day is God adduced as the cause of events. It is not an explanatory principle that gets us anywhere, for something that explains everything ends up by explaining nothing. It can be effectively argued, I think, that science was defined in a way enabling it to accomplish its potential only when God was set aside, so to speak, in order to concentrate on proximate causes that could be measured and compared. The same is true of history as we have come to know it. How satisfied would we be if in a discussion of the origins of World War II a modern historian declared that it was the result of God's hand in human affairs?

Even in Calvin's time it was easy, indeed common, to forget God. "By an erroneous opinion prevailing in all ages, an opinion almost universally prevailing in our own day—viz. that all things happen fortuitously—the true doctrine of Providence has not only been obscured, but almost buried."³ In opposition to this idea that things just happen, or by fortune, Calvin argued that "all events whatsoever are governed by the secret counsel of God." Even inanimate objects "exert their force only in so far as directed by the immediate hand of God."

Of course everyone was willing to recognize the "omnipotence" of God, this being a stock attribute that is found in all the creeds. But Calvin was not satisfied with such an easy term; he wanted to make sure that it was understood not as "the vain, indolent, slumbering omnipotence which sophists feign, but vigilant, efficacious, energetic, and ever active—not an omnipotence which may only act as a general principle of confused motion, as in ordering a stream to keep within the channel once prescribed to it, but one which is intent on individual and special movements."⁴

Expressed eloquently in the great closing chapters of Book One of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the providence of God did not mean that man must be a mere instrument, totally inactive in the process. He did not like the easy compromise of saying that man was a partner with God. God was "omnipotent," he says, "not because he can act though he may cease or be idle, or because by a general instinct, he continues the order of nature previously appointed; but because, governing heaven and earth by his providence, he so overrules all things that nothing happens without his counsel."⁵

Notice the word "overrule." It is an important word in Calvin's formulation; it finds its application with reference to those human affairs which appear on the surface less than consistent with divine objectives. Calvin envi-

sions a Deity who does not sit idly by but who "holds the helm, and overrules all events."⁶ "Overruling" is the process by which God brings "perplexed and dubious matters to a happy result."

Not that Calvin thought man was in a position to discern God's will and purposes. In relation to our capacity of discernment, things appeared fortuitous, contingent. But "what seems to us contingency, faith will recognize as the secret impulse of God," even if "the reason is not always equally apparent."⁷ Sometimes, to be sure, all of this is "conspicuous," but at other times the role of providence was anything but obvious. In "overruling all things"—again that important concept—God works "at one time with means, at another time without means, and at another against means." Brave indeed would be the human being who could pretend to see through such complexities. Calvin understands that "occasionally as the causes of events are concealed, the thought is apt to rise, that human affairs are whirled about by the blind impulse of Fortune, or our carnal nature inclines us to speak as if God were amusing himself by tossing men up and down like balls."⁸ But the man of faith must accept that behind all such appearances is the mind and hand of God and that in time his purposes will be made manifest.

In Chapter 17 of Book One, entitled "Use to be Made of the Doctrine of Providence," Calvin offers an interesting statement, recognizing on the one hand that man does not understand what is in the mind of God, but on the other hand that there is purpose and meaning in events even if we do not understand them:

It is true, indeed, that if with sedate and quiet minds we were disposed to learn, the issue would at length make it manifest that the counsel of God was in accordance with the highest reason, that his purpose was either to train his people to patience, correct their depraved affections, tame their wantonness, inure them to self-denial, and arouse them from torpor; or, on the other hand, to cast down the proud, defeat the craftiness of the ungodly, and frustrate all their schemes.⁹

This categorizing of possible explanations is, to my mind, virtually an airtight rationale for the doctrine of divine providence. Every contingency is provided with a possible explanation.

The doctrine enabled Calvin and his followers to deal with specific events. Persecution of the believers in France; the complicated course of international affairs; the relations between the different reformers; the rise of schism and heresy within the ranks of believers; even specific events like plagues and economic misfortune—all of these could be "taken in stride" with the confident recognition that God would overrule events for his purposes. More specifically, with the confidence that they were the elect of God, the Calvinists could offer tentative, plausible explanations for these specific events. An example is provided in a remarkable letter from Calvin to a Catholic priest who had pointed to a recent epidemic in Geneva as evidence of God's displeasure.¹⁰ In many incidents Calvin and his followers were able to find Biblical parallels; there were modern Herods, modern Gideons, modern Red Seas, and modern miracles paralleling those of the sacred record.

One way of conceptualizing this problem is in terms of standard syllogisms. The most important elements are contained in the givens, the assumptions, the premises;

once they are accepted, the rest follows inevitably. For Calvin, certain faith-premises were controlling. These included:

God exists.

The faithful will be (or are) saved.

Human history is subordinate to God's ultimate purpose.

When such basic positions are accepted, all one has to do when attempting to understand specific events is to "plug them in." A plague infests Geneva. Since this can scarcely be conceived of as a reward and since it cannot be thought of as contrary to the divine will, it must be intended to remind us of our dependence, to chasten those who had been tending to forget God, to punish the ungodly, or, since such "natural" disasters show little discrimination in choosing victims, to accomplish all of these purposes simultaneously. Examples could be multiplied, but in every instance the providential interpretation of the event is really implicit in a prior major premise. I do not think this would trouble Calvin, for he would see such premises as of the essence of faith.

Belief in an everruling divine providence did not lead Calvin and his followers to the kind of fatalism that would sit back and do nothing; Calvin saw no inconsistency between "human deliberation" and divine providence. For it was the Creator who had given us intelligence and ability:

For he who has fixed the boundaries of our life, has at the same time intrusted us with the care of it, provided us with the means of preserving it, forewarned us of the dangers to which we are exposed, and supplied cautions and remedies, that we may not be overwhelmed unawares. Now, our duty is clear, namely, since the Lord has committed to us the defense of our life,—to defend it; since he offers assistance,—to use it; since he forewarns us of danger—not to rush on heedless; since he supplied remedies,—not to neglect them.¹¹

It was the Creator who "has furnished men with the arts of deliberation and caution, that they may employ them in subservience to his providence . . ." And he does not allow us to see into the future for the important reason "that we may prepare for them as doubtful . . ." How do we do this? We "cease not to apply the provided remedies until they have either been overcome, or have proved too much for all our care."

An important element of the whole doctrine was its reassuring of the individual believer. Instead of throwing up hands in despair, one can rest assured that all will be well. Things will work out in the long run. There are explanations even when they are not readily apparent. Specifically, says Calvin, the Christian "will have no doubt that a special providence is awake for his preservation, and will not suffer anything to happen that will not turn to his good and safety."¹² This should not only be thought of in general terms. Rather, "it is of the highest moment that we should specially recognize this care toward ourselves."¹³ "Ourselves" here refers specifically to Calvin's fellow believers in the church, whom God "gives singular manifestations of his paternal care."¹⁴ The whole doctrine was comforting, reassuring. The knowledge that God "overrules," says Calvin, "is necessarily followed by gratitude in prosperity, patience in adversity, and incredible security for the time to come."¹⁵

Anticipating Pascal's later commentary on the human

condition, Calvin notes the “innumerable” ills of human life, how close we are to death, how slight are the means that might end our life. “Walk along the streets, every tile on the roofs is a source of danger.”¹⁶ Without a belief in God we humans would be miserable indeed, living “exposed to every blind and random stroke of fortune.”¹⁷ Fortunately, faith brings relief and a marvelous peace of mind.

Some three centuries later Brigham Young, who became Mormonism’s second prophet-leader, came on the scene. Although not a theologian in the strict sense of the word, not a trained scholar, not aware of many of the complexities of the history of Christian thought, Young could not be content simply to serve as an administrator, although he did this with vigor and often with success. He also had to make sense out of the welter of events, fitting them into the religious framework he had accepted when he became a Mormon in 1832. And his thoughts were not kept to himself. He produced thousands of letters, many position papers, and at least several hundred sermons. It is in these sermons especially that we find the mind of Brigham Young. And in them, I would argue, there is nothing more basic than his firm faith in the sovereignty and providence of God.

Brigham believed that the Latter-day Saints should “acknowledge the hand of God in all things.” In an interesting anticipation of a later invention, Young said, “If I had the skill given me today to construct a machine by which we could pass from nation to nation in the atmosphere as they now do on terra firma on the railway, would there be any harm in acknowledging God in this? I should receive the knowledge from Him; it is not independent and of myself. I am dependent upon Him for every breath I draw and for every blessing I receive. If you, ye nations or wise men of the earth, are not dependent upon Him, we would like to see you act independently. Let a man who thinks he has power independent of God—if there be such a man—take a grain of wheat, rye, barley, or a kernel of corn from the element God has ordained and organized for its development, and see if he can make it grow.”¹⁸

Here is a typical statement about God as Brigham Young saw him:

He is our heavenly Father; he is also our God, and the Maker and upholder of all things in heaven and on earth. He sends forth his counsels and extends his providences to all living. He is the Supreme Controller of the universe. At his rebuke the sea is dried up, and the rivers become a wilderness. He measures the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meteth out heaven with a span, and comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure, and weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; the nations to him are as a drop in a bucket, and he taketh up the isles as a very little thing; the hairs of our heads are numbered by him, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father; and he knoweth every thought and intent of the hearts of all living, for he is everywhere present by the power of his Spirit—his minister, the Holy Ghost. He is the Father of all, is above all, through all, and in you all; he knoweth all things pertaining to this earth, and he knows all things pertaining to millions of earths like this.¹⁹

Again:

Whether they make good or bad use of it, all power is ordained of God and is in his hand. He sets up a kingdom

here, and pulls down another there at his pleasure. He breaks the nations like a potter’s vessel; he forms a nucleus, and around it builds up a kingdom or nation, permitting the people to act upon their own agency, that they may do right, or corrupt themselves, as did the Children of Israel; and after they have become ripe for destruction, they will be scattered to the four winds.²⁰

For Brigham Young God was clearly sovereign, the ruler and maker of heaven and earth, the overruler of all things for his own purposes. “Wars, commotions, tumults, strife, nation contending against nation, and people against people,” said Young, “have all been governed and controlled by him whose right it is to control such matters. Among wicked nations, or among Saints, among the ancient Israelites, Philistines, and Romans, the hand of the Lord was felt; in short, all the powers that have been upon the earth, have been dictated, governed, controlled, and the final issue of their existence has been brought to pass, according to the wisdom of the Almighty.”²¹

Such statements can be multiplied. Brigham Young over and over again returned to the idea that God was running the show. In this there was little claim to originality. The principle becomes most interesting, it seems to me, when it is applied to specific circumstances. One of the finest statements I have yet come across is the following contained in a letter from Brigham Young to Orson Hyde, dated July 28, 1850:

... we feel no fear. We are in the hands of our Heavenly Father, the God of Abraham and Joseph, who guided us to this land, who fed the poor Saints on the Plains with Quails, who gave his people strength to labour without bread, who sent the gulls of the deep as Saviours to preserve (by devouring the crickets) the golden wheat for bread for his people, and who has preserved his Saints from the wrath of their enemies, delivering them from a bondage more cruel than that inflicted upon Israel in Egypt. He is our Father and our Protector. We live in his Light, are guided by his Wisdom, protected by his Shadow, upheld by his Strength...²²

This personal statement breathes faith and interprets a series of specific events in terms of divine providence.

One of the problems facing those who in general terms are willing to see the hand of God in various happenings on earth, obviously, is that of negative experiences—trials, tribulations, suffering, persecution. If you see yourself as belonging to the Chosen, the Saints, then there must be some way of accounting for such experiences. For Brigham Young this posed no real problem. Indeed, he saw a positive value in persecution, in opposition. “Let any people enjoy peace and quiet, unmolested, undisturbed—never be persecuted for their religion, and they are very likely to neglect their duty, to become cold and indifferent, and lose their faith.”²³ He was confident that the opposition to the Church could not triumph in the long run. “Every time you kick Mormonism you kick it upstairs; you never kick it downstairs. The Lord Almighty so orders it.”²⁴ Statements similar in tone came up frequently in Young’s preaching. “You may calculate, when this people are called to go through scenes of affliction and suffering, are driven from their homes, and cast down, and scattered, and smitten, and peeled, the Almighty is rolling on his work with greater rapidity.”²⁵ Again: “I sit and laugh, and rejoice exceedingly when I see persecution. I care no



Governing heaven and earth by his providence, he so overrules all things that nothing happens without his counsel.



more about it than I do about the whistling of the north wind, the croaking of the crane that flies over my head, or the crackling of the thorns under the pot. The Lord has all things in his hand; there let it come, for it will give me experience."²⁶

It is apparent that Young was attempting to "have it both ways" (as of course did Calvin). If something happened, it was consistent with the will of God. If it appeared negative, there must be some hidden good that would emerge. Sometimes this led to a certain awkwardness, as for example with the concept of "chastening":

When we look at the Latter-day Saints, we ask, is there any necessity of their being persecuted? Yes, if they are disobedient. Is there any necessity of chastening a son or daughter? Yes, if they are disobedient. But suppose they are perfectly obedient to every requirement of their parents, is there any necessity of chastening them then? If there is, I do not understand the principle of it. I have not yet been able to see the necessity of chastening an obedient child, neither have I been able to see the necessity of chastisement from the Lord upon a people who are perfectly obedient. Have this people been chastened? Yes, they have.²⁷

So far, so good. If persecution or other suffering comes upon the Latter-day Saints, they have deserved it, and it will help to turn them back to obedience.

Perhaps Brigham Young should have stopped there, for on the assumption that no one is ever perfect and that there will always be acts deserving of punishment in any group of people, there would be little room for complaint. But human nature is not so easily satisfied. At times the suffering seemed inconsistent with the behavior; there was no obvious way of understanding what was being punished.

We have been persecuted, driven, smitten, cast out, robbed and hated; and I may say it was for our coldness and neglect of duty; and if we did not exactly deserve it, there have been times when we did deserve it. If we did not deserve it at the time, it was good for and gave us an experience.²⁸

I wonder if Young would have been willing to carry his parallel of children and parents to this point. You get a spanking from your parent for no obvious reason and ask what it was for. Answer: "Well, if you did not do anything to deserve it this time, there have been other times when you did deserve it; and besides it will do you good."

It is interesting, I think, to hear a non-theologian of

the sixteenth century, Michel de Montaigne, discuss this same question. Here is the relevant passage in Montaigne's essay entitled "We should meddle soberly with judging divine ordinances":

It is enough for a Christian to believe that all things come from God, to receive them with acknowledgement of his divine and inscrutable wisdom, and therefore to take them in good part, in whatever aspect they may be sent to him. But I think that the practice I see is bad, of trying to strengthen and support our religion by the good fortune and prosperity of our enterprises. Our belief has enough other foundations; it does not need events to authorize it. For when the people are accustomed to these arguments, which are plausible and suited to their taste, there is a danger that when in turn contrary and disadvantageous events come, this will shake their faith. Thus, in the wars we are engaged in for the sake of religion, those who had the advantage in the encounter at La Rochelabeille make much ado about this incident and use their good fortune as a sure approbation of their party; but when they come later to excuse their misfortunes at Moncontour and Jarnac as being fatherly scourges and chastisements, unless they have their following completely at their mercy, they make the people sense readily enough that this is getting two grinding fees for one sack, and blowing hot and cold with the same mouth.²⁹

Montaigne would consider both Calvin and Brigham Young to be "getting two grinding fees for one sack."

But what was the alternative for these two religious leaders? Given their premises, what else could they say? In Brigham Young's case, certainly, it was unthinkable that the restoration of the Christian gospel by Joseph Smith could lead anywhere but to a triumphant conclusion. On this he had waged his life, his fortune, his sacred honor. Of this he was as sure as he was of anything in life. In a period of time when the wavering, the neurotic, are more fashionable and in some ways frankly more interesting, it is instructive to contemplate the rock-like confidence of the Lion of the Lord. He "knew" God would overrule earthly events so as to bring to pass the divine plan. In such a frame of reference, what could be more natural than to put events into two baskets: those that were experienced as positive, as forward-propelling, as gratifying, and those experienced as negative, frustrating, irritating, or downright unjust? And what could be more natural than to see the former as the reward of the righteous, the obvious working out of God's purposes, and the latter as temporary dissonances that would by no means win out in the long run and in the

short run served purposes, such as reminding the faithful of their dependence on the Lord, that could not be known with certainty but could often be guessed at or perceived through a glass darkly?

Brigham Young wanted the doctrine of divine providence to serve not only as a manifesto of confidence for the Church—the idea that whatever happens to us temporarily and individually, the movement of the restored gospel would triumph—but also as a reassurance to the individual. “Let the Lord be God,” he said on one occasion, quite unconscious of the place of that statement in the thought of Martin Luther, far removed from him in space and time, but anxious to convey to the Latter-day Saints that they should do what they could and then relax, leaving the outcome to the Lord.

Every heart that loves this religion, called “Mormonism,” exclaims, from the centre and circumference of his soul and feelings, “Let the Lord be God.” Without that, all will be worthless; with that is everything. Without that we are nothing; we cannot endure; and all our prospects are blasted and scattered to the four winds. In reality, we are nothing only what the Lord makes us. In a short time, if the Lord is for us, all will be right.³⁰

Over and over again statements like the following rang through Young’s sermons: All is right; God can carry on his own work; my heart is comforted; I feel first rate; I feel happy; and (to use a colloquial expression that must have communicated well his meaning) don’t fret your gizzard. “Our religion has been a continual feast to me,” he said. “With me it is Glory! Hallelujah! Praise God! instead of sorrow and grief.”³¹ Holding himself up as a model not of one who had achieved perfection but of one who had suffered much and whose attitude was still one of supreme confidence, Young repeatedly assured the Saints that they need not worry, for God would do his part.

It need not be added, perhaps, that Brigham Young did not see the overruling power of God as an excuse for inactivity or fatalism on the part of man. The belief in the free agency and responsibility of man was fundamental for Young. Blessings were conditional upon obedience. Men should “take hold and perform the labors devolving upon them.” Here is a good statement of Brigham’s basic position:

Have I any good reason to say to my Father in Heaven, ‘Fight my battles,’ when he has given me the sword to wield, the arm and the brain that I can fight for myself? Can I ask him to fight my battles and sit quietly down waiting for him to do so? I cannot. I can pray the people to hearken to wisdom, to listen to counsel; but to ask God to do for me that which I can do for myself is preposterous to my mind.³²

When in meeting he was told that a company of handcart pioneers was approaching the Salt Lake Valley in a pathetic condition of fatigue and weakness, he adjourned the meeting, instructing the congregation to go to the assistance of the new arrivals. “Prayer is good,” he said, “but when milk and potatoes are needed, prayer will not take their place.”³³

We have seen that both John Calvin and Brigham Young had a fundamental faith in the overruling power of God, who did not stand aloof from human history but saw to it that the divine purpose was fulfilled. Both leaders used this concept to explain specific events, both positive and negative, in the struggle of their respective movements. Both called upon this principle to serve as a

calming reassurance to the individual believer. And both interpreted the principle in such a way that men were not entitled to sit back and do nothing or to lapse into a mood of fatalism; rather they were to do their best, enjoy whatever blessings came their way, and endure trials and suffering patiently. Clearly this particular aspect of their respective theologies, however differently it might have been expressed, was functionally identical.

I do not want to be understood as saying that the theologies of the two leaders were the same in all respects. Although it is quite possible to find other elements of similarity, it should be noted that the differences were numerous and profound. Anthropology, theology, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology—in all these traditional categories there were basic differences. In a word Calvin saw himself (and in important ways was) in the Pauline-Augustinian tradition, whereas Brigham Young was closer to a Jamesian-Pelagian position. Mormonism was in several respects the nineteenth-century equivalent of sixteenth-century Protestant radicalism, roundly repudiated by Calvin. Calvin would have been repelled by the most fundamental claims of Mormonism, and Brigham Young explicitly rejected most of the ideas we associate with Calvin.

Yet I wonder whether we are not too prone to focus on differences and to overlook that which the two great religious leaders had in common. Several years ago Ernst Troeltsch noted that the strident religious polemic of the sixteenth century—Protestant against Catholic, one brand of Protestant against another—had obscured the simple fact that all Europeans of that age still shared fundamental beliefs. For practical purposes all were theists; all accepted the historicity of the Bible; all were Christians. Not until the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment would these common assumptions begin to break down. In the same sense, I believe, John Calvin and Brigham Young shared some beliefs or assumptions that were as basic as those on which they differed. And not the least of these was their commitment to and ringing proclamation of the sovereignty and paternal providentiality of God.

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Notes

1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1966), 1:171. Hereafter abbreviated *Institutes*.
2. *Institutes* 1:172.
3. *Institutes* 1:173.
4. *Institutes* 1:174.
5. *Institutes* 1:174.
6. *Institutes* 1:175.
7. *Institutes* 1:181.
8. *Institutes* 1:183.
9. *Institutes* 1:183.
10. J. Bonnet, comp; *Letters of John Calvin*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1855-57), Vol. 1, pp. 364-73.
11. *Institutes* 1:187.
12. *Institutes* 1:188.
13. *Institutes* 1:189.
14. *Institutes* 1:189.
15. *Institutes* 1:190.
16. *Institutes* 1:192.
17. *Institutes* 1:193.
18. *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1855-86), 12:260. Hereafter abbreviated *JD*.
19. *JD* 11:41.
20. *JD* 7:148.
21. *JD* 1:163.
22. Brigham Young Letterbook 1, Reel 31, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
23. *JD* 7:42.
24. *JD* 7:145.
25. *JD* 2:7.
26. *JD* 2:8.
27. *JD* 12:308.
28. *JD* 14:97.
29. Michel de Montaigne, *Complete Works* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1948), p. 160.
30. *JD* 5:343.
31. *JD* 8:119.
32. *JD* 12:240-41.
33. Sermon of November 30, 1856, *Deseret News*, December 10, 1856.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN JOHN CALVIN AND BRIGHAM YOUNG RESPONSE

JOHN DILLENBERGER

I have been impressed by the care with which Mr. Bitton has dealt with both Brigham Young and John Calvin. He has obviously read the sources and quoted them correctly and well. For me, however, the problem does not lie in deciding whether or not Calvin and Brigham Young had similar ideas about providence but rather in understanding the term, "sovereignty of God" at all. We talk about the "sovereignty of God" in John Calvin, but I don't think that Calvin used those words. The ideas that are discussed by both Brigham Young and John Calvin may fit generally under that category but I wonder if that is the most helpful way of looking at them.

The term, "sovereignty of God" is not generally used in theology and then not until the seventeenth century. Too, it was probably not understood in the context of the Bible but rather in the context of the social and political times of that century. The seventeenth century was the age of absolutism politically, culturally, philosophically, and scientifically. While we usually think, for instance, about natural science in modern terms, it was a dogmatic enterprise in the seventeenth century. And when the Church opposed the scientists, they were right on theological grounds, they were wrong on scientific ones. There were germs of truth in this dogmatic science that were later validated, but the theory behind the science was all wrong.

It was this kind of sovereignty—that of absolute power and control like medieval lords—that both Calvin and Brigham Young tried to employ. What each did was to use the kind of language which most meaningfully described God at his particular juncture of history. At some junctures that takes on more deterministic categories; at other junctures it takes on more open categories. John Calvin lived in a world in which those open categories were not as prevalent as they were in Brigham Young's time. I would say that for Calvin God was creator and redeemer, and his understanding of what that meant included the concepts of providence and predestination. There is a deterministic motif which runs through both of these concepts. But the deterministic motif is not an essential of theology as much as it is a category that belongs to particular worldviews at certain times. For example, though all of us believe that some things are determined, we probably do not believe they are determined to the extent that either Brigham Young or John Calvin did. Today we are troubled by the concept of predestination. In the

ancient world and then through the Middle Ages being determined by God was meaningful as over against being determined by the dark powers of fate and fortune. That was emancipation. People didn't feel their freedom in the same way as we do in the modern world.

Brigham Young believed in the sovereignty of God which is total control but at the same time that the freedom of humanity was absolutely essential. And there were great difficulties in putting those two together. Therefore the crux of the issue becomes discerning the *intention* of a term at a specified point in time rather than fighting over the validity of a particular formulation. So while the general concept of sovereignty has come to be an important part of all religious understanding, we no longer live in the kind of world where that concept was so meaningful. Theology's problem is how to comprehend God's continual relationship to the world. We must demythologize terms as the environment of religious concepts changes.

There are so many marvelous motifs of Christian history evident in the instincts of Mormonism (though they are often combined in ways that seem strange to those of us who are not Mormons). You have a living residue of wisdom. But the question is: Can Mormonism find a way of utilizing that distinct wisdom in a new world and in new categories? Paradoxically, to be faithful to its heritage it may have to say things quite differently than it did in the past. History can never replicate itself because the context and thus the meaning changes. Those who repeat the past are ironically the most untrue to what happened. Sometimes to affirm the past we must do and say the opposite of those who went before.

That which is disclosed is always disclosed in the timebound categories of any generation, of any time. The things that fall from Heaven are still colored by earth. And the reason theology is an enterprise that will not go out of existence is simply that it is the theological task of every generation to ask the question: In faithfulness to God's witness to us and in faithfulness to God's witness out of the past, how can we and how must we now say what they also once said? For that is the continuity and witness of the saints throughout history.

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GOING MY WAY:

AN INTERVIEW

WITH NEWSWEEK'S

KENNETH WOODWARD

In the September 1, 1980 issue of *Newsweek* there appeared an article by its religion editor and senior writer, Kenneth Woodward. While not all would share the opinion of Wendell Ashton who called it "a brilliantly-written treatise," it was extraordinary for at least three reasons. First, it was not news per se, not connected to any event or development in Mormondom. Rather, it was a tightly-worded, lucid attempt to outline Mormon beliefs to an obviously non-Mormon and mostly non-religious readership. That such a piece could be printed in a national news magazine which primarily deals in the controversial and the timely is in itself a remarkable achievement. Secondly, the tone of the article was by and large neutral, free from the belittling sarcasm or the overblown praises common to Mormon-related media coverage. There was no mention of the Church's easiest institutional targets (the battle with Sonia Johnson or LDS finances) or of its much-vaunted institutional successes (growth statistics or celebrity members such as the Osmonds, the Marriotts, Johnny Miller, or George Romney). Lastly, the article gave long overdue recognition to an extremely worthy enterprise, namely SUNSTONE. "Significantly," it reads, "it is only in struggling independent Mormon journals, such as the brightly-edited bimonthly, SUNSTONE, that creative Mormon thought regularly finds a public." As SUNSTONE editors, we were immediately interested in the story behind the story and the man behind the story.

Kenneth Lawrence Woodward (for Saint Lawrence) is a committed Catholic and has been the religion editor for *Newsweek* since 1964. He is a product of exclusively Catholic education from elementary school, where he claims "the sisters glided across polished classroom floors as if on silent rubber wheels," and Saint Ignatius High School in Cleveland—which he attended with Phil Donahue among other notables—to Notre Dame and graduation with high honors in English literature. He later received a fellowship to the University of Michigan Law School where he spent one doleful year reading poetry. ("There are no connotations in the study of law," he moaned, "only denotations.") He completed his formal studies

with an MA in English from the University of Iowa.

Woodward's on-the-job training came in Omaha where he worked as a civil rights reporter for the *Sun* newspaper group from 1962-64. He was the first journalist to receive the Outstanding Citizenship Award from the Omaha Urban League for a series of articles he wrote exposing real estate profiteering in Omaha's black ghetto.

As a devoted if beleaguered father of three, Mr. Woodward has long been concerned about the condition of America's families. He has written numerous articles for *Newsweek* on the subject, including such cover stories as "Saving the Family" and "Who's Raising the Kids?" (The latter received the American Psychological Foundation's National Media Award in 1976.) "I was outraged," he said. "Kids were being incredibly neglected." He is the co-author of *Grandparents, Grandchildren: The Vital Connection* (forthcoming this March from Anchor-Doubleday) in which he examines the effects on our society of the transition from a three-generational to a nuclear family and the decided loss for both grandchildren and grandparents.

The task of reporting all religious developments in the world for *Newsweek's* two and a half million readers each week for sixteen years, while an awesome responsibility, has provided Mr. Woodward with a unique vantage point. He has interviewed hundreds of religious persons from every possible lifestyle, persuasion, and belief system, has heard their stories, has observed the ebb and flow of their religious sentiments. He often quotes Gerard Manley Hopkins: "the Holy Ghost over the bent world broods." Woodward broods too, painfully watching and reporting the decline of religion from a distance. But he also partakes, bringing to his work an invaluable if not essential element: his own faith. So his accounts are imbued with a personal understanding of what religion is all about, and a genuine respect for any sincere, religious adventure. SUNSTONE felt that its readers could benefit greatly from his perceptions of religion in general and Mormonism in particular.

This interview was conducted by Peggy Fletcher from Sep-

tember 8th to September 29th, 1980, at various locations in New York City and recorded on snatches of non-functioning cassette tapes, menus and napkins, old SUNSTONE calendars, notebook paper, and book jackets.

SUNSTONE: Which religious persons you have met while writing for NEWSWEEK have particularly influenced you?

WOODWARD: I couldn't possibly name them all.

SUNSTONE: I know. I only have a few hours of tape.

WOODWARD: Abraham Heschel, who is dead, was my spiritual godfather. He was a rabbi and a blue blood Hasid. He lived in a little room in the Jewish Theological Seminary here in New York. His books were always threatening to fall over which gave me the perilous sense of being inundated at any moment. That same sense was obvious in his conversation as well. And he always said, because he was a Hasid, "My friend, let me tell you a story." It was from him, then, that I learned the limitations of propositional or philosophical theology. Because he always told stories and he always made a point.

He taught me what the Sabbath meant, to have a day of rest, to let everything stand still (something which is virtually impossible in our society). I could see practices rising out of this which, if you really had insight and spiritual understanding, could make a day of rest all that it might possibly be.

Because Heschel was rooted in a millennia-old tradition, he was able to be very relevant without being trendy. An awful lot of people were looking for a way to be relevant because they weren't anymore (especially the Christians), and they would hop on whatever good or nefarious cause came along. Mostly the causes were good, like civil rights, but some people were so caught up that they became unstable. Heschel, because he was rooted, was always stable. That's what I really appreciated about him.

There's Martin Marty. It's incredible to find an intellectual and an academic—not to mention a superb journalist—who is also a deeply spiritual person. Marty will sit down and smoke cigars and play poker, have an investment club with his neighbors, build a cabana in his back yard for a swimming pool, and raise not only his own family but several foster children as well. Many of his acquaintances are completely unaware that he is one of the most important scholars in the country in American religious history. He's always taking a back seat when he could probably tell you anything you want to know, always pointing to somebody else, trying to bring people out—a very self-effacing man given his gifts. So I have learned a lot from him in that regard.

Dorothy Day, an incredible woman out of the twenties who ran the *Catholic Worker*. I felt I was intruding on her life to try to write a story about her. (It is so nice when somebody doesn't want to be written about because most people are dying to have their names in a national magazine.) I went into the chapel with her while she prayed. We talked about kids; she talked about her grandchild. And then we talked about her work. Her big problem was that some of the derelicts and drunks she put up and fed in her hospitality house would steal her books. But it was a thing she put up with because she preferred to have the books go rather than get rid of the derelicts.

Some of the most interesting people I've met are the gnomes, the sort of ordinary people in the ranks that you can't really write about. I'll tell you about a guy I met. . . .

SUNSTONE: My friend, let me tell you a story?

WOODWARD: Right. I don't even know his name but he looked like my grandfather. He had white hair, and I met him when I was doing a story on the Southern Baptists in the sixties. I was not sure what to expect because in the North, most writers, editors, and social action people I knew presumed that all Southern Baptists were rednecks and racists. Well, it seems that this particular man had been working for thirty years with blacks, had even put together a black seminary under Southern Baptist auspices. Then about two weeks before I talked to him (he didn't tell me this—I learned it from somebody else), he had gone to a black church and participated in the service. Afterwards, a bunch of real rednecks got hold of this man, who was in his sixties at the time, rolled him out of the car, urinated all over him, and left him in a ditch. That story never got reported. Those kinds of people, against their own religious tradition as well as the whole Southern culture, had been doing yeoman's work for many years with no publicity.

So although there is much that is bad in religion, it does summon people to their best selves. It can sustain (Mormon word) people in extraordinary undertakings without asking the *Newsweeks* of the world to come in and tell their stories. Religion in general can make good hypocrites, but at least hypocrites know they ought to be something more than what they are. We have just been through a period of pervasive self-congratulations, people constantly saying I'm ok and you're ok. The whole culture has been trying to tell us that whatever we're doing, it's ok. Well, it's not ok. It's not that what you are is necessarily bad, but you can always be better, do more, open up to something higher. I think that's what all religions offer. Certainly nothing else does. The Constitution doesn't spell out what the niftiest guy of the week is supposed to be like. Television gives us nothing but the Incredible Hulk and Laverne and Shirley for models. And on down the line.

SUNSTONE: Has it been difficult for you to write about your own church?

WOODWARD: I'd say it has been both hard and easy at the same time. Easy because it's what I know best; hard because it has made me rethink and sift through all my beliefs and experiences more critically.

SUNSTONE: I know exactly what you mean.

WOODWARD: In 1971 I did a cover story called "Has the Church Lost Its Soul?" (Interestingly, we didn't say *which* church. Lenny Bruce used to ask, "Why is the Catholic church the only *the* Church?") Sometimes in the midst of group journalism there comes a story you can wrap yourself around, and they let you write it all yourself. That one came out of my guts.

I had set myself the job of evoking a culture, describing how the Church creates a culture and infuses meaning in the ordinary things that happen to people—birth, marriage, sex, death, and, for Catholics, athletics, especially football. I tried to use specifically Catholic imagery to give outsiders a true sense of Catholicism as it had

been. But the article was definitely an attempt to say what was lost more than what remained. Some right-wing Catholics were offended, but they clearly didn't understand. It was a very loving piece. For me, Vatican II was the end of something not the beginning. What I was trying to say was that up until the 1960s there was an integral Catholic subculture in the United States which separated Catholics from other people, made them feel unique and united. Like a family so to speak. Remember, we are talking about fifty million people (the largest single church in the country), and all of different backgrounds, feeling some commonality, feeling like a people. The extraordinary thing is that this feeling lasted as long as it did given the pressures of secularism, division, and its own size. But it also disintegrated overnight which means there was something rotting from within. It was not being nourished and renewed as it ought to have been.

You see, in part what religion can do is link up the everyday with the eternal, providing meaning in ongoingness. That's what traditions are all about. But the paradox of tradition is that everything that's alive has to change. Therefore, for traditions to remain viable, they must look forward as well as backward. To reembody the past, you must give it contemporaneous meaning. Sometimes that meaning gets reversed. The Catholic church's original position on birth control was an attempt to say good things about the body, especially about sexuality and reproduction, in opposition to the Gnostics. So in order to reaffirm that same position now they ought to be fully supportive of birth control. Religion locates you in a tradition—allows you to pick your heroes, heroines, and models from other times, places, and cultures (in the case of the Catholic church, most often medieval Europe). Allows you therefore to transcend your culture and then look at it in a critical light.

Let me give you an example. In the sixties I suggested to the rector of St. Peter's Cathedral here in New York that he get all the cardinals in their red dress and have a high pontifical mass in Latin (natch, right?) and then have Daniel Berrigan preach the sermon against the war in Viet Nam. So on the one hand you use the symbolism of the mass with all its triumphalism—a Gregorian chant and everything that's old. None of it is American, after all, which would assert that we belong to a larger and more noble tradition. Then the sermon provides the contemporary relevance: out of our tradition, therefore, we do X with respect to the war. I have yet to see such a mass, but that's what traditions *can* do. (The Berrigan brothers have been arrested again. Did you know?)

SUNSTONE: Do you have any trouble, particularly in a secular environment, being a thinker and a believer?

WOODWARD: The major answer to that is no, assuming I'm a thinker. Actually, it's very easy in the Catholic tradition to be a thinker because we have an exalted respect for reason, as exemplified in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. The epistemological point to Thomism is that the mind is in touch with reality and it can know God, at least by analogy. So I don't have a problem with that at all.

I suppose there are some who would say that I'm not a believer. They would be wrong, of course, but it has been difficult for me to discover how timebound many reli-

gious ideas and practices are. I used to think that Jesus spoke in Latin. That's what happened at mass, right? I didn't mind that some popes were bad (I was somewhat glad that they were), but to realize how many things were historically conditioned was hard. Maybe it's a personal-ity thing, but I wanted to think that some things never change, some things are eternal, beyond change, beyond corruption. I guess it's part of growing up, something you have to come to terms with at some time.

SUNSTONE: What about being a believer among non-believers?

WOODWARD: That's no problem at all. They're idiots and I'm arrogant. You see, I know what they know, but they don't know what I know. The very well-educated, the ivy league types by and large know nothing about religion, absolutely zilch-o. You can tell them anything you want, because they don't know what you're talking about. So I have the best of both. (Actually, it's often harder to be a believer among believers.)

Anyway, lots of the people around here are "ex." You see, for many persons who have grown up within a subculture, be it Mormon or Catholic, the outside world is always "they"; it's always a world of danger and mys-



Bernard Goffry, *Newsweek*

Mormons need to do a little more thinking about the logical implications of their theology.

tery, both frightening and alluring. So if the inside world becomes too inhibiting—intellectually, sexually, any which way—the outside world seems more desirable. I somehow got the notion that that really wasn't the case. Too, when most people get to the outside world, they want to make it on the outside world's terms. I was sufficiently happy to make it on the inside world's terms. I guess because the people I admired most did both. There was nothing good or right about the outside world that wasn't available to me in my own subculture. I didn't disassociate religion with any of man's endeavors, understandings, or images of himself. In addition, my religious education taught me the Blakean tradition of critiques of the culture. So again, I had the best of both.

SUNSTONE: Have your religious perceptions changed during the years you've worked for *Newsweek*?

WOODWARD: Oh sure, but not necessarily because of *Newsweek*. Views of God change with age, I think. Naturally they do. If it's a living relationship and it's between two persons (as I understand that term), then it has got to change. Instructed as I am by the lives of the saints (Catholic saints that is, not Latter-day) and by the mystics, I have learned that there are dark nights of the soul, there are times of spiritual darkness. Those who would live intimately with God are the ones who understand their distance from him/her. Also I've learned that the most important, the most significant, the most creative Catholics I know are the people who, like Heschel, are the most orthodox, the most rooted, who are able to ride out a number of things. I guess that's what I have tried to do. Simple things are often very hard for me. Those people, like you and me, who deal in ideas, who have been gifted with good brains, have to learn to shut those off at certain times and develop humility. There are some simple people, including some in my own family . . .

SUNSTONE: Mine, too.

WOODWARD: who are not complex, who have never thought about religion the way that I have and do. But if ordinary people can't get close to God, if it depends on intellect, then everybody's dead. One has to be instructed by the ordinary people. I think I have softened in that direction over time, too.

SUNSTONE: What made you do a story on Mormons at this particular time? There wasn't any news in it.

WOODWARD: The idea goes back to 1978 when Kimball announced the blacks could have the priesthood. It was a Thursday or a Friday night. I had already completed my section but it was too important a story to be ignored. I had been planning to watch the Holmes/Shavers fight on TV. (Ernie Shavers is from Ohio.) First things first; it's a matter of priority. We would like to arrange the Second Coming to meet our deadlines. I called up Charles Graves (head of LDS Public Communications for the East Coast at that time). "So, Charles," I said, "let's go to dinner and watch the fight."

Thus, over bourbon and Perrier (he was having the Perrier—it's fancy water), we began to discuss the implications of the announcement. I wanted to know why it couldn't have been changed earlier, and he launched into a description of the pre- and post-existence in Mormon theology. I had just finished a cover story on Reverend Moon and was struck by the similarities to his Divine Principle, the whole sense of marching two by two into the afterlife. It occurred to me as Charles continued that the same set of sensibilities was at work, namely that the fullness of humanity is the joining of male and female. So, taking a long swallow of bourbon, I turned to Charles, noting that his tie was in place and everything was in order, and I said, "Charles, tell me. Is there a Mrs. God?" He looked down into his Perrier, thought about that a moment and said, "Yes, there is." I said, "This is incredible. I have never heard this. Mormons have been around 150 years and if I, as a religion editor, didn't know what they believe, what about the average person who doesn't spend his time monitoring these things?"

That's when I became intrigued by it, but I tucked it in

the back of my mind. I kept saying to myself I should do that story some day. I was not interested in how much money the Mormons have, and I'm tired of growth statistics, which is what the Church wants you to talk about. But nobody was taking them seriously as a people who have, to use Peter Berger's phrase, a "cognitively deviant mythos" by which they live. They're living on a different story, in other words, than the other Christians. So periodically someone from the Church would come to me and say, "It's our anniversary. Don't you want to do a story on us?" I kept saying to them, "What I would like to do is a story on your theology. When you're ready to do that story, I'm ready."

Finally, when I went carefully over the theology, I felt that I should go out to Salt Lake City and talk to some official types. I had been thinking about it all summer. This is not the stuff of high drama, mind you, but it was a question of when Mr. Packer and Mr. Madsen and the rest would be available. And honestly, I had thought of plugging it into the Sunstone symposium because it was the only Mormon event that I could think of.

SUNSTONE: Why didn't you mention the symposium in your article?

WOODWARD: She asks accusingly. Actually, the piece shaped up somewhat differently than I originally planned. Also, the Pope just happened to make an important decision that week about converted married priests, which took some of the space.

SUNSTONE: I can see where your loyalties lie. Tell me about your methodology. How did you go about collecting information for your story?

WOODWARD: Methodology is too fancy a word for what I do. I was primarily interested in bringing to the outside world what Mormons believe. I could have read about it in books, I suppose, but that wasn't the point. I wanted to have various kinds of people in the Church tell me the Mormon story of human existence in their own words and not just repeat formulas. So I asked everyone—from General Authorities to ordinary people—the same questions over and over again. Their answers were all different, which is as it should be (not radically different, just varying emphases). Some people were very official and somewhat stilted. I didn't want that. It's not that a stilted answer is in itself wrong, it's just stilted. Some people were more nuanced. I found, too, a certain nervousness and defensiveness. I didn't want that either. I tried to reassure them that nobody was out to get them; I was not doing an investigation. ("What do you *really* think of God?") I was not interested in their money. I was strictly interested in how they see themselves and their relationship to God. And out of all my conversations certain patterns emerged.

SUNSTONE: Whom did you talk to?

WOODWARD: You want me to just list them?

SUNSTONE: Yes.

WOODWARD: Well, there was this persistent female editor . . .

SUNSTONE: Besides her.

WOODWARD: I spent one entire evening with Boyd

Packer and his family. And I talked to Truman Madsen for a few hours. Also, Marvin Hill, Hugh Nibley, James Ford (a convert at BYU), Davis Bitton, Dallin Oaks, Jan Shippo, Sterling McMurrin, Lowell Bennion, and Mary Bradford (briefly). Also, I talked to Lorie Winder. She gave me a copy of *Exponent II*. And, of course, the Church's public relations men here in New York, formerly Charles Graves, and now Steve Coltrin.

SUNSTONE: How did you decide which people to talk to?

WOODWARD: Many of the Utah appointments were set up for me by Mr. Coltrin. He was in Utah at the time and personally accompanied me to a number of the interviews. Other names were suggested in the course of the discussions. Like Davis Bitton and Sterling McMurrin.

SUNSTONE: How did you choose Jim Ford?

WOODWARD: I read a piece that he did in the literature of the Popular Culture Association on *Battlestar Galactica* and Mormon theology. He seemed intelligent and articulate, and I wanted a convert's point of view.

SUNSTONE: What has been the general response to your article?

WOODWARD: We've received somewhere around three hundred letters, which is abnormally high for a non-cover story. Not many of them are completely positive or absolutely negative. I'd say 90 percent of them are generally complimentary, thanking me for treating their Church with respect but taking issue with one or more of my specific statements. The three most common objections (and these comprise the bulk of the complaints) were: 1) Mormons *do* believe that Jesus atoned for our sins, 2) Mormons *do* believe that God is the Supreme Being, and 3) my use of the term "Mrs. God" was inappropriate and disrespectful.

SUNSTONE: Let's take the three objections individually. First of all, did you mean to be flippant about "Mrs. God"?

WOODWARD: No, I really didn't. I was trying to capture the emphasis I found over and over, that of a very domestic view of the eternities. A man needs a wife, I was told, to be exalted. The purpose of life was to gain a body and "be fruitful and multiply." The afterlife will be very much like this life. Families will be together; reproducing and raising children will continue infinitely. I used the term "Mrs. God" in all my conversations, including discussions with both Packer and Madsen, and was never told that it was offensive or inaccurate. So that reaction was somewhat unexpected.

SUNSTONE: What about the claim that Mormons *do* believe God is the Supreme Being? Have the letters convinced you that you were wrong about that?

WOODWARD: No. I am only convinced that some Mormons need to do a little more thinking about the logical implications of their theology. I was not saying that Mormons don't believe God is *more* supreme than man but rather that He is not man's creator. Obviously, if God were once as man now is, then there must have been a being who was the god who preceded him. He is therefore part of an infinite stream of beings of which there is no Supreme Head, no First Cause. This was very clear

from my discussion with Truman Madsen as well as my reading in the Doctrine and Covenants, *Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*, and *Mormon Doctrine*. In the latter, Mr. McConkie quotes Joseph Smith as saying, "I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea . . ." So I think I reported it fairly accurately.

SUNSTONE: In the article you said, "Unlike orthodox Christians, Mormons believe that men are born free of sin and earn their way to godhood by the proper exercise of free will, rather than through the grace of Jesus Christ. Thus Jesus' suffering and death in the Mormon view were brotherly acts of compassion, but they do not atone for the sins of others. For this reason, Mormons do not include the cross in their iconography nor do they place much emphasis on Easter." Where did you get your information and do you still think that's true?

WOODWARD: A lot of people have written in to say that Mormons *do* believe that Jesus atoned for man's sins and that that is central to Mormon beliefs. I wish I could have said more about the Atonement, but it might have been too truncated. I was trying to capture the essence of Mormon beliefs for our non-Mormon (and mostly non-religious) readership. To a traditional Christian, the Atonement was Jesus' acceptance of death. His act of dying redeemed man from the necessary consequences of the Fall of Adam, making it possible, through the grace of God, for man to be saved. It seemed to me, particularly after talking with Madsen, that while Mormons retain the rhetoric of atonement for sins, what they mean is something really quite different.

Let me quote from the transcript of my discussion with Madsen. He said, "As I understand the Mormon view, Christ somehow came and suffered. This is prior to the cross. Mormons don't stress, you'll notice, the cross as much as they stress what happened in Gethsemane. You won't find a cross in any Mormon chapel. That doesn't mean we don't believe he was crucified; he was. But crucifixion has been suffered by other men. It's a terrible way to die but it's not unique. What was unique in Jesus' suffering was that he knelt in Gethsemane (from our point of view and we have a lot of revelations to that effect). He so identified with the totality of man's sins and setbacks that it was as if he were guilty of all of them, and he sweat blood just as Luke says. . . . He experienced such a compassion for mankind that there is not one condition that you can get in in terms of sin, badness, setback, tragedy, or pain, not one condition in which you can say, 'You don't know what I've been through.' Because he can always say, 'Oh, yes I do. I've been there.' So he suffered that his bowels might be filled with compassion." Well, compassion is an important and admirable virtue, but it's not the same thing as atoning for sins, in the usual sense of that term. To atone Jesus had to relinquish his life on the cross.

Some of the letters have used the third Article of Faith as evidence that Mormons believe in the Atonement and that it is central to their beliefs. To me, however, that is one more indication of Mormon schizophrenia in its theology. The Article of Faith reads: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the

Bernard Goffryd, *Newsweek*



Actually it's often harder to be a believer among believers.

Gospel." Again, while that uses the rhetoric of atonement, it emphasizes the aspect of *earning* godhood by acts of obedience. It's for these reasons that I maintain that for Mormons atonement may be on the books, but it doesn't mean the same as for other Christians, and it's not all that central.

SUNSTONE: What did you think of Brigham Young University?

WOODWARD: I had the strong impression that all is not well there. Every church-related institution at one time or another goes through a crisis in relation to its church and revealed truth as it has been formulated and presented by the authorities. There will always be tension between these things and disinterested scholarship. I can appreciate that. It would be one thing if they said, "Look, we see our obligation to be the spiritual formation of Mormon students (that would be a good thing—wish there were more of it), and we draw these lines on scholarship." But it seems to me in this case they don't say that; they pretend to be open on scholarship. However, I don't think they really are.

I am concerned specifically about two areas, religious studies and history. It seemed to me from talking to certain people that many Mormon scholars are not really interested in other religions per se. Rather they look at non-Mormon scholarship only as a means of authenticating their own religion and scriptures. There is no openness in that. I think that those who are doing this will suffer in the end. They may get kicked upstairs in the Mormon hierarchy, but they are not doing themselves or their people a service.

Secondly, I was appalled at the willingness to dump on their own past traditions. I don't understand why Mormons are so uptight about polygamy. Other people aren't. (Given the way our society is moving, most people would probably applaud such unique marital arrangements.) It is awful for a people who are so historical-minded to pretend this didn't happen or to sweep it under the celestial carpet. I think that's a big mistake. If you really believe in your people, you really believe that a revelation passed through and among them, then you look honestly, unashamedly at your past. Mormon history is of such recent vintage that many of the documents from the nineteenth century are readily available. If the Mormon understanding of what happened in the past is at considerable variance with the conclusions of unbiased historians, archeologists, and other scholars, Mormons might be well advised to recon-

sider some of their claims or at least to weigh alternative interpretations.

One other thing bothered me about BYU. That is I sensed a marked inclination towards an instrumental view of education. By that I mean education which has employment as its underlying goal. "What pays off is what's important." There is nothing ominous about that, just extremely limited. And it does lead to a divorce of work from belief. Education—particularly religious education—which does not instill a critical attitude towards the world allows one to become a good scientist or businessman or government official without thinking always of the larger implications.

SUNSTONE: Do you think churches should become involved in political battles?

WOODWARD: I think a church is well within its rights and responsibilities to take a stand on issues like the ERA. I personally think that this amendment is poorly drawn up, and therefore I am opposed to it. But if a person disagrees with me then he does, and it doesn't have anything to do with religion. Similarly, if the Mormon church is going to take a stand on political issues, it must realize that people who oppose the position will be critical. Mormons can't just say, "Well, that's anti-Mormon sentiment." So I would like to see them enter into the public arena in a more open and less defensive way.

Once a church does take a stand on a political issue, an obvious question arises: What pressures will be brought to bear upon church members who disagree? If, in their wisdom, the General Authorities make a political judgment and a member doesn't perceive it as all that wise, what happens to his or her relationship to the Church?

But the big point in all of this, Peggy, is that the Mormon church, as far as I can tell, has never seen it as their obligation to take on civic responsibility for other people. They have been a sect for most of their existence and are still very sectarian in their outlook. Sects see the world as "us against them." Sects tend to withdraw from the body politic and leave to others, the heathen, the unsaved, whomever, the business of trying to create justice for the whole of society. Mormons as a group don't share in the task of working out differences among people of various backgrounds—religious, ideological, economic—and don't speak for people other than themselves and beyond domestic issues.

Mormons seem to have a love/hate relationship with America. Or one might call it a superiority/inferiority complex. They see themselves as in possession of the

Truth, and therefore better than the world, and yet feel constantly persecuted by the world. They disdain the world and yet seek its approbation. Mormons, because of their belief system, see themselves as living radically different lives than traditional Christians but somehow at the foundations seem coopted by the very society they think they are different from.

In part this paradox may be internally caused. Mormons seem to have a working contradiction. Theirs is a church which historically included a communitarian movement, ethos, and ideals but presently has embraced a kind of high church republicanism which emanates from the General Authorities. The end result is a strong emphasis on free enterprise and minimal government which can't be justified by Mormon history or scripture. I think there are some real questions that have to be asked: Does emphasis on free agency necessitate this support for free enterprise? What about the people who need more than minimal government? Without the help of government some wouldn't have the civil rights they presently enjoy, social security and help for the aged, the handicapped, the children. Government can put a floor under the ragged ruins created by a freely enterprising society. Too often, the free enterprise system pushes people towards creativity and individual achievement but puts them at war with each other. Couldn't Mormons draw upon other aspects of their experience and assert other values which might be more consonant with their scriptures and those they share in common with other Christians?

SUNSTONE: What are some of the differences you see between traditional Christianity and Mormonism?

WOODWARD: One big difference I see is the strong success ethic in Mormonism. To me the Jesus story is really very different than that. It teaches us how much success fails. Jesus' project was to move his people from a conception of God which had to do with kingdoms and power and justice to a more intimate conception of the Father whose kingdom (that is, the end) is close at hand. To give yourself wholly to the Father (in Biblical language), to feel properly sustained in this, and then to go to the Cross is really extraordinary. He moved through death, not as the Mormons claim, on a perfunctory assignment worked out in the divine family room before, but with a feeling of being forsaken, of having failed. He was a failure. He was a failure by Jewish standards. To the Jews, prophets may die but here was, according to the New Testament, a sinless man, the awaited Messiah, and he fails and dies in shame. So I think we're kidding ourselves if we talk about success. All of our projects are destined to fail. It was in dying that he was exalted.

The Mormon appeal to some extent is in their notion of self-help salvation, progress, and achievement. To traditional Christianity, achievement in religion means failure in most other endeavors. It's a very corrupted, messed-up world and typically those who succeed in it are those who can compartmentalize their lives, who don't see any connection between how a corporation operates, what it takes to make money, and their commitments as religious people. I guess I don't find enough interiority about Mormonism. There should be more doubt, more self-criticism, more willingness to fail, more living with darkness.

SUNSTONE: What problems do you see in Mormonism's future? Maybe I should say, *do* you see any problems?

WOODWARD: I saw little glimpses that convinced me that the Mormon hierarchy is not particularly interested in reaching, maintaining, and sustaining their more thoughtful members. They have to be fed as much as anyone else. You can't do this by hammering home authority, authority, authority, but rather you *have* to elaborate theology, to continuously engage the imagination and intellect of your best thinkers. I agree with those who say that Mormons don't really have a theology in the sense of an internally coherent, well-developed set of principles. I am not suggesting that one is saved by theology but only that theology is one of the necessary ingredients of a healthy spirituality. You have an intellectual life as soon as you start asking why. And you can't stop people's minds. Why would you want to? To make an intellectual inquiry about God is an act of belief. It's an act of love. Without that sort of love and concern on the part of at least some of the people, the Mormon religion could become a very sterile sort of belief system.

The Church may not care about its philosophers, artists, or poets so long as there is a sufficient quantity of board chairmen, presidents, middle management people, and professional golfers, but that's because Mormon leaders don't seem to recognize the need for spirituality which is expressed precisely in thought, art, and love and *not* expressed in making money or building corporations. (I find it odd that the fact that someone is president of a hotel chain is a bragging point for a church.) But it seems to me such spirituality is critical to the survival of any religion.

Art tells us how we feel about what we believe. It's the only way that abstract statements of faith come alive, to see what they really mean. I didn't see a lot of Mormon art, and I don't suppose there is anything like a Mormon aesthetic. The Mormon church may be young (a mere 150 years) but it ought to be inspiring artists. There is something wrong with a tradition that is *believed* but not *felt*. Moral axioms may help govern behavior, but they don't calm the restlessness of the soul nor open one to the breathing of the Spirit. Without creative input and expression, a religion can slowly fossilize, lose all vitality.

SUNSTONE: Was there anything you *liked* about Mormons or Mormonism?

WOODWARD: Well, there's this brightly-edited bimonthly. . . .

SUNSTONE: Besides that.

WOODWARD: Seriously, I think it is healthy for a church to have responsible, independent publishing. To me, things like *Sunstone*, *Dialogue*, and *Exponent II* reflect positively on their mother church, a definite indication of maturity on the part of the institution which has spawned them.

I liked the strong sense of maternity and active parenting that was evident among the Mormons I met. I disagree with those who say that the family is merely in a state of transformation, that it was in a bad way in the past and now is getting better. I think the family is in real trouble. It has been neglected in our legislation and in every other way for too long. So I appreciate any religious

Bernard Goffryd, *Newsweek*



community which stresses the value of nurturing. (I would like to see Mormons underscore the importance of that for men as well and in a very concrete way.) I like the fact that Mormons seem to have maintained the three generational family fairly well. Mormon grandparents do seem involved with their grandchildren. It's a fading phenomenon in America, one which I am loathe to lose. Along that line I was intrigued with the idea of patriarchal blessings which seems to provide a closeness between the generations, a spiritual bonding which can produce stability and identity for Mormon youth.

I was impressed by the fact that the Mormon mythos seems to have taken hold in many cases. That a mother would be genuinely concerned about her daughter failing to reach the Celestial Kingdom and eternal association with the rest of the family indicates to me the Mormon story is compelling to its adherents. The pre- and post-existence seem very close and operative in Mormon lives.

What else can I say? Everyone I met was courteous and cooperative. Salt Lake has a couple of nice fountains. . . .

SUNSTONE: I have heard you use the phrase: God's in the details. What do you mean by that?

WOODWARD: The phrase comes from architecture, I think. You can see it in the spires and so forth. By that I mean, we don't discover what a person or a community believes about God just from their formal affirmations and creeds but rather in the little ways in which they work their encounter with the mystery of God into the cracks and crevices of their everyday lives. Each religion has its own way to ritualize and hallow the everyday, to make it holy. We find God in the details, in the art, the painting, the architecture, the sculpture, the music but also in the ethics of each body of believers.

In other words, what sort of God requires abstinence from alcohol? Why does it make a difference? (Which it does.) Or if you go to a Presbyterian church meeting, you will find they have a preoccupation with good form. They think they gave us the Constitution. When you are among Presbyterians you will see that this emphasis is

Mormons are living on a different story than the other Christians.

not just historical, not just sociological but somehow the way people of God ought to act. To them, God has a great respect for parliamentary procedure. Certain temperaments are displayed as a result of being Catholic or Protestant or Mormon, and again the difference doesn't come in the big affirmations but in the little things. Like modes of prayer. Only Catholics think of "ejaculations" as short prayers. Everybody else has a somewhat different usage for that word. Walking into someone else's church you can sense the differences. If I go into a Congregational church and there's no crucifix, this tells me something. I remember I went to a Congregational wedding once and the only trinitarian symbol I saw was the Pepsi machine. Some wear crosses around their necks and some, sunstones. That's how we make our commitments part of us. We don't respond to God and the divine impulse directly; we respond with our lives. And since we don't have many one-on-ones with God (basketball image), we find him in the very small moments, the whispers, the nuances.

Every religion begins with a revelation from God and then builds scriptures, traditions, and institutions upon it. All of this is an attempt to penetrate and understand human experience. A better way to say that is: We are on a journey *from God to God*. And all those who make the journey are fellow travelers. What we encounter on the journey is human experience. So that which divides us from God also unites us with each other, and those pilgrims who are making the same journey ought to understand each other. Persons who are shaped by one religious tradition can more readily understand someone shaped by another than someone who has no religion at all. They have had to wrestle with the same spiritual questions, temptations, experiences, gratifications, modes of transcendence. Those people who are superficially on a journey only know what separates us; understanding of our commonality requires profound firsthand knowledge of the difficulties of spiritual experience and commitment. If Mormons would talk honestly and essentially about their own spiritual adventures, how their experience has shaped them, their anguish as well as their success, their feelings of abandonment as well as their conversion rate, then I think they could begin the communication with other travelers. They could be understood and appreciated and accepted as never before.

What Mormons Believe

Mr. Woodward in his two-page *Newsweek* article, tried to describe "the Mormon story of human existence" to a non-Mormon audience. Many have criticized his explanation, questioning details or faulting overall emphasis.

We would like to challenge our SUNSTONE readers, lifelong believers and recent converts, to accept the same assignment Mr. Woodward did. In a two to three page summary, try to capture for a non-Mormon audience the nuances and emphases of Mormon theology that seem critical to you.

Please send your "What Mormons Believe" to SUNSTONE by February 1, 1981. We hope to publish a series of these responses in a future magazine.

Crouched on the rocks, he tipped onto his toes over the little water-filled crevice and stuck out his hand. "Cherry," he whispered, "the bucket!"

"Here. What is it?"

"Shh. That orange rock. Look." He lifted it up and touched its underside with a stick.

She shivered. It was alive. It rippled. Writhed maybe. "Hey," she said, "don't hurt it."

Twisting his mouth at her, he plopped the orange thing into the pail. He ladled water over it with one hand.

"Remember what pool you got him out of," she leaned over for a better look, "so he won't be disoriented when we put him back."

"C'mon," he snorted. "They spend every day and every night in a different puddle. Wherever the ocean deposits them."

"Really?" She poked the crusty shell tentatively. "No family ties?"

"No family ties." He was feeling the crater where the creature had been.

"How conscious are they?"

"Conscious of pain probably. Hunger. Let's see what we can find for the old boy to eat."

She gagged aloud. "Maybe it's an old girl," she said. "Maybe she'd like crumpets and a laxative." She stood up and checked out Shasta who, her whitish fur browned with water, was sniffing at some kelp behind them. "All this supposition," Cherry said, "that lower forms have no feelings the way we do. Maybe they aren't even lower forms. Why do we assume they don't feel?" Her tennis shoes squished behind his on the wet rocks. "Just because we can't look them in the eye?"

He crouched at another indentation and dangled a hermit crab in front of her face. "Here. Let's see if Jumbo Jim wants lunch."

"Maybe," she said, "Jumbo Jim's a vegetarian."

"Not a chance."

"Just because we don't know how different creatures think." She leaned over his shoulders as he turned the orange shell and dropped the tiny crab onto the cold soft stomach flesh of the rock creature.

The rock creature was not a vegetarian.

She stood up. "Now dogs," she said to the grey ocean receding in front of her, "dogs have eyes we can look into. We know dogs have feelings. They care for their pups. Their owners. They're family-oriented." She noted that Shasta was not following them. "Familiar. We can communicate with dogs."

Keith bent his thin legs and crouch-walked, motioning her towards the next tidal pool. "And how do you like being Shasta's god?"

"I'm not Shasta's god."

"Shasta's mere and pere may be responsible for her birth. But you," he turned and pointed a wet finger at her chest, "are responsible for her continued existence."

Cherry chewed on the inside of her cheek.

"You feed Shasta," he said, "and get her shots and let her sleep on your bed even when she smells bad. I," he said lightly, "need a god like you." He started to search out the water at his feet, but brought his chin up. "See that one?" He pointed. "That pool's yours. You can be its Juno or Hera or whoever. See what you have there."

She squatted, her wet tennis shoes overseeing the indentation. Tiny limpet shells lined the sides. "Limpets don't go anywhere," she said. "They probably have family and community like us. Of course they don't seem to have much contact with each other. Probably some kind of telephone or radar."

"See if you can find the PTA president." She heard his hand dive for something behind her. She looked back. "Missed. Big crab."

"What would you have done with him if you'd caught him? He wouldn't have stayed in the bucket."

"It would have been an interesting encounter though."

She sniffed. "You cerebral sorts are so humane."

"Hey now. What's the purpose of life anyway, according to your religious tenets?"

"To learn things," she responded automatically, "to grow." She dabbled her hand in the icy water. "What do you mean, my religious tenets? Don't you believe that?"

"Yeah." He looked up. He'd pushed back the sleeves of his CSH sweatshirt, but the cuffs were still dark and

Low Tide

Karen Rosenbaum



wet. "That much I believe."

She fingered the cold hard limpets. "No more?"

"I don't know." He let out an abrupt breath and set to prying a mussel off the side of a stone.

Her fingers were losing sensation. She lifted them out of the water and shook them, spraying the rocks around.

"You'll never surprise anything that way," he said. "Be sneaky."

"I'm going to be a benevolent god," she said, "not a skulking, scientific one. My world's fine." She crawled next to him, pressed her cheek next to his leg. He was feeding the mussel to a large anemone. "Oh Keith. Why don't you serve up the whole thing now to Jumbo?" She was instantly sorry she'd said it. His eyes opened wide.

"For a benevolent god," he said, "you have some interesting ideas."

She waded off by herself over a smoother stretch of shore towards the cliffs that walled off this part of the beach. Seagulls stalked the water. She searched for a sand dollar but whenever she bent to pick one up, she found the part stuffed into the sand jagged and broken. The one round shell was marred by a gaping hole in the center where a hungry gull had pecked out its dinner and destroyed the pretty design. She slipped it into her pocket anyway. It would probably crack there. Shells were so brittle. She held up to the sky two broken angel wings.

"Shasta!" she called but Shasta apparently didn't think her voice sounded urgent enough. I am, she thought, too lenient a mistress. She took a big step to avoid walking on a quivering layer of violet—part of a jellyfish probably. Or maybe all of it. If Shasta came now, she'd nose it, destroy it maybe. Or did jellyfish secrete stuff to hurt their enemies? She stooped, scooped wet sand over it, walked on.

Her feet were rather numb, didn't even feel uncomfortable since they didn't feel at all. Her toe was wearing through the top of one of her treadless tennis shoes and she had to be careful now that she'd reached the slick rocks. These were the old-fashioned tennis shoes, the kind that weren't a status symbol, not a symbol of anything. She remembered buying them, hung by their

shoelaces on a pole marked 8, in Woolworth's.

Stream of consciousness stop one. The first Friday afternoon with Keith. Bowling at that place up on College. He'd asked for size 7 shoes, and, embarrassed to ask for size 8, she'd asked for size 7 too. She joked uncomfortably about her feet being as large as his and bowled even more uncomfortably, her cramped toes curled under. That was eight months ago, she counted on her fingers, June to April, right after she'd stopped worrying about spring exams. Right before she'd stopped worrying about big feet.

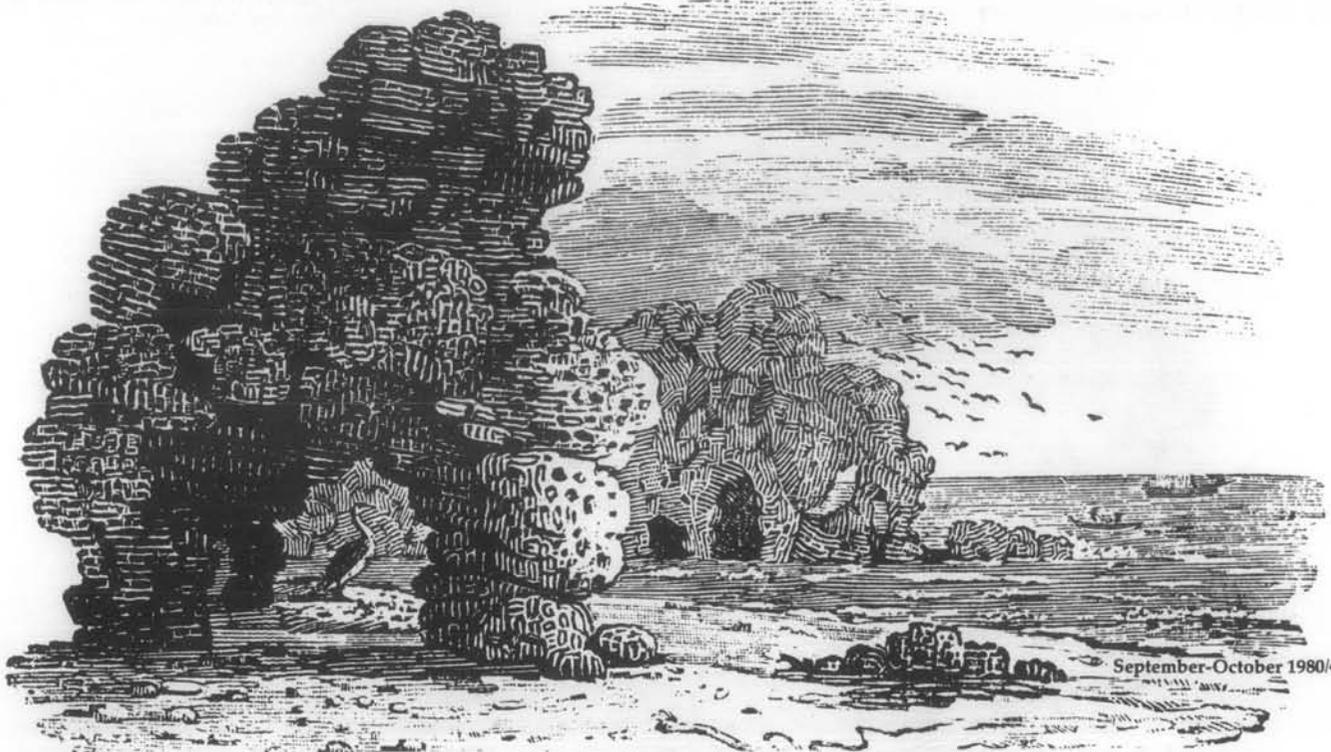
Shasta didn't come again when she whistled but Cherry didn't feel like exercising her authority. Her levis were starting to unroll so she made new cuffs around her knees. She straightened and bent her spine the other way, threw her head and neck back. The sky was fog still. If there's a heaven, it's inside you, Keith had said last week. It's not up there. Jupiter's up there. And Io. She couldn't even see the sun though today. But she could still see Keith and his bucket.

Funny. All their lives human beings spent in conflicting modes. To be alone and stand straight and tall and shout I am. And to reach out and lean against someone and hold someone up and to whisper Are we?

She waded out to where the tide still was foaming against the rocks and sat on a tall stone. The water washed over her feet every few seconds. How long were the intervals? Keith might time them. Her watch was in the glove compartment though and it didn't have a second hand anyway. She looked over at Keith whose head was up, fixed towards her. She raised her arm high, waved. He waved back.

God, she whispered. The world was so complicated. She pulled out her emptied sand dollar. Even this, simple and round, had so many parts. And the rocks and the fogs and the rings of Saturn. Human beings, parts and passions. So many parts to their passions. And even the existence of all the questions. Could it all just have happened? Big Bang. Little Bang. Lord I believe said a Biblical voice out of her brain. Help thou my unbelief.

Shasta trotted up as though she were promptly obeying that last, five-minute-old whistle, a smooth piece of



wood between her teeth. Cherry took it, patted Shasta's damp head, tossed the stick down the tide line. Turning so fast her fur sprayed, Shasta galloped down the beach. Shasta, now Shasta, was a true believer. Well. Belief depended on the object of belief being unseen. Shasta had an advantage.

Behind Shasta, a smooth stick between his teeth too, loped Keith. Cherry laughed, took both sticks, threw Shasta's back down the tide line, and dropped Keith's into his now empty bucket. "You put Jumbo back?"

"I fed him to an octopus." He sat on a neighboring rock, lower than hers. "No. I put him in the hole where I last saw the big crab."

"I don't want to hear about it."

"Okay," he said, pushing his heels into the wet sand. "Communicating with the Great Beyond?"

"Yeah."

"Make connections?"

"No."

Shasta, holding the stick between grinning teeth, jostled her. Keith took the stick this time, threw it even further, and deeper.

"Not so far in."

"She can swim."

"What if she's sucked under by a current?"

"Nah." Back on his rock, he tipped the bucket upside down and put his feet on it. He'd taped one of his shoes with wide grey metallic stuff. It wasn't holding very well.

"What if Shasta were a child?" she said.

"We'd have fed her to Jumbo Jim."

"You just don't want to talk about children."

"I don't mind talking about two children. But I don't want to talk about ten."

"I don't want ten."

He played with the metallic tape. "You want five. That's as bad."

"It's not just a religious thing. I like being one of five children."

"If there were only two kids in your family," he said, "you'd like being one of two."

"No I wouldn't."

"Cherry." He got up as Shasta trotted back. "This is not one of the things I can give in on. I can handle an occasional church meeting. I don't intend to smoke tobacco

or dope. I drink milk with every meal. My idea of a binge is club soda in a non-returnable bottle." Shasta dropped the stick at his feet and rubbed her wet body against his bare legs. "I'm into the idea of marital fidelity and family home evenings. I can handle the whole thing on sex. Right?"

She looked at her levi cuffs. "Right."

"And the kids can go to Primary and Sunday School and be baptized and be in temple pageants and be Eagle Scouts—all two of them."

"It's not just that," she whispered. Shasta looked worriedly from Keith to her. "It's that it's hard for me to keep believing when you've stopped."

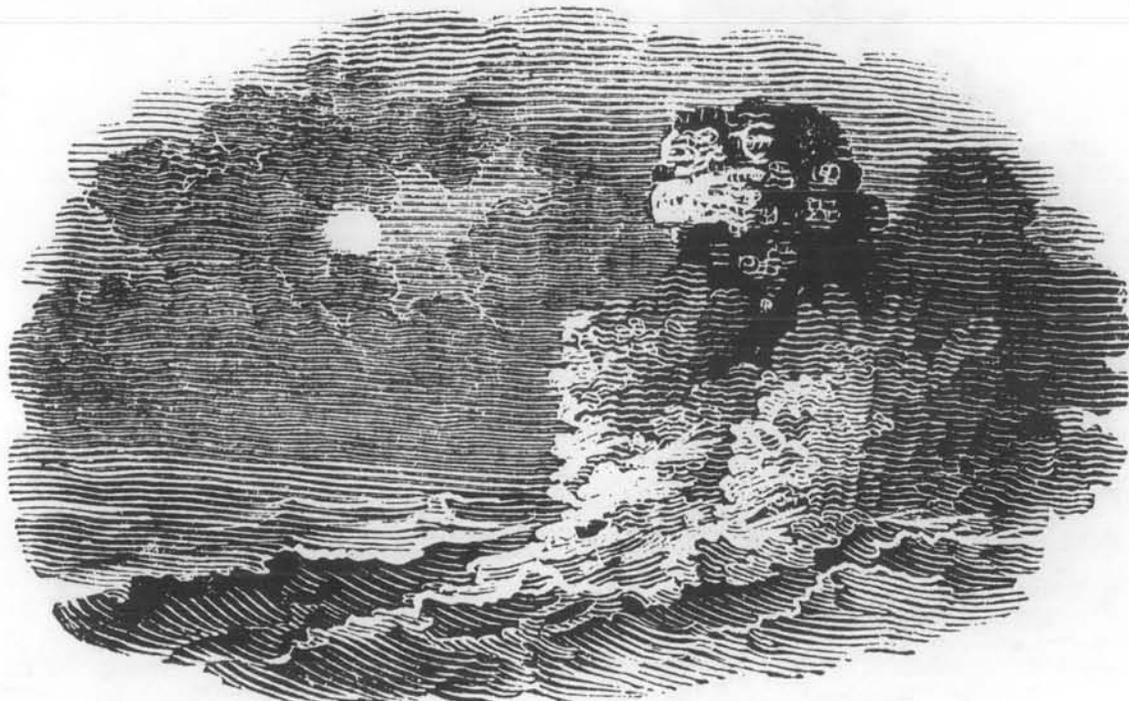
He crouched beside her, his hands on her sandy legs. "I'd believe for you, sunshine," he said, "if I could." He stood up. "Look. Maybe I'm wrong." He shrugged. "Probably we're all wrong. Probably we'll never know." He tried to smile but his mouth was wrinkled. "C'mon Shasta," he said, throwing the stick in front of him. "I'll race you to the treasure." His sneakers slapped the wet sand. Dazed for half a second with joy, Shasta reared, then bounded off beside him. Shasta's faith was whole.

Cherry pulled the bucket over to her rock, upturned it. Sand streaked the sides and rimmed the bottom but all the little live things were gone. A grain of sand. A pismire is perfect and a grain of sand. It sounded like a psalm. And a mouse, Whitman had said, and if a mouse then why not a hermit crab. Why not a hermit crab is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels?

They weren't infidels though. Exfidels she thought. And she did feel staggered. Shasta had beaten Keith to the stick and relinquished it and he was once more throwing it further down the beach. They both took off again.

Swinging the bucket, she waded back over to the smoother sand. The water washed out over her feet. She fell onto her knees and dug furiously. Sometimes if you fell on your knees and dug furiously you caught a little sand crab. She brought up a handful of heavy drenched sand, the sea leaking out her fingers down her arm. She opened her fist and the sand slid out too. No crab. Or if there had been one, it got away.

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Editors' Note

This paper was delivered at SUNSTONE's 1980 Mormon Theological Symposium

Plato has suggested that man is the measure of all things. I am not sure that I believe that, but I do believe that man is the best example we have of whatever it is that man measures. Most religious persons have a view about man, even though they are usually not aware of where the idea came from, what the view means, or how it relates to what else they believe. The confusion does not seem to alter the belief. In this country you need a license to fix a toilet. To be a philosopher or a theologian you do not. This may be why most of the toilets in this country work, and religions don't.

Over the past few years I have been increasingly aware of confusion in religious thought about the role of man.¹ This stems, in the main, from my feeling that what is usually said about man makes little sense to men; my general belief in systematic theology (and consistent philosophy); and my feeling that the selective rationalism of much contemporary religious thought is self-defeating. My hope in this short paper is to look at some of the areas considered in a doctrine of man, to comment on the disharmony, and to draw some preliminary conclusions.

Perhaps for this paper you will allow me to assume that man is a metaphysical animal since he lives in transition between that which he is and that which he is becoming and because his knowledge of the process alters the nature and the outcome of the process.

I

It is not difficult to see why the Mormon movement has been reluctant to be involved in any large scale discussions about metaphysical foundations. Or why Mormons would not pursue the philosophical assumptions they so quickly make. To the vast majority of persons involved in Mormonism, it is a religion; their experiences relate to behavior, to worship, and to their personal commitment. And, in the larger picture, they are concerned about their dependence on each other, and upon the love of God. Mormons, of most persuasion, share this tradition because they did not begin with any *a priori* affirmations about the cosmos; they responded to a faith experience. It was not necessary to speculate about the nature of the universe. Rather they reacted to faith in a God who delivered them from the bondage of apostasy and ignorance.

Just when it was that Mormonism made its unique stand, and when the Reorganization left the role of Christian heretic to the Latter-day Saints is hard to define. I would support Thomas Alexander's suggestion² that prior to 1835 the expressed doctrine of Mormonism was "not all that contradictory to existing Christianity." The major doctrinal changes were made during what Alexander has called the "Interim Period 1836-1890." The most startling changes appear to have occurred between 1836 and 1844, a period when the Reorganization suggests the church—and very probably Joseph Smith—was falling away from the truth.

Consider the King Follett Discourse of April 1844. The

PERSISTENCES THAT DIFFER: COMMENTS ON THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

Paul M. Edwards



LDS tend to see this document as a fairly clear statement of their emerging doctrine for it included such things as the plurality of gods, the progressiveness of man's becoming, the rejection of *ex nihilo* creation, and the material character of all essence.³ All of these positions are further defined by Orson and Parley Pratt, Charles Penrose, James Talmage, B. H. Roberts, and others. RLDS thinkers, however, tend to ignore the Follett sermon declaring that the nature of its contents disprove its authenticity. In general, they have never considered a serious inquiry into the philosophical questions raised by the sermon, regardless of who wrote it and when.

II

Contemporary thought is a conglomeration of Greek and Hebraic ideas about the nature of the world. The Greek mind, so dominant in the New Testament, identifies actual experiences occurring when one stands and reflects—with composure and self-control—and with the expectation of answers constructed logically, in and through space. Space is a philosophical given. Sight is the primary sense, and through it all things are locked in time and in space via the picture of what they “are.”

In contrast, Hebraic experience is found in ceaseless movement that arises through the expression of power by way of deep emotion and life generating commitment. Everything is in motion; therefore, thought is encountered in time, not in space. Logic gives way to psychology as the decisive reality of the world becomes word. Thus, it follows, that primary sensory experience lies in hearing, for hearing is the blending of the changing flavors of noise from which is plucked a meaning for the moment.

It is within the context of these conflicting concepts that religious studies have been conducted. The method has been historical (in an effort to recognize a pattern through chronology), psychological (assuming that when a person is thinking and acting religiously he is acting and thinking in a manner different than when he is thinking and acting secularly), or it can be philosophical. This third method suggests that we deal with the truth and/or falsity of basic beliefs on the assumption that one may well be better off knowing such things prior to planning eternity on the basis of an emotion.⁴ My suggestion is that the doctrine of man be considered in this manner, and I suggest two major reasons for doing so.

(1) It is central to the questions of man's moral actions and thus deals with the question of purpose. It is the lack of such answers that has driven modern persons into Existentialism, Phenomenology, and even into LDS Neo-orthodoxy which offers responses, of sorts, to the questions of ethical purpose.

(2) The doctrine of man as expressed in contemporary LDS thought is potentially one of the most unique statements on man that exists in Western religion. Thus one who does not understand the LDS position on man cannot understand either the uniqueness of his own religion, sense the concern others have about his religion, or recognize the ethical and moral responsibilities implicit in the doctrine.

III

The Hebrew view of creation borders on a compromise between the priestly accounts⁵ and the tradition-

historical⁶ account in Genesis neither of which is homogeneous. While major translations suggest that the creation ideology rests on the statement “God most high, maker (acquirer) of heaven and earth,” the use of the term “maker” is consistent with the more orthodox view of creation from chaos.⁷ The term “acquirer” implies receipt of something or perhaps the organization of the chaos. There is nothing in Genesis which really tells us of the origin of heaven and earth, but it is hard not to assume the process includes the making or dominating of an essence. Judaism has always emphasized that creation is not spontaneous, nor the result of accident, but is the work of the author of everything in accordance with definite plans and laws.⁸

Protestantism maintains man was created by and from the will of God through a process that stresses man's total dependence on God. Man is because God willed it. He, man, had nothing to say in the matter; he could not have chosen to be, or not to be. It is a characteristic of modern Protestantism, both liberal and fundamental, to suggest that since man was created from nothing he will return to nothing, unless God intervenes for him. The assumption of man's anxiety over nothingness is given as the basis for understanding how dependent we are on God to maintain our somethingness.⁹

There is no doubt whatsoever that man is equally as dependent in Catholic thought. While man is a creator in his own right, he is unlike God who is uncreated and thus does not have the essential quality of independence.

The LDS, as indicated, hold that man also is necessary. The LDS Doctrine and Covenants¹⁰ says “man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created nor made, neither can be.” In this context the LDS movement is an alternative to Existentialism and to Protestant Neo-orthodoxy because it rejects the contingent nature from which the absurd pessimism emerges. In LDS thought man could not, not have existed; thus it is difficult to make a connection with human anxiety over non-being. Every man is the ground of his own being—not God. Man's existence is a given, as is God, and the elements.

It is important to note two things. First of all, to say that something is non-being does not mean that it has no existence, but that it does not have the existence of true being. It could be “something-besides-being”—like an illusion—for the opposite of being is not non-being, but something other than being. To have been created out of nothing, or to have had non-being at the time of creation, is not the same as having no existence.

Also, we must be aware that what has been called Mormon Neo-orthodoxy (to avoid confusion I shall use LDS Neo-orthodoxy) accepts man's necessity but, as David Yarn has indicated, emphasizes the contingency of man's pre-mortal condition. They raise the question of the legitimacy of the *ex nihilo* argument. For the question is not from what was man created—or did he exist independently—but if that which is, is dependent on God. The LDS Neo-orthodox say yes to the latter but declare the first unimportant.¹¹

If one follows the LDS position to the logical conclusion then it is necessary to deny the absolute nature of God and to accept free will and salvation only through



The doctrine of man in LDS thought is potentially one of the most unique statements on man that exists in Western religion.

divine grace. And, in fact, LDS theology accomplishes this. In doing so they are not guilty of the sin of pride, but they deny that the attempt to be like God is a sin. For man is essentially of the same substance, progressing from man (immortal spirit clothed in a mortal tabernacle) to spirit (immortal man free of fleshy tabernacle) to angel (an immortal spirit quickened with a lesser glory) to a God (an immortal man possessing the fullness of celestial glory).¹²

The RLDS Church has accepted the more orthodox position that identifies God as the creator and sin as separation from God. In a very real manner the RLDS movement does not deal with the mechanics of, or question the nature of, creation. They have preferred rather to describe the responsibilities of what is called man. Joseph Smith III accepted the literal historicity of the Adam and Eve account¹³ but does not seem to have understood just what that meant. The RLDS Doctrine and Covenants states: "... and that he created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness created he them."¹⁴ While the RLDS Basic Beliefs Committee used a lot of space explaining the fact that man was created to know and to act, it leaves the reader with less than nothing in explaining creation itself. Man achieves his purpose from creation for he alone of all God's creatures "holds the earth in His [man's] hands;"¹⁵ and because he is the "junction of flesh and spirit hung halfway between heaven and earth, both liking and hating the honor";¹⁶ and because "God is source He is ultimate being."¹⁷

They further state that all man has, is given him. He is created to know God, he receives his freedom as a gift, he is saved by grace; all of which imply that man is not necessary. And it implies creation in the sense of "making." It "seems inconceivable that the boundless universe, the earth, or the complex nature of life is the result of blind chance."¹⁸

The primary question of creation for the Mormon community lies in the difference then, between necessary and contingent being. For the LDS, in opposition with nearly all other theological positions, man is a necessary being. That is, he is co-eternal with all that is.

Philosophically the question is this: Does man need to be, or is his existence a matter either of chance or choice? This is certainly not a new argument. Uncreated, thus necessary being, was discussed by Plato who saw matter and form as givens. This has been a theme of Idealism ever since and was defended in a variety of ways by such persons as John Boodin, Burdon Parker Bowne, George Howison, Alfred N. Whitehead, and James McTaggart Ellis McTaggart. The Personal Idealism of McTaggart probably comes as close to the LDS concept as any—despite the fact that McTaggart saw no room for God at all. McTaggart held "the necessity that a substance should have an exclusive description arises from the fact that two substances cannot be completely similar, and that a substance which is not completely similar to any other has necessarily an exclusive description"¹⁹ thus a separate existence emerging from the opposition in all things.²⁰

There are some interpretations of Judaism that have considered this idea of necessary man. Modern Judaic thought, however, emphasizes man's absolute dependence on God. At creation God breathed into man the breath of life and made a living being. Prior to that, man had dust but he did not have life. Man does not have a soul, he is a soul. Man is contingent on the will of God, who for his own reasons gave life.

Yet, within all these views, how do God and man differ? One is immediately drawn to the priestly account of Genesis: "Let us make a man in our image, after our likeness... so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he creates him, male and female he created them." This would seem to settle it. But it does not. The Judaic tradition suggests that we are often too restrictive when we interpret the word "likeness." Certainly, we cannot ignore the assumption of the similarity of form, but man's similarity to God may well consist in man's dominion over the animals, his sharing with God creation and dominion.²¹

The Christian concept of the difference is probably the easiest to understand since it is the one presented by the great media religions. God is supreme, the creator, om-

niscient, the ground of all being that can neither be completely known or adequately loved. Man is simply the opposite. Because of the assumed differences implied in Christian theology, attempts to identify the differences have received little attention. Primarily, I believe, because the tautology of such explanations are lost in the implied assumption that the difference is the tautology.

It is a different story for the LDS. "God, angels, and men are all of one species, one race, one great family, widely diffused among the planetary systems, as colonies, kingdoms, nations . . ." ²² The primary difference between Jesus Christ and men appears to be a difference in the current structure; thus the difference between Christ and other immortal and celestial men is that man subordinates himself doing all things in Jesus' name. The difference between Jesus and God lies in age—really in seniority—an answer that fits well into the concept of progression, but does not fit as well with the LDS statements of co-eternal existence. ²³

LDS Neo-orthodoxy accepts the otherness of God but accentuates the inadequacy of human reason to discover the difference between man and God. Thus they have no ground to describe the difference other than to repeat their assumption of God being that which man cannot fully know. ²⁴

IV

The basic Christian view of man is that he is bad. The pessimistic concept was born when the Greeks became aware of the precariousness of the human condition. Obviously man is not a creature of divinity and will never be intimate with the gods. Yet, man is aware that life is determined by a destiny which alots him time—short, painful, and unknown—between life and death. ²⁵ On the contrary the Jewish and LDS share the position that man is basically good. This primary optimism is one of the unique characteristics of the LDS message. The RLDS view is less defined. In a twelve-page discourse by the Basic Beliefs Committee, man is represented as one who is free and loved but so beset with crime, corruption, sin, and apathy that it would make an Existentialist weep. My mother used to tell me that "children were natural born thieves and liars and it was her job to teach us differently." While unofficial, this statement appears in keeping with the RLDS assumption that man is good but it is an awful condition to be in.

The doctrine of original sin has become a very convenient scapegoat for the failure of twentieth century optimism. In modern LDS thought the phrase "original sin" means first sin—the sin of Adam and Eve as mortal parents. The term is altered to mean something very LDSish and avoids the traditional view that this is a sin for which all mortals must pay. The alteration does not, however, prevent mortals from paying. Apostle James Talmage explained that men are in no way responsible for Adam's transgressions. In fact, it would appear logical that men be beholding to Adam for making the choice to begin man's journey on earth. Either way, however, man is not responsible for Adam's sin and is not to be held accountable. And yet, all men have suffered death and separation. ²⁶

In the *Journal of Discourses*, Brigham Young wrote, "The Savior came . . . to redeem the earth and the chil-

dren of men from the original sin . . . committed by our first parents." ²⁷ Charles Penrose, writing thirty years later, explains the somewhat paradoxical nature of this affirmation. There are two kinds of sin, he states, original and actual. Actual sin is the act of an individual for which repentance is due. Original sin is that sin committed by Adam and Eve, which was passed on to all of their posterity and through which we experience death and separation of body and spirit. However, since LDS thought assumes that man in the contemporary world is not responsible for Adam's sin it follows that God would not hold him accountable for original sin—accountability somehow being different than accepting the results of the sin through death and separation.

LDS Neo-orthodoxy appears to accept the effects of original sin. They do not deny the innocence of birth and accept the fall as having some positive effect, but on the other hand they adopt the Christian position that as a result of the fall natural man is God's enemy. In this they come as close to the Christian position as they can without denying Mormonism. ²⁸

The essential works of Christianity with its natural assumption of man's depravity have assumed that the sin of Adam—whatever that might have been—has been attached to every human being since.

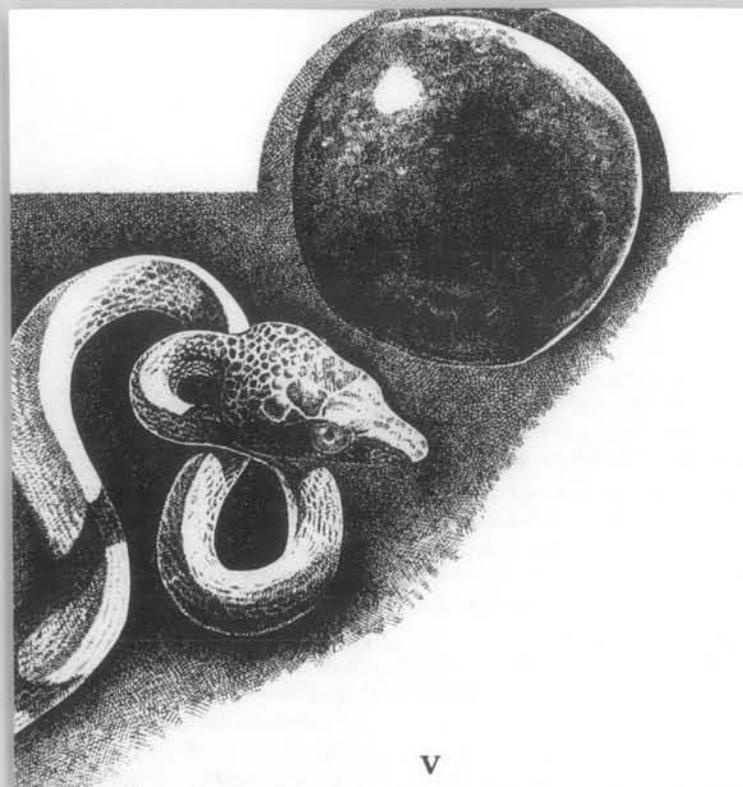
The Judaic idea that the sin of the first man was his desire to be like God ²⁹ presents such sin as objective, an incarnation of all the powers in life that are hostile to God. But sin is a daily fact of life. For the Jew the "psalmist laments that he was brought forth in iniquity and conceived by his mother in sin." But this passage is not designated to make all sex sinful as much as it is to portray the speaker as totally sinful.

It appears that the RLDS hold a much less identifiable position. They land somewhere between the LDS and the Protestants. There is little doubt that in written and delivered statements man is viewed very pessimistically. The whole concept of original sin would be supported by the vast majority of church members. However, the report of the Basic Beliefs Committee does not deal with the question directly and in fact it seems to have been avoided. The best we have in terms of documentation is:

In following the dictates of pride and in declaring his independence from God, man loses the power to fulfill the purpose of his creation and becomes the servant of sin. . . . This condition, experienced by our ancestors who first came to a knowledge of good and evil, is shared by all who are granted the gift of accountability. ³⁰

Without interpretation this leaves the question of original sin very flexible. What interpretations are available, however, tell us that man's sins are in his will and not in his loins; thus this sin is not generic. The message of the atonement is that all men have the power to choose Christ. It is not clear if this atonement relieves man of the sins of Adam or not. ³¹

LDS Neo-orthodoxy presents a concept of salvation which is certainly LDS but maintains a difference in emphasis. They are less concerned with salvation via obedience, laws, and knowledge of God and are more concerned with a totally redeemed man—redeemed through a spirituality that is hard to distinguish, if distinguish you can, from the Christian concept of grace.



V

I am amazed at what little attention evil receives in contemporary theology. In a very real way, of course, neither Protestantism nor Catholicism accepts evil as reality in and of itself. They tend to indulge in a compromise between a pantheistic "best of all possible worlds" and a dualism designed to preserve God from the responsibility of evil by dividing the world. Paradoxically, it is considered a heresy to deny the truth of the contradictory assumptions (1) the power to cause implies the power to overcome and (2) the power to overcome implies responsibility for existence.

Philosophically the question is a significant one. The concrete nature of evil in the world indicates either that evil is equally as powerful as God or that God is unable to be both all good and all powerful or that God is not all powerful or that evil is really good in disguise. Once again it is the Idealistic tradition that has faced the question by realizing that in the insoluble conflict between God's power and his goodness, power must go. The location of this lost power—inside or outside of God's mind—is really irrelevant. Hasting Rashdall states "God possesses all the power there is but is not all powerful."³² E.S. Brightman holds to a total finiteness for the "cosmic artisan" while his successor Peter Bertocci allows for God's infiniteness, except in the areas of power and knowledge. The logic of this appears incomprehensible to me.

The Jewish tradition sees evil in the manner in which one discusses the results of sin, and it is considered concrete only in the sense that sin has results. For them there is an inexorable connection between man's actions and the state of his life, a connection that most Jews see as divine retribution.

In Christianity the paradox becomes a test of faith. What disagreement there is lies between the poles of conservatism and liberalism rather than between Protestantism and Catholicism. The vast majority of Christian authors seem to accept the fact that faith requires them to

LDS Neo-orthodoxy becomes more and more willing to accept the Christian and the RLDS God, who is not progressing.

take refuge in the mysteries of God's way rather than to accept any concept of a finite God. The more liberal maintain that God might be limited by what Brightman has called "The Given" which was a recalcitrant segment of God's nature. This limitation, the Quaker Eldon Trueblood has suggested, places God and man together in the battle against evil.

Mormonism is once again divided. LDS thought recognizes that evil has elemental existence. These elements are found among the uncreated facts where God maintains his consistent battle to influence blind process. When it comes to explaining the effects of moral evil (that which men do to themselves) and natural evil (that which the universe does to them), the LDS produce about as many unconnected answers as other religions. There are two exceptions. First, evil is real. Evil exists in the inevitable fact that it does exist, and thus that it stands in "opposition" to good. It does not exist because there must be opposition to good but because it does exist, and it is in opposition to good. Second, the paradox of natural evil does not exist. God, like man, is conditioned by his environment and thus is limited. This relieves God of the obligation to take responsibility for natural evil. All the world that God deals with and controls is good; but there remains some parts of something somewhere—including hurricanes and rototillers—that God does not control. Thus the essential goodness of God is preserved. All it costs is the absolute nature of God.

The RLDS position is an acceptance of orthodox Christianity with the temptation to be Augustinian. Evil is identified as a semi-existent state that needs to be, but which is connected in some undisclosed fashion with the distance between God and man; a distance I might add that is seen as being necessary for man to know God. In most commentaries that have come out in the past fifty years evil has been discussed only in terms of behavior; and to try to get some official statement on the nature of evil and its place in God's world is like trying to milk a steer.

VI

The five traditions I have been discussing agree that man has free will—certainly enough freedom to allow him to respond to the call of divine grace and enough that the responsibility for sin remains on man's shoulders (or independent) and is not transferred to God. Protestantism says man can move through his freedom to appeal to God through Jesus Christ. To Catholicism free will is such that man remains a rational being who, though he is no longer capable of spiritual goodness, can still choose natural goodness. In Judaism man's freedom is a gift. God taught right and wrong; man is free to choose and to suffer the consequences for the choice.

Nowhere is there a stronger belief concerning free will than in LDS writings. Sterling McMurrin, one of the most insightful authors on LDS thought, has stated it so well that it is best to quote him:

Nothing is permitted to compromise that freedom as the essential meaning of personality, whether human or divine, and at every turn of Mormon theological discussion the fact of moral freedom and its implied responsibility must be met and accounted for . . . man stands against God or with him.³³

It is here—the ultimate freedom of man's will—that the LDS uniqueness rests, for it is here that the LDS take their stand against the traditional attitude of human pessimism, the idea of salvation by grace alone, any concept of divine election, and all forms of determinism.

The Reorganization expresses the opinion that God has endowed all persons with the potential freedom of moral choice, not as something granted after creation but as a part of the character of man.³⁴ Yet such agency *requires* us to love God.³⁵ It is difficult to see how this either follows or makes sense. But there is little doubt that in RLDS teachings man can choose either to do good or to do evil and that if he chooses evil God will not interfere until men have "learned their lesson."³⁶

VII

I have five short concluding statements which emerge from my inquiry: they are the heart of the inquiry.

(1) The tendency to seek to understand Mormonism either historically (through chronological emergence) or psychologically (assuming persons act different when being religious) rather than philosophically (giving significant treatment to theology) is a major reason why the movement is not better understood. It is this sort of approach that led Fawn Brodie to make a major error when she suggested that Joseph Smith left a barren spiritual "legacy," a religious movement "devoid of spiritual content."³⁷ For the spirit of Mormonism lies, as most Mormons know, in the testimonies of the individual—testimonies that carry meaning from generation to generation in a manner that chronology usually misses and with a message of sacred/secular embodiment that psychology does not have the methods to understand.

Does this mean that the real story of Mormonism is to be found in philosophical inquiry. Obviously not. But within the testimonies of the church is a foundation that is understandable and which can be challenged, corrected, and directed. In disagreement with the LDS Neo-orthodox, I believe man has the ability to know and

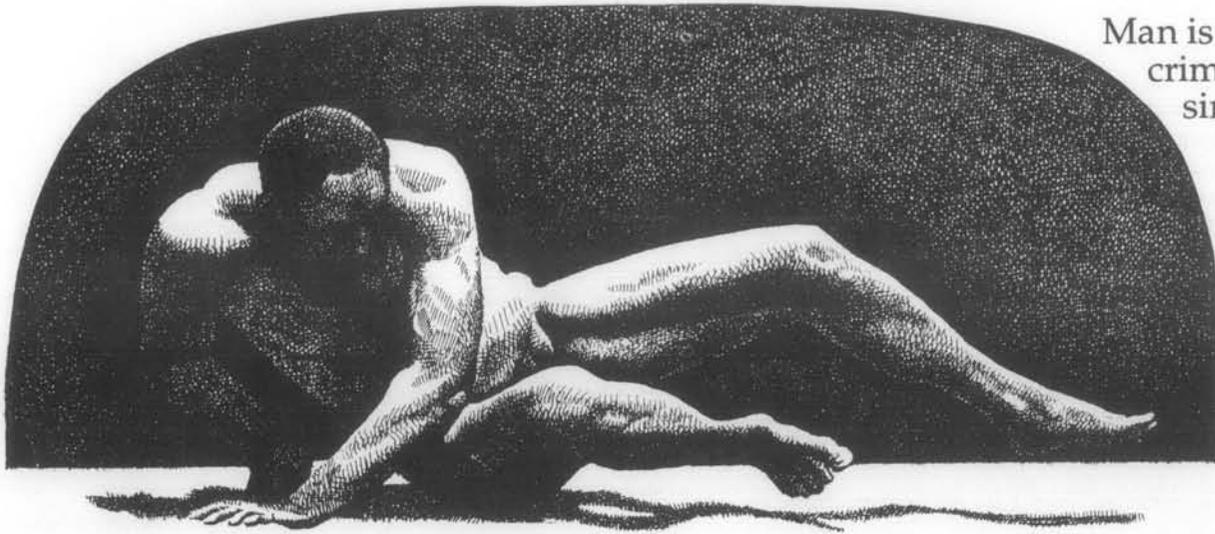
it is in the search for his foundations that he will best use this ability.

(2) The RLDS Church has not considered the doctrine of man to be an essential part of their message, and they make little or no effort to understand or express it. As recently as the 1980 Mormon History Association meeting, Geoffrey Spencer, President of the RLDS Temple School, presented a paper which traced Reorganization thought through three periods: Joseph III, the 1920s and 1930s, and the late 1970s. Yet nowhere in this rather extensive look did he mention the concept of the doctrine of man, nor was there any suggestion the movement has given it thought.³⁸ While we are constantly being told that the report of the Basic Beliefs Committee is not official, it is the only semi-official statement we have, and the lack there of any treatment concerning the doctrine of man is conspicuous by its absence. Commentary or interpretation of RLDS assumptions are openly discouraged and rarely attempted.

(3) While LDS theology has dealt with this question in some fashion, there is still considerable confusion about the difference between human and divine freedom, the concept of foreknowledge, and the effect such freedom has on man's responsibility and predictability. Marden Clark in a very interesting article in *Dialogue*³⁹ makes an attempt to deal with this. He starts out indicating that he wishes to ignore the philosophical questions involved. So far he is traditional Mormon. He goes on to suggest that if the case for God's knowledge is that he knows us (like a parent knows a child) and thus knows what we will do, then man is mechanistic. Clark will not accept this and here his LDS attitude emerges. His explanation appears to me to be one that suggests first of all that man is of necessity free, that God created him free, and that God then is contingent (at least in his freedom) because he could not exercise the freedom to make man anything but free. Thus, it seems to follow, God is less free than man since God made man totally free but was not himself free not to make man so. This is something like curing dandruff with a guillotine.

This seems to be inherent in most LDS arguments for free will, and yet God, as finite as he might be, is still involved in our behavior. Despite the fact that the question argues against the creation concept of LDS thinking (if God did find himself compelled to *make* men anything), there is even a larger question. If, as Dorothy Sayers has suggested, the artist creates more in his own image than the parent, who simply begets, then it is important for us to consider if man—as the artistically created person God was forced to make—is not more like God than Christ. For Christ as God's only begotten reflects God's matter, but man his creation reflects his form. Is there a case here for the Creative Personalistic concept that perhaps man is a better example of what God is than is Jesus Christ, thus turning our study from Christ to ourselves?

(4) Thomas Alexander has stated that in recent years "the failure explicitly to confront the doctrine of man has opened the way for a type of Mormon Neo-orthodoxy."⁴⁰ Kent Robson has expressed the same opinion. They are absolutely correct. The radical expressions made in LDS Neo-orthodoxy concerning the nature of man are, I believe, the direct results of the failure of the



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LDS people to understand the impact of their concept of man. This view has chosen to underscore contingency and in doing so seems tempted to suggest that man is evil, using today's persons as evidence. The Neo-orthodox do not go quite this far. Instead they admit to the fact that they are disillusioned with man, with the concept of his reason, and certainly with his knowledge.⁴¹ They have become suspicious of the ability of man to carry out the laws and to understand the principles necessary for his own salvation. Thus they turn to revelation—a sort of simplistic revelatory statement—that will give them information and in fact provide them with a grace unheard of in more orthodox LDS thought.

While they have adopted this very strong attitude toward simplistic revelation they have not, as noted by O. Kendall White, made the mistake of equating religion (the working out of revelation) with the vain attempts of man's knowledge. I am not sure if they will take this final step, but I suspect they will. Finally, given their understanding of the limits on the nature of knowledge they become more and more willing to accept the Christian and the RLDS God, who is not progressing. They manage to carry this off within the context of their own terminology: God has progressed so far that he cannot progress further (only expand control); thus though God continues to be finite in his definition, he is infinite in the nature of things.

This is not well thought out in Neo-orthodoxy. In fact, the charges against them of anti-intellectualism and lack of sensitivity to ethical and moral issues are realistic charges, best substantiated by examining the internal nature of their statements. Someone once indicated that after 1835 the LDS moved on to become the left wing of the church and that in time the RLDS became the right wing. If this is true, LDS Neo-orthodoxy is trying hard for the center and has gone way out on a limb to accomplish it.

(5) The LDS have the best potential theodicy in the Western world. I have never understood why they are so reluctant to take their views into the armed camps of philosophical critics and theological double-think. The non-absolute character of the LDS God is not unique within metaphysics⁴² but is fairly unique among theological statements. If God's goodness is not in ques-

tion then neither is his love for man nor the worth of man tangled up in the extremes of evil. One does not get hung up on why being human is such a damnable combination of inconsistencies dealt with in a manner which seems to treat the "good, the bad, and the ugly" alike.

The difficulty in the LDS position is that while it articulates this basic response to a question as old as God, a systematic explanation that could be fed by consistent, if not totally rational, argument has not been attempted. A further problem is the use of orthodox Christian terminology for concepts which are radically different, with resulting confusion of meaning.

The distinction between the LDS and the RLDS does not lie in the hundreds of idiosyncrasies each church has developed like twins living apart. We may have had the same parents, but the two are so far apart that their only commonality rests in good memories of the "old days" when we lived in the same neighborhood and shared a common language. For our attitude toward man divides Mormonism like nothing else can.

Francis W. Holmes, Sr., published a book some years ago in which he stated, "It is the contention of the author that all the differences between the two churches (LDS and RLDS) are based on doctrine and ideas that were introduced into the church after the prophet's death . . ." ⁴³ I disagree with his dates—Alexander and others have pretty well convinced me it was more like 1835 or so—but with this clarification I agree with him. The primary agreement I find with the early church is epistemological not doctrinal.⁴⁴ But the LDS movement seems to have followed the changing doctrine that emerged about 1833-35 and have made numerous attempts to interpret and to systemize these ideas.

The RLDS Church seems to have grown out of the need to identify itself in terms of what it was not—the Mormon Boundary as Dick Howard calls it⁴⁵—and their position as a religion was born from the act of disclaiming doctrine.⁴⁶ The claim that the RLDS Church's distinction is a clear breakage from the 1844 exodus is simply not true. Any reading of early *Heralds* will indicate that such things as the plurality of gods and the Book of Abraham⁴⁷ were still under consideration.

Both traditions have made interpretations from their own experiences—the LDS with more direction and in-

sight than I would have expected, the RLDS with little apparent interest in dealing with doctrinal foundations. If I am correct about my views that the key distinction lies in the concepts surrounding a doctrine of man, then the distinction between the churches (which is one question) and the contribution of each (which is the larger question) will be seen in a faithful look at the significance of their foundation arguments.

Notes

1. I am assuming that a doctrine of man would also be a doctrine of woman, and would appreciate it if you would make that adjustment in your mind.
2. Thomas Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone* 5 (July-August 1980): 24-33.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Edwin Burt, *Types of Religious Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1931), Chapter One.
5. Genesis 1:1-2-4a.
6. Genesis 1:2-4b-25.
7. As far as I can tell there is very little understanding or agreement on what chaos is, in terms of being something; surely it cannot be nothing. The chaos of nothing appears to be paradoxical.
8. Philip Birnbaum, *A Book of Jewish Concepts* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 100-101.
9. I have always had difficulty with the idea that man was concerned with the prospects of returning to nothing; that is, that most persons would want to remain something after death.
10. Doctrine and Covenants (LDS) 93:29. See B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 2nd ed. (Deseret News Press, 1950), Vol. VI, pp. 310-312.
11. O. Kendall White, "The Transformation of Mormon Theology," *Dialogue* (Summer 1970): 9-24.
12. Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool: John Smith, 1883), p. 34.
13. *True Latter Day Saints Herald* 18 (1887): 720.
14. Doctrine and Covenants (RLDS) 17:a, b, c.
15. Jason Briggs, Zenas Gurley, J. Harrington, *A Word of Consolation to the Scattered Saints* (Janesville, Wisconsin: 1853), p. 91.
16. RLDS Statement of Belief, p. 92.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
18. White, pp. 9-24. The question of the existence of God, if taken as a necessary fact, presupposed that either there is no limit to time or that God was himself the result of blind chance.
19. J.M.E. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*, Section 105. See George Boyd, *Views on Man and Religion* (Provo, Utah: Friends of George Boyd, 1979).
20. This is carried further by Sterling McMurrin in his work on LDS theology, by George Boyd in his *Views on Man and Religion*, and by Paul M. Edwards in his work on RLDS theology.
21. Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green, *Israelite Religion* (Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 124-125.
22. Pratt, p. 33.
23. Placement in time required by a concept like seniority raises a whole nest of questions about eternity, foreknowledge, historicity, etc.
24. White, pp. 9-24.
25. See Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, Vol. 1 (University of Chicago Press, 1978).
26. James E. Talmage, "The Philosophical Basis of 'Mormonism' " " An Address Delivered by Invitation Before the Congress of Religious Philosophies Held in Connection with the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. San Francisco, California, July 29, 1915" (Independence, Missouri: Press of Zion's Printing, n.d.).
27. June 1867.
28. An interesting sidelight is the LDS acceptance of the Virgin Birth which is neither necessary or productive theologically. If sin is not transmitted via birth Mary was in no danger, nor was Jesus, and, despite the assumptions of the Virgin Birth concept, both Mary and Jesus suffered death as mortals.
29. Ezekiel 28:4-9.
30. *RLDS Statement of Beliefs*, Paragraph Six.
31. A brief comment on what the LDS call actual sin. Adam who was pre-existent and who accepted the commission to begin the work of mortals on earth, accepted the role of "to know" through the fall of man and thus opened an interesting question. Is this his original or actual sin? Is it the first sin, from which he was forgiven *ex post facto* by Christ? Or is it his actual sin for which he must repent (despite the goodness of the act) and be saved?
32. Hasting Rashdall, *Theory of God and Evil* (Oxford University Press, 1924).
33. Sterling McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965), p. 7.
34. I do not have time here to follow the question of pre-destination, foreknowledge, and determinism, all of which effect the outcome of theories of *free will*.
35. F. H. Edwards, *The Joy in Creation and Judgment* (Independence: Herald House, 1975), p. 61.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
37. Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* (New York: Knopf Publishers, 1971), p. 403.
38. Geoff Spencer, "Reorganization Thought: Whence and Whether," MHA Paper, 1980.
39. Marden Clark, "Some Implications of Human Freedom," *Dialogue* (Summer 1970): 47.
40. Alexander.
41. See Boyd, Turner, Robson. "Roundtable: The Nature of Man," *Dialogue* (Spring 1968): 55-97.
42. Heraclitus, Hegelian and Marxian dialectic, Whitehead, Arnold Toynbee.
43. Francis W. Holm, *The Mormon Churches: A Comparison From Within* (Kansas City, Missouri: Midwest Press, 1970), p. 3.
44. This key question is considered in some detail in a larger work prepared for the RLDS First Presidency by this author: *Philosophical Assumptions and Meta-Physical Foundations of RLDS Theology*. The argument is that Joseph's early contributions were more directed at how we know God, than what we know about him.
45. Richard Howard, "The Reorganized Church in Illinois, 1852-82: Search for Identity," *Dialogue* (Spring 1970): 64.
46. Briggs, Gurley, Harrington, p. 23.
47. Editorial: "On the Plurality of Gods," *Saints Herald* (December 1860): 280-283; Editorial: "The Early Revelations," *Saints Herald* (March 1860): 63.

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T H E • W I D O W

Her town waits for one good storm
to end the year, to bring
quiet whiteness which softens
sadness of bare trees,
rests ever-giving earth,

but only scraps of white from
half-hearted, half-forgotten snow
litter fields and yards
like remnants of time torn into
confusion of frozen memories.

She looks small,
standing at her carved door,
Victorian house heavy above her.
She tilts slightly caneward,
eyes and mouth smile,
neck mottled with freckles of age.

We step over cracks in her walk
where she plants flowers each spring.
Now they are weeds, awkward, angled,
with brown dry heads
begging for snow
to cover their ugliness.

She has just returned from a funeral,
another old friend viewed,
remembered as growing vine,
torn down from arbor, now
a woody shell, brittle in the coffin.

She apologizes for her cold house,
broken furnace.
Brown wallpaper closes in
dark hall lined with shut doors.
Ink-shiny plants flourish along walls.

In her sitting-room, padded rocking chair,
lumpy in faded comforter,
looks out the window at frog-shaped
tree stump she painted green.
Her cat waits on back railing
for "his good hot meal
I fix morning and night."

We arrange our chairs for talking.
She asks our names, repeats them.
We admire her plants, staked, washed,
standing for inspection
like well cared-for children.

We look through museum glass doors
at the parlor's velvet antiques,
smooth cushions, unscuffed carpet.
Again she tells us, "this plant hasn't
flowered since he died. Such pretty
pink flowers. Not since he died,
three years ago."

As we leave, hall doors
like history books plead
to be opened.
Shiny leaves brush our arms.

We pass the furnace man at the door,
step over the old flowers
dying in the cracks
and see the cold December sun
on the waiting edge of clouds.

Julia Barrett



JULIA BARRETT is mother of six and grandmother of seven. She has run in nine marathons and is currently preparing for the St. George Marathon. Many of her ideas come when running.

POLITICS AND PIETY:



AN INTERVIEW WITH SENATOR ORRIN HATCH

With the rise of "New Right" organizations in the United States, an increasing number of conservatives are entering the political limelight. Supported by such groups, a previously unknown attorney, Orrin Hatch, was lifted to Republican Party candidacy and eventual victory over three-term Senator Frank Moss in the 1976 race for Utah's U.S. Senate seat.

Since then, Senator Hatch, a Utah native, committed Mormon, and father of six children, has been named by the *National Journal* as one of five most effective young senators. He was appointed by his party leadership to serve on five committees in the 96th Congress, including the Judiciary Committee, the Labor and Human Resources Committee, the Budget Committee, the Senate Select Small Business Committee, and the governing board of the Office of Technology Assessment.

The following interview was conducted by Susan Staker Oman and John Sillito on August 13, 1980.

SUNSTONE: Why did you leave a lucrative law practice here in Salt Lake City to become a United States Senator?

HATCH: I felt that our country was in trouble, and I was concerned about the type of leadership we have had. I got tired of standing on the sidelines and complaining. I decided that I could win and that if I believed strongly I should get involved.

SUNSTONE: After four years would you advise other people to seek elective office?

HATCH: Well, the only ones I would advise to seek elective office are honest, decent people who really want to do something to correct the ills in our country. It is a very difficult life, but you can make it whatever you want. If you work hard (and some don't) and you are in the middle of most of the battles that occur on the floor of the United States Senate, it's an overwhelming thing. I come back to the state on a regular basis, generally traveling on the weekends. I used to spend that time with my family and I used to attend church regularly with my family. It's very difficult on family life.

SUNSTONE: As one of a handful of Mormons in Congress, do you see yourself as a representative for all Mormons as well as Utahns?

HATCH: Well, my first obligation is to represent Utah as a whole. I try to live my particular religious beliefs. If I do that, that's all my church can expect of me. I feel when you're in politics you represent all the people and not just special interest groups.

SUNSTONE: Do the Mormon members of Congress work together on issues that might be of interest to the Church?

HATCH: No more than any other congressional delegation for their constituents. As long as our constituents are right in their desires, whether it's the Mormon church or Catholic church or atheist groups, then of course we would do everything in our power to serve and help them.

SUNSTONE: Do you think the Church has helped shape your political beliefs? Does Mormon theology point a person toward a certain political philosophy?

HATCH: Well, I was a liberal Democrat for most of my life, and I have been a member of the Mormon Church all my life. So, the answer is yes and no.

SUNSTONE: How did you make that transition?

HATCH: I came to the conclusion that the Democratic party was hurting this country because of its emphasis on central power and federal government solution. I felt that they had left me, not that I had left them. Though we have terrific people in the Church from all political persuasions, I think that in the Intermountain West we do tend to be more conservative, and the reason for that is that we're individualistic. We like to be left alone; we don't want federal intrusions; we don't like regulations. The West is now leading a movement for such ideas, and I think we are winning that battle.

SUNSTONE: Do you think that it is theology or history that has made us that way?

HATCH: I think it is more history. Some of my best friends in the Church are very liberal, many of them are moderates. I know a number of people who consider me a moderate conservative because they really know me. For instance, I led the battle for the institutional civil rights bill. It wouldn't have passed without me, much to the chagrin of many of my conservative colleagues. I voted to give pregnancy disability benefits to pregnant women, much to the resentment of my conservative colleagues. Liberals and moderates might think, my gosh, he's been painted a little far to the right by the media.

SUNSTONE: You spoke earlier of the West fighting against federal intrusion. There has been some confusion over why you sponsored S 1680—the sagebrush rebellion. Some of your critics claim that it was merely an attempt to turn public land over to private owners. How do you respond to that? What are your motives for promoting the sagebrush rebellion?

HATCH: Of course I don't want to turn public land over to private interests. I want to turn public lands back to the states where they belong. I have yet to see the state that gave away its public domain. The real purpose for S

1680—I prefer to call it states' rights rebellion—is to bring to the attention of the American people the fact that vast lands in the West are being tied up and, frankly, ruined by some of the environmentalist extremists through federal government control. The people are losing control over their own lives and in the process losing the benefits that could come from alleviating dependence on foreign oil, gas, and mineral suppliers. My bill does not interfere with reasonably balanced environmental concerns. Environmentalists can still try to control state legislatures. What it does do is decentralize the power of the federal government so the local people can control their destinies.

SUNSTONE: A representative of the Christian Voice, which is a conservative, evangelical Christian political group, was quoted in the press as saying that no Mormon would ever hold a policy-making position in their group because Mormons aren't actually Christians. How do you feel about making political alliances with groups that theologically oppose the Church or perhaps consider it a cult?

HATCH: First of all that was a misquote. I called the Christian Voice people, and they directly apologized, wondering how anybody could construe anything they said to mean that. Secondly, I feel it is important to motivate fifty to sixty million evangelical Christians to get involved in politics. I think it would be wonderful if every person of every religion—Christian, Jewish, and others—would get involved in politics. Whether they agree with me or not, I think it is a healthy thing for society. Besides that quote is logically rebutted by the fact that I was the first person the Christian Voice came to and asked for help. I have my misgivings. I don't want any religious group to use my name improperly. I know that I'm not going to agree with everything they do. I think some of their rating system is ridiculous. But on the other hand, their attempts to get people interested in politics are very worthwhile. I think it would be difficult for someone like me that wants *everybody* to get involved with politics, whether they agree with me or not, to criticize a particular group for getting involved.

SUNSTONE: Does it concern you that some of these same groups which support conservative politics may also be supporting anti-Mormon activities—publishing books, supporting missionaries?

HATCH: No, because you're always going to have problems with certain selected people in every group. Members of other groups believe in their churches just like Mormons believe in theirs. They have the right to believe the Mormon church is not as right as their own church. But I don't think that you could show that any of those groups are actively anti-Mormon. Now there may be individual ministers, but they have the right to feel any way they want to. And I would fight to protect their rights to feel that way, or to write about it, or do whatever they want to.

SUNSTONE: There has been a great deal of discussion recently about the relationship between church and state. How do you feel about the controversy surrounding the Church and the Equal Rights Amendment, for example?



If a church wants to dominate the government, I think it is improper under the Constitution.

HATCH: Well, I think that the Church has taken the position on the Equal Rights Amendment that it is a moral issue. I think that churches have the obligation to stand up for their moral beliefs. I think that obligation continues even if it is difficult to do so, and even if they come under public scrutiny and criticism. What are churches for anyway?

SUNSTONE: Do you think there should be a separation of church and state?

HATCH: I don't think any church should dictate how a state or federal government should act. I don't think that they should utilize their funds, for instance, to elect public officials. I don't think that churches should per se get involved in politics to the degree that they are trying to control state legislatures or other separated powers in our country. In the early days of our country the church people were very much involved. The ministers were involved; there was a prayer in the meetings. Separation of church and state is basically to keep any one church from dominating the political life of our country. The founding fathers came from countries where the principal church dominated the political, spiritual, and moral life of the country. I think churches have an obligation to speak out on what they consider to be a moral issue. But if they want to dominate the government then I think that is improper under the Constitution.

SUNSTONE: What about the alleged Mormon church activity in Florida elections, supporting candidates who were anti-ERA?

HATCH: I think that losers in politics continually try to find some scapegoat to take blame for their losses. If you're talking about the Equal Rights Amendment in Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, or Illinois, I don't think the Mormon church has directed its members to participate in defeating the Equal Rights Amendment. I think the position of the Church leadership has been that all Church members should get involved. I think that individual leaders who feel strongly on those issues, without the umbrella of the Church, have participated in opposing some of those issues—and that's their right. There is only one person that binds the Mormon church and that is the president of the Church. So individual leaders, in-

dividual workers, individual members in individual states have the right to act any way they want to.

SUNSTONE: Then you don't think it is proper for a church to direct their members in those kinds of political activities?

HATCH: Oh, I don't know if it's improper. If a church feels strongly that a moral issue has been acutely violated then I think that church is obligated to do its best to stand up for its belief. And I don't see anything wrong with trying to influence others.

SUNSTONE: Let me ask a hypothetical question. Let's say you had been in the United States Senate in 1970 and you were convinced that the Equal Rights Amendment was a good and proper thing. You endorsed that issue. You sponsored it in the Senate. Subsequently the president of the Mormon church took a position opposing it. What sort of a quandary would that put you in as a political figure and as a Mormon?

HATCH: It would be a difficult quandary.

SUNSTONE: What would you do?

HATCH: I don't know. Honestly I don't know what I would do. But I don't think that I would have been for the amendment in 1970 because of my constitutional law background.

SUNSTONE: As a political person, you are constantly taking stands on specific issues. In general, what would you do if the Church were to take a position against something you strongly supported?

HATCH: I don't know. I don't know because I have never been placed in that position. I think if I were undecided, I would first ask what my constituents would want me to do. Beyond that I would have to completely reexamine my position. It would be just like any other position. If I came to the conclusion that I was wrong, then I wouldn't be ashamed to stand up and say so.

SUNSTONE: Do you think that a Mormon can actively support the Equal Rights Amendment and really, honestly live in harmony within the Church?

HATCH: Sure. The Church has not made that an issue to the degree that a person would be excommunicated merely because he or she believes in the amendment. If the Church did, that could be very difficult. I think a person can live the Mormon church teachings and believe in the amendment. I think it is more difficult for them to have total acceptance in the church if they do because the First Presidency has spoken out on this issue. If you venerate and respect and love and follow the First Presidency then that creates a natural dilemma for you—within your own conscience and with the people who feel that they are supporting the Church leadership.

However, the Equal Rights Amendment does pose a problem for a Mormon politician like myself who believes in equal rights for all and especially for women. When people come out and say that because I am not for the amendment I am not for equal rights, nothing could be further from the truth. You hate to go through that, but on the other hand there are millions of people in this country who disagree with the Equal Rights Amendment, men and women. My experience has been that it is mostly women who disagree.

SUNSTONE: Nationally the Church is increasingly perceived as lobbying for certain political positions. Do you think that might affect the possibility of Mormons being chosen for positions such as cabinet members or federal judges—particularly if the general perception is that members of the Church must look to the leader of the Church for guidance on specific issues?

HATCH: I don't think that the Church really does thrust itself politically upon individuals. The only way I can see it doing that is if it tried to control the legislature or tried to exert power to the detriment of people who did not believe in the Church. I think there has been an attempt by some elements in our national media to say that the Mormon church is trying to do that when in fact that isn't true. I don't see how anybody could say that is true.

SUNSTONE: Whether or not it is true, it affects perceptions of the church. Isn't that becoming a problem for Mormons who might be involved in politics?

HATCH: Well, one of the big problems that all Mormon politicians had was the Mormon stand on priesthood for blacks. I received a call while on the floor of the Senate from one of the General Authorities who told me that President Kimball had declared that all worthy males could hold the priesthood. Nobody could have been happier. That meant so much to me because it had always been a difficult issue for me. But I do think the Mormon church is sometimes singled out when many other churches also feel strongly about issues. If a Mormon makes a mistake and commits an immoral act, his name and the Church's name are all over the newspapers. If someone from another religion does, the media rarely mentions his particular religion. I think part of the reason for that is because Mormons are so straightforward about their beliefs. Also I think some like to show that Mormons are the same as everybody else and not as good as some people say they are. In either event, it isn't just, but, nevertheless, a fact of life.

SUNSTONE: At a devotional at BYU, President Benson stated "those that would remove prophets from politics would remove God from government." What role do you think prophets should play in politics?

HATCH: The same role that Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets of the Old Testament played. They spoke to kings. I remember when Nathan came in after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and he said, "David thou art the man." He certainly laid into David. Now I don't see anything wrong with a true prophet letting the political leaders know that on certain moral issues they are wrong. He has an obligation to do it.

SUNSTONE: But President Benson is not talking specifically about moral issues. He says that a prophet should be involved in politics. Would you want the President of the Church taking political stands on every issue?

HATCH: I don't think you have ever seen presidents of the Church do that, not even Joseph Smith when he ran for president of the United States. No, I think that all he is saying is, don't expect the president of the Church to ignore the fact that we live in a very complex political atmosphere which affects every moral judgment and every moral thought that everybody in this country has. I don't think that President Benson meant by that statement that



I don't think that the Church really does thrust itself politically upon individuals.

President Kimball is going to run for President or for governor of the state of Utah. I think he is saying that a church leader should speak out. The Pope came to America and spoke on all kinds of political and social issues. I haven't seen him criticized in our Utah media. I have to admit I enjoyed everything the Pope said, and I think he did our society a tremendous amount of good by emphasizing moral values. I think he and President Kimball would get along very well on these moral issues—I know the Pope and I would. Now if he could do that, why should Utah get upset because the Presidency says that we believe that the Equal Rights Amendment is detrimental to families? Or that abortion, except to save the life of the mother and for rape and incest, is detrimental to morality in our society? In the whole four years that I have been in the Senate, I have yet to have any General Authority give me any instructions concerning how I should vote back in Washington, and I would be shocked if one did.

Let me make another point. I do get a little tired of some of the atmosphere in Utah—as though the Mormon church is the only church in the world that speaks out on moral issues. This just isn't right. Jerry Falwell speaks to twenty-five million people a week on moral issues. He speaks on many political issues too, and I don't see anything wrong with that. He believes in what he's doing, and he believes that there are moral issues that transcend even the pulpit. He believes that this country is an inspired country, the freest land in the world. He believes that the free enterprise system has made this country the greatest country in the world and is the basis of our thinking. I think our First Presidency does too, and I've seen a lot of comments about the free enterprise system, about our great system of government, our great system of business, our great system of economic life. Those statements have not been particularly criticized as being political. But whenever the Church comes out on a moral issue, all of a sudden those that may not agree (even some who do) get all upset. And generally these people who overreact couldn't care less about the Church to begin with.

SUNSTONE: At a rally in Scottsdale, Arizona (which I believe you participated in), President Benson said that "the Lord blesses the work of the Freeman Institute." Was that hyperbole?



Every issue in government to me involves morality.

HATCH: I think he believes that is literally so. He may very well be right. I don't quite view it that way. But I'll say this. If there is a greater man than Spencer Kimball or Ezra Taft Benson in this country, I would like to meet him. Whatever President Benson wants to say is fine with me. He's one person who has always been willing to put his neck on the line and stand up for what he believes. There have been times when I felt I disagreed with him politically, but I haven't seen a person who is willing to take the flack for what he believes any more than that great person. And I admire him for it.

SUNSTONE: Do you think it is appropriate to invoke the Lord's blessings on a political group?

HATCH: Sure, if you feel strongly about it. I see religious leaders every day praying for certain groups that they feel are beneficial to this country. But you know you only hear about it when a Mormon leader does it. Why is that? I've never quite understood that.

SUNSTONE: One last question on the Freeman Institute. Do you think you would have been nominated for Senator without the help of the Freeman Institute?

HATCH: Yes sir. Cleon Skousen was beneficial to me primarily in the nominating segment of the campaign. I can name fifteen other groups that helped too. And some may have done even more than Skousen. All the other people who were running went to him, and every other opinion leader in Utah, asking for support. I was fortunate enough to convince Cleon that probably I would serve the best if elected. By the way, those who know me know I didn't promise anything for those votes other than that I would do the very best I could to stand up for the Constitution. And as the ranking minority member of the Constitution sub-committee, I'm doing everything I can to stick up for Constitutional principles.

SUNSTONE: A question about the place of government. How much should the government become involved in legislating morality?

HATCH: The big question is whether the federal government should inject itself into the family life of the people in this country. Of course I don't like having battered wives or battered children exist in our society. But on the other hand I don't want the federal government

coming in and telling the family what they can or cannot do. Take an issue like abortion. I believe that abortion is the wrongful taking of viable human life (with others like the President and the Catholic church). So I try to stop taxpayer dollars (fifty percent of the taxpayers are totally opposed to abortion) from being used to pay for 300,000 abortions a year in America and indirectly millions worldwide through American foreign aid. I don't have any qualms fighting for these principles. The people who are pro-abortion are fighting for principles that are alien to morality in the eyes of many of us. I believe I am doing what my constituents really want me to do.

SUNSTONE: Then you are willing to let the government get involved if you feel strongly enough about the principle?

HATCH: Every issue in government to me involves morality. Every issue involves folkways and mores; every issue involves religious belief and non-religious belief. There is no such thing as a purely political issue that doesn't involve alternative beliefs of various people. And I'm willing to admit that I may be wrong in some of my approaches, but I don't believe so or I wouldn't fight as hard as I do for them. But if I can be shown that I am wrong, I will admit that I am wrong in public and go on from there. I think good representatives should do that. We can't be right in everything.

I had never run for a public office before I was elected Senator. I thought things were much more black and white than they really are. I wasn't even quite sure about the necessity of compromise, but compromise is an absolute principle in the legislative process, and I guess in a great many other processes as well. I've learned that I didn't know as much as I thought I knew. Not that I was cocky; I wasn't. But I've learned that there are some grays and alternative points of view that you have to consider. Sometimes you can't get everything you want so you do the best you can, and you compromise.

But I've also learned that you can compromise too much. You have to finally draw the line and you have to stand up and fight for your constituents and for your country. Labor law reform is the perfect illustration because it involves morality and immorality, politics and non-politics, power and the lack of power. We were willing to sit down and see if we could compromise with the labor leaders, but they weren't willing to compromise. Finally we had to say, "Well, we'll have to draw a line then." We did, and it was a horrendous battle, on the Senate floor twenty hours a day for six weeks. I still have not recovered the health that I had before that battle, because I was there every second, leading the fight as a freshmen senator. It fell my lot to lead because I was the highest ranking minority person opposed to the bill on the Labor and Human Resource committee. And as you know we won that battle even though it was a tough fight.

What I'm trying to say is that, yes there is a compromise. We have to continually study, continually listen to committee testimony and hearings. We have to continually try to understand the feelings, beliefs, and motivations of our colleagues and their constituents. In the process, we try to do what's right. That's the bottom line. In the end, hopefully we represent our own constituents in the best possible way.

One Fold

Unitarians Promote Gays

Representatives of more than 1000 Unitarian Universalist churches voted at the association's recent conference to employ openly homosexual and bisexual persons in leadership positions of the denomination and in local congregations. According to president O. Eugene Picket, one of the denomination's major priorities is "rebuffing the emergent new right in its vengeful desire to smother the rights of women, gay people, minorities, and others who struggle for justice."

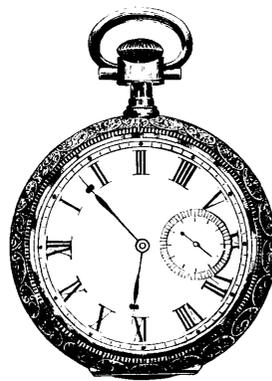
American Roman Catholics Increase

A recent Gallup poll indicates that since 1947, the high birth rate of Roman Catholics and the influx of Hispanics has resulted in an increase in the percentage of adult Americans who are Catholic—from 20 percent to 29 percent. Protestants dropped from 69 percent to 59 percent, and Jews from 5 percent to 2 percent.

Clergy Salaries

The July 18 issue of *Christianity Today* reports that the average American pastor earns \$10,348 annually, with a congregation of about 300. To supplement their income, more than 20 percent take second jobs. "Even if these salaries didn't include housing allowances or parsonages, the final annual figure would still fall short of providing a stable economic picture for

most pastors." The magazine compares the \$10,348 annual salary with U.S. Department of Labor figures which show that truck drivers average \$18,300, lawyers \$25,000, and dentists \$40,000. Low-paid ministers "feel negative about their churches . . . get angry at the injustice of their paychecks," and unable to retire at 65 or 75, become "a burden" to their churches.



Christian Priorities

A *Christianity Today*-Gallup Poll recently asked Christians which of six actions should be ranked as the highest Christian priority: A) Help to win the world for Jesus Christ; B) Concentrate on the spiritual growth of one's family and self; C) Join groups and support causes that will improve the entire community; D) Help strengthen the local church; E) Take part in efforts to

influence local, state, and national legislation on important issues; F) undecided. Southern Baptists voted overwhelmingly for winning the world for Jesus (78 percent), with personal and family spiritual growth coming in a distant second (17 percent). Roman Catholics also ranked evangelizing the world as their first priority (53 percent), with personal and family growth second (26 percent). Methodists showed the greatest interest in supporting community causes (16 percent gave it top priority), whereas less than 1 percent of all Baptists gave community interests top billing.

Among clergy, two-thirds of those over 50 ranked evangelism first, as opposed to little more than half of those 30-49 years old.

As for political involvement, 51 percent of the clergy believe it "very important" for religious organizations "to make public statements about what they feel to be the will of God in political-economic matters." In an apparent backlash against the activism of the sixties, only 44 percent of those under 30 felt it was "very important" to make such expressions.

Mormon Sesquicentennial Image

Despite an insightful and even-handed *Newsweek* report on Mormonism (September 1) much prejudice persists in religious periodicals. *Christianity Today* reveals its out-dated bias by listing Mormon-related books under "Cults." (The August 8 issue notes four: "The best and most exhaustive treatment is *The Changing World of Mormonism* by Jerald and Sandra Tanner.") *Christian Century*, on the other hand, takes Mormonism more seriously, recently devoting several pages to a feature article by Jan Shipps and regularly reporting, objectively, Mormon news.

SUNSTONE

SUNSTONE is pleased to announce the second in a series of quarterly lectures sponsored by The B. H. Roberts Society. On Tuesday, November 25, 1980, President David Gardner of the University of Utah and President Jeffrey R. Holland of Brigham Young University will address the topic, "Educating the Saints: Intellectual Inquiry and Revealed Truth." The program will include a response by

Dr. Chase N. Peterson, former Vice-President of Alumni Affairs, Harvard University, and presently Vice-President of Health Sciences, University of Utah. Committed to the examination of the Restored Gospel as it relates to contemporary culture, The B. H. Roberts Society encourages discussion in the spirit of fellowship and discipleship. For more information, contact SUNSTONE (801) 355-5926.

From the Editors

Thanks Deserved

Due to economic pressures and family considerations, Allen Roberts has returned to his work as a preservation consultant and designer. During the two years he was the president of Sunstone Foundation, the magazine doubled its circulation, improved its graphics and professional credibility, and published regularly. In addition, Sunstone sponsored cultural events, published two cartoon books and three calendars, established a fiction contest and an annual history award, and founded the ground-breaking Mormon Theological Symposium.

Without Allen's overtime efforts, financial sacrifices, artistic expertise, innovative salesmanship, and stubborn point of view, Sunstone might have died a painful and lingering death. We thank him heartily and wish him well.

Errata

The body of Gary Huxford's article "The Changing Image of the Prophet" (Volume 5, Number 4) referred to five notes, but eight notes were listed at the end of the article. The first three notes listed at the end of the article should have been deleted, and notes 4 through 8 should have been numbered 1 through 5.

Theological Symposium

The second annual Sunstone Theological Symposium began with a question: "Is There a Place for Theology in Mormon Life?" Peggy Fletcher, one of the charter members of Sunstone Foundation and editor of Sunstone Magazine, answered that question affirmatively. Describing herself as "ontologically Mormon, Mormon to my very depths," she asserted that study and thought cannot undermine faith, that the study of theology can help "ward off secularization," and that theology can be an important tool in achieving "the purpose of life—to learn how to love."

James E. Talmage, a nineteenth century apostle drew a crowd of 1700 when he announced that he would lecture on theology. Despite the uneasiness of twentieth century Mormonism with the

term "theology," this symposium, funded in part by the Utah Endowment of the Humanities, drew a crowd of about 500 historians, lawyers, homemakers, educators, students, senior citizens, sociologists, and philosophers—both Mormon and non-Mormon—to give or listen to thirty-four papers on a wide range of topics. In honor of the Church's 150th anniversary, some of the papers were more historical and methodological than strictly theological. The remaining papers seemed to group themselves into discussions of doctrine, explorations of the human implications of the theology, and examinations from a history of religions perspective.

Doctrinal discussions included the Mormon views of original sin, the light of Christ, and the Mormon conception of hell ("essentially a mental experience" that "is actually a part of God's redemptive work," according to Kent Dunford of the LDS Institute of Religion at the University of Utah).

Eugene England of Brigham Young University's English Department explained two simultaneously held Mormon views of God: one that he is perfect—omniscient and omnipotent; the other that he is still progressing in knowledge and dominion. From Joseph Smith on, claimed England, an "adventurous mode" has been used to describe God's continued progression in spheres beyond our own while a "worshipful mode" shows him an absolute in our sphere. "Such a noble, expansive vision of the cosmos, a vision at the same time worshipful and ennobling in its humility, seems to me vital to the Mormon spirit and to Mormon thought. It must not be lost in our more recent emphasis on the equally true and important vision of God's perfections and on human dependence."

Other papers probed the tensions growing out of the human consequences of Mormon theology. Richard Sherlock, a professor of human values and ethics at the University of Tennessee's medical

center, pointed out the ethical dilemma of prolonging life when one believes in an afterlife. John L. Sorenson, chairman of Brigham Young University's anthropology department, pointed out that the most serious factors in how Mormons can "be wrong" are whether the offense was willed and knowing, two factors that virtually compelled the excommunication of ERA activist Sonia Johnson.

The issue of obedience to authority and individual freedom drew at least two direct treatments. Jackson Newell, dean of the University of Utah's College of Liberal Education, posited: "The individual needs most and suffers most from the Church organization." Options include "surrender to the institution, whether from faith or exhaustion," "abandoning ship," being an "unconscientious resister," or, the "healthier course, the conscientious critic."

British-born convert Irene Bates of Pacific Palisades, California, asserted that Church history shows revelation, not "as a direct one-way line of communication from the Lord, giving unsolicited instruction to prophets and leaders," but more frequently as the result of "long study or even painful struggle with persistent questions." She warned that "the efficacy of the process by which revelation is sought might well be endangered" because of the view that members are "passive receivers only," the fear that "our contribution might be seen as an attempt to 'steady the Ark' instead of recognizing our obligation to report on the terrain," and the "contagious apathy" that results when it is felt that "our contribution may fall on stony ground, or even be given a hostile reception halfway up the ladder." However: "We are, all of us, a part of the environment in which such revelations are sought. What comes to us from the Lord by way of revelation through the prophet may, in great measure, depend upon us. The only real alternatives to that understanding would be either to believe that prophets are omniscient or else that God provides all the questions as well as the answers."

Giving broader views than expositions of specific doctrines or the personal struggles with situations caused by those doctrines were a series of papers using a history or religions perspective. Edwin Gaustad, professor of religious studies, University of California at Riverside, pointed out both the strengths and the challenges of the Mormon "connection" to history: it takes ancient history seriously because of its commitment to the Book of Mormon and takes its own

history, including personal and family history, "with deep earnestness." He urged Mormon historians to avoid "cultural captivity" (thinking of Mormon history as Utah or as a story beginning in the nineteenth century), to avoid the defensiveness resulting from trying to be "sole owners of their own past," and to consider history "an ally, not an enemy." The Vatican archives had been opened, he observed, because the Catholic Church decided it had "more to fear from secrecy than from openness and honest scholarship."

Catherine Albanese, associate professor of religion at Wright State University, looked at other nineteenth century religions that, like Mormonism, professed a belief in a "male/female god" including the Ephrata community in Pennsylvania, the Rappites or Harmonists, the Oneida community, Theodore Parker, Mary Baker Eddy, and the European traditions that lay behind them. Mormonism, she found, had "turned mysticism inside out. Humans will not dissolve in God" they are to become distinct gods themselves. The material world is not a place to be denied, for in Mormon theology it is sacred and ultimate."

Jan Shippo, associate professor of history and religious studies at Indiana-Purdue University, saw Mormonism as a "radical restoration." In its beginnings, it "restored" the New Testament Church, but as it developed, it became instead a "restoration of Israel" by establishing such Old Testament links as patriarchal blessings, a mission of "gathering" Israel through proselyting, and the Lord's personal acceptance of the Kirtland temple as he had accepted Solomon's.

Stephen J. Stein, associate professor of religious studies at Indiana University at Bloomington, examined the "acknowledged centrality of apocalyptic" as manifest in *The Evening*

and the Morning Star, a Mormon paper first published in 1832. Documenting the "apocalyptic fervor that had been building for two centuries" in America, he noted that "if the Mormons had not been interested in the millennium, they would have been a highly exceptional religious community."

The following papers were also presented:

Howard C. Searle: Prolegomena to a Study of the Role of God in LDS History

Arthur R. Bassett: Faith, Hope, and Charity: Another View of the Doctrine of Atonement

Eric Hansen: The Book of Mormon as a Microcosm of the World: A Structural Approach

Steven L. Olsen: Social Evolution in the Book of Mormon

Janice Allred: Toward a Mormon Concept of Original Sin

Edward H. Ashment: Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papers

Thomas G. Alexander: Adoption of the Current Interpretation of the Word of Wisdom, 1898-1933

Gerald Bradford: The Idea of God in William James and Mormon Thought

Armand Mauss: The Fading of the Pharaoh's Curse: A Retrospective View of the Portents and Preparation for the New Revelation on Priesthood Eligibility

Culley K. Christensen: The Adam-God Doctrine Reappraised as an Evolutionary Step in the Development of the Mormon Doctrine of Diety

Scott Kenney: From Kingdom to State: Theological Implications of the Mormon Drive to Statehood

Louise Wynn: Speculation and Revelation: Scientific Curiosity Among the Mormons

Kent Robson: Is God the Creator of Natural and Moral Law?

Kim McCall: The Moral Imperatives of a Finite God

Roger Thomas: Existence and Freedom

Madison Sowell: View of the Hebrews and the Book of Mormon: The Comparative Method Reexamined



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Mark Thomas: Revelation in the Book of Mormon

Melodie Moench Charles: Mormon Christianizing of the Old Testament

John Durham Peters: All or None Versus Sifting: Two Mormon Views of Truth

N. Lee Smith: The Light of Christ: The Unifying Concept of the Universe

A dinner held Saturday night at the Hotel Utah topped off the symposium and provided four Salt Lake City clergymen fifteen minutes each to share their impressions of Mormonism. The four guests, each from a different denomination, could not have been more refreshingly diverse in their approach.

Reverend George Nye of the First Baptist Church was intense, short-haired and blue polyestered—in sum, a lot like a mature Mormon missionary. And his approach, noted one Mormon wryly, was similar: “Blitz in and tell ‘em in ten minutes what’s wrong with their church.” It was not quite that blunt. He courteously acknowledged at the beginning that “no one has the right to challenge anyone’s ultimate authority because it is always a faith statement that cannot be proved. We can only take it and measure it against our own experience.”

He next pointed out that Mormons like to “lay traps” for the unwary nonmember by asking, “Do you believe God continues to reveal himself?” Answering the question for himself, he said, “I agree with you, and *that* is why I must reject the writings of Joseph Smith.” He traced an increasing sophistication in God’s revelation of himself from the Old Testament to the “higher level” Jesus had established in the New Testament. Logically, then, Joseph Smith’s revelations should constitute a third level, as much above the New Testament as it is above the Old Testament. However, “Joseph Smith’s teachings revert to Hebraism and the darkest of Old Testament practices.” He cited “women and their plight” in Mormonism as an example. Another was the use of the Urim and Thummim, “almost a pagan custom.” At Christ’s crucifixion, the veil of the temple was torn “so that no one would be barred from salvation, but race distinctions have, until recent times, barred some. Joseph Smith prays that a curse will destroy his enemies. Jesus on the cross forgave his.” He summed, “Mormonism cannot be the further evolution of religion.”

Braced by this candor, the audience next heard Dr. Jeffrey Silliman of Mount Olympus Presbyterian, a husky

native-born Utahn with a mellow neighborly style. He opened with reminiscences about his boyhood in Green River, surrounded by Mormons. He investigated the Church “because I was interested in what my friends believed—and also in self-defense. Any religion that is the driving force in the lives of four million people must be taken seriously.” Describing himself as “a student of Mormonism for twenty years,” he insisted that his remarks reflected “strictly my opinions—and my observations are practical rather than academic or theoretical.”

He pointed out that Mormonism developed in relative isolation, “in conversation with itself.” He attributes this lack of dialogue to the belief in the great apostasy: “If we’re the only ones with the truth, let’s talk to ourselves.”

One resulting problem was the use of the same terminology to describe strikingly different concepts. “Take the word *God*, for instance. To me that communicates a being infinite yet personal, the maker of matter, space, and time. For Mormons, the word connotes a finite God, developing just like I am.” He suggested that this difference could be the clash of “New Testament monotheism against Greek and Roman polytheism” but concluded with the same “good-neighbor” tone he had begun on: “This is not good or bad. It’s just different.”

The third minister, Dr. Stephen Sidorack of Centenary United Methodist, wiry and intense, his lively face framed with a curly dark beard and long hair, established the same congenial rapport with the audience by quoting from Joseph Smith’s account that “my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them.” He quipped, “Knowing your respect for Joseph Smith, I would expect you to take his remark seriously.”

By way of background, he asserted the equal importance in any church of “the personal salvation of the individual, and the salvation of the social world,” a joint emphasis that may have “helped spare England a bloody revolution—they had the French Revolution without the bloodbath.”

Calling himself an ethicist rather than a theologian, Dr. Sidorack stated, “As a non-Mormon living among Mormons, as it appears to me, the LDS Church is found wanting in the social aspect. It leans to the personal side. It has forgotten to address social causes of major importance.”

Acknowledging public statements on

some social issues like abortion and pornography, he added, “these statements by the institutional church show that it does in fact take stands—but only when it wants to or has to. My plea to the leadership is to wake up before it is too late in human history. It appears that the leadership is oblivious to the reality that our world has come of nuclear age.”

Impassionedly he urged, “All churches in Utah will be held divinely accountable for their acquiescence to the proposed MX missile system,” and ironically quoted a Public Communications spokesman whom he had contacted on the issue: “We have carefully reflected on both sides of the issue and that’s where we stand. Would Brigham Young allow MX in Zion?”

He quoted President Spencer W. Kimball: “We are a warlike people, easily distracted from our assignment of preparing for the coming of the Lord. When enemies rise up, we commit vast resources to the fabrication of gods of stone and steel—ships, planes, missiles, fortifications—and depend on them for protection and deliverance. When threatened, we become anti-enemy instead of pro-kingdom of God; we train a man in the art of war and call him a patriot’ (*Ensign*, June 1976, p. 6). Preparations for war are all around us,” he accused, “and the most powerful church in Utah is speechless.”

Reverend Monsignor Jerome C. Stoffel of the Catholic Diocese of Utah for thirty years, his gray hair and lined face adding to his venerability, rose to add a voice of mildness after Dr. Sidorack’s fervent eloquence. He acknowledged the “problems of communication” that existed and staked out one point of difference: “There is a fundamental difference between the LDS belief in God and my belief in the transcendent totally other being I call God, who is unknowable unless he makes himself known. He brought into reality a human being who, given the power to know and respond, could love that Creator. Being in the image of God, we can know and love that which we know. A human being can acquire knowledge, respond to it, and move to trust another person, and thus initiate an act of responsive love. Love flows out of that free act. But the problem is two-fold: knowing and loving.”

He acknowledged, “We do not share a common knowledge in Utah, but that is a different problem. We are struggling with the problem to love. There are many Latter-day Saints I could not communicate with on the basis of our shared knowledge, but we have both loved God and can attempt to at least

understand, realizing that we are not always talking the same language."

Peggy had observed that one of the Salt Lake clergymen she had contacted, who had not been able to come, had still rejoiced in the invitation: "I've been in Salt Lake for fifteen years and I've never received an invitation like this." After this evening of shared impressions and opinions, it seemed clear that the next occasion for communication would not have to wait for another fifteen years.

Deadline Changed

In *Sunstone* 5:3 (May-June 1980) the rules for the T. Edgar Lyon Memorial Award and the 1980 Fiction Contest were reversed. This made both the rules and the deadline dates confusing so we have decided to extend the deadline for contest entries for the T. Edgar Lyon Memorial Award to January 1, 1981. We hope this will allow time for more to participate.

T. Edgar Lyon was what any historian and scholar ought to be (but few are)—careful, methodical, thorough, analytical, and insightful. It is in his memory and to encourage his sort of excellence that *Sunstone* has chosen to establish this annual award. *Sunstone* will give \$600 in cash prizes for well-researched and documented manuscripts in the field of history. Pieces will be judged on originality, research, style, and organization as well as validity of interpretation and reasoning. We are seeking pieces on social history (history, sociology, psychology, etc.) and history of ideas (theology, philosophy, sermons, etc.). *Sunstone* is deeply committed to the study of Mormon history—the research, interpretation, and exposition of our people, events, and ideas.

Rules

1. The contest is open to all writers. Entries must be delivered to the *Sunstone* office or postmarked by 1 January 1981.
2. Papers must be typewritten, double-spaced, on one side of 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " by 11" paper (not onionskin). Since manuscripts will not be returned, contestants should keep a copy and send in the original. The papers should not exceed 7500 words.
3. Each entry must be accompanied by a signed statement from the author attesting that it is the contestant's original work, that it is not being considered elsewhere for publication, that it has not won another contest, and that it will not be submitted elsewhere until the contest results have been announced.
4. Announcement of winning entries will be made in the May-June 1981 issue of *Sunstone*. *Sunstone* reserves the right to publish at some time in the future all articles submitted, but is not obligated to do so; it reserves the right to make editorial changes as needed in published entries.

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Reviews

Heber J. Grant: Man of Steel, Prophet of God
Francis W. Gibbons
Deseret Book, 1979
240 pages



Although Francis Gibbons bears his testimony to Heber J. Grant's prophetic calling in his preface, his portrait of the prophet is not always inspiring. Grant was the General Authorities' "fair haired boy," called to preside over the Tooele Stake at age 23 even though there were many capable men in the stake who could have done a credible job. Not only

did Grant not live in Tooele, but he did not yet have a testimony of the gospel. When Joseph F. Smith discovered that fact, he wanted to "undo" Grant's calling. He complained to President John Taylor that no man should preside over a stake "who does not know that the gospel is true." Taylor defended Grant, claiming that the "only thing that he does not know is that he does know it" and that he would bear testimony soon enough. He was right. At age 26, Grant was called as an apostle by a revelation beginning "Thus Saith the Lord."

Although Grant's determination is always recognized in Church history, his business ambitions are emphasized in this biography. Most readers will wonder why an apostle was devoting such an inordinate amount of time to temporal matters. The answer, not provided by Gibbons, is that his activities were necessary to the financial well being of the Church. Either the author was naive as to the nature of the role, or he feared that telling the story might place the Church in an unfavorable light.

Thus, it is necessary to refer to other sources to properly understand Grant's role. For instance, Ronald W. Walker's excellent article in *Sunstone* (Jan.-Feb. 1980), "Crisis in Zion: Heber J. Grant and the Panic of 1893," graphically portrays the disastrous financial condition of the Church that year, partly due to polygamy troubles and partly due to Wilford Woodruff's spending habits. The First Presidency remained somewhat oblivious to the significance of the crisis even after they had enlisted Grant's expert help to acquire loans from the East. Walker convincingly contends that the Church would have suffered a more serious bank failure than the Kirtland fiasco had it not been for Grant's financial acumen.

Ignoring that larger problem, Gibbons focuses only on Grant's 1891 mission to the East coast to secure loans for the ailing Bank of Utah, of which he was president. The account of Woodruff giving Grant a blessing before he traveled to New York is misleading. Woodruff allegedly promised Grant that "he would find the money he sought and that more would be offered to him than he needed." But the impression is left that the blessing was intended to alleviate Grant's personal financial problems. Nowhere is it evident that he was on a mission to save the church from bankruptcy—a growing threat which became even more critical by 1893. As a result, Walker's article does more than Gibbon's book in revealing Grant's ultimate contribution to history. While it may be unpleasant for some to admit

that the Church was in severe financial straits in the 1890s, it is nevertheless a fact, and it was most fortunate that this apostle could engineer a rescue. It is equally important that Grant guided the Church as prophet during the critical years of the Great Depression and that his tenure was noted for fiscal stability.

Gibbon's work is inadequate and will never be considered definitive. It is a thin, unbalanced volume done with scissors and paste. In 232 pages of text, only 59 are devoted to Grant's 27 year tenure as president. The author takes disconcerting liberties with direct quotations, chopping them off before they end and changing the words when they do not suit him. The book would be better without Gibbon's hyperbole, the most embarrassing example being his description of the maturing of a prophet: "Though he were an apostle, destined to be the prophet, yet learned he obedience and wisdom by the things which he suffered."

Although Grant was an enthusiastic polygamist, the author glosses over it as if it were an uncomfortable subject. The three wives keep popping up in different places, but never together. After going through a wrenching loss of Lucy to early death, Grant is suddenly traveling with Augusta. Each wife is treated in the book as if she were his only wife. There is no interaction.

There are some matters which Gibbons handles adequately such as Grant's signal failure as Japanese mission president. "We have baptized only 3 people so far and 2 of them I am afraid are no good." One of the converts would supposedly give his life for the gospel, but Grant found out later that he only wanted to borrow some money to start a patent medicine establishment. The second wanted \$1500 to start a printing office and when he didn't get it, "his faith oozed out."

Grant was criticized for his fanatic interest in Prohibition. He was speaking in conferences about it so often that Francis M. Lyman, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, requested that he desist. Lyman explained that people were getting tired of hearing about Prohibition all the time so he insisted that Grant talk of "the peaceable things of the kingdom."

One of the strongest clues to Grant's spiritual prowess as prophet was his decision to call Melvin J. Ballard to the apostleship, even though he had always thought he would call his dearest friend, Richard W. Young. At the last minute, inspiration told him that Ballard, whom he barely knew, should be called instead.

Grant was incapacitated by a stroke in 1940, leaving his left side paralyzed and his speech impaired. From then on, most of his conference addresses were delivered for him, and his leadership was seriously curtailed, even though Gibbons insists that Grant "had the reins of leadership firmly in his grasp." One of the most challenging questions suggested by the book is the extent to which Church administration is hampered by an aged and incapacitated prophet, as Grant was for the last five years of his presidency. Yet, his twenty-seven years at the helm were among the most important in the Church's history—worthy of a scholarly, balanced, and intensive biography, one that is yet to be written.

Dennis L. Lythgoe

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A Glen Canyon Portfolio
Philip Hyde
Northland Press, 1979
\$35.00



The first time that I saw Glen Canyon or its dam I was eleven or twelve years old. I vividly remember my mother telling me about the many construction workers who were killed while completing the giant concrete dam, some smothered in some natural history museum a million or so years from now.

I never thought about the waters of Lake Powell (or "Lake Foul" as some call it) filling up and smothering the beauty and life out of a canyon millions of years old; burying the canyon beneath the tons of silt deposited daily by the Colorado river, no longer able to flush its debris into the Pacific; sealing the canyons doom in mud, as tightly as those workmen sealed in their concrete tomb. Others, like Philip Hyde, the book's photographer, and Bruce Burger, who wrote the text, mourned the death of the canyon as they would mourn the death of a close friend. However, those others are few. That is why the Glen Canyon has recently been termed "The Canyon No One Knew."

Because so many people never experienced the majesty of Glen Canyon, Philip Hyde's new collection, *A Glen Canyon Portfolio*, serves as a photographic memorial to a once beautiful place on this planet, since inundated by the flood. Included with the photographs, taken from 1961-1964,

Your Religious Booklist

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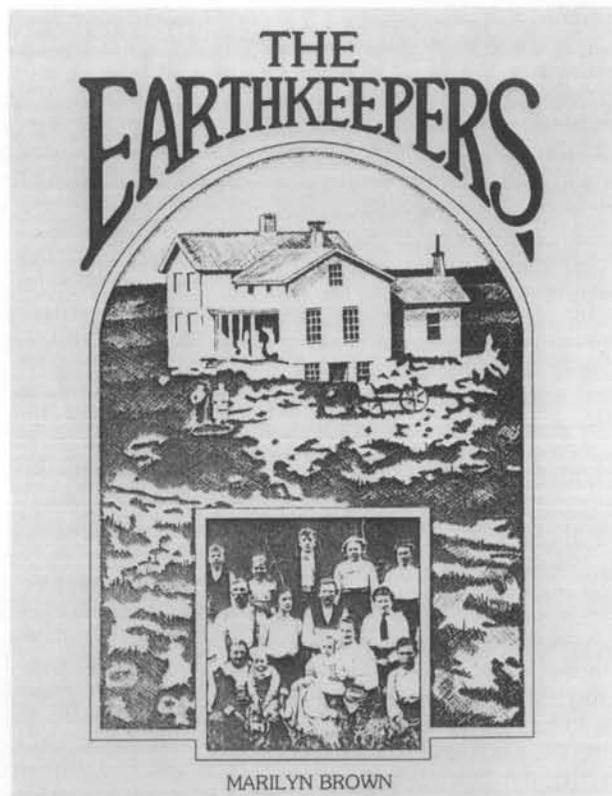
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Wheat—Humor and Wisdom of J. Golden Kimball—by Mikal Lofgren \$5.95

Discover views of J. Golden Kimball on a variety of subjects.

The Earth Keepers—by Marilyn Brown \$7.95

A powerful, compassionate novel about Mormon pioneers.

is a narrative diary by Bruce Burger called, "There Was a River," an account of one of the last river trips through Glen Canyon in October, 1962.

Through the twenty black and white photographs, Philip Hyde invokes and records what was once a wild, free, and living canyon. The areas that he photographed had names like Klondike Bar, Pot Canyon, Willow Canyon, Fronds Gelees Canyon, White Canyon, Hidden Passage, Mystery Canyon, Cathedral Canyon, and Music Temple.

Hyde summons the vivid Colorado River, Glen Canyon, and surrounding environments with his expert eye for depth, clarity, and subject matter. The side canyons, wandering from the rivers edge and beyond, become the focal point for many of his photographs. One photograph, "Reflections, pool near mouth of Fronds Gelees Canyon," is a bold photograph mirroring the softly clouded sky and rock walls of the canyon in a pool, like polished obsidian.

Bruce Burger's descriptions of the deep grottos and cool pools of hidden canyons, the sight of blue herons landing at the rivers edge, are alive, precise, full of exciting imagery, adding a personal touch to Philip Hyde's photographs. A description of an exploratory trip up one of the many side canyons on foot gives the reader examining the photographs an idea of the difficulty one encountered while trying to see and feel the picturesque elegance hidden between the sheer sandstone cliffs. Grandeur at a price. "Finally the canyon shafted to an icy pool between sheer walls," Bruce Burger begins, "and we could only proceed by swimming. . . . Until then I didn't know cold in its Platonic form, but such purity sped us to the far bank in record time. Yet time itself is slowed by such agony. . . . From there we hiked a riverbed of willows and underbrush and I discovered one cardinal rule: never strip below the ankle. Sneakers are life. . . . More lasting and impressive than the discomforts of travel is the sheer hush as if nothing survived but water and red stone. Where the water has gouged a cave over a pool, the hollow fills with an opalescence spread from sunlight a few feet away. If you stand beneath you are lit from all sides, lifted to a radiance. You notice the grind of your own footsteps: the dankness itself is sanctified."

Then, as if Bruce Burger were the one reviewing Philip Hyde's photographs of the side canyons he continues. "This is the peripheral world of the side canyons, whose very entrances can be easily missed. Here is none of the river's

clarity: all is mystery and haze, and must be sought out."

Other favorite photographs of mine are: "Stream channel in sandstone," photographed in White Canyon, which looks remarkably like salt water taffy in the process of being pulled and twisted in a candy store window; "Hidden Passage in Glen Canyon," a photo of a small waterfall flowing out of the immensity of the canyon's slickrock; "Sculptured wall, Cathedral Canyon," with the sandstone wall which fills the entire photograph looking as if an abstract artist and sculptor had taken their chisels and files and had carved delicate wave-like ripples across the wall's surface, afterwards painting its face with feather-like growth lines as if it were a portion of some gigantic tree stump; and "Cathedral in the Desert," a tube-like formation in the sandstone forty feet wide and hundreds of feet long, with a trickle of precious water flowing along the slickrocks' sandy, shadowed floor.

Again, Bruce Burger gives us a glimpse into the visions confronting a person willing to explore the canyon environment. "In the afternoon," he begins, "we climbed a high bluff further down the river and found nothing—but never before have I seen nothing on so colossal a scale. For miles and miles we could see only sky and hellish swirling stone. Even the river was lost and we stood in a world as void as our imaginings of first creation. One could find it worthless, but there was an angry beauty to it—as if a mad potter had whirled his clay on spool after spool and set them spinning like gyroscopes out to a sandstone infinity. With all its motion there was also a stillness that was eerie and absolute, the aftermath of some gigantic holocaust."

With descriptions like the ones above by Bruce Burger, and Philip Hyde's almost mystical photographs, *A Glen Canyon Portfolio* is an excellent way to know what most of us never had a chance to see. The book differs from other publications dealing with the Southwest arid environments, such as *Slickrock*, *The Hidden Canyon*, and the new *Desert Images*. The photographs in *A Glen Canyon Portfolio* are unbound, individual, black and white photographs that can be framed if desired.

The diary portion of the portfolio by Bruce Burger is short and interesting to read. (However, his poetry is horrible and luckily there isn't too much of it.) His insert description and explanation on Lake Powell, written from hindsight in 1975, was misplaced. It would have had more impact had it been placed at the

end of the 1962 diary instead of on October 20, 1962, the next to the last day of the river trip.

The diary was free from editorializing, for the most part, and rarely showed anger or even frustration over the impending burial of the canyon. Only occasionally did I get the impression that Bruce Burger might be seething under the calm of his diary. While writing about an impressively beautiful location called Music Temple, which he describes as "a cavernous room that opens dramatically from a brief and narrow canyon," he describes the music from a fellow companion's guitar. "The music, like the light, came from nowhere, but filled the whole canyon with the body of its sound." He later interjects, "It must be the distemper of the times that Utah, with Music Temple and the Mormon Tabernacle securing its primacy in acoustics, glorifies what is built and shrugs off what is given."

I was hoping for more statements like this one. He begins his diary by stating, "all of our passage was scheduled for inundation by Glen Canyon Dam, at the close of a year that was already nearly over. I was prepared for beauty and desolation, and felt privileged to see it before it was destroyed."

Why was he accepting the death of the canyon without a trace of anger or resentment. The diary is almost fatalistic. Why fight against decisions that destroy the environment, it seems to say to me.

I must admit, I feel cheated somehow. I would have loved to have taken my children into one or all of the side canyons I saw in Philip Hyde's photographs. Instead, I have to take them to the so-called "Jewel of the Colorado," where no doubt they will have a good time swimming in the still, non-flowing water. But I think that I will remember the words of Philip Hyde: "Gone are the river and stream edges softened by riparian vegetation—grass, moss, even large trees where enough soil accumulated—willows, gamble's oak, cottonwood, box elder. Gone, too, is the remoteness and feeling of adventure, reduced to the commonplace of reservoir recreation by gasoline power, noise, and smoke." And I, and my posterity, will wait for the canyon's resurrection, when earthquake or dynamite takes the dam apart, piece by piece.

Nick Carling

NICK CARLING graduated in History from the University of Utah. Interested in environmental issues, he is currently employed as a facilities planner for Salt Lake County and teaches the elders quorum in the Hawthorne Ward.



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