

# SUNSTONE



ARE MORMONS JOINING  
IN WORLD SUICIDE?

BY  
ARTHUR HENRY KING

# SUNSTONE

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# Readers' Forum

## On Faith, Scholarship, and Wordprints

The Genesis Project, a recent computer study of Bible "wordprints" at Israel's Technion University, concluded that the book of Genesis was most probably written by one person. This language study, which supports the traditional authorship of Moses, recalls the timely SUNSTONE article, "Book of Mormon Wordprints Reexamined" (6:2, March-April 1981).

Curiously, the Genesis Project in Israel and the Book of Mormon wordprints at BYU both conclude in favor of a fundamentalist view of scriptural authorship, but do so by opposite findings as to multiplicity of authorship. The BYU study claims to have found statistical differences in language use which suggest numerous ancient authors rather than one contemporary author, such as Joseph Smith. The Genesis Project claims statistical unity of different passages in the original Hebrew, suggesting one author, a conclusion more difficult to assert. Differences can be defined at certain confidence levels, but sameness can only be expressed as an absence of detectable differences between samples.

The conclusion that one author penned the book of Genesis contradicts a century of widely accepted biblical research, which employed the methods of literary, form and tradition criticism that grew out of Wellhausen's Documentary Theory of Old Testament source writings, articulated in 1876. Textual contradictions, varying vocabularies and writing styles, and duplicate stories have led biblical exegetes to distinguish four basic literary sources in the Pentateuch: Yahwist, Elohist, Priestly writer, and Deuteronomist. (See *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 1968, for elaboration of these ideas.)

For instance, two creation stories are distinguished in Genesis. The first (Gen. 1:1—2:4a), attributed to the Priestly writer, presents a chronology of seven days wherein God creates heaven and earth, the oceans, land, vegetation, lights for the earth (the

sun, moon, and stars), animals, and lastly, man (male and female). The Yahwist creation story which follows (Gen. 2:4b—25) differs significantly. The "Lord God" (Yahweh) creates the heavens and earth, next man (male only) out of the dust of the earth, then animals, and lastly woman constructed from man's rib. Included in the second story is the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Knowledge, a forbidden fruit, and the Serpent.

These two creation stories illustrate how different language, imagery, and styles are combined within a single book. Mormon exegete Scott G. Kenney has demonstrated further evidence of multiple authorship in his examination of overlapping flood narratives in Genesis: "Mormons, Genesis & Higher Criticism" (SUNSTONE 3:1, Nov.-Dec. 1977). The discernment of multiple authors in the Old Testament has resolved many questions of textual duplication and variation.

Is a century of biblical scholarship and consensus destined to be nullified by a statistical processing of word usage? If the BYU wordprints studies are any indication, the computer findings might not be accepted too quickly. When the BYU studies first came out, press reports cited "overwhelming evidence" of multiple authorship of the Book of Mormon (*Church News*, Feb. 16, 1980, p. 14).

Then, one year ago in these pages, Professor D. James Croft (Management Science, University of Utah, now a director of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board in Washington, D.C.) demonstrated that the conclusion positing twenty-four Book of Mormon authors was unwarranted, both by method and by evidence. He argued that (1) first of all, stable "wordprints" (frequency of common word use by author) may not exist over time, subject matter, or literary form—questions about wordprint validity also apply to the Genesis Project; (2) highly edited works such as the Book of Mormon may contain altered frequencies of

noncontextual words—also applies to Genesis Project; (3) the BYU study has design problems, such as lack of paired comparisons between Book of Mormon passages and writings of individual nineteenth century authors (including Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon) and a lack of baseline tests to show that wordprints are stable within the writings of single authors; and (4) the study improperly implies more statistical differences among Book of Mormon authors than even the flawed data and test results warrant.

"Wordprint" authors Wayne A. Larson and Alvin C. Rencher of the BYU Department of Statistics, responding to Professor Croft in the same issue of SUNSTONE, acknowledge "some mistakes" in their original article (*BYU Studies* 20, Spring 1980) but said that their major conclusions were still valid. They cite results "inadvertently left out" and "not reported in detail" which do support the existence of many different wordprint styles.

It is interesting to note that prior to Professor Croft's response, some BYU faculty close to the wordprint project tried to persuade Croft not to go public with his critique and eschewed open interchange and discussion of faith-promoting subjects. The risk that objective analysis might not support one's interpretation of faith does not seem to warrant presuming a desired but unsupported conclusion from that analysis. Hopefully, commitment to a faith would be encouraged by more rather than less understanding of that faith.

The search for Book of Mormon wordprints continues. Physics professor John L. Hilton (University of California, Berkeley), by his own acknowledgement a faithful Latter-day Saint, is attempting to construct a valid research design that would fairly test the multiplicity of Book of Mormon authorship. He is in touch with the BYU people, whose difficulties he hopes to avoid, and he has invited Professor Croft's advice. He has also made contact with the Genesis Project in Israel. Professor Hilton has set up controls to insulate the study from his pro-LDS bias; he expects to publish definitive results when complete.

If the Book of Mormon is an ancient book, the writing patterns of different authors, rather than the style of the translator, should be discernible. Section 9 of the Doctrine and Covenants describes how Joseph Smith kept working on the translation until it was "right." Lacking verifiable

source documents and archeological confirmation, the Book of Mormon could use the support of successful wordprint studies. As of now, the existence of twenty-four Book of Mormon authors remains a matter of faith.

Not yet available in English, the Israeli wordprint analysis of Genesis awaits critical evaluation. Based upon the initial results of the BYU analysis, perhaps we should be cautious in our expectations.

George D. Smith  
San Francisco, California

### An Avalanche of Evidence

Without wishing to get embroiled in an endless dispute, I would like to respond to some comments made by George D. Smith, Jr. (SUNSTONE 6:4) which were apparently prompted by my letter in the previous issue of your magazine.

While the subject of Roberts's work on Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon can rightly be thought of as a subject deserving the attention of Mormon historians, it can in no way be considered a subject worthy of discussion when considering the authenticity of the Book of Mormon; for competent historians of the ancient world learned long ago that playing the game of "parallelomania" in an attempt to impugn the authenticity of an alleged ancient document just won't cut it. (Methodological examples of this realization can be found in Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament* [Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966], pp. 22-34, 143-146, 153-158; Harrison, in Harrison, Waltke, Guthrie, and Fee, *Biblical Criticism: Historical, Literary, and Textual* [Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, Mich., 1978], pp. 4-5; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* [i-xiii], Anchor Bible Series [New York, 1966], pp. LVII-LVIII; Marshall, *The Historical Criticism of Documents* [London, 1920]; cf. Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* [Deseret Book, 1976 edition], pp. 5-6; Jakeman, "Which Is the Way?" *Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology*, No. 117 [December 1969], pp. 1-6.) Indeed, if one were to prefer "parallelomania" when testing the Bible, he could "disprove" the authenticity of the "Book of Books" (or so he might think) in five minutes! (See, for example, the "success" of such methods as discussed in *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism*, by a Latter-day Saint Historian [Salt Lake City, 1977], pp. 49-55.)

The critics of the Book of Mormon always come into the game assuming that the record is a man-made product of the nineteenth century. They then go looking for books written during that period of time which discuss the American Indians and their ancestors. Upon finding ten to twenty parallels between such sources and the Book of Mormon (I've never seen anyone come up with more than thirty!), they assume that the game is over and that the antiquity of the Book of Mormon has been disproven once and for all. What the critics don't seem to realize, or just choose to ignore, is that as long as they insist on testing the Book of Mormon by such a method they will never really be in the game. *The only way to prove the Book of Mormon false is to find contradictions with the milieu of the ancient world from which it claims to have arisen.*

The real issue isn't what parallels can be found between the Book of Mormon and nineteenth century sources on the American Indians and their ancestors (none of which deal significantly or at length with pre-400 A.D. Mesoamerican culture); rather, it is whether or not the Book of Mormon fits into the ancient background claimed for it. Perhaps one day the Book of Mormon will be subjected to the serious and honest historical test it has been crying for since the day it came from Cumorah.

Michael T. Griffith  
Rexburg, Idaho

### Premen Speculation Unsatisfying

Dr. Robert C. Fletcher's "Attempt at Reconciliation—Are Creation and Evolution Compatible?" (Vol. 7, No. 1) contained valuable comments about the perceived conflict of Science and Religion and an interesting, even somewhat plausible explanation of the origin of man which seems to account for the Image of God Problem as well as the Atonement Problem. However, his scenario left as many conflicts intact as it reconciled, especially for the Mormon scholar.

While the Sectarian view of man's creation may have been harmonized with the "observations of the paleo-anthropologists," by limiting his treatment to "the story of the creation of man in the Old Testament" Dr. Fletcher ignores the unique problems posed by latter-day revelation and modern scripture.

What do we do, for example, with 2 Nephi 2:22 which virtually eliminates if not birth then at least death (a necessary condition for evolution) for "all creation" prior to the Fall? What

are we to do with Moses 3:7 which names Adam not just as the "first man" in God's image but the "first flesh upon the earth," all things having been created spiritually before? Premen may not have been men, but they had to be flesh.

Using Gen. 2:24 and its reference to leaving father and mother to suggest that premen were the parents of Adam and Eve assumes that Adam wrote the book of Genesis. It is more likely that the phrase is an editorial comment by Moses directed to his audience. Gen. 1:21, 22, 24, 25 is a commandment to multiply and fill up the earth not a description of the prevailing conditions.

For reconciliation to work both sides of the question must be satisfied, and Mormon theology is left unsatisfied by the premen speculation.

However, I can wholeheartedly agree with Dr. Fletcher's conclusions that belief in God need not be threatened by fossil evidence and that the creation story is more important in explaining the purpose of life than its genesis. "The intention of the Holy Ghost is to teach us how one goes to heaven and not how heaven goes."—Galilei Galileo, Letter to Grand Duchess Christina quoting "an ecclesiastic of most eminent degree." (St. Augustine?)

Richard C. Russell  
Salt Lake City, Utah

### Not Alone After All

I enjoyed reading the article: "An Attempt at Reconciliation," by Robert C. Fletcher. I found that his views on a Creator and on Evolution are very similar to my own. And, I was pleased to see this viewpoint expressed by a fellow Mormon in a Mormon publication. It is encouraging to find that you are not alone or all that different.

Brother Fletcher might be interested to hear about a book that I read recently entitled: *The Monkey Business—A Scientist Looks at Creationism*, by Niles Eldredge. In this book, the author examines the arguments put forth by the Fundamentalist Creationists who are trying so hard to mandate that their views are taught in the schools. He points out fallacies in their arguments, especially those relating to their claims that the earth was created in six days of 24 hours each. He also mentions that there is a third, or middle, ground consisting of those religiously inclined scientists who believe both in a Creator and in Evolution. Mr. Eldredge goes on to say that the Fundamentalist Creationists hate and fear these

religious evolutionists even more than they do the strictly secular scientists who advocate evolution.

Also, in case he is not already familiar with it, there is a work called *The Urantia Book* which sets forth an explanation of the origin of Man which is practically the same as his own. *Urantia Book* says that the first true men were a set of twins, male and female, who were born to prehuman primate parents as mutations. These twins, according to *Urantia*, left their tribe and parents as adolescents and traveled to a far country where they lived together in isolation. They later mated and produced offspring, who were truly human just as they were. Thus, they were the progenitors of homo sapiens and could, figuratively speaking, be called "Adam and Eve."

I was encouraged to read in this SUNSTONE article that the First Presidency has made that statement that "The Church has taken no official position on the matter of evolution and related matters." Thus, the door is left open for those of us who hold to this middle ground, even though we are in the minority. The more popular Mormon view is expressed by books such as those by Cleon Skousen—"The First Two Thousand Years; The Second Two Thousand Years."

In this connection also, I recall an article in the old *Improvement Era* way back around 1940 in which then President David O. McKay answered a question about the Age of the Earth. As I remember it, he said that there are three views about this, as follows: (1) the earth was created in six days of 24 hours each; (2) the earth was created in six days of 1,000 years each; (3) the earth was created in six stages, each of which lasted for millions of years. President McKay then went on to say that there are good Mormons who hold to each of these views and that the Church, as such, takes no position either for or against any of these views. Thus, we are free to accept any of these views, whichever seems most reasonable to us.

W.H. Sanderson  
Salt Lake City, Utah

#### **Spiritless Preman**

Robert C. Fletcher aptly titled his article "An Attempt at Reconciliation" (SUNSTONE v. 7. No. 1). Unfortunately he failed in his attempt. Any effort to reconcile religious and scientific differences in any area of investigation must provide

explanations that are in harmony with the scriptural information available. A suggested theory to reconcile the difference between evolution and creation that disregards scriptural evidence is suspect.

We learn from Abraham 5:5, Moses 3:5, D&C 29:31-34, and Genesis (I.V.)2:5 that there were two creations: spiritual, then temporal. Moses' account of the spiritual creation is that the Lord "created all things . . . spiritually before they were naturally upon the face of the earth."

The attempt to reconcile creation and evolution by speculating that Adam and Eve were the offspring of spiritless preman is simply not in harmony with modern scripture. I suggest, therefore, that Mr. Fletcher change the "scenario."

Gordon F. Holloway  
Hot Springs, South Dakota

#### **Speculation Without Guilt or Apology**

Thank you, Robert C. Fletcher, for your speculative piece, "An Attempt at Reconciliation."

I like speculation. It's exciting, entertaining, and it doesn't require obedience, faith, or sacrifice. Speculation only asks for thought. Best of all, I am free to accept, reject, alter, or expand on a speculation without guilt or apology.

For example, I can easily come up with alterations, or alternatives, to Fletcher's speculation, i.e., that God assigned Adam to the evolution-derived body of a "preman." None of my speculations are more or less valid than Fletcher's (but they may be more or less logical):

(1) God created Adam and Eve by simply breaking down the bicameral mind in two selected pre-persons (Adam and Eve). This speculation associates the development of consciousness with the origin of the soul (see Julian Jaynes' *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind.*)

(2) God transported Adam and Eve to earth from another place. All pre-Adam evolution on earth was in preparation for Adam's entry. Natural evolution of plants, animals, and premen were required so that solutions to human needs would be available. Premen died out, like other evolutionary species, probably before Adam's appearance.

(3) God created Adam through the "Pinocchio" method, i.e., a good fairy (an angel) comes down to earth and

through magic (the priesthood) converts Geppetto's (evolution's) wooden puppet (Fletcher's preman) into a real boy (the soul of Adam).

These examples range from the sublime to the silly to the sacrilegious, depending on your makeup. But so what? Speculation is nothing more than this: thoughts, ideas, conjectures. We are free, of course, to evaluate the logic of a speculation. And we should. But we are not free to assign to it "right" or "wrong" titles. We should avoid judging the speculators as sinner or saint.

If a speculation appears to have merit, it can be studied, supported, and perhaps validated. It may eventually graduate to a theory, or even to a truth, doctrine, or law. But then, it must live by different rules and ceases to be a speculation.

We ought to encourage two things: (1) speculation (because it encourages thought and the development of knowledge), and (2) the unmistakable identification of a speculation (because when a speculation is quietly ushered in through the back door, it is often allowed to depart the front door masquerading as truth or doctrine).

D. Jeff Burton  
Salt Lake City

#### **In God's Due Time**

The article, "An Attempt at Reconciliation," by Dr. R.C. Fletcher was very well conceived. I am impressed with the author's research on the "compatibility of the evolution versus creation" and agree on the timeliness of such a discourse.

But I would like to ask a question: Was it necessary for the God of this great universe, to depend on inferior creatures—"preman"—in order to provide the earthly bodies for a man and a woman similar to His own divine body? Surely this was done by the perfect knowledge of the same natural laws by which Moses caused the Red Sea to divide or by which Jonah was preserved in the belly of the fish. To know "how" these supreme laws work can only be the prerogative of the Gods. It does not seem reasonable that "preman" parents, who were mortal, could produce bodies that were not subject to death (Adam and Eve) until their expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

There is no conflict in my mind regarding the evolutionary process of this earth, evidenced by bone and fossil material from "over several million years ago," except I perceive that these objects and particles arrived

from other much older planets during the creation period. No one knows how long it took to create this earth. Neither does anybody know where the material came from which enabled the master Creator(s) to organize the earth. I believe that God, who has revealed so much already of His "work and glory" will, in due time, allow a glimpse into His secrets. Perhaps it will be in the day when man has learned to love unconditionally.

Carla Sansom  
Westlake Village, California

### Creation and Evolution: Bad Bedfellows

While I empathize with R.C. Fletcher's article on evolution and creation, "An Attempt at Reconciliation" (SUNSTONE V. 7:1), I see a myriad of pitfalls, tortuous and unnecessary explanations, and a confusing mixture of metaphors. Biblical creation and scientific evolution do not make good "bed fellows."

Fletcher argues that "the theory of evolution [is an area]—where the observations are meager and critical tests difficult to perform." The fact is that evolution is supported by a vast amount of concordant data compiled by many fields (e.g., comparative anatomy, genetics, biochemistry, embryology—to name a few) and not merely paleontology as the article seems to suggest.

The creation story of the Bible was written by non-scientific men in a non-scientific age. While its prose is beautiful and inspiring, it cannot begin to explain the mysteries and development of life. For that matter, much mystery still remains for science. The point is that scientific evolution and biblical creation begin from totally different world views.

The account of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden must be either viewed as an allegory, beautiful as it is, or accepted as literal fact. Mormon theology does not seem to allow for Adam and Eve existing with their "premen cousins." Numerous questions arise: What about *all* things being created in immortality? (See McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*). Was Adam an Anglo-Saxon type as commonly depicted? What happened to all of the premen and their progeny?

Mormons, it seems, have three options in viewing Genesis and Darwin's position: (1) Accept biblical creation as literal fact and reject scientific evolution. (2) Eden, with its two inhabitants, represents a rich and

powerful allegory concerning Man's emergence into a reflective, conscious and religious being. (3)

Compartmentalize the two world views and don't subject their inherent conflicts to careful scrutiny. The latter solution is probably opted for by most Mormons.

Reconciliation as advocated by Dr. Fletcher may be an admirable task, but I fear it leaves intellectual and spiritual debris rather than clarifying and tidying the dilemma.

R.J. Stout, M.D.  
Salt Lake City, Utah

### Bravissimo for New Columns

Bravo and bravissimo on your January-February 1982 issue. The addition of columns is, I hope, a fixture and not an experiment. I've seldom read anything that tickled and sobered me more than Marvin Rytting's confessions from his stake financial clerk's office. I found myself recognizing all kinds of feelings of relief that I'd never admitted before about similar pressures and secret satisfactions.

And Marybeth Raynes's lucid discussion of intimacy is a promise of such thoughtful insights that I'm already anticipating the next installment.

Lavina Fielding Anderson  
Salt Lake City

P.S. And why not identify them on the table of contents page with the author's name?

### Cardboard History

Lawrence Foster's "New Perspectives on the Mormon Past" (SUNSTONE 7:1) arrived just as I was finishing Merlo Pusey's *Builders of the Kingdom*, the excellent life stories of George A. Smith, John Henry Smith, and President George Albert Smith. Foster's comments come, of course, at a time when LDS historians are being urged to write "faithful history," a euphemism for dishonesty. Pusey's work is an example of history which is candid enough to admit that Church leaders were and are not perfect. The question is, does it tear down faith? No! To the contrary, for the first time these particular figures became alive to me, the details made Church history a living thing from which I gained valuable insights. I admire these three men far more now even though I learned, for example, that they disagreed with some of their peers.

It is this very attempt to hide aspects

of our history—from the Mountain Meadows Massacre, to Joseph Smith's "peepstone" trial, to our connections with Masonry, or Brigham Young's comments on Adam-God—which has consistently embarrassed us and destroyed the credibility of the Church in the eyes of many. "We have met the enemy and he is us!" The main anti-Mormon literature—Brodie, Tanners, Walters, Martin, etc.—was produced without access to the Church archives. On the other hand, the best history, by Hill, Arrington, and Bitton, for example, has benefited from the ability to research and talk about our past honestly. It is far easier to defend the faith when you are on solid ground rather than mutually relying on rumors. Until D. Michael Quinn was able to thoroughly research the subject we had false impressions about the Council of Fifty. Would we be better off with the files closed?

It is true that it would be improper to try to write history which emphasizes mistakes and weaknesses of the figures involved without the balance which shows their superior qualities. We do need to be reminded that history is, by nature, constructed selectively and not everything is relevant. But would anyone suggest that the biographies of Camilla or Spencer Kimball would have been more faith-promoting if they had pictured them as cardboard one-dimensional figures with little relationship to the daily lives most people experience?

Scott S. Smith  
Thousand Oaks, California

### Systematic Theology, A Dubious Enterprise

Systematic theologizing is a dubious enterprise. Attempts at systematization by Catholic and Protestant thinkers over the past 15 centuries have done more to confuse and mislead than to clarify truth and promote faith. Theologians fail because they start with inadequate definitions and premises, proceed with a limited concept of logic, and arrive at indefensible or incorrect conclusions. In contrast to "all their creeds" which were "an abomination" in his sight, the Lord provides an alternative message and method: the scriptures which contain a set of general principles and some stories of faithful lives amidst fallen peoples and individual access to the Holy Spirit for personal revelation regarding understanding and application of the scriptural lessons in one's own life. But modern Mormons seem to be

learning the wrong lesson from history: rather than avoid the temptation to "improve" upon divine provision we seem to be nurturing a new scholasticism. An example of such ill-conceived effort recently appeared in *SUNSTONE* (6, 6): Kim McCall's "What is Moral Obligation within Mormon Theology?"

If McCall's style is confusing, his/her content represents a great leap backward. McCall mixes problems of Protestant theology and classical western philosophy with Aristotelian logic, imposes them on some interpretation of LDS scripture, and formulates a grotesque theory. Restoration concepts of God, mankind, their relationship, creation, salvation, and so on, are radically different from those of historical Christianity. Hence any discussion of LDS "philosophy" relying on traditional categories, paradigms, and problem statements is doomed in advance to failure. Mormon language may look like standard English, but no dictionary definitions can illuminate the word-symbols associated with the Restored Gospel. Like McMurrin, McCall fails to understand that Mormon logic is more dialectical than categorical, that both/and more than either/or characterize it, and that its reality is dual/plural rather than monistic. A Stanford education in philosophy and reliance on Kant and McMurrin make for blinders in the classical Greek mode of perception which, in this instance, did not get transcended.

McCall may well be a good and faithful Mormon, but as a theologian s/he seems to be in the wrong century and church.

Any criticisms made of McCall apply even more to the non-Mormon philosopher Appleby and his article. Reconciling the existence of evil and of a "benevolent deity" who is (in some sense) omnipotent, omniscient, and just may be "troublesome" for the world of "great orthodox traditions." The Restored Gospel is not concerned about "evil in the universe" but about necessary opposition in this world. Tribulation and temptation are integral to this mortal probation and experience. Without them we would not have choice nor opportunity for growth and joy. There is no LDS scripture (in my awareness) that suggests a god who wants to eliminate them from the universe; rather, it suggests one who so designed it. LDS scripture simply does not suggest any suffering which could be called "pointless" or any death that would be "tragic" (in the classic sense

of that term). Rather, "In this life ye shall have tribulation" and "be believing, and all things shall work together for your good. . . ." Death is no more tragic (under any circumstances) than birth; it is a transition, both an end and a beginning. Indeed, death is a release from the injustices of men and a step toward encountering the justice of God. Death is, to the true Christian, only transitory, having been overcome in the resurrection of Jesus. Life is in God's hands in so far that no one dies before his time be fulfilled and that death has been conquered. It is only the philosophies of a fallen world that fear death and misunderstand the simultaneity of good and evil. And so it is only such thinking that seeks a "finitist" resolution which denies divine power to perform miracles because of an alleged "problem of evil" which is utterly intractable with regard to any deity possessing such powers."

But, however misguided Appleby's theologizing, I must celebrate his wise and beautiful final sentence: "If we conceive of God as that being which is uniquely worthy of worship, it might well be worth considering how loyal we should remain to the adoration of sheer power." Following which I would recommend an immediate reading by all Mormons of Pres. Kimball's Bicentennial message: "The False Gods We Worship" (*Ensign*, June 1976).

T. Allen Lambert  
Ithaca, New York

#### Why Print It?

I am amazed that the editors of a magazine that purports to be "Uniquely Mormon," a forum for exclusively religious ideas and values, would print the coarse and profane language in "The Genealogy of Della B. Paulsen" by Joseph Peterson and "The Shriveprice" by Levi S. Peterson. I am disappointed that two writers of such obvious talents have so little sensitivity and refinement. Any person concerned about religion should shrink from using such language in speech or in writing. The editors of any magazine concerned about religion should at least make sure that the names of Deity are not profaned in the fiction they publish.

I have subscribed to *SUNSTONE* for over a year and have been consistently pleased with the quality of the articles. I have particularly looked forward to reading some Mormon fiction that didn't have a happy ending. But to protest this vulgarity and profanity (such an ugly blot on a fine piece of fiction,

especially in the case of "The Shriveprice") I will not renew.

I quote Spencer W. Kimball, who, like your magazine, is uniquely Mormon:

Why do authors sell themselves so cheaply and desecrate their God-given talents? Why do they profane and curse? Why do they take in their unholy lips and run through their sacrilegious pens the names of their own Creator, the holy names of their Redeemer? Why do they ignore his positive command?

I would add, and why do editors print it?

Yvonne (Mrs. Charles R.) Harrell  
Kaysville, Utah

#### Mature Vision Lacking in Story

Joseph Peterson's prize-winning story, "The Genealogy of Della B. Paulsen," is an interesting example of the difficulty of writing Mormon fiction.

The story deals with the sixteen-year-old-protagonist's search for identity in a small Mormon community that is remarkable for its brutality and hypocrisy. The question of "Who am I?" is complicated by an adulterous grandmother whose betrayed husband is the only human being with whom Della feels any kinship. Grandpa Huey is a character whose reality is lost in the complex symbolism the author burdens him with. The old man is cuckolded, accused of incest, committed to a mental hospital, emasculated, and eaten alive by cancer—evidently the only possible fate for the natural man imprisoned in the Puritanical hypocrisy of a narrow society. His cancer-ravaged face frightens children, but Della regards him as sacred, made holy through his suffering. But his character is not convincing; the reader remains on the outside of Grandpa Huey and the emotion he inspires is a combination of pity, revulsion, and irritation. He reminds one of the characters in naturalistic novels that are doomed from the moment of conception by a combination of their own nature and an inscrutable and malevolent fate. Anyone who loses that often without putting up a fight of some kind is simply unbelievable. The old man eventually drowns as he performs his ritual bath in the canal. Thus Della ends her story with grief, fornication with her current boyfriend, and an anguished assertion that she *is* Della B. Paulsen. The ending is ambiguous, either by default or intention. Either Della has discovered who she is, or she has not, or perhaps the conclusion means she has discovered that adultery, like her "blood-spot freckles" is transmitted genetically and her

genealogy dooms her to submit to the Bilyys of her world.

Although the writing is vivid and many of the images sharp and clear (but how pray tell does a grown man "squat" in the "crotch" of a tree?), Mr. Peterson falls victim to one of the two traps for Mormon writers: either the picture of Mormon life and Mormon characters is so idealized that any conflict with evil—which always appears as an intrusive, outside force connected with gentiles—is merely an opportunity to demonstrate faith; or, with a kind of inverse sentimentality Mormon society becomes a stifling straight jacket for the soul and Mormon characters are divided between the sensitive, rebellious sinful (usually young) and the rigid, Puritanical hypocrites (usually the faithful).

The latter vision is the one Mr. Peterson presents in his story. The idea that sin might *not* be a cry of protest against a hypocritical world but rather a manifestation of the evil within, or that strong men might also be weak or good men sin, or that sin might eventually bring one to a broken heart and a contrite spirit never seems to affect his creation of character. The adulterous wife-abusing bishop in the story has all the stereotyped flatness of the mustache-twirling villain in a melodrama. The atmosphere in Della's town is achieved through cataloging every scandalous story ever circulated about the Church. The result is distortion that serves no artistic purpose.

One might argue that Faulkner uses the same method in creating his Yoknapatawpha County, but Faulkner's world of moral failure is the result of the dual sins he sees in Southern history: the enslavement of the blacks and the destruction of the virgin wilderness through private ownership. Mr. Peterson's world seems to be the outgrowth of the pioneer trek west and the attempt to build Zion. Mormon society is not without fault, but promoting injustice, brutality, or hypocrisy has never been the aim of the gospel of Jesus Christ or those who believe it.

Idealistic youth's first realization that even good men must battle with appetite, selfishness, and pride and that occasionally there are those who lose the fight, can produce cynicism. But mature vision can encompass the whole man, both good and evil. It is to be hoped that Mr. Peterson acquires that vision to match his talent.

Mae Blanch  
Brigham Young University

# Outside Looking In

## BOOZE WITHOUT ALCOHOL AND OTHER SINLESS SUBSTITUTES

Ray Ownbey

Growing up as a middle-of-the-road Baptist in a small Oregon town, I was always glad that my family was not as hard-nosed as some. We went to movies and we went to dances, although there were those who did not.

However, in spite of our relatively liberal background, we were always cautioned to be tolerant of others whose standards were more restrictive than ours and to be very cautious about our own behavior. Specifically, we were admonished always to avoid the "appearance of evil." Even if *we* were doing no wrong, being in a place where others *were* or where someone with a weaker faith might see our example was not a good idea.

Now, due to the ingenuity of some clever entrepreneurs and chemists, it is possible for a select group to practice just the reverse of that principle. That is, Mormons in Utah and non-drinkers everywhere can now enjoy the appearance of evil without the substance. They can look like they're drinking without actually doing so.

The bottles look like wine bottles. They have corks. And the labels identify the contents as wine (with alcohol removed), so that if you squint you can't even tell the difference between that stuff and the real thing.

I've been trying to figure out just why one would want to drink alcohol-less wine. Most of the reasons I've come up with aren't very satisfying. Is it because people like the taste? (How would a non-drinker know if it was good or bad wine?) Is it to settle the stomach or calm the nerves? Without the alcohol, I don't think that works. Is it to make the world think you're just like everybody else, while you

keep your different standards a secret? Maybe we're getting closer now.

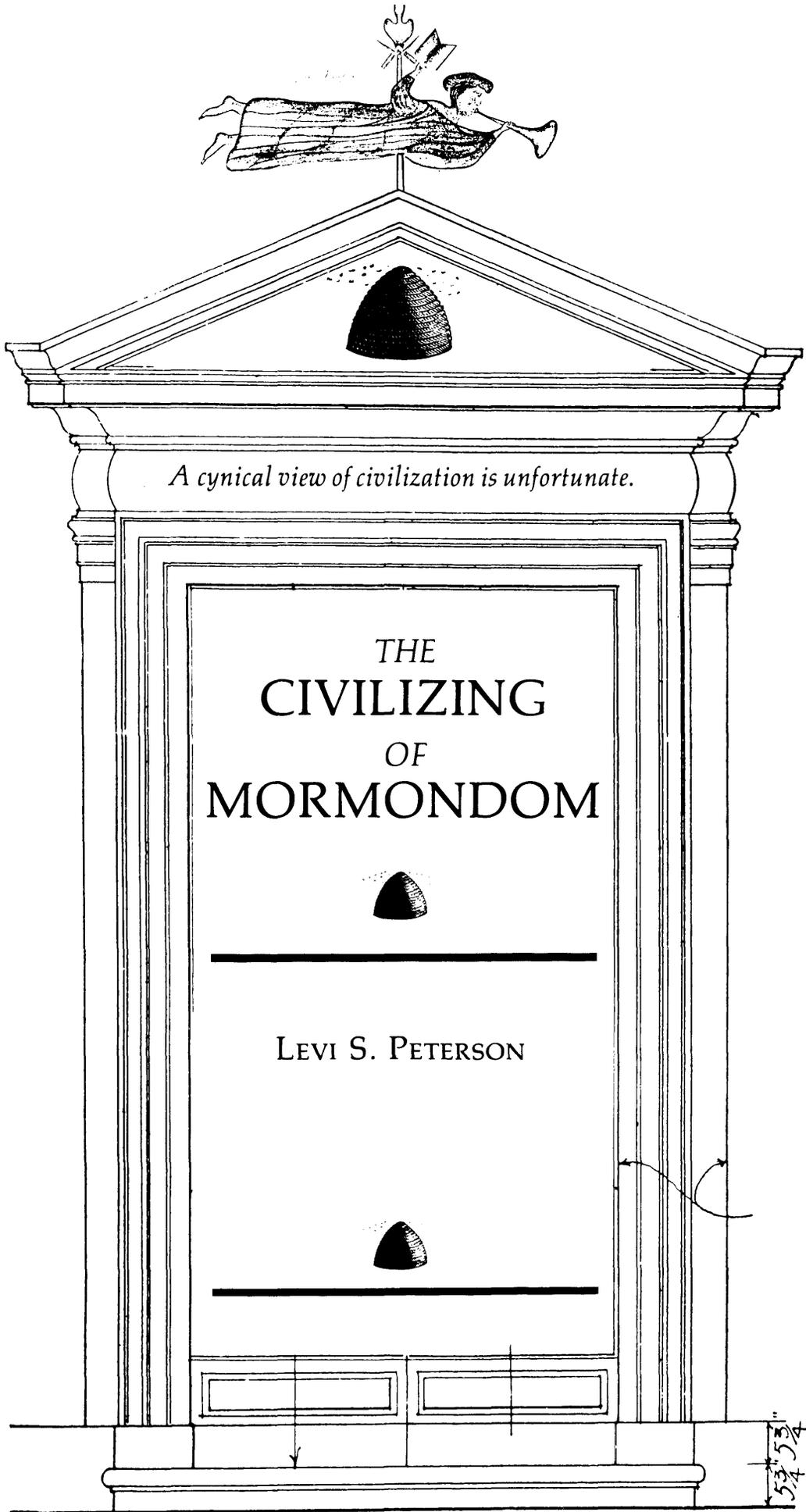
There's something at work here which is made to order for a lot of Utah Mormons. And it has to do with a preference for appearance over substance, for form over content, for the way things look rather than the way things are.

Drinking is not the issue here but rather a sort of Shirley Temple attitude (the drink, not the actress). Remember Shirley Temples, the soft-drink-with-a-cherry concoction that children had along with mom and dad so the kids would feel like grownups? With no-booze booze, we have the same mentality at work: adults pretend to be grown-ups, or something like that.

Of course Utah Mormons are not the only people who are victims of this way of thinking. We all suffer from it, in one form or another. But here it is institutionalized. It is promoted and encouraged by the most powerful organization in the state.

A good example has to do with Mormon church music. (I've come a long way from the no-booze booze, but I'll get back to that.) I've been to enough Mormon meetings to get a feel for the kind of music that is used in Church services. The curious thing is that it is not necessarily religious music, but it evidently has to "sound" religious. I've never heard a guitar or saxophone in a Mormon service, but I've heard Verdi and Wagner whose operas dealt with lust and adultery and all that raunchy stuff. Out of context, I guess those composers "sound" religious.

The attitude is seen elsewhere, this confusion of what is with what appears. As I understand it, Mormon church policy permits behind the scenes financial involvement in gambling but not up front, on-the-floor participation in Nevada casinos. So there are no good Mormons  
**continued on p. 60**



**M**ANY Mormons see little value in the process of civilization. Some of them tend to regard the Church as a culture which *gives to* but does not *take from* its sister cultures in the world, particularly in such essential matters as theological insight and moral understanding. Such things, in their view, come strictly through revelation, and it is the role of the Church to dispense them to the world through missionary work. It is inconceivable that an increased understanding of perfection might come to the Church from the wisdom which slowly accumulates through the civilized development of the human conscience in many cultures.

Certain other Mormons are even more militantly conscious of their disesteem for civilization, which they express by rejecting the world at large as the symbolic Babylon from which the Church, as God's specially anointed society, is to keep itself unspotted. This view tends to take on a doomsday color, for the changes occurring in non-Mormon cultures are often seen as totally corrupt and retrogressive, tainted by sin and worthy of destruction. Everywhere are wars and rumors of wars without end and perversities and whoredoms beyond calculation. Armageddon looms on the horizon, and the fearful settle into the fortress of their righteousness to await the imminent end of the world—something like Jonah, who supposed there was nothing in the city of Nineveh worthy of salvation.

This cynical view of civilization is unfortunate. The Church is not a detached and isolated island; it has a symbiotic, interdependent relationship with numerous other cultures, with whose people its members commingle on a daily basis. Civilization is a social process which flourishes most dramatically precisely when such interaction takes place. A new insight, a new value, a new tool passes from person to person, crossing boundaries and domesticating itself in various cultures, stimulating among its recipients further inventions and discoveries.

Given the fact of proximity and interaction, the Church has inevitably influenced its sister cultures, not merely by proselyting converts from among them but also by the example it gives of Christian living. But one does no dishonor to the divine mission of the Church by admitting that, in its turn, the Church is highly influenced by the world, sometimes even in matters relating to Christian living. Evidence for this assertion may be seen in events preceding the revelation of 1978 which extended the priesthood to Mormon men of all races. That revelation was an immense relief to numerous Mormons, whose united concern and questioning about the inequality of the former policy had moved the prophet to seek a revelation on the matter. But why should Mormons of the 1970s have been so concerned when Mormons of the 1920s were not? The reason is that they had been influenced by the growing racial equality in other cultures. Seeing other Americans, white as well as non-white, endorsing racial

#### Editors' Note

*A version of this paper was delivered as the presidential address at the annual meeting of the Association for Mormon Letters, January 1982. The published proceedings of that meeting will be available.*

equality, Mormons gradually became sensitive to its value and became more and more uncomfortable with the former priesthood doctrine. This was civilization at work. The Church, being a conservative society, may change more slowly than some other particular culture and in a differing order and proportion, but it nonetheless changes in rough correspondence to the large, collective changes affecting the totality of the civilized world.

Furthermore, not even the problems of civilization justify Mormons in holding a cynical view of it. Admittedly, some civilized developments, like advances in Olympic skiing techniques or in high fashions of dress, seem trifling and inconsequential. Other developments, like industrialism and environmentalism, are mutually contradictory; although people value the wealth and leisure afforded by the development of industry, they deplore the pollution and environmental disfigurements which accompany it. Another form of civilized development, warfare, is downright destructive. Even certain benign developments create problems: for example, scientific medicine, applied with an admirable humanitarianism over the entire earth, has fostered an ominous growth in population.

Nonetheless, Mormons—along with all other human beings—should desire, work for, and expect the survival of civilization. They should assume that its processes will continue, carrying humanity further in many categories of development. If at present violence, anxiety, and moral uncertainty abound in the world, it is all the more important that we not confuse the substantive achievements of civilization with its disorders and that we confront its problems rationally, trying our best to harmonize contradictory developments, to subordinate lesser values to greater, and to master our destructive energies. Civilization, whatever its disorders, is what humanity was born to. It implies the fruition and fulfillment of the individual person; it illuminates, rounds out, and justifies mortal experience, and it offers human beings a lifetime odyssey into discovery, growth, and satisfaction.

**T**HOSE within the Church most aware of the civilized changes going on in the world are the intellectuals. They are instinctively attracted to the expanding edge of civilization, where the old is constantly transformed into the new in science, art, morality, and dozens of other categories. Thus they become agents of civilization, indispensable catalysts who serve an important function. Many writers have used the term *Mormon intellectual*, yet so far as I am aware no one has bothered to define it in detail. I propose the following characteristics. First, Mormon intellectuals are liberal rather than conservative. More tolerant of the innovative and the unusual than most other Mormons, they associate change with a flourishing, fulfilled life. An even more crucial trait is an alert, active, and questioning intelligence. Curious and adventurous in temperament, they develop their mental gifts by exploring the world around them. They are well read, and they keep themselves versed in national and international issues. They prefer art and entertainment of an aesthetic rather than of a popular quality and are likely

to be as interested in the form and technique of art as in its content and message. They respect reason and base their convictions upon evidence and logic.

Even if they are not scientists, they accept a scientific view of the world and are interested in the social consequences of science. They interpret the scriptures allegorically rather than literally and try to harmonize them with science. Although they are committed Christians, they are likely to question and analyze many Church doctrines which their brothers and sisters in the Church accept without question. They do not discount the Holy Spirit as a source of truth but recognize that the *experience* of the Spirit varies from individual to individual and must itself be subject to the arbitration and evaluation of reason. Accepting that the Holy Spirit provides the elemental revelations upon which Mormon theology is based, they may nonetheless doubt that it concerns itself with the trivia of daily living. Intellectuals tend to be well educated, but advanced formal learning alone is not a sure criterion. Such a mind is often found among persons without extensive formal education, as in the case of a self-cultivated businessman, an artistic housewife, and a rancher with a shelffull of philosophy books.

Particularly useful for understanding the impact of this personality type upon the Church is Father Thomas O'Dea's sociological study *The Mormons*, published in 1957. O'Dea devotes a chapter to the internal conflicts and tensions of the Church, among which the most prominent and threatening is the conflict between tradition and education. Through its esteem for education the Church has, O'Dea points out, paradoxically exposed its members to the militant ideas of secular culture. The Mormon intellectual is at the center of this conflict because he is, by O'Dea's implicit definition, an educator—a university professor or an institute or seminary teacher. "As creator and preserver," O'Dea writes, "the intellectual is esteemed; as critic and questioner, he is suspect."<sup>1</sup> In O'Dea's treatment, the role of critic and questioner far outweighs the role of creator and preserver. O'Dea sees the tension raised by intellectuals as potentially destructive to the Church and he thinks of them as unhappy people caught in a state of spiritual estrangement from an organization that, for emotional reasons, they cannot abandon: "Torn between a loyalty to the Mormon tradition and a commitment to modern thought, affected by both a genuine attachment to their own group and its way of life and the intellectual dispositions of the modern temper, these men find their own Mormonism a great problem to themselves."<sup>2</sup>

O'Dea accurately points out that Mormon intellectuals exert a pressure for changing the Church in terms of a worldly pattern, and he accurately stresses the disequilibrium and tension which this pressure creates. He is unwilling to predict the outcome of the encounter between the Church and secular culture and does not discount the possibility of radical, destructive change. My own view, however, is that this tension is healthy and productive. Certainly it is possible that the worldly changes proposed by intellectuals could prove damaging; if, for example, imported ideas led to an official abandonment of the doctrine of the Restoration,



A CYNICAL VIEW OF CIVILIZATION IS UNFORTUNATE. THE CHURCH IS NOT A DETACHED AND ISOLATED ISLAND. IT HAS A SYMBIOTIC, INTERDEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP WITH NUMEROUS OTHER CULTURES, WITH WHOSE PEOPLE ITS MEMBERS MINGLE ON A DAILY BASIS.

something vital would have departed from Mormonism. But this is not likely. It is more probable that the Church will decide it cannot tolerate the tension raised by its intellectuals and will simply eradicate them through excommunication.

These extremes need not occur. Generally speaking, Mormon intellectuals are neither alienated from the Church nor bent upon its destruction. Implicit among the traits which I attribute to them is a *commitment to, an engagement with*, the Church. They constitute a loyal opposition, a body of critics and questioners who desire not to destroy but to improve the Church. Writing articles, preaching sermons, making comments in Sunday School lessons, and conversing with friends, they spread new ideas and suggest new practices. And as intellectuals persist in propounding changes, the Church slowly becomes prepared to accept many of them. The service intellectuals render the Church may be illustrated by a specific consideration of three contemporary issues.

**T**HE first issue concerns the age of the earth and the origin of life. Although this matter became an issue in the Church not long after the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859, it remains unsettled today.

The most prominent Mormon position on this issue, which I will call the literalist position, derives from a literal reading of Genesis; it holds God created the earth only a few millennia ago, that he created species in a literal Garden of Eden through distinct acts of creation, and that the first man, Adam, brought death for the first time not only upon humanity but upon all other species as well. The intellectual position is that organic evolution, as understood by modern biology, is God's mode of creation; the earth is

therefore ancient and life forms, including humanity, have evolved from earlier, more primitive life forms. This view arises from the need of thoughtful Mormons to harmonize their rational belief with that of the preponderance of other thoughtful people and from their conviction that the theory of evolution does not contradict the essentials of Christianity.

However, if one wishes to throw a pall of shocked silence upon the members of a typical Mormon Sunday School class, one has only to declare a belief in evolution. A great many in the Church agree with the denunciation of evolution made by Joseph Fielding Smith. Elder Smith describes his book, *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, as a refutation of "the most pernicious doctrine ever entering the mind of man: the theory that man evolved from the lower forms of life. For its source we must go beyond the activities and research of mortal man to the author of evil, who has been an enemy of truth from the beginning before the earth was formed."<sup>3</sup>

Although official statements of the Church have often seemed to favor the literalist side of this issue, a surprising number of General Authorities have over the years spoken or written in favor of evolution. These include B. H. Roberts, John A. Widstoe, and David O. McKay. The result is that the Church has officially endorsed neither position. Strictly speaking, a good Mormon may believe in either a recent, instantaneous creation or in an ancient, evolutionary creation.

The inconclusive struggle between the two positions has been well documented in a number of recent essays. Richard Sherlock chronicles a furor which arose in the Church educational system in 1911 when four professors at BYU persisted in openly declaring the harmony between the Gospel and evolution. The dismissal of the professors demonstrated that the Church university was not to be the public forum for

such an idea.<sup>4</sup> Sherlock documents another episode involving the refusal of the General Authorities in 1931 to approve the publication of B. H. Roberts's speculative work, *The Truth, The Way, The Life*, which postulated the existence of pre-Adamic men.<sup>5</sup> In an excellent essay tracing the Mormon conflict over evolution from its beginnings, Duane E. Jeffery details another dispute, perhaps less spectacular but equally crucial, which arose among the General Authorities upon the publication in 1954 of *Man: His Origin and Destiny*. Although President McKay did not denounce the book in sermon or in publication, he quietly assured anxious inquirers that Joseph Fielding Smith's work did not represent the official position of the Church.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, the Church seems at the present moment to be edging toward an official endorsement of the literalist view of creation. Ironically, the discovery of DNA—the basic molecule of all living matter—and the resultant new technology of biological engineering make organic evolution more certain than ever. However, a close acquaintance with the facts upon which the theory of evolution is based is absent among even many well educated Mormons because in the crowded curriculum of modern universities they get little exposure to the life sciences. Many Mormons take license for believing evolution to be false in the objective candor with which scientists admit that evolution is a theory—a view accepted for all practical purposes as factual, yet admittedly subject to change should new facts emerge. Speakers in General Conference allude to the literalist interpretation of the creation without the slightest recognition that another interpretation exists, and recent lesson manuals propound it with a total confidence. Similarly, the dictionary published in the new LDS edition of the King James Bible defines the word *death* in a literalist way. The definition reads: "Latter-day revelation teaches that there was no death on this earth for any forms of life before the fall of Adam. Indeed, death entered the world as a direct result of the fall." Such a definition, placed in such a sensitive spot, is indeed alarming, for it comes close to being an official disavowal of the theory of evolution.

The vital function of intellectuals for the present is to influence the Church to maintain its traditional policy of non-alignment. The advantages to the Church of such neutrality are great. For one thing, it can thereby continue to shelter a greater variety of personality types. An official stand against evolution not only would alienate many existing members but would obviate the possibility of converting other thoughtful, science-oriented people. Perhaps even more important, the present policy of tolerance allows the Church to exercise an influence upon the course of scientific civilization. At present, Mormon scientists are accepted members of scientific communities and make notable contributions in many areas. A prominent example at BYU is one of the most energetic and colorful paleontologists in the United States, Professor James A. Jensen, affectionately known as Dinosaur Jim. This indefatigable prober into the fossil record of ancient life has unearthed a new species of giant dinosaur and has clarified the nature of the flying reptile, *Archaeopteryx*.

A different kind of contribution to the scientific world



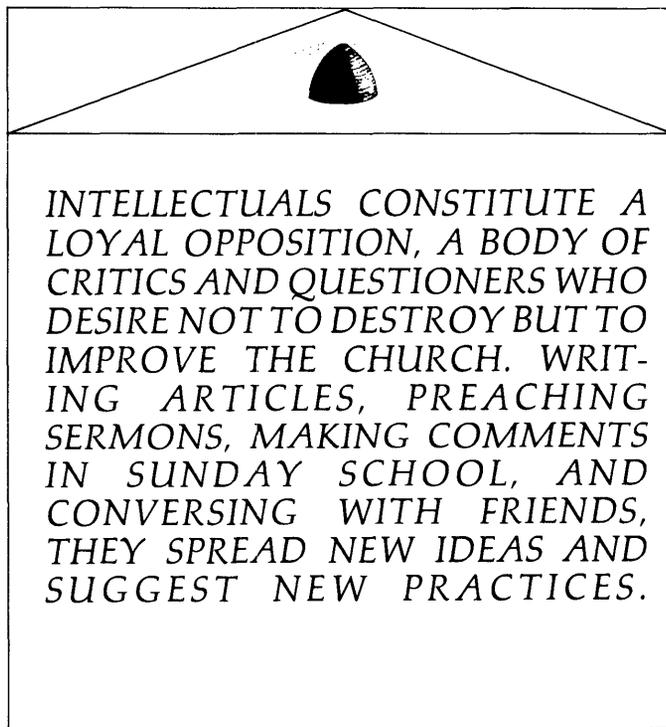
CIVILIZATION, WHATEVER ITS DISORDERS, IS WHAT HUMANITY WAS BORN TO. IT IMPLIES THE FRUITION AND FULFILLMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON; IT ILLUMINATES, ROUNDS OUT, AND JUSTIFIES MORTAL EXPERIENCE, AND IT OFFERS HUMAN BEINGS A LIFETIME ODYSSEY INTO DISCOVERY, GROWTH, AND SATISFACTION.

is made by three BYU biologists, James Farmer, William Bradshaw, and Brent Johnson, in an essay where they ponder the moral and theological perplexities of biological engineering. Among the problems they note is the test tube baby. They describe the process by which a physician implants in a woman's uterus only one of a number of her previously extracted ova, all of which have been fertilized externally by her husband's sperm. The authors wonder whether the discarded ova, quickened with life, are to be considered human souls. They also ponder the spiritual and ethical problems of the woman who, unable to carry a fetus in her uterus, rents the uterus of a surrogate mother, into whom the fertilized ovum of the first woman is implanted. These authors end their essay on an optimistic note: "Although the new biology may alter the way in which Mormons think about some ethical problems, it will not fundamentally change the need to live by faith in a world that we do not fully comprehend. The Lord may have placed very few constraints on us in our search for knowledge and understanding. It seems rather that he allows us much freedom in this world. As a result, science moves inevitably towards synthesis of living things, as it has already achieved the ability to alter species."<sup>7</sup> Although these Mormon biologists raise far more questions than they answer, one can only admire their intelligent, courageous effort to accommodate, rather than to retreat from, an expanding scientific civilization. Their essay, slanted towards Mormons, could as easily have been slanted towards non-Mormons. Because they are respected members of a broad scientific community, they are in a position to inject Latter-day Saint values into the world-wide discussion over the problems of biological engineering. Regardless of their private beliefs concerning evolution, their respectability in the scientific world would be lessened if the Church were to officially denounce the theory of evolution.

**A** second large issue raised by Mormon intellectuals is the liberalization of sex. Mormons retain an immoderate degree of the old Christian assumption that sexual passion is of itself repugnant to God. As a reminder of the conscious commitment of traditional Christianity to mortification of the flesh, consider a letter from St. Jerome to Laeta, a Roman mother who had consecrated her infant daughter to the life of a nun. It is replete with suggestions for shielding the little girl from a knowledge of her own appetites and desires. Thinking ahead to the time of her maturity, Jerome even warns against her taking baths, which may arouse, he fears, too much sensual awareness in a woman consecrated to virginity: "Such an one should blush and feel overcome at the idea of seeing herself undressed. By vigils and fasts she mortifies her body and brings it into subjection. By a cold chastity she seeks to put out the flame of lust and to quench the hot desires of youth. And by a deliberate squalor she makes haste to spoil her natural good looks. Why, then, should she add fuel to a sleeping fire by taking baths?"<sup>8</sup> St. Jerome was by no means unique. For centuries, traditional Christianity taught that, although sexual exchange between married partners was legitimate and necessary, those Christians who desired

to excel in godliness had to maintain total chastity.

Mormon intellectuals are not likely to have much sympathy with such a repressive attitude, having been influenced by what is appropriately called the sexual revolution. During the past century, there has been in the civilization surrounding Mormondom a remarkable freeing of inhibition and anxiety about sex. The physiological facts of reproduction are widely disseminated, and the human body is more openly displayed. Sexual pleasure has become a widely accepted value, and techniques for arriving at it are abundantly discussed in books and manuals. For many Mormons, the sexual revolution has been a large scale renewal of Sodom and Gomorrah; throughout the world they see a multiplication of X-rated movies, pornographic book stores, uncloseted homosexuality, pre-marital sex, and partner swapping among couples. Such persons, having taken account of the fringe excesses, fail to take account of the fact that sexual liberalization has a legitimate focus in the committed married couple. Intellectuals, on the other hand, are more likely to recognize that fact. For them, the sexual revolution, despite its disorders, is a civilized development toward a more complete fulfillment of the instincts and desires God gave to humanity.



The Church has long taught that sex is sacred rather than inherently evil. Evidence of this appears in *Ensign* articles and in conference sermons which express, along with the usual admonitions against fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and masturbation, the belief that sex is something to be controlled not because God hates it but because it is holy. An enlightened statement of this point of view, one which the Mormon intellectual might readily accept, is Carlfred B. Broderick's essay "Three Philosophies of Sex, Plus One."<sup>9</sup> Broderick considers as equally erroneous the notion that sex is inherently evil and the notion that sex may be indulged in extra-maritally. The correct view, he says, is that sex

is sacred and is the center of a happy, successful marriage. The rules against extra-marital sex exist simply because such sexual experience militates against a fulfilling marriage. Broderick does not explicitly endorse a vigorous and passionate sexual exchange between married partners, but his language is so positive that one can at least suppose that he is no advocate of restraint and inhibition.

Unfortunately, there are yet many in the Church who do advocate restraint and inhibition between married partners. Many speakers and writers, impressed by the Apostle Paul's analogy between the body and a temple, interpret the sacredness of sex to mean that it should be cautiously and timorously practiced. The logic of the analogy, one can only suppose, goes thus: just as one does not play basketball in the temple, so one does not engage in sex for mere pleasure. A notable expression of this attitude is Steve Gilliland's essay "Chastity: A Principle of Power." Gilliland's concern is with chastity not for the unwed but for the married. He notes that President Kimball has declared that sex between married partners need not be limited strictly to procreation, but Gilliland goes on to extol and scripturally explicate chastity in such detail that one wonders why he bothered mentioning President Kimball's statement. "The chaste couple," Gilliland writes, "is concerned about strengthening each other. Their feelings of responsibility prevent them from doing anything that would weaken or tempt each other. Modesty in speech and dress are as much for the protection of others and one's partner as for one's self."<sup>10</sup>

It is the role of Mormon intellectuals to dissuade their brother and sister Mormons from such an excessive, self-punishing notion of chastity, which is nothing other than an unwitting adumbration of the early Christian hostility toward sexual pleasure. There is nothing admirable about asceticism; it is a primitive and uncivilized attitude. Surely they are wrong who rationalize restraint and inhibition through an analogy between the human body and the temple. A healthy accession of pleasure is not a desecration of the human body. Mormons do not think it a desecration of the body to eat and drink for pleasure as well as for nourishment. A free, frank, and abundant sexual expression is both proper and desirable between husbands and wives—not only for procreation and affection, but for the simple pleasure of passion. Lust is not an appropriate word for any mutually fulfilling exchange between a husband and wife. Passion is God's gift to marriage and needs no apology.

**A** third large issue raised by Mormon intellectuals is the status of women. The crux of the issue is that venerable civilized value, equality. In the freeing of slaves and serfs, in the raising of the standard of living for the working class, in the extension of suffrage to all adults, we see the steady progress of equality in our civilization. Now women are asking for further equality, it being only natural in an advanced society, where simple physical strength does not determine competency. According to



AN OFFICIAL STAND AGAINST EVOLUTION NOT ONLY WOULD ALIENATE MANY EXISTING MEMBERS BUT WOULD OBTAIN THE POSSIBILITY OF CONVERTING OTHER THOUGHTFUL, SCIENCE-ORIENTED PEOPLE. PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, THE PRESENT POLICY OF TOLERANCE ALLOWS THE CHURCH TO EXERCISE AN INFLUENCE UPON THE COURSE OF SCIENTIFIC CIVILIZATION.

the Victorian novelist George Meredith, one may judge the level of civilization in a society by the degree of equality which it extends to women.<sup>11</sup>

By that standard, Mormon culture is lacking. The Church actively discourages women from seeking a professional parity with men by emphasizing a single important role for them as homemakers. It has, in fact, gained a national notoriety for its militant campaign against the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, which it sees as a threat to family life. Furthermore, the Church has forthrightly persisted in its policy of denying the priesthood to women. This policy is defended in an abundant literature, of which Rodney Turner's *Woman and the Priesthood*<sup>12</sup> is an egregious example. With a scarcely veiled condescension, this book asserts that God has ordained man to be over woman in spiritual matters. In more conciliatory tones, the General Authorities have tried to mollify women by emphasizing the dignity and beauty of the homemaker and by admonishing women to cultivate their private relationship with God.

Paradoxically, numerous faithful women hold jobs outside the home, some because they are single or widowed, many others because they wish to supplement their husband's income. Nonetheless, the large majority of Mormon women support the Church in its opposition to women's liberation. If asked, most of them would assert that they have no desire to hold the priesthood. Believing their restricted role to be ordained of God, they accept it with good will.

Their acquiescence may change in the near future. A native Mormon protest movement is clearly underway. Its most spectacular proponent has been Sonia Johnson, whose excommunication for publicly opposing the Church's stand on the ERA has brought national exposure to the status of Mormon women. Less sensational but ultimately more potent for change

within the Church is a growing number of speakers and writers who, without defying the Church, relentlessly keep alive the idea that Mormon women suffer from an unjustifiable inequality. Although this loyal protest has been raised chiefly by women, men too are now participating in it. Sensitive, liberal, and aware of trends in the world, these women and men are intellectuals. However, the constituency for whom they speak includes all Mormon women; these intellectuals detect, even in those women who courageously accept their present status, a subliminal sense of deprivation.

One particular deprivation clarified by Mormon intellectuals is the lack of a pattern of feminine diety. An essay by Linda Wilcox documents the history of the Mormon concept of a Heavenly Mother and calls attention to the recent appearance of a worship directed toward her. "At the present," writes Wilcox, "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."<sup>13</sup> Wilcox's low-keyed, objective historical study corroborates what many people already know from informal conversations: many Church members, women and men alike, are addressing prayers to the Heavenly Mother and believe themselves to have received a response from her. Though lacking in polemic intent, this essay reminds us that behind this new form of worship, particularly among women, is the need for an enhanced esteem for femininity. Without question, many Mormon women have hitherto been unable to visualize themselves as complete religious persons because the traditional Christian image of diety is so overwhelmingly masculine.

Another deprivation to which intellectuals are calling attention is the denial to women of the priesthood. This denial is conspicuous because, without exception, worthy males are ordained at age twelve and remain in the priesthood all their lives. Their participation in the

priesthood is understood by all to be a high privilege. Women may seek inspiration for the conduct of their private lives and may engage in Church callings, but they do not engage in the administrative work of the Church nor in the performance of most of its rituals. To a growing number of sensitive Mormons, this seems anomalous, for in the world at large women are proving successful in executive and professional positions. It is evident that Mormon women possess the spiritual and administrative competence to function in the priesthood. All that lacks is permission.

This prohibition is all the more difficult to bear as women become aware, through recent historical writing, that they have lost former rights to the exercise of spiritual gifts. Mormons reading the journals of their pioneer grandmothers are likely to be aware that women in the nineteenth century practiced the gifts of the Spirit—attending prayer circles, anointing with oil, healing the sick, and receiving revelation in behalf of others—much more abundantly than do their granddaughters in the twentieth century. The loss of the right to exercise these gifts is poignantly traced in Linda King Newell's essay, "A Gift Given, A Gift Taken." For example, Newell notes 1946 as the termination of the right of women to anoint and administer to sick sisters; the "official death knell" came in the form of a letter from Joseph Fielding Smith who asserted that "it is far better for us to follow the plan the Lord has given us and send for the Elders of the Church to come and administer to the sick and afflicted."<sup>14</sup> The simple historical facts are astonishing, and Newell sets them forth in language which is touched, not by anger or protest, but by delicate grief.

The most consequential question now before the Church is whether women will be permitted to hold the priesthood. It is a question so fraught with misgivings and perturbations that only very recently has it been openly aired. A decade ago, a woman seemed bold if she simply declared her independence from the priesthood in spiritual matters relating strictly to herself. For example, in a 1971 essay, Cheryll Lynn May indicates that the priesthood is only a supplement to her private efforts to approach God: "For me, the central core of the Gospel is the individual personal relationship between God and man. In most cases, priesthood authority acts to promote and enrich this relationship; when it does not, it must, for me, take second place."<sup>15</sup>

Indicative of a new frankness in the 1980s is an essay by Anthony A. Hutchinson, "Women and Ordination: Introduction to the Biblical Context." Hutchinson examines the primitive Christian church and fails to find there a precedent forbidding the priesthood to women. "In terms of the New Testament evidence, there is no reason to deny ordination to women; there are, instead, compelling reasons to recommend it."<sup>16</sup> Even more assertive is a personal essay in which Laurel Thatcher Ulrich traces her own evolution as a Mormon intellectual. Beset by the fear that a woman should not exert herself as a writer and thinker, she has nonetheless grown into a constructive religious critic. Of particular interest is her obvious confidence in the propriety of the priesthood for women:

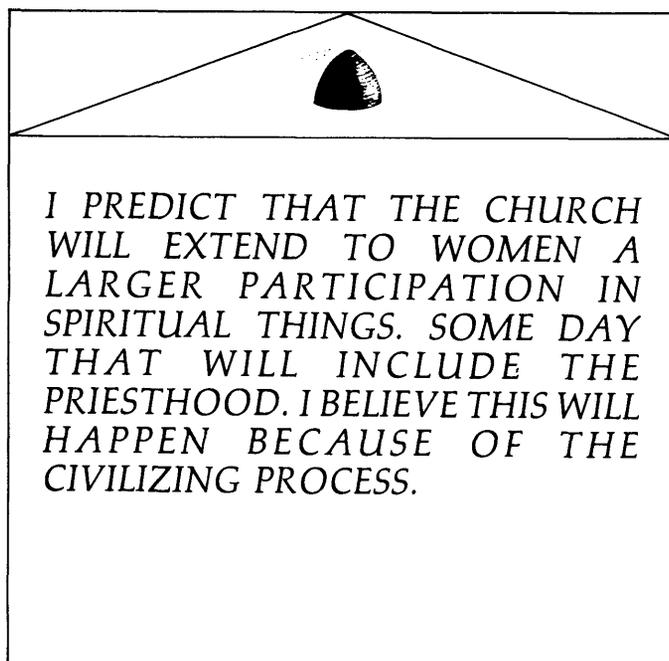
For me, learning to question the present structure of



IT IS THE ROLE OF MORMON INTELLECTUALS TO DISSUADE THEIR BROTHER AND SISTER MORMONS FROM AN EXCESSIVE, SELF-PUNISHING NOTION OF CHASTITY, WHICH IS NOTHING OTHER THAN AN UNWITTING ADUMBRATION OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN HOSTILITY TOWARD SEXUAL PLEASURE.

the priesthood has been a positive as well as a negative experience. With feelings of anger and betrayal has come a new sense of responsibility; with recognition of discrimination has come renewed conviction of the essential message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am convinced that an effective challenge to male dominance can only be built upon "principles of righteousness." Trusting the spirit of the priesthood in the Church, Mormon women must recognize the potential for priesthood in themselves.<sup>17</sup>

What of the future? I predict that the Church will extend to women a larger participation in spiritual things. Ultimately, that participation will include the priesthood. I believe this will happen because of the civilizing process. Part of that process involves Mormon intellectuals, who have been influenced by the extension of equality to women in the world at large. They discuss, question, challenge, and in general keep the issue of



equality alive. That is how the more important part of the civilizing process can work. As other Mormons are forced to think about the status of women, the great civilized value of equality works in their hearts. Implying the absolute worth and dignity of individuals, equality requires that no person or class of persons be arbitrarily precluded from the rights and privileges that make life worthwhile. Perhaps it will eventually touch the hearts of so many Mormons that the prophet will inquire of God. Perhaps then, when the members of the Church are ready to accept women in the priesthood, they will discover that God also is ready.

**M**ORMON intellectuals do not lead an enviable life. Often they sense keenly the distance between themselves and the rest of the Church. Isolated from one another, they may suffer guilt and doubt; at times they may well wonder whether their evolving values, seemingly unpalatable to other Mormons, are not perverse or insane. For this reason, it is important that they form their own

communities, both for comfort and for enhancing their effectiveness as agents of change. They should gather as friends in discussion groups and readings. They should join professional and cultural organizations. Above all, they should maintain *voices*. Independent presses, liberal journals and magazines, symposiums and conferences are all vital. *Sunstone*, *Dialogue*, *Exponent II* and similar publications are crucial. It does not matter that the analysis and criticism offered through their pages seem to go unnoticed. These publications give a concrete, durable form to expanding ideas, which enter thousands of homes and hundreds of libraries. Printed ideas are potent for change; at unexpected moments they come alive and declare the future.

Above all, intellectuals should not apologize but take pride in their contribution to the Church they love and wish to see flourish. In particular, they may be proud of their part in the process by which the Church is growing into an international religion. A Church that takes seriously its duty to be a religion for all nations, for all classes, temperaments, and mentalities, cannot fail to change. It must further its own perfection by keeping pace with the evolving civilization around it.

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16. Anthony A. Hutchinson, "Women and Ordination: Introduction to the Biblical Context," *Dialogue* 14 (Winter 1981):71.
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# 1850-1867

## THE ITALIAN MISSION

MICHAEL W. HOMER

*Disillusioned with Italy's Catholics, the Mormons preached to the Waldenses*

**L**ORENZO SNOW HAD BEEN AN apostle less than a year when called by Brigham Young during the 1849 October conference to "establish a mission in Italy and wherever the spirit should direct."<sup>1</sup> Two weeks later Snow left for Europe with Joseph Toronto, a native of Sicily who had been with the Saints since Nauvoo. When they finally reached Liverpool in April, Snow began to consider how best to spread the gospel into the Italian region which at that time was a patchwork of separate but geographically contiguous political entities, united in language, loyalty to the Catholic church, and hostility to outside missionaries. Snow's interest was piqued by a group that must have seemed a welcome exception—the Waldenses, a Protestant group living in the Piedmont region of the Sardinian states where certain religious liberties had been granted them only two years before. He therefore visited the public library in Liverpool, seeking more information about the Waldenses:

The librarian to whom I had applied informed me he had a work of the description I required, but it had just been taken. He had scarcely finished the sentence, when a lady entered with the book. "O," said he, "This is a remarkable circumstance." I was soon convinced that this people were worthy to receive the first proclamation of the Gospel in Italy.

Snow was initially attracted to the Waldenses because they, like the Mormons, had suffered religious persecution and had been driven to a mountain retreat.

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There were other striking similarities. Both groups had doctrines which emphasized a belief in an apostasy, rejection of papal authority, and a return to primitive Christianity. Snow was soon convinced that he had been directed to a branch of the House of Israel.

Snow traced the origins of the Waldenses to the twelfth century and a French merchant named Waldo who renounced his wealth in order to serve God and preach. Waldo quickly established a community of followers known as the Poor Men of Lyons, which, at first, did not challenge Catholic doctrine but only claimed the right to preach repentance and a return to primitive Christianity. After seeking in vain for ecclesiastical recognition, he and his followers were excommunicated for refusing to abide by a church decree which prohibited lay persons from preaching unless invited to do so by the ordained clergy. Forced to leave Lyons, they gathered in other European cities where they increasingly separated themselves from the church. The sect, which was more popular than intellectual and grew most among the lower classes, became characteristically anti-sacerdotal. It rejected the authority of the pope and priests as well as the efficacy of masses and alms for the dead and instead maintained the right of lay persons—both men and women—to preach and pray.

Severely persecuted beginning as early as 1198, many of the Waldenses were eventually eliminated. Nevertheless a portion found refuge in the small valleys of the Cottian Alps, located on the present day border between France and Italy, a remote mountain location where they survived repeated onslaughts during the next 400 years against their nonconforming beliefs and practices. Even when the persecution against them subsided in the eighteenth century, they continued to evoke the

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sympathy of writers and philanthropists because of the extreme poverty which existed in their communities.

**W**ITH THE WALDENSES IN MIND Snow began making more detailed plans for the Italian mission. While visiting various Church conferences in England, he met two British converts whom he asked to travel with him and Toronto to Italy. Jabez Woodard was studying the Bible in Italian when Snow first met him.<sup>2</sup> T.B.H. Stenhouse, the newly chosen president of the Southampton Conference, was asked, according to his wife Fanny, because he had impressed the apostle with his "great zeal and untiring energy" in a religious discussion with a non-Mormon after a church meeting.<sup>3</sup>

On 15 June 1850 Snow, Toronto, and Stenhouse left Southampton for Genoa, Italy; Woodard remained behind for several months to arrange his personal affairs. After their arrival in Genoa, Snow sent his two companions to Torre Pellice, the largest community of the Waldenses, to make inquiries and preparations. The favorable report they sent Snow on July 20 convinced him that there was "an opening . . . presented in the valleys of Piedmont when all other parts of Italy are closed against our efforts." Three days later he left Genoa to join his associates.

Upon his arrival, Snow was impressed by how much the valleys of Piedmont resembled the Salt Lake Valley and began at once to write a pamphlet about the Mormons for the Waldenses, hoping that the parallels in history and belief would be as striking to them as theirs had been to him. Tracing Mormon history from the visions of Joseph Smith to the arrival of the Saints in the Great Basin, "The Voice of Joseph" also included glowing accounts of life in Utah and the newly organized program of the Church to aid converts emigrating to America. Since French was the most generally understood language of the region, Snow had his pamphlet sent to Liverpool for translation. It was later published in Turin with "a woodcut of a Catholic nun, anchor, lamp and cross on the first page, and on the last, Noah's ark, the dove and the olive"—presumably to give it a Catholic appearance in order to get it published.

Snow and his associates were initially very cautious about introducing such Mormon ideas to the Waldenses. They first tried to create a favorable impression among the inhabitants and were encouraged when a blessing they gave to a sick innkeeper's child seemed to prompt the child's complete recovery. Soon after this experience Snow, Stenhouse, and Jabez Woodard (who had finally arrived the day before) ascended an imposing mountain near Torre Pellice, dedicated the land for missionary work, and organized the Church in Italy. Nothing could impede the progress of the Church in that country Snow declared; it would "increase and multiply and continue its existence in Italy."<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, Joseph Toronto traveled to Sicily where he hoped to spread the Mormon

message to his family and friends.<sup>5</sup>

Shortly after the mountain top ceremony the missionaries began to visit a number of the Waldenses' ministers; some permitted the Mormons to explain their beliefs to a few congregations. After one such meeting in October 1850, which had been organized and attended by the "most talented ministers," the missionaries were finally successful in converting Jean Bose. A few days after he had personally baptized Bose, Snow sent a letter to Brigham Young in which he "rejoiced that the Lord had thus far blessed our efforts and enabled us to open the door of the kingdom in dark and benighted Italy."

However in the same letter to Young, he complained that the Waldenses were part of "a Church where organized dissent has been unknown . . . and . . . [t]he people regard any innovation as an attempt to drag them from their martyred ancestry." It had become painfully evident to Snow that the religious legacy of the Waldenses, which he had hoped would help attract converts to Mormonism because of the parallels between the two religions, was as much a hindrance as an aid to the missionaries. He also asserted that lies and slander had been printed about the Mormons which would "bleach the memory of many a vile traducer in other lands."

**B**Y THE END OF THE YEAR THERE had been no additional conversions, and Snow decided to return to England to supervise the translation of the Book of Mormon into Italian. He hoped by so doing the mission could be expanded to the larger and in some cases better educated Italian-speaking population. He also wanted missionary work to begin in other nearby countries. To accomplish this, he sent Stenhouse to Switzerland and encouraged Woodard to send missionaries to other locations in the Sardinian States. On the eve of his own departure from Italy, in January 1851, Snow sent a thoroughly discouraged letter to Orson Hyde. The Waldensian Church, he wrote,

has been flattered into immeasurable self-importance. . . . Their self-esteem, combined with deep ignorance, presents a formidable barrier to the progress of the gospel. They have had so little intercourse with other parts of the earth—so little knowledge of anything beyond their own scenes of pastoral life, that it is difficult for them to contemplate the great principles of temporal and eternal salvation.

Despite Snow's pessimism, however, the Mormon mission among the Waldenses was hardly over. Within a month of his departure two more men and then the family of one of the men—eight children and two parents—were baptized. The father, John Daniel Malan, had refused to take the office of elder in the Waldensian church and became instead a Mormon elder—"a firm believer in 'The Voice of Joseph.'"

Woodard, left in charge of the mission by Snow, was enthusiastic about the turn of events. "The veil over Italy has burst," he wrote in a letter to Snow. The March

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The converts were often as disillusioned with the missionaries' homeland as the missionaries had been with the converts'.

15 edition of the *Millennial Star* echoed these euphoric sentiments: "the Alpine hills have commenced to reverberate the tidings of salvation, the gift of the Holy Ghost, to those who have wandered long in darkness. . . they speak like Saints." The next year saw only eleven additional persons baptized, however. Even by May a more seasoned Woodard wrote to Snow: "I am still alive and able to climb mountains if I cannot move them."

Snow again visited the Waldensian valleys for two weeks during January 1852. He was still convinced that the Italian mission should be expanded beyond the "narrow sphere" of the Waldensian valleys and, therefore, talked about leaving John Daniel Malan to preside over the Waldensian converts temporarily and sending Woodward to Nice to do missionary work among the Catholic population. In the end Snow took Woodward to Malta instead where they organized a separate mission. Then Snow was called back to Salt Lake (he had wanted to go to India), and Woodward returned to Piedmont to preside over the mission in Italy.

Shortly after Snow's departure the Book of Mormon was published in Italian (May 1852). No doubt remembering Snow's wishes, Woodward did send missionaries to Genoa and Turin to preach among the Catholics, but they had little success.<sup>6</sup> They were welcomed by neither the people nor their governments. On one occasion, while Woodward was in Turin in September 1852, he even received a government directive ordering him to leave the Sardinian states.

By the end of 1852—two and a half years following the arrival of Mormon missionaries in Italy—there had been only 39 converts, all of them Waldenses. Although 1853 proved to be the most successful of the nineteenth century Italian mission, only 53 additional persons were baptized. During the same year Woodward, in keeping with Church policy, began preparing the Italian converts for emigration to America. The first group to depart, consisting of 20 persons from the families of John

Bertoch, Phillippe Cardon, and Barthelemy Pons, left Piedmont in January 1854. Jabez Woodard, a European convert himself, went with them. At the time of their departure, property values were depressed because of crop failures and converts received little in exchange for the few possessions they sold to help pay for the journey. Like most Mormon emigrants, they could not have left without the aid of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund that had been promised in "The Voice of Joseph." This first group of Italian converts sailed from Liverpool on the *John M. Wood* 22 March 1854.

With Woodward's departure, the Italian and Swiss missions were consolidated and placed under the direction of T.B.H. Stenhouse. During the next several years Church membership in Italy declined rapidly because of additional emigration, excommunications, and lack of new conversions. In 1855 two more groups of Waldensian converts departed for Utah, 15 persons in March aboard the *Juventa* and another 30 in December aboard the *John M. Boyd*. These groups included the Malan, Beus, Stale, Rochon, Rivoire, and Justet families as well as singles traveling without relations. Eventually 73 of the 170 persons (43 percent) who were baptized in Italy between 1850 and 1861 emigrated to Utah.<sup>7</sup> The large majority of those who did not emigrate, a total of 73 persons (43 percent of the total converts), were excommunicated between 1852 and 1862. Among the stated reasons for these excommunications were negligence, rebellion, infidelity, evil and immorality, apostasy, absurdities, unbelief, criticism, nonchalance, cowardice, lying, bad conduct, fear of the world, and deceit.<sup>8</sup>

After 1853 the missionaries had a very difficult time attracting new converts even among the Waldenses. In 1854 the missionaries reported that the ministers of the Waldensian faith, in order to discourage further conversions to Mormonism, told their congregations that their forefathers had sworn that "they would die before they would change their religion or again quit their country." They also exhorted "their listeners not to change their religion, but cleave to that faith which their fathers had sworn to maintain." The ministers also criticized Mormonism and its peculiar institution, polygamy. On one occasion a congregation was warned that the Mormon missionaries were "hired by Brigham Young to convert them as bait to bring them to Western deserts of America and, the recruits would be slaves, and young women possessed by that infamous polygamist and his associates to satiate their lust and debauchery."<sup>9</sup> The strong influence the ministers held over the people of these small communities was a constant source of frustration to missionaries who, like Snow before them, complained about the ignorance of the people and bitterly judged that the Waldenses were "no longer worthy of their faithful ancestors."

By 1861 it was reported that "the work in Italy . . . has been at a standstill for a long time." In 1863 there were only 13 Mormons remaining and by 1867 that number had dwindled to six. In that same year Mormon

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missionary work in Italy ceased for almost 100 years.<sup>10</sup>

**T**HE HISTORY OF THE EARLY Italian mission illustrates some of the problems Mormonism has encountered taking its message to all nations. It also provides insights into some of the factors which attracted early converts to Mormonism. Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton in *The Mormon Experience* show that converts in the nineteenth century frequently had multiple motives for embracing the faith: "The unique feature of Mormonism's appeal was its combination of theological intelligibility and spiritual reassurance with a specific program offering material and emotional satisfaction in the present."<sup>11</sup> Certainly the Waldensians of Piedmont were attracted for both spiritual and economic reasons.

Lorenzo Snow had expected large numbers of the Waldenses to join the Mormon church when they discovered similarities and parallels which seemed obvious to Snow. Though Snow and other missionaries were disappointed by the number of converts, certainly it was true that many of those who did join the Mormon church in Piedmont did so because of the similarities between the two religions.

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Snow was initially attracted to the Waldenses because they like the Mormons had suffered religious persecution and been driven to a mountain retreat.

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In 1853 a missionary named Thomas Margetts noted that Mormonism's message had found acceptance among some Waldenses because that group of people, unlike the Catholics of Italy,

did not believe in the doctrine of confession, and they have suffered much for their religion. From these sufferings, many of these people have learned to be kind to the stranger that may call upon them. They will invite you into their houses . . . will give their ears to your words, and, where they are honest in heart, they will acknowledge the truth of the gospel, and prove they believe it by being baptized.

Many of these "honest in heart" were dissatisfied Waldenses who had been taught that their movement was a continuation of the original church organized by the Apostles. Like many of Mormonism's converts in other parts of the world, they were, by upbringing, primitive gospelers, already sympathetic to the hope

that "the practices of original Christianity were again on the earth—a lay ministry, baptism of believers by immersion, and the gifts of the spirit."<sup>12</sup> Some of those who had grown dissatisfied, for a variety of reasons, with the Waldensian faith were prepared to accept such claims from the Mormons. In 1893 Stephen Malan wrote that previous to the arrival of the Mormon missionaries his grandfather had

denounced the false precepts and unscriptural dogmas of the day and announced publickally [sic] that there were [sic] but one true religion practiced according to the petern [sic] of Jesus Christ primitive Church; he did not know in which part of the world it was. . . .<sup>13</sup>

Similarly a missionary in 1853 wrote:

While conversing with the master of the house, he expressed his astonishment at the great difference between the truths I advanced, which were believed and practised [sic] by the ancient Saints and Apostles, and those impositions which had been imposed on them (my entertainers), and to which they had quietly submitted without even calling into question the validity of the doctrine.

The new converts seemed particularly attracted by Mormonism's belief in modern day revelation, the gifts of the Spirit, and the claim contained in "The Voice of Joseph" that miraculous occurrences were possible, desirable, and an important part of the restoration. Some of the Waldensian converts claimed religious experiences similar to those contained in the Bible including dreams, visions, speaking in tongues, and healings. For example, on his return to Piedmont in 1852, Snow was greeted by a newly converted woman who stated that she had seen him in a vision a few weeks previously. Several other converts on the same occasion also claimed to have experienced visions and healings. Other accounts, recorded many years later, indicate that Phillippe Cardon and one of his daughters, Madalair, had foreseen in dreams the coming of the Mormon missionaries several years before their arrival.<sup>14</sup> Similarly Stephen Malan wrote in 1893 that at the time of Joseph and Hyrum Smith's death there were signs in the heaven and people in the community had received visions and dreams telling them "that the religious principles of the day were not in accordance with Holy writ." Madelaine Malan, another convert, wrote that at the time of their baptisms the gifts of the Spirit were manifest and that her mother had sung by the gift of tongues and had given the interpretation.<sup>15</sup>

**S**PIRITUAL AND THEOLOGICAL reasons accounted for only part of Mormonism's appeal, however. As early as the seventeenth century, many Waldenses had left their mountain homes because of religious persecution. But during the 1800s other Waldenses left their homeland for social reasons, looking for more economic opportunities than their valleys, which had massive unemployment

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ment and overcrowded communities, could offer.<sup>16</sup> By 1844 over 1000 persons (of a total population of 20,000) had left for other locations in Europe. In 1854 one missionary wrote of the terrible poverty he observed:

It is heart-sickening to see the great poverty that exists among these mountains. Last year there was a great falling short of crops of grain, which, together with the grape disease and potato rot, contributes largely to augment the miseries of the labouring poor. The country is teeming with beggars. I never saw such miserable holes in my life as some of the people dwell in.

In that same year, with at least 3000 families suffering great hardships, the Venerable Table, the ruling council of the Waldensian Church, began to seriously consider a plan to sponsor the emigration of its people to locations outside continental Europe, including Sardinia, Algeria, the United States, Australia, and Argentina.

Converts to Mormonism shared the widespread desire to emigrate to a place of great opportunity. Mormonism's program to relocate its converts in America was featured in "The Voice of Joseph," which by 1851 had been widely circulated. It described Salt Lake City as located in "a beautiful valley beyond the 'pass' of the Great Rocky Mountains . . . where peace and happiness dwell." The tract went on:

Oh, what a life we live! It is the dreams of the poets actually fulfilled in real life. . . . Here, too, we are all rich. . . . There is no real poverty; all men have access to the soil, the pasture, the timber, the water power, and all the elements of wealth, without money or price.

Regarding emigration the tract noted:

Having come up through great tribulation; they [the Mormons] are not forgetful in their prosperity of their brethren who are still in adversity, scattered among the nations; Accordingly they have established a "Perpetual Emigrating Fund," for the migration of the poor. As the gathering of Israel from every nation has been decreed by the Lord, this fund has been arranged as to be increased to millions.

Not surprisingly, such descriptions sometimes attracted those with mixed motives for joining the Mormons. Samuel Francis, a missionary, wrote: "In these valleys, a great many lovers of emigration join the church, expecting to get free emigration to America." Mormons accused the Protestant ministers of resorting to blackmail to retain their flocks in the face of promises of emigration: offering "presents of money, wheat, potatoes, and other things" to investigators and free transportation to Algiers to Mormon converts who would leave the American church. Francis indicated that he was glad that these other opportunities to emigrate were given to the Italian saints since "it is the best things that could be put into operation to find out those who join the Church for emigration."

Some LDS converts did leave the Church in 1855 to take advantage of these competing opportunities to emigrate. Others, frustrated because they had not been sent to Utah by 1857, asked to be excommunicated.

Those who remained in the Church were reportedly "willing to walk all the way to Liverpool (excepting the crossing of the channel) if the servants of the Lord could furnish them means to cross the ocean, to go to Zion." By 1863, with no baptisms in over two years, the thirteen remaining members of the Italian branch were likewise "anxious to gather to Zion."

Most of the Waldenses who remained in the Church eventually came to Utah. But the converts were often as disillusioned with the missionaries' homeland as the missionaries had been with the converts.' Stephen Malan, who left an account of his arrival in the Salt Lake Valley in 1855, was scarcely unique:

I could not sense the descriptions given while in my native land, of the flowery border of the Jordan River, nor of the virgin prairies of the valleys of Deseret, nor of the dense forest, and shrubs of its mountain dales and limpid water brooks, and salubrity of its climate. Having never seen it, I conjectured something of a similarity to my country's nature's gifts.

He was so eager to see the land which had been described in such glowing terms that he left his company, without eating breakfast, and climbed a slight elevation at the mouth of Emigration Canyon to see the valley for the first time: "My eyes surveyed the whole landscape from the spot upon which I stood; nothing but desert was

The religious legacy of the Waldenses, which Snow had hoped would attract converts to Mormonism because of the parallels between the two religions, was as much a hindrance as an aid.

visible; from the east to west mountains, I could not perceive anything indicative of anticipation." Malan was so confused that he asked a group of teamsters entering the canyon "where was that great valley of Salt Lake and where was the city located; with a burst of laughter they asked me if I was deprived of my eyesight." Almost forty years later Malan, still a Mormon, reminisced about the experience:

The test was a severe one but it was momentary. As I walked along the road the fragrance of the sage was beginning to cause a cogitation upon my mind that this indigene plant growing so profusely could be changed into fruitful orchard, and gardens by man's industry, and that the whole valley could eventually be converted into that condition in which I had anticipated. It is so now to a great extent.

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Thus the Waldenses, though few in number, became part of the richly varied tapestry of the Mormon Zion. Their unique strand was singled out by Brigham Young as Johnston's army approached Utah in the fall and winter of 1857-1858: he reminded the Mormons of the courage and perseverance demonstrated by the

Spiritual and theological reasons accounted for only part of Mormonism's appeal. The Mormon program of emigration was the primary stimulus for some conversions.

Waldenses in defending their mountain homeland and enjoined his people to emulate them.<sup>17</sup> The story of the Waldenses has also been memorialized in the LDS hymn book. In 1851 Lorenzo Snow included, "Hymn of the Vaudois Mountaineers in Times of Persecution," a poem about the Waldenses written by the English poet Felicia Hemans, in his report of the Italian Mission. This poem was adapted for the hymnal as "For the Strength of the Hills We Bless Thee" in 1863.<sup>18</sup> Snow also recorded a dream about the Waldenses, which highlighted his own mixed feelings about the success of the Italian mission and which could perhaps characterize many of the nineteenth century missions which seemed at the time to accomplish so little:

I discovered a fish had got upon my hook. . . I then drew my line, and was not a little surprised and mortified at the smallness of my prize. I thought it very strange that among such a vast multitude of noble, superior looking fish, I should have made so small a haul. But all my disappointments vanished when I came to discover that its qualities were of a very extraordinary character.

### Notes

1. Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1884). Unless otherwise noted all material about the history of the Italian mission comes from this book or from the *Millennial Star* or from Lorenzo Snow, *The Italian Mission* (London: W. Aubrey, 1851).
2. Jabez, Woodard, MS, "Autobiography and Diary /C.A./ 1853-7." Church Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereafter cited as Church Archives.
3. Fanny Stenhouse, *Tell It All: A Story of a Life's Experience in Mormonism* (Hartford: A.D. Worthington & Co., 1874), p. 92.
4. The mountain they most likely ascended was Monte Vandalino, which they renamed Mount Brigham. The large projecting rock upon which they organized the Church and renamed the "Rock of Prophecy" was the summit of Monte Casteluzzo—which Snow described as being part of Mount

Brigham, but which today is considered a separate peak.

5. Toronto was baptized in Boston in 1843 and moved to Nauvoo shortly thereafter. A few years later, he donated \$2500 in gold to the Mormons to help provide bread and other provisions for those working on the temple. This act ingratiated him to Brigham Young, who called on him in 1846 to drive his cattle west. Upon his arrival he became the first settler in Utah of Italian descent. It is not clear when Toronto returned from his first Italian mission. In 1875 he traveled to Italy and returned to Utah with fourteen of his relatives and friends from Sicily. Toronto's activities were monitored by a U.S. consular official in Palermo who wrote, in 1879, that Mormons of Sicilian extraction had visited Palermo, within the last five years, to look after their pecuniary affairs. Dispatches—U.S. Consul in Palermo, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota.

6. Attempts were made to proselyte outside of the Waldensian area in 1852, 1853 (Genoa, Turin), 1854 (Turin, Nice), 1856 (Turin). *Millennial Star* 15:186, 14:426, 16:192, 15:282, 16:707, 19:218.

7. The record of the Italian Mission indicates that between 1850-1866, 184 persons were baptized, 58 emigrated and 73 were excommunicated. These emigration figures are inconsistent with the rosters of emigrant ships which contain the names of at least 73 Waldenses who emigrated between 1853-1866. One possible reason for the discrepancy is that some of the children of the emigrants were not baptized Mormons, either because they were too young or because they chose not to be. See "Emigration Records and ship Roster," and "Record of Embership of the Italian Mission," MS, Church Archives.

8. "Record of Membership of the Italian Mission."

9. Stephen Malan, "Autobiography and Family Record" (1893), MS, Church Archives.

10. There were scattered attempts to find additional converts among the Waldenses by some of the original Waldensian converts themselves after 1867. James Bertoch and Jules Grague spent a portion of their German-Swiss Mission in Piedmont between 1891-1893. Daniel Richards and Paul Cardon also proselyted among the Waldenses in 1900. However, these efforts failed to produce any additional converts. Some additional Waldenses have affiliated with the Church since the Italian mission was opened in 1966.

11. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), p. 43. See also Oscar Handlin, Foreword to *Homeward to Zion*, by William Mulder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), p. vii.

12. Arrington and Bitton, *The Mormon Experience*, p. 28.

13. All quotes from Stephen Malan are from the autobiography in the Church Archives.

14. Marie Madalaine Cardon Guilde, "Autobiography," Typescript in possession of author, p. 3. Rebecca Cardon Hickman, "History of John Paul Cardon, 1839-1915," Typescript in possession of author, pp. 7-8. Ella Vida Cardon Adams and Blondel Cardon Potter Smith, "Phillippe Cardon, Pioneer," Typescript in possession of author, p. 2.

15. Madalaine Malan Farley, "Biographical Sketch," Typescript in possession of author, p. 2. See also Malan, "Autobiography and Family Record."

16. George B. Watts, *The Waldenses in the New World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1941), p. 45.

17. Brigham Young, "Present and Former Persecutions of the Saints, Etc.," *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool, 1855-86), 5:342.

18. Helen Hanks Macare, "The Singing Saints," (Diss. UCLA, 1961), pp. 401-02, 545-59. See also J. Spencer Cornwall, *Stories of Our Mormon Hymns* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1963), pp. 247-48.

# ARE MORMONS JOINING IN WORLD SUICIDE?

*Believers in the gospel should be dissidents against modern world culture. But it is surprising how comfortable most of us feel with the horrors which surround us.*

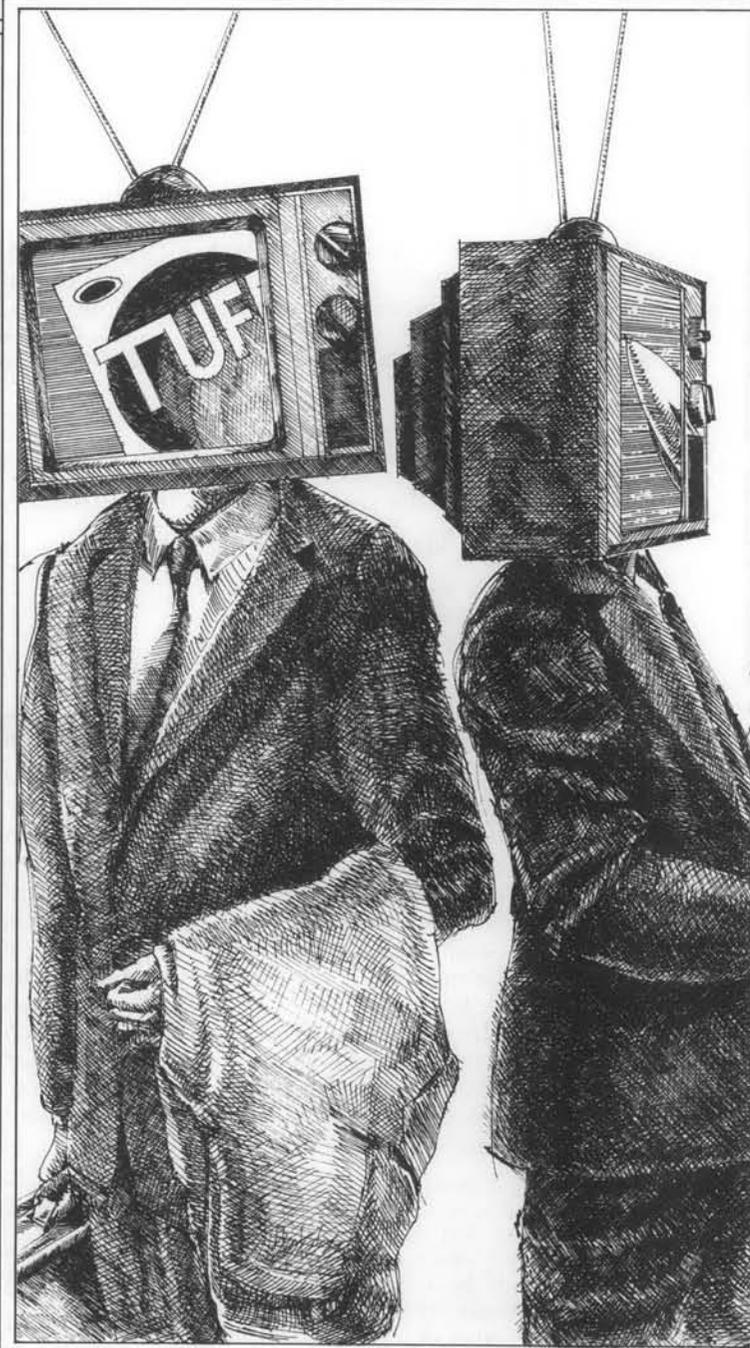
Arthur Henry King

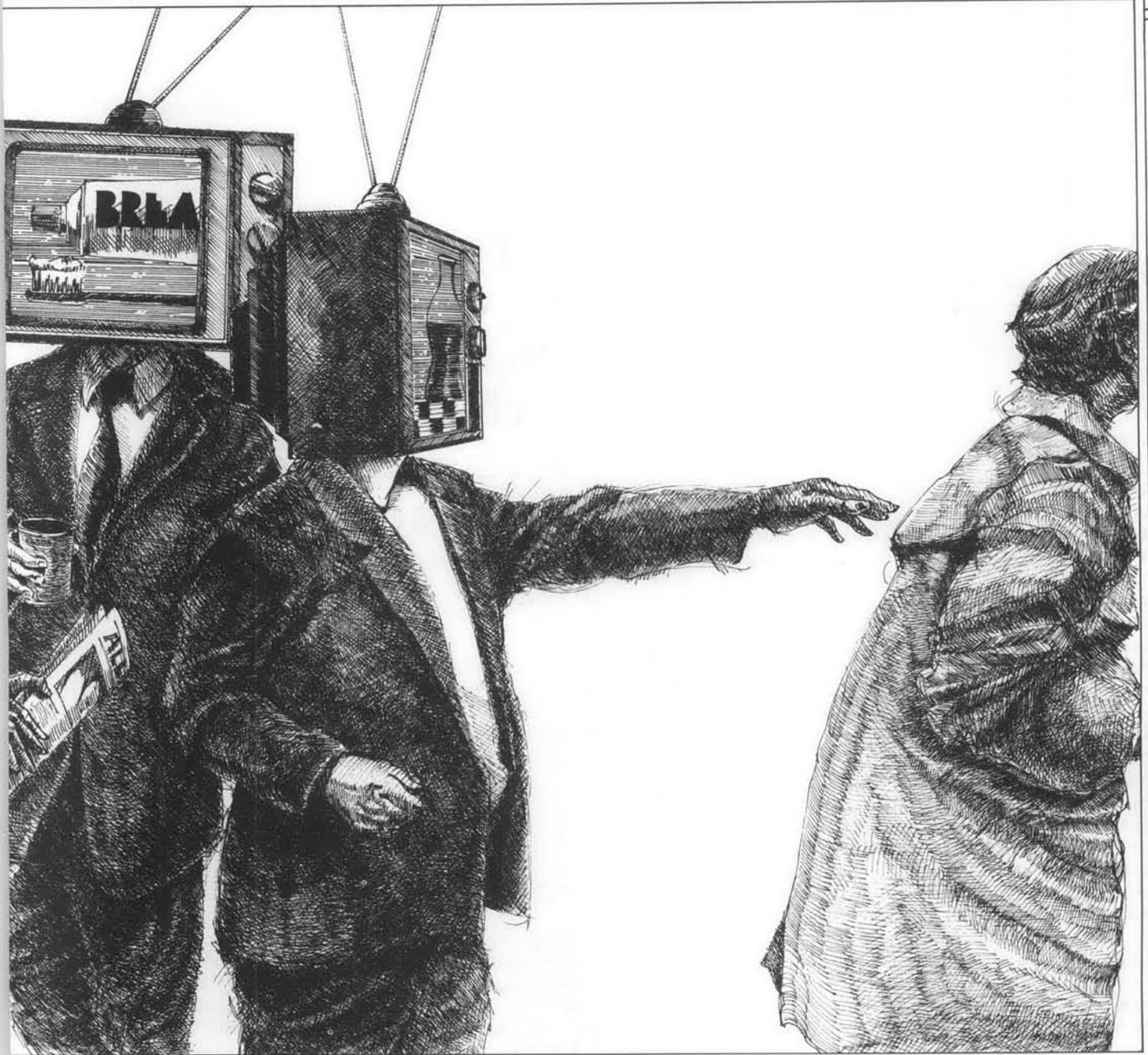
I

propose to try and establish a universe of discourse between us by first discussing principles, going on to the Church and the surrounding culture in general, then applying my thoughts to various areas—behaviorism, mass media, advertising, public relations, and the arts—and finishing by applying this to the situation of Church members in but not of, or of as well as in, the surrounding culture.

Here, then, are my two principal assumptions. First, Moses 5:6. "Why dost thou offer up sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him, I know not, save the Lord commanded me." That is the fundamental text in our scriptures about obedience; I assume the relationship of obedience to faith and of faith to obedience is immediate. The primacy of obedience or faith is irrelevant, because they are twins.

The second assumption is one that is behind all





western (and eastern) culture: there is a link between art and morality. I do not pretend that this link is direct; when that is assumed, each tries to overrun the other. But rather art and morality are related indirectly through religion.

Religion, as Kierkegaard reminds us more firmly than anyone else, is prime and morality secondary. The sacrifice of Isaac is an example that religion is deeper and more important than any morality that may emerge from it. Similarly, art is related in its origin and practice to religion throughout history. Through religion, and not in any other way, art and morality can be reconciled.

The channel runs through religion from art to morality and from morality to art. That is seen best in the scriptures, brought home to us in a parable like the prodigal son or, above all, that awkward episode that no gospel wished to contain and that was finally attached to

the end of St. John—the woman taken in adultery.

Once an absolute aesthetic category is introduced, however—and the aesthetic category has little importance before Kant—we get a split between art and morality which results in the development of so-called “good” art as an exclusive occupation, an occupation for those “in the know.” The rest is thought to be bad. And, indeed, that is almost what happens, except that in these conditions all turns out ultimately to be bad. The distinction we have between aestheticism and vulgarity in our modern culture is directly due to the severance between art and morality which, in its turn, is due to the decline of faith and religious practice.

Let me pass on, now, to the Church and the surrounding culture. This is complicated because the immediate surrounding culture is that of the United States. But I don’t mean by “surrounding culture” just

the culture of the United States: I mean what has become world culture, represented by the United States, which is primarily responsible for it. The United States is primarily responsible by means of mass production for the survival of the rest of the world.

What is the nub of the problem of modern culture? The whole world is affected, because Africa, Latin America, and Asia are absorbing this culture, and it has already been established in China, the United States, Europe, and the Soviet Union. I go to Moses 1:9-10. "And the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that his glory was not upon Moses; and Moses was left unto himself. And as he was left unto himself, he fell unto the earth." And then Moses' reaction: "Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed."

### Self-assertion and Self-esteem

Many in the Church oppose evolutionary theory. Yet some of those who oppose it automatically introduce some of its consequences into their philosophy and practice. The late nineteenth century capitalist development in the United States represents an application—some people might say Satanic—of the principle of the survival of the fittest.

From the point of view of their use of evolutionary theory, capitalism and communism are on the same side. This applies not simply to the United States but to the whole western world and indeed the whole world. Capitalism and communism both have a mechanistic, a materialistic, view. Both premise economic man. Both use mass production. Both produce, as a kind of reaction and yet as a kind of intensification (for the obverse is always part and parcel of the metal, together with the reverse), self-assertion, the assertion of Godless man, individual, or group. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest, and modern capitalism and communism as twin descendants of this doctrine, are not separate from the reaction against them. How could Winston Churchill win the war except by becoming more and more like Hitler as the war went on? How could Hamlet defeat and kill Claudius except by becoming more and more like Claudius as the play goes on? They belong to the same world. They belong, ultimately, to the same spirit. They are uncle and nephew.

Behind self-assertion, then, as a reaction to this mass-production society, is the decline of faith, the emergence of man as hero, which I do not see in the Renaissance, but I do see emerging in the nineteenth century, together with a premium on aggressivity. The United States is the only country I know in which the adjective "aggressive" is used melioratively.

Another dubious phrase, when we think of the Moses quotation, is "self-esteem." We are told by the gospel the search for the self is not one which is undertaken in terms of the self; but outside the self and with others. The self is not self except in relation to others, in the family, and in the community. The self cannot find itself by trying to find itself because the self is not the kind of thing you can take hold of and make. If you try and make a self, the self you've made is not the self you are. And, indeed, I'm extremely dubious about the self one is. I have a debate with my stepdaughter on this subject. She says, "We have to be what we are." And I say, "No, we

cannot be what we are; it's impossible. What we have to do is become what we may." And that becoming is, in turn, something that requires forgetfulness. Self-

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forgetfulness seems to me to be prime, not self-esteem. Forget yourself and you may become yourself. But if you think about becoming yourself, you will not have forgotten yourself and will, therefore, never be yourself, let alone ever become yourself.

United States culture has led the world in the doctrine of success, in the doctrine of individualism. And I say that these two doctrines are profoundly anti-Christian, anti-gospel.

Consider a remark made by the headmaster of the Cathedral School in Lund, Sweden, to his most brilliant pupil, who is now a member of the Swedish Academy (one of the Eighteen): "Don't try to be remarkable in any way." The boy was precocious and affected because he was able. (And how many boys are not precocious and affected when they are able? The ablest, of course, are not. But, then, the ablest don't know they are able. That is one of the greatest points about being able.) "Don't try to be remarkable in any way" is the opposite of the American doctrine of getting ahead, of being successful, of finding oneself; but it is definitely a European and an Asian, as opposed to an American, attitude. And of course, it is going under in Europe and Asia as world culture gradually takes over from European culture. "Don't try to be remarkable in any way." It is a hard

saying, but it does seem to me that the gospel lies profoundly behind it.

### **Behaviorism**

There are other "threats to the Church" from the surrounding culture, threats which I regard as worse than any threats in Ohio, Missouri, or Illinois 140 years ago. The first, in order of philosophical primacy, is behaviorism. Behaviorism I take widely because it seems to me that the behavioristic approach is characteristic not simply of behavioral psychology but also of cognitive psychology, and pretty well all psychology, just as it is also prime for sociology and for economics. Psychology, sociology, and economics are fundamentally statistical. They deal with cases, not people. Cases are not people. The variables are always greater than any social science can contain. Social scientists cannot do useful work unless they remember that the variables are nearly always too many for them, because they are dealing with people and reducing people to cases. They have lost the people. Just as, if you reduce yourself to the case of yourself, you will find that you are not there.

But what am I talking about in practical terms? Take the example of the spread of professional counseling in the Church and at BYU, the infiltration into ecclesiastical responsibility, the jargon that is used. Just as mass production developed in America, so did the jargon of the social sciences. During the war there was an Allied Ministers of Education Conference in London. When the Americans entered the war, they sent sociologists and historians over to join this Allied conference, which afterwards became UNESCO. The style changed, the minutes changed, the whole way of talking about everything changed. And, in spite of efforts to stop the rot, the rot was there. The jargon has remained in international institutions. Now there are many institutions of the United Nations, all using their own kind of jargon and all associated, ultimately, with the jargon of the social sciences initiated in the United States.

One of my difficulties in the Church at the present time is the word "goal." Although I am not opposed to the something hidden behind the word "goal," I strenuously object to the use of the word "goal," because of its psychological background and implications in mechanistic terms. If planning with goals in mind does nothing else, it will tend to occlude the Holy Ghost. Self-esteem (already mentioned) is another one of those things which has come from the same background.

### **The Fictional and the Real**

I was watching a TV program the other morning, and they were telling that a news-film company had handed over two-thirds of their library to UCLA for research use, and they gave one or two excerpts. One of the excerpts was the burning of the Hindenburg airship at LaGuardia Airport (agony, panic, screaming, death). The TV man commented, "A good, dramatic sequence, even in black and white." And what does a photographer do on such an occasion? Is it his duty to continue to photograph? I don't know what I could do on such an occasion except fling myself on my knees and pray to God. What else can be done when you're faced with a situation like that and you are helpless? People were running about like ants. How helpless we can be in such

a situation is a reminder of what Moses said: "Man is nothing."

The same morning on the same program. Remember those children suffering from progeria? They met in Los Angeles and were submitted to the vulgarity of Disneyland (after all, Krushchev had been submitted to it). The comment on the episode was, "It makes a fine story, doesn't it?"

And let me remind you of the photographer who, some twenty years ago in the Congo, came across a group of soldiers who had forty prisoners and bribed the soldiers to shoot the prisoners in order that he might photograph the shooting.

Well, those three episodes put the mass media into focus. The point is this (I've noticed it even more with children than with adults): we cease to make a distinction between fictional events on the screen and the real events on the screen. And in mere self-protection, what we do is not to think of the fictional as real but the real as fictional, so we can harden our hearts. And that is the fundamental problem. What did Lear say? "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" Sisters Goneril and Regan, prominent mass-media reporters in this our time, have ceased to be moved by anything. They just record.

This is a fundamental crux, the real and the fictional on the screen. We protect ourselves from the horror of what the world is really like by equating it merely to the fiction—which is also horrible, but we're all so used to it as fiction that we take it as an amusement. Horror has always been one of the principal amusements of mankind. The fictive horror of the TV replaces the factitious horror of the Colosseum.

I pass by such obvious things as advertising and salesmanship; and the fact that the economy seems to be based on upping prices most of the time in order to sell things at ordinary prices at so-called sales. I pass to a public-relations story. Professor George Allen from the University of Sussex had been some years Cultural Advisor to the British Embassy in Washington—and knew Utah. I took him around Temple Square. He greatly admired the Temple and Tabernacle. He said they were unique. He took many photographs because, as he said, these are superb buildings. Then I took him to the Visitors' Center—the then new one, not the newest one. When he had gone round, he looked at me quizzically and said, "Isn't it strange? The technique behind this is exactly the same as that of Socialist Realism in Russia and the propaganda of the more modern wing of the Roman Catholic Church. I think it must be a matter of public relations."

Public relations, at least in my country, have replaced government, for we are not governed any longer by cabinet ministers; we are governed by their public-relations officers. I've had a good deal to do with public-relations officers in my time. I've had nothing to do with them here in the United States; but I ask you to look in your heart and ask if you don't think that public-relations officers don't also run Congress and the White House. Whatever it be, it is a further removal from reality that consists again in taking the real film as if it were a fictional one, and the fictional one as real.

### **Art**

But the most important of my topics is art. Art affects

everybody. For example, Princess Diana's wedding-dress has a whole art history behind it. Taken by people as it was, it had, nevertheless, significance in many different ways that they might not realize, in the tradition of the royal wedding dresses, but also in the total tradition of dressing and what dressing is for, and so on.

The greatest sin committed by intellectuals in this Church is that of accepting as they are the arts of the surrounding culture. That culture has not got out of the romantic movement at all; it is more deeply in it than ever, and there is more than one reason for that. A major reason is the reaction to the industrial revolution in terms of individual self-assertion.

Art is the main and most profound way in which individual self-assertion has come about since (say) 1770. And that self-assertion is deeply anti-gospel. It most obviously reflects man as hero, and it has produced such odd heroes as Lord Byron and Oscar Wilde. Art, in our time, increasingly represents what it has represented ever since those "Satanic mills," of which Blake speaks, went up; and that is the isolation of the individual. Now our Church is one in which the individual need feel less isolated. But, unfortunately, our increasing insistence on individuality, even in the Church, is taking us towards that isolation. Our emphasis ought rather to be on the family, and, above all, on the multi-generational family, not the two-generation family consequent upon the industrial revolution.

The isolation of the individual leads to a sense of insufficiency in the individual: "Man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed." That leads to various types of despair, and that, in turn, leads to self-pity, cynicism, solipsism, boredom: the prime emotion of most modern art, whether directly or indirectly, is self-pity. Direct enough in Hemingway and in Scott Fitzgerald, less direct in William Faulkner, but, nevertheless, insidiously there in terms not merely of the totality of the plot but in terms of the detail of the character.

I reread recently (I read Faulkner as he came out in the latter twenties and early thirties) at the insistence of an undergraduate, *Absalom, Absalom*, and I found self-pity permeating the organization of the book. One of the things that we have to remember is that self-pity can very well coexist with self-irony. In fact, self-irony is frequently a subtle method of self-pity. So, when Faulkner comes back in his work and says, "Look, this is ironical," the answer is "Yes, but this irony is itself self-pity, just as a permanent ironical attitude is a self-pitying attitude, just as a skeptical or solipsistic attitude is ultimately a self-pitying attitude."

Efforts toward Mormon art are, in my view, ill seen; for I don't know what Mormon art is. I do know that there are Mormon artists and they produce art; but if they aim to produce Mormon art, then they won't succeed in producing art. It's this business of deliberateness again. If you aim at education, then you'll never become educated. If you aim at salvation, you will never be saved. Because these things are indirect, supreme results of doing something else; and the something else is service, is righteousness, is trying to do the right thing at every moment. Trying to do the right thing at every

moment is so important and so difficult a task for most of us that the setting of goals becomes very shadowy.

Mormon art, then, in my view, is a figment. There are Mormon artists, but the trouble about it all is that they tend to take from outside. They may not even be aware how much they take from outside. But they do take fashions from outside, and they just don't like things that aren't in accordance with those fashions. For example, no one pays proper attention to the most important English literature from 1200-1660: the religious literature.

### Attacking the Surrounding Culture

What else is there besides self-pity in modern art? Something that runs through the arts. It's there supremely in Picasso; it's there in James Joyce. It's not a word that Mormons like to hear, but it's a most important word. The word is "destruction," the power of art to destroy, and the need to destroy the evil in contemporary culture. Let me give you some examples of what I mean.

Picasso underwent in stages, more profoundly than most men, the experience of the twentieth century. The experience that he was undergoing was the experience of the natural man, who is an enemy to God. Nevertheless, to undergo such an experience, with his ability, meant to portray the *impasse*; and the impossibility of any decent life whatever in a non-religious culture comes out to full expression. Let me remind you of those tender, delicate, mildly ironical pictures of an acrobat's family that were produced just before the first world war, and the impact of the exhibition in London of the work Picasso produced during the German occupation of France. Tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, came to that exhibit. They spat, they swore, they tried to get at the paintings to destroy them. And the more energetic they were in their reactions, the more successful one knew that Picasso had been. Why? Because he was showing these people what they could not bear to see: what, in ultimate circumstances, the natural man is like. "Guernica," for example, is a superbly organized extreme of human disorganization; and that paradox holds us. It is one of the fundamental documents of our time, just as James Joyce's *Ulysses* is. And we need to see the destructive power of people like Joyce and Picasso and to see how they had, by degrees, to move towards that destruction because they had no alternative in the country in which they lived. The rest was *kitsch*. Even Matisse seems to be *kitsch* compared with Picasso.

I am reminded of an important piece of satire which ought to be an example to us of how we need to attack the surrounding culture. That is Swift's *Modest Proposal*. It was written because children in Ireland were starving. Kill them off. Use them, among other things, for gloves, and so on—something that became real, you remember, in Nazi Germany, not with children, but with Jews and other experimentees, like gypsies, who sometimes get forgotten.

I suggest that we take a lesson from the fundamental satirists like Swift or Aristophanes or Rabelais and see what that means in terms of our contemporary culture. I daren't tell you about the modest proposal that one of my friends has just made, a satire about abortion, because it's too horrific. My own imagination has merely

been of taking fetuses and sending them to restaurants in order to develop fine dishes from them. This is the kind of satire that hits. It needs to. It's the hard hearts that have to be broken. And the disbelief in the existence of the hard hearts is dangerous. What is it that scripture says? "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." And it says "be ye wise as serpents" *first*; because, if we aren't as wise as serpents, we shan't last long as harmless as doves. And Christians are going to last. Some may be martyred: it's not only blacks that can be lynched, but anti-feminists and anti-abortionists. But we shall last: the Church gains strength from martyrs.

## The doctrines of success and individualism are profoundly anti-Christian and anti-gospel.

### Where Are the Dissidents?

Finally, the question, "Where are the dissidents?" I don't mean the dissidents in the Church, which is a minor matter. I mean those who are dissidents from our modern world culture. For, from my point of view, fascist, communist, and democratic mean the same kind of thing at the same kind of level. There's no ultimate difference between them. They're using the same methods—with different "goals," perhaps—but they're using them in terms of self-interest. Wherever you have a so-called "communist" government, it has established itself as a government of gangsters. Wherever you have a so-called "fascist" government, it has established itself as a government of gangsters. I won't go on to say what happens if you have a "democratic" government; but look at the lobbying, the daily unveiling of corruption, and the infiltration of gangsterdom in "democratic" states. The historian who was in charge of the history department at my old Swedish university of Lund, Professor Lauritz Weibull, a famous man, six-foot three

and slim in proportion, a great admirer of Leonardo, used to say this to his doctorate seminarists when they first came in, "Men, you have hitherto been treated as children; but, from now on, remember that this is a sound principle in history: if anyone gets to a position of power, he's a scoundrel; because the only way to get a position of power is by being a scoundrel." He said, "It doesn't always work, but it works most of the time."

The question is: *who* dissents from the world culture of which we're speaking? The dissidents should be those who believe in the gospel and yet are being constantly undermined by this world culture which they do not recognize as such. We need, in this Church, to forget the minor demurs some have about the way authority is exerted in the Church. We need to think more carefully about our own sins. Why, as students sometimes say, are so many businessmen called to be General Authorities? They are prepared for the task; the intellectuals are not. That is why intellectuals are not called. So what do the intellectuals do except complain about it, which, of course, is what intellectuals always do?

We need, then, concertedly, to understand the nature of the culture surrounding us and to realize that our missionary effort is *one* aspect of what we need to do. There's little need to destroy what I'm talking about inside the Church, the minor, weak, and largely futile efforts Church members make to imitate the evils of the surrounding culture is in its nuclei, not within our own Church. For our own Church is the only hope of the future. We know that by prophecy. We know by faith that the Church of Jesus Christ is the power on earth by which He will save the world.

What is the conclusion of all this? Mormons, in so far as they are committing cultural suicide, are doing so by identifying themselves with the world, which is committing cultural suicide as a whole, as a totality. We need not, in the light of prophecy, be surprised at that. But it is surprising how comfortable most of us feel, forgetting that they are not fiction, with the horrors that are almost daily presented to us on the television screen. The natural man is an enemy to God. Man by himself, if God withdraws, is nothing. Only through Him are we anything at all. Only by Him do we live. Only by Him have we power and property and inheritance and ability and marriage and family and everything that makes life still worth while. We owe everything good to Him. If we remember that, and if we attack the world by missioning but also by showing our own members, first of all, what there is wrong with the surrounding culture instead of letting them slip into it, then we shall be doing our duty.

ARTHUR HENRY KING was educated at Cambridge and received his Ph.D. from the University of Lund, Sweden. He taught English at Lund, as well as the Universities of Stockholm, Tehran, and Karachi. Twice decorated by Queen Elizabeth II for his work in education and for the British Council, he served as Assistant Director General of that body from 1969-71. He is currently professor of English at BYU.

*This speech was delivered 10 December 1981 as part of the B.H. Roberts lecture series, "Perspectives on Mormon Culture." Dean May, assistant professor of history and director of the Center for Historical Population Studies at the University of Utah, and Keith Engar, dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Utah, responded to the speech.*

# ELEVATION

## THE LOVE OF CHRIST, AND SPRING

Christmas past and the advent of  
small birds come,  
Delighting in nothing but dried seeds  
With paper wings wind-torn beyond  
flight,

Sad King David finds new love:  
maiden mistresses,  
To lend his old flesh heat,  
Make ruddy flowers blossom in his  
cheek.

No more backing up to fires; the  
king will burn within  
Though winter sheet the earth in ice  
And fill the wind with sleet.

Whatever dead Chaldeans say  
Who read Egyptian books and  
struggled with the universe  
To number years and days,

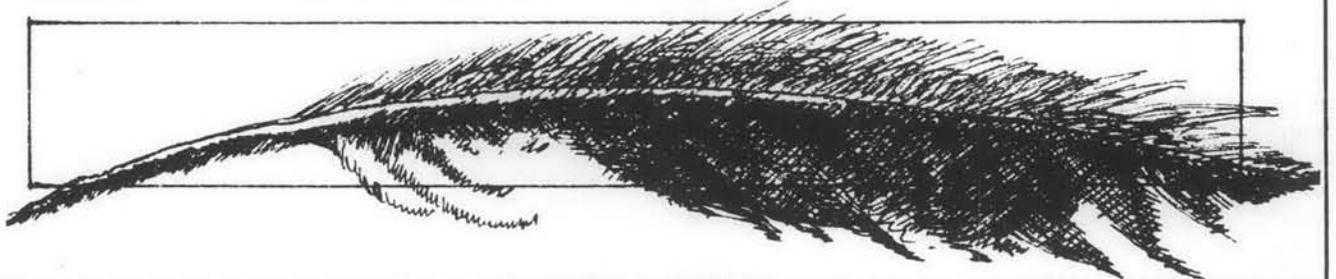
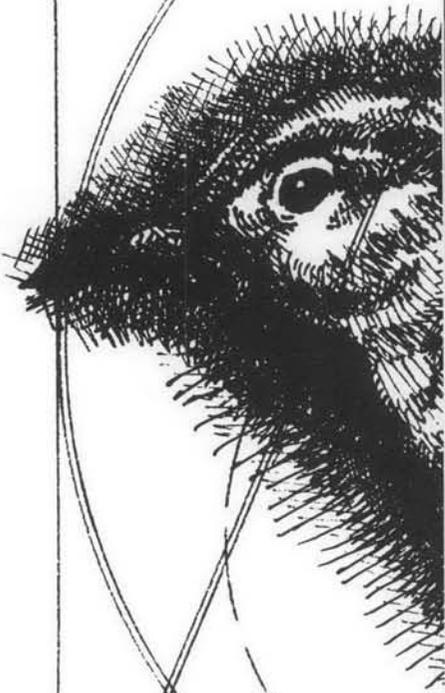
Whatever the precise angle light  
defines at noon  
Above the southern ridge,  
Or whatever stands of pine may  
shield

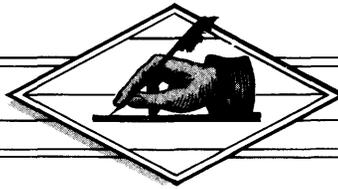
The entrances and exits of the sun  
and moon,  
Or through whatever track of night  
The Swan flies north by darkened  
ways,

Whether rising moon or setting sun  
Make pale our vision of her grace,  
To bring her gifts to wise men, fools  
beyond hope,

That lady follows star-winds  
Although they be so cold  
Her breath streams back a mist of  
ice, among the stars a road.

STEVEN O. TAYLOR





# Retelling the Old Old Story

A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SHARES THE CHALLENGES OF WRITING FAITHFUL HISTORY

An Interview with Jonathan M. Butler

**I**N RECENT MONTHS MORMONS HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE MIDST OF A SPIRITED—SOMETIMES acrimonious—debate about how our religious past should be chronicled. Savoring as we do our status as a peculiar people, we have tended to see this disquiet in our community as unique. Unfortunately, such a perspective unnecessarily isolates us from others—with whom we share more than we often comfortably admit.

Mormons and Seventh-day Adventists have a common birthright, the religious ferment of western New York in the early nineteenth century. The Adventists trace their lineage back to William Miller—the millennialist revival preacher in Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York who predicted Christ's coming for the mid-1840s—through those who, after the Great Disappointment, gathered around the "Adventist prophetess" Ellen G. White. She had converted to Adventism in 1840 before the Great Disappointment and lived to shepherd those who believed in her unique historical and doctrinal teachings and special views on health and diet into the twentieth century (she died in 1915).

Though 150 years have accentuated the divergent aspects, Mormons and Adventists remain in some metaphoric sense siblings whose lifelines continually cross and part and intertwine. The contemporary controversies in Mormondom mirror to a remarkable degree currents of strain and questioning and debate among Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs). Writers of Adventist history must deal with the central fact of Ellen G. White and her writings—the nature of her inspiration and the degree to which her works assume the role of scripture among Adventists—just as writers of Mormon history must deal with the prophetic claims and sacred writings of Joseph Smith. In recent years this challenge has been increasingly joined by Adventists trained in history and religious studies at various secular universities, with mixed reactions from the community of Adventist believers.

In 1976 a faculty member at an Adventist university, Ronald L. Numbers, published a social history about the health teachings of Mrs. White, a book recognized as a piece of first class scholarship and writing in numerous journals. "As one raised and educated within Adventism," wrote Numbers in the first pages of his book, "I admittedly have more than an academic interest in Mrs. White's historical fate; but I have tried to be as objective as possible. Thus I have refrained from using divine inspiration as an historical explanation." This omission was unforgiveable for the Adventist community as a whole, and Numbers lost his job in the aftermath.

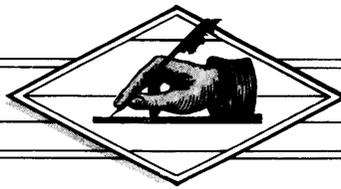
Despite the risks, research and writing about the Adventist past by faithful Adventists have continued and even proliferated. Jonathan M. Butler, an associate professor at Loma Linda University, the SDA flagship in Riverside, California, exemplifies this trend. Trained at the University of Chicago in American church history under Martin Marty (MA in 1972, Ph.D. in 1975), Butler teaches courses in American religious history, the history of Christianity, and Adventist history and writes for various SDA publications. He is presently at work on a book about Ellen G. White.

He talked with SUNSTONE editor Susan Staker Oman in San Francisco during the meetings of the American Academy of Religions (December 1981) about the challenges and tensions which face the insider who tries to stay in the good graces of his religious community while writing responsible academic history about that same tradition.

**SUNSTONE:** Most of our readers will probably wonder why we have decided to interview a Seventh-day Adventist historian. What would you tell them?

**BUTLER:** In a way, Mormons and Adventists are like fraternal twins who were separated at birth. Both

groups come out of the Burned-Over District of western New York, both have prophet founders, both view the American experience as revelatory in some sense, both form rather comprehensive religious systems, both are worldwide missionary groups. Getting to know each



other after a lifetime of separation, so to speak, can only contribute to our mutual self-understanding.

Too often, though, there's misunderstanding and ill will, at least from the Adventist point of view. The polemic against Mormonism is a kind of American

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commonplace. But it has been particularly high-pitched in the Adventist community. I grew up hearing about the "Satanic delusion" of Mormonism—a group that came into existence as a "counterfeit" of Seventh-day Adventism. Maybe Mormons are just too close for comfort. Like the Spiritualists in the nineteenth century who were similar enough to our prophetess that she spent her career lambasting them. Or like the Jehovah's Witnesses who get a lot more bad press among Adventists than, say, Episcopalians. I think of R.G. Collingwood's point that polemic usually suggests an attraction. Certainly Adventists are attracted to Mormons, maybe even envious of you. After all, we've never produced anything so fine as a Marie Osmond.

In my case, I was practically a Mormon missionary once. I worked my way through college in the mid-sixties selling religious children's books in Utah. I went door to door in white shirt and tie (if not with a bicycle)—one summer in Salt Lake City and one in Utah Valley. In effect, a friend and I impersonated Mormons. We learned the idiom. Not that we fabricated deliberately. But if people assumed we were Mormons, sales went better. In our Adventist selling school, we were told to refer to God as "Our Heavenly Father" and never show the pictures of angels with wings. In fact Adventist publishing has been entirely altered in this respect. Books now appear from the Adventist presses with wingless angels—a direct impact of the Mormon market. In making my sales pitch, occasionally I'd make a mistake. I wasn't always sure where I'd gone wrong. But this look of smugness would come over my Mormon customer, and I'd know my cover was blown. I was suddenly a Gentile. It's the same smugness I'd seen in my own people, a sense of certitude and superiority, but now I was seeing it in someone else. Like in a mirror. This probably gets to the heart of what is most similar about us, and why the likeness also repels: we both think we're right.

SUNSTONE: *Do you see similar parallels between Adventist historiography and Mormon historiography?*

BUTLER: In the scholarly sense, you would have to say

that Adventism is a mere "counterfeit" of Mormonism. You really are developing a rich historiography in Mormonism. We are at least twenty years behind you in that regard. Most of our history writing is still in-house. Mormons are writing sophisticated history that has begun to communicate the Mormon experience to those outside of Mormonism. Your experience should provide Adventist historians with a kind of agenda to follow, even if loosely, in pursuing our own tradition.

SUNSTONE: *What kind of history have Adventists written?*

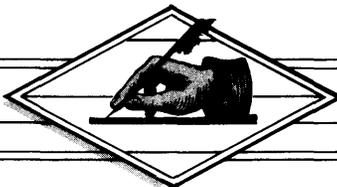
BUTLER: Most of us grew up on "salvation history" (*heilsgeschichte*)—stories of God's hand in our special history. Visions, miracles, saints, and heroes. Like the Hebrew scriptures, this was history written *by* believers *for* believers.

Then apologetic history came along in the next generation, written by believers for non-believers (though usually only believers read it). F.D. Nichol, for example, wrote what he called a defense of the Millerites in which he argued they were not "oddballs," cranks, and stupid farmers. They had not stood in ascension robes or filled insane asylums. LeRoy Froom filled half a book shelf in every Adventist living room with his four volumes on *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, tracing millenarianism through every generation of Christian history and finding it in rather respectable company (even among people who wouldn't know themselves to be "millenarian," as it turned out). Like other new, fledgling movements, Adventists needed a "useable past." Of course this made for amateur history writing by today's professional standard—not just biased but prejudiced and misconceived and sloppy. But the apologists did a huge amount of work. And they took the long view and the big view that you find among romantic historians of the nineteenth century. Their lives were not pinched into narrow, obscure little monographs.

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Sure, the apologists are now vulnerable as historians at almost every point, but that's partly because they painted such big panoramic pictures.

In the last decade or so Adventists have been writing narrative history, the better stuff resulting from dissertations in Ph.D. programs in non-Adventist history departments. Unfortunately, though the supernaturalism has been left out and the apologetics, nothing really has replaced it in the way of an interpre-



tation. It's mostly one "darn fact" after another. You really need a heavy emotional or spiritual investment in the tradition to stay awake reading this sort of chronicle, but plenty do. Adventists have that lovingly antiquarian regard for the Adventist past. Some churchmen remain a little wistful about the loss of "God's hand" in the histories. They want the historians to look up from their narratives once in a while and wink reassuringly to the believer, indicating God has supernaturally intervened in the movement; if the "Dark day" in New England signaling the end of the world was caused by smoke from a Newfoundland forest fire, God used the fire for his larger purposes. For the most part, churchmen have allowed the narrative history because, if it doesn't "prove" the supernatural, at least it doesn't seem to deny it.

Where Adventist historians feel like naughty school children is when they write interpretive history. Here the supernatural does not intrude on the level of cause and effect. The historian provides perfectly plausible, comprehensive explanations for historical events without a hint of the divine hand. The prophetess Ellen White saw visions about health and temperance, say, because Sylvester Graham had lectured in her hometown, or she was chronically ill, or she read books on the subjects. The prophetess had visions because she suffered from a form of epilepsy called "partial complex seizures." Now Adventists could do as we've done with the "Dark day" and say God used the social and cultural milieu of the prophetess to influence her. Or God communicated through epileptic seizures much as he might make contact through a person's musical sensibility. But for the most part believers cannot see it this way. The visions were of God or of the Devil, as Ellen White herself said. Or the visions were supernatural or psycho-pathological. They were not in any sense both. Of course things aren't that simple. Like the Woody Allen line about whether you can see the human soul under a microscope. "Maybe," he says, "but you'd definitely need one of those good ones with two eyepieces." Biblical prophets had those high powered eyepieces, in a sense, but ordinary historians do not. A scientist doesn't intrude on a scientific discussion with statements of faith. A pathologist doesn't find a soul in a cadaver. A cosmonaut doesn't find God above the stratosphere. History is also a modest enterprise, which neither proves the divine nor debunks it. Maybe the church, if it realized that about history, would cease being disappointed in historians. Actually I believe that good interpretive history according to the latest and best canons of historical scholarship is the highest and most refined kind of apologetics. It can actually contribute to the faith of a new generation of Adventists who do not respond to the old-fashioned salvation history.

*SUNSTONE: How are Seventh-day Adventist scholars who are attempting to write interpretive history treated?*

**BUTLER:** Unfortunately the scholars who face the severest criticism within our church are precisely the ones who are doing this, who put their minds to the issues that matter most to church members. It can be a

somewhat thankless task to come to terms creatively with the tradition.

One strategy Adventist scholars adopt under these circumstances is to avoid any direct study of their own religion. A church historian, for example, might study sixteenth century Lutheranism rather than nineteenth century Adventism. He can make a scholarly contribution this way and benefit the church. But if this is the extent of Adventist scholarship I think it will have shirked a fundamentally important function. For any tradition to remain faithful to itself it must transcend itself. Adventist scholars may make impressive contributions in archeology or historical theology or literary criticism or behavioral science, but if none of these methodologies are turned on our own tradition, and used to advance it, then we are intellectually

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schizophrenic indeed. On a cosmetic level this may look healthy, but it's really not healthy at all.

The last generation of religion scholarship offers a good case study in this regard. Of all the scholarly disciplines in Adventism, religion was the last to seek graduate or professional training. Medicine was the first. Technology and the hard sciences never seem to present the philosophical threat that the humanistic disciplines do. But in order to get accreditation for the pre-medical and medical programs, the colleges needed full-fledged liberal arts programs, so medicine had a domino effect on Adventist higher education. At first, though, we wanted only educational certification from accrediting boards as a kind of gesture, while carrying on educational business as usual. We did this in the sciences, the humanities, the arts, and so on. Religion teachers did not want to bring up the rear academically, so they got into Ph.D. programs too. At first religion scholars educated themselves in biblical languages, or archeology, and speech for the homileticians. In those days—about 20 years ago—these were the "safe disciplines" in which to pursue doctoral studies. The next wave of religion scholars ventured into religion disciplines proper—biblical studies, church history and theology (though historical theology for the most part), and, belatedly, ethics—but these scholars avoided specifically "Adventist" topics at the dissertation level and ducked scholarly study that might put them at odds with their tradition. This was good for the church then but not good enough in the long run. Now the newest



generation of Adventist scholars have begun to sift the tradition with the methodologies they've acquired in the non-Adventist universities.

In history a comparable development occurred. Historians circumvented Adventist history at the graduate level. They studied Elizabethan England or the American colonial period or Latin America, but now they are using the historical method on Adventist history. The church has had to "come of age" with this late-breaking development, and there's no way of telling yet how this will come out. In the academic setting, they usually say "publish or perish." But in Adventism right now, as we've seen recently in the Missouri Synod or the Southern Baptist Convention, it has been more like "publish *and* perish." Ironically, it seems to me that the

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scholars who come to grips with their traditions are the ones with the most confidence in it. They believe it can hold up under historical and theological scrutiny. They take the tradition seriously enough to want to transform it and adapt it to the needs of a new generation. Their critics too often do not display the same confidence or creativity.

*SUNSTONE: Your prophetess Ellen White and the matter of her literary borrowings have been in the press lately. Have Adventist historians been in the middle of that?*

**BUTLER:** Yes. This is a good example of the kind of sensitive issue I was talking about. Adventist historians have been doing some thorough investigation. One historian has written over 200 pages of source criticism on a slim chapter in one of her books. In this case it was not the historians or theologians who brought the issue into the news, however, but a southern California Adventist pastor named Walter Rea. He had been essentially a verbal inerrantist regarding Mrs. White's writings, had commanded great portions of her work to personal memory, and collected anthologies of her writings for publication. He read only the Bible and Mrs. White. Then Rea was casting about for something more to read and decided that reading from Mrs. White's own library should be O.K. What was good enough for the prophet should be good enough for him. It was then that he happened upon numerous parallels between her writing and the books in her library. Close paraphrases, verbatim quotations—without the quotation marks—structural dependence. He was personally devastated by

his discoveries. Scholars had been aware of some of this, but not the degree of it which Rea, with an excellent memory for Mrs. White's work, uncovered. He remained of "fundamentalist" temperament, but was now a fundamentalist scorned. He became as adamant in his opposition to the prophet as he had been in his support of her. And as a result, he has had and will have a much greater impact on Adventist laymen than the scholars. He lacks the scholarly discipline and tools, but he has the sense of outrage which registers with ordinary people.

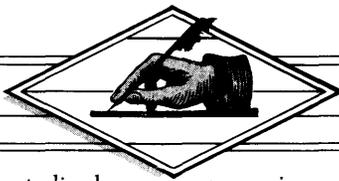
*SUNSTONE: What is your personal view of the controversy?*

**BUTLER:** My own view is that the source and redaction criticism of Mrs. White's literary efforts cannot discredit her achievement. She produced religious classics for a large, dynamic community of people. "Higher" criticism cannot possibly plumb the meaning of them. Like the phenomenologists tell us, it's not so much the text but what's "in front" of the text that engages us. Mrs. White's writings hold rich significance for people. The whole is more than the sum of the parts for them. Why texts take on this religious authority for people is the fascinating story, more so than even where they came from. Why people continue to reinterpret them from generation to generation without ever wearing them out. Why in fact a former Adventist pastor would have devoted almost twenty years trying to dismantle a corpus of writings. That in itself speaks of their significance. David Donald, the Civil War historian, finds the Lincoln myth as historically significant as the real Lincoln. I would say the same of Ellen White.

*SUNSTONE: Making sense of Ellen White is as central for Adventists then as is making sense of Joseph Smith for Mormons?*

**BUTLER:** Exactly. And right now my church is in a real paradigm shift in regard to its understanding of Ellen White. The model of inspiration with which an entire generation of Adventists have operated is crumbling all around us. Old truisms we grew up with regarding the prophetess cannot be said anymore with any kind of security. Since the revelations about her literary dependence, I hear Adventists quoting her by saying, "Ellen White (or whoever?) said, . . ." Most people in the church try to explain her literary dependence by saying that she selected only the best material, that she edited the best possible anthology. Even this formulation has hardly passed the lips of church leadership when it appears obsolete in the face of new literary findings. She drew from historians in a historical argument, for example, who were not the best among her contemporaries, who held to errors in fact as well as in judgment.

I imagine Adventists by and large will survive these historical revelations with faith in Mrs. White's inspiration intact, but it will have to be a *different* faith. My children will not grow up on the knee of the same Ellen White I did. She may be more of a grandmother to them than a mother. That is, she will retain an important and respected position in their spiritual heritage, but they will acknowledge, and be untroubled by, their historical distance from her. Already, I notice in the



religion classes I teach that a professor cannot clinch an argument with a quotation from Ellen White. Now students want some corroborating evidence, a scientific or historical authority that backs up inspiration. Students are even willing to quarrel with the prophetess on occasion, or contrast her to scripture and favor scripture. This would have been unheard of a decade ago.

One difficulty for the teacher is meeting the needs of this new generation of students with the older generation eavesdropping on the conversation—members of the Board of Trustees, parents, local ministers whose belief in Ellen White's inspiration cannot work for their children. I think their children will still believe but only on their own terms. Reinhold Niebuhr comes to mind here, where he says that it's no easy task to build up the faith of one generation without destroying the supports of faith for the other.

*SUNSTONE: You have quite a task: teaching the younger generation while staying in the good graces of the older one—especially since you work at an Adventist university.*

*BUTLER: It certainly does take the skills of a diplomat. But I firmly believe that historians and theologians have a good deal to contribute to their church. They can help church members through the breakdown of one paradigm and the rebuilding of a new one. Still they need to speak and act responsibly. It would be too bad if their potentially constructive contribution wasn't made*

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because they were just too obnoxious in trying to communicate it. Historians do have the opportunity for popularizing their history. Everything they do need not be iconoclastic revisionism. A historian with a particularly provocative thesis to get across to his religious community can spin-off some less threatening narrative history, or apologetics, or devotional material that the devout can put on their end tables and feel good about. In this case, the historian is like a musician. Sometimes it helps his cause if he can sit down at the piano and play some of the good old gospel hymns for church members. Then maybe they'll allow him to compose the more exotic contemporary music as well.

For me, there always has to be that opportunity to do history as an art form. I am happy to teach and write popularly. Editing and writing for the journal *Adventist Heritage* allows me to do this for the general Adventist public. But all this only makes sense to me if there

remains a preserve where I can truly, uncompromisingly, pursue history artistically. Not as a salesman, a popularizer, an evangelist, but an artist. Our church still struggles with this. It would rather pour all its energy and support into "marketing," to adopt a corporate business model, with nothing left for "research." (That's not even "good business" on an utterly pragmatic level.) But more than that, it fails to recognize the church needs its artists. If the church

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snuffs out its artists—its intellectuals, its scientists, its historians, and writers—that tells the world that artists have no place in that church. A basic drive of the human spirit—to think, to create—has no place in the church. Students, of course, pick this up quickly, and in an intellectually fertile period of their lives it does no good for the church's credibility to discourage their active minds.

Scholars are asked, "Why aren't you converting other scholars and intellectuals? Why do you simply raise problems for the church rather than supporting solutions?" Adventist scholars can point to the Association of Adventist Forums which is a far-flung community of Adventist scholars, professionals, ministers, and laymen, who hold meetings, entertain wide-ranging discussions of contemporary interest to the church, and publish a quarterly journal *Spectrum*. *Spectrum* started out very much like *Mormon Dialogue*. In fact, I believe there was some dependence on the part of the Adventist founders of the journal about ten years ago. In the last few years, however, *Spectrum* has shifted from a strictly professional scholar's format to more of a magazine, with increased circulation and a larger impact on church affairs. In design it falls somewhere between *Dialogue* and *SUNSTONE*.

I know many Adventists who say the only reason they've remained Adventists is due to *Spectrum* and the Adventist Forums. It seems to me this is to function evangelistically within the church. Clearly, you're not going to convert thoughtful, academic types through the usual door-to-door missionary efforts or mass evangelistic meetings. But if you can show to the world outside that intellectuals find a place within the church, they are nurtured and fulfilled there, you've done something for your evangelistic outreach. I can't bring an academic colleague to church or encourage him to remain there if his kindred spirits are being ignored or misunderstood or harassed by the church.



SUNSTONE: *But do you meet the needs of intellectuals at the expense of others?*

BUTLER: This can happen. You can be honestly trying to solve one person's problem and in doing so create a problem for somebody else. As a rule, I would rather not cause problems for anybody, but if a person has a problem then I want to grapple with it. I suppose there are always casualties, but there would be casualties either way. If you stick your head in the sand, ostrich-like, and ignore the problems there will be more ill-effects, it seems to me, than if you face the problems. C.S. Lewis commented at one point in his writing that if this chapter does not prove helpful to you, skip over it and read the next one.

I think of a student who said he had converted to Seventh-day Adventism because he believed that Adventism, unlike any other religion, had never changed. His faith, then, had been based on a naive historical sense. After a very short time in my denominational history course, he either had to reject history or mature in matters of faith. He was able to remain a believer, but based on some different assumptions. I always have a number of students who believe in Ellen White as a prophet because she never made a mistake or she was not influenced by her cultural context or she experienced no spiritual or intellectual development or she was impeccable personally. None of these assumptions hold up under historical scrutiny. For some this shatters their faith and for others it transforms their faith.

I think of the Pauline image that some are ready for milk and others for meat. We need to be sensitive to people's various "dietary needs," so to speak. But we can't nurse people on milk forever, if we ever want them to grow up. In Adventism, I sense a tremendous hunger for more substantial food. We underrate our lay people when we only spoon feed them.

SUNSTONE: *Isn't part of the problem between historians and their church that historians point up the flaws and human foibles of the church's past?*

BUTLER: Yes, that's true. The doctrine of evil is one doctrine you can believe without any leap of faith. It's plain enough even to the unbeliever. And historians cannot sift through the past very long before developing a pretty healthy doctrine of evil. People tend to be

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rascals. And the most high-minded of people, such as you find in religious institutions, can be the worst and most devious of rascals. They're as bad as other people, but they cover it up—to themselves and others—with giant moral rationalizations. Their religion becomes one more expression of human evil.

But historians can draw on theological models for their work here. In traditional Christianity, the Incarnation mingled humanity and divinity. The Christ was not only human or only divine but fully human *and* fully divine. It's been a heresy in Christian history to emphasize either Christ's divinity or humanity at the expense of the other. Historians force us to recognize a church's humanity, denying us the Docetic heresy which would completely divinize Christ's body. The historian who says that his tradition is human is not implying that

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it's *only* human. But the nature of the historical discipline constrains him to comment on simply this aspect of Christ's body. Mormons too emphasize the humanity of God in the very highest echelons of their theological doctrine. It seems to me that Mormon historians could draw upon this as a rationale for their work. In their work historians in a sense are living out the theological emphasis on God's humanity.

Martin Marty used to quote Ortega y Gasset in class at the University of Chicago to the effect that "I am I and my environment." That is, not I am I apart from my environs, my background, nor I am my environment with no "I," no potential for novelty. But both together. It's been a watchword for me as a religious historian.

SUNSTONE: *Why then is there such resistance to the scholar's efforts?*

BUTLER: One of the big problems that groups like Mormons and Adventists face is, it seems to me, our narcissism. We insist only on self-evaluation and refuse to see ourselves as others see us. We insulate ourselves from the outside and develop an unrealistic self-image. Then we're in for some surprises. Like when Captain Stormfield visited heaven in the Mark Twain story and found that earth was barely on the map and known as "The Wart."

Adventists have been covered in *Newsweek* and *Christianity Today* lately, and usually they have been disappointed and even embarrassed by such outside



coverage. There's often no specific, factual misrepresentation in these articles, but they still don't set right with Adventists. I think it's because we're not used to seeing ourselves against the larger backdrop of the outside world. We have read only our own "Chamber of Commerce" reports and believe them unequivocally, and then we see ourselves in the national press and it has a different ring to it. Take the last time that Ken Woodward wrote us up in *Newsweek* and quoted our prophetess, perfectly accurately, in her statement that evil angels will impersonate men in the last days and bedevil Adventists. In an Adventist periodical that remark would fit in. In a national magazine it seemed strange, flaky, a little sick. The wider context made this so. If the Secretary of State, for example, were to quote the Adventist prophetess before a Senate Foreign Relations Committee as an explanation for problems in Eastern Europe—evil angels are impersonating men—even the Adventists would consider him loony, and ask for his resignation. It's important, for this reason, to hold ourselves up against the larger backdrop and see how we look. This, of course, is exactly what scholars do. If we look a bit silly as a result, who's really to blame?

*SUNSTONE: Can you identify any specific problems that the church faces where the scholars might help?*

**BUTLER:** Seventh-day Adventism and Mormonism are both world churches, facing all kinds of cultures but coming from an American homeland. We need to be self-conscious about our Americanism so we're not simply transmitting cultural baggage, we're not just Americanizing people. We're drawing them into a family of God that is larger than any cultural expression of it. Sometimes it is very difficult to sort out the Americanism from the Mormonism or Seventh-day Adventism. For example, diet, which is a preoccupation in both traditions, was an American interest in the early nineteenth century. We don't say, well let's not talk diet any more because that is a fossil of American culture. I am not suggesting that. Still we ought to be aware of the fact that in American tradition there is an interest in health which is not going to be an automatic concern for a European. He doesn't relate hygienic concerns to religion. European Seventh-day Adventists simply miss some of our health and diet preoccupation; they are Seventh-day Adventists, but they are different from Americans. Too, a female prophet is not a natural European symbol. The American mom that Ellen White has become for Seventh-day Adventists does not occupy the same position for Europeans. And our American tendency toward the infallibility and inerrancy of scripture (which is carried over into our approach to the writings of Ellen White) is not naturally European. So we have a gulf to bridge, culturally even *within* Seventh-day Adventism and between Europeans and Americans.

Of course there are other places where some Americanisms resonate very well. In Latin America, people embrace Seventh-day Adventism as a kind of cultural upward mobility. The Kingdom of God means cleaning up and getting healthy and getting educated and going to Loma Linda and taking dentistry. This

upward mobility is equated with going into the Kingdom of God. So it works to the advantage as well as the disadvantage of the church—this American baggage.

I simply think we need to be self-conscious about this. We can live on the high in one area of the world and face the low in the other. But in time it will all even out. Upwardly mobile Adventists from the Third World will some day confront the same problems that Americans now face. We can continue as a church with a nineteenth century mindset and do well in areas of the world where it's still the "nineteenth century." Klaus Hansen makes this point about Mormonism and it applies as well to SDAs.

Henry Adams in 1900 looked back on the massive intellectual and technological changes over the previous 50 years that had so transformed America and said that in 1856, when he entered Harvard as a freshman, he stood as near the year 1 as the year 1900. It simply won't do in Adventism or Mormonism, anymore than in Reaganomics, to approach the world as if it's still the nineteenth century. We need to realize that we are, in most respects, as far removed from our religious founders as they were from the biblical period. Historians can help us see that.

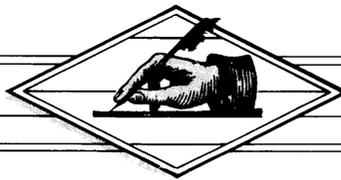
If we live under the illusion that there is no difference between the past and the present and hence try to live in the past, we will become increasingly anachronistic. Groups which do that are going to lose people. In the

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TO BLAME?*

midst of the twentieth century, does a person have to become a Victorian to become a Mormon or a Seventh-day Adventist? Certainly we grew out of a Victorian context or a Jacksonian context, but now let's take that tradition and revitalize it and translate it into more contemporary terms—in continuity with the past, but growing and building on the past.

*SUNSTONE: How does your own personal work on Ellen White fit into this historical mosaic you have been describing?*

**BUTLER:** I'm working on a psycho-pathological interpretation of the prophetess. A physician has analyzed Mrs. White's behavior and concluded it exhibits all the symptoms of left lobe epilepsy, which results from the kind of blow to the head that Ellen suffered at the age of nine when a schoolmate hit her with a rock. Detractors of the prophetess in the past have identified her as an epileptic who experienced



grand mal seizures, but quite rightly Adventists have been able to dismiss this by showing how Ellen's pattern diverged in a number of ways from the grand mal seizure. This latest study, however, is based on the epileptic "partial complex seizure," a more recent discovery of medical science, which far more closely fits

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Ellen's case. This would disturb the average church member, particularly in light of the author's claim that it provides an exhaustive explanation of the prophet's experience—the nature of her trances and visions (for example, her breathelessness), her abundant writing, her judgmentalism.

As I tried to say earlier, the church need not disregard this sort of pathological interpretation out of hand as if it allowed no place for faith. There is no question that Ellen White was ill in some sense throughout most of her life, and she was quite open about it, as Victorian women generally were. But I think the historian can offer a perspective here that a more clinical approach lacks. The historian can point out that a great many women in the nineteenth century experienced this sort of thing—visionaries, spiritualist trance mediums, and so on—and can raise a question as to whether they all had received blows to the head and suffered from partial complex seizures. Moreover, even if we should grant a disorder of this kind, have we really exhausted our understanding of the prophetess? We learn something about the *brain* of the prophet, perhaps, but nothing about the *mind*. Why would one epileptic experience sexual fantasies and another dream of the New Jerusalem? The strictly psychological explanation for a prophet fails to account for the content of his experience. And it especially falls short in accounting for his *following*.

Charisma, after all, is a sociological rather than a psychological category. Why does one epileptic command nothing more than medical attention while another enlists a following of devoted disciples, in fact generation after generation of them? Why is one man a crank, an oddball, a schizophrenic and another the founder of a religion? The prophet's "gift," in this sense, is not simply individual. It has to do with his capacity to bring a community into existence. It has to do with his believability. If we identify the prophet medically or psychoanalytically, we still need to explain what it is about one person that develops such a community while another does not. That ingredient comes closer to what we mean by "charisma."

For one thing, successful prophets, like contemporary

celebrities, can usually use a good agent. In Ellen White's case, it's hard to imagine her success without the dynamic entrepreneurial skills of her husband James. And Ellen could not have fulfilled a prophetic function without the encouragement of her community. In a five year period early in her career when her visions were not printed in the denomination's major periodical, she saw the visions diminish and assumed her work was done. Then as they resumed printing her, the visions increased once again. The symbiotic relationship between prophet and community was pretty obvious here.

It's really impossible to conceive of a "prophet," as we define it in the biblical sense, apart from community. Prophets serve a people. In the area of predictions, the prophet "prophesies" that an institution will be built here, or a program occur there, and unless a community finds this believable and goes about getting it done, the prophecy fails. The prophet finds validation for his experience in a cooperative people. All this, then, I would use to counter an aridly psycho-pathological definition of a prophet.

*SUNSTONE: Has anyone attempted a psycho-biography of Ellen White as Fawn Brodie did for Joseph Smith?*

*BUTLER: Not yet. And this would no doubt be the least palatable historical approach on Mrs. White among Adventists. Interestingly, Adventists always speak highly of *No Man Knows My History*; they recommend it for anyone who wants to understand Joseph Smith. But clearly this is not done with the self-conscious intent of endorsing psycho-biography as a methodology. When Brodie favorably reacted to Ronald Numbers' *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* with speculation in *Spectrum* as to how she might go about a psycho-historical study of the Adventist prophetess, the roof caved in on the journal. It was far and away the most explosively controversial piece that ever appeared in the ten-year history of *Spectrum*, and denominational leadership seriously discussed whether the journal should be allowed to continue or whether denominational employees should be allowed to write for it. (I might say here, parenthetically, the Mormon and Adventist intellectual communities differ in that Adventist intellectuals and academics are, for the most part, employed by the church, and therefore are directly answerable to church authorities on this kind of thing.)*

Unfortunately, where Adventists do seem to approve of a kind of psycho-history is in impugning the motives of historians—doing a layman's psychoanalysis of them—in explaining why they would write revisionist history of the church. Such reductionism is as inadequate in describing a denomination's detractors as its devotees. Finally, of course, motivations hardly matter. We ought to learn from any historical argument, if it's a good one, whatever passion or hangup inspired it.

*SUNSTONE: You mentioned Ronald Numbers's book. How did Adventists receive that book?*

*BUTLER: Ronald Numbers was, in a sense, our Fawn Brodie. His book actually was not nearly as provocative as Brodie's. It was social history of only one aspect of*



Ellen White's career—her health writings—though that is an important area of her work for Adventists. He argued first of all that Mrs. White's health teachings had not been unique and original but were derivative and commonplace for her time. Second, her health ideas were not always well-selected but were occasionally bizarre and wrong-headed. Third, she underwent considerable development and change in her thinking on health. And last, she could be disingenuous as a person in protecting her image as a prophet. Nothing in the Adventist understanding of the prophetess prepared us for such an interpretation. Even the scholars abandoned Numbers in the wake of his publication. He was dismissed from my university where he taught history of science and medicine and had distinguished himself with the precocious scholarly publishing of journal articles and another monograph. Now six years later, as research has intensified on Ellen White and the

church employment. On the other hand, writing Adventist history is not necessarily the best entree into the academic world of American religious historians. While Adventism is awfully central to my life and work, I have to admit it's rather marginal and insignificant for most people. I know there are no small parts, only small actors. But I would look a bit quizzically at another historian who has spent a decade working on, say, Phoebe Palmer. So, while you're burning a bridge behind you to your own religious community, you're not building a bridge to the outside. Both on a personal and a professional level, there seem to be real advantages in leaving Adventist history to some other historian. I have several times come to the firm decision that I wouldn't continue my research and writing on Mrs. White. But somehow I find myself back with those notecards again, shuffling through them, musing over them, and realizing that I'm at it again.

MY HISTORY IS A KIND OF  
INTROSPECTION. THERE IS AN  
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INSIDER

There are many reasons I can give for what I'm doing. Marginal figures and communities can tell us a great deal about society at large. Of course, the fascination of Americans with the Mormon story, for example, is in part because it is an exotic story. It's like a novel; we enter a different world from our own and explore its richness. But there is also an intriguing sense when we enter this world apart that there are similarities too; it speaks to our own situation. We may find intolerance there, dreams of family or future, preoccupation with diet, motherhood, or God. Though it is different, it is the same. In a paradoxical way, the marginal community becomes a way of learning about the mainstream. Mormons and Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Scientists—all these sects—preserve aspects of the American vision which are actually dimmer for Americans at large. This could be my apology for working on Ellen White and it could be the apology of Mormons working on Joseph Smith.

controversy, if anything, has only escalated, Numbers's findings no longer raise an eyebrow. They've held up over time. In our church, however, the "heretic" is never restored to the community, even if his so-called "heresy" eventually establishes itself as orthodoxy. Numbers is lost to the community in this sense. But he certainly has made it easier for other historians to function. He opened up breathing space for Adventist scholars, whether or not the scholars acknowledge it.

Being in-house, I have a unique view of that marginal community. I have access to materials which are denied to people outside. And I also have an organic sense of the community itself. I believe it was Niebuhr who said that when you are writing biographically on your own tradition it amounts to a spiritual autobiography. My history is a kind of introspection. There is an intuitive quality I have about this historical material, being an insider. When you are so close to the material, you may lack some of the perspective that the outsider can come by rather naturally. But I can tell him things.

*SUNSTONE: You're thinking of your own scholarly work on Ellen White in this respect?*

**BUTLER:** Definitely. I've published material on Mrs. White since Numbers's book which might have ended my career with the church if it had preceded *Prophetess of Health*. One of our historians did an extensive literary study of Mrs. White's historical work about the time Numbers published his book. This might have truncated his career a decade ago, but again, thanks partly to Numbers, he's now an Adventist college president.

*SUNSTONE: If such writing puts you in so precarious a position professionally, you must wonder at times whether it's worth it.*

**BUTLER:** Why I do this is a source of great wonderment to me almost all the time. In a couple of ways, writing Adventist history is something of a thankless task. On the one hand, it creates difficulties for the Adventist historian within his religious community, with the possibility of losing church membership or at least

Finally, I have to admit that the drawing power of my work is inexorable. It's more than a job to me. It's a vocation—a calling. Paradoxically, I work in this entirely human enterprise (expunged of any supernaturalist presuppositions) as a kind of spiritual, almost sacramental, act. I doubt that I'd be nearly as engrossed by any other historical materials as I am by my own Adventist past. In fact, I'm afraid to handle historical topics which do not engage or inspire me to this degree. Adventist history is my own family heirlooms, the dust in my attic, the family album. Aesthetically as well as religiously it draws me. I have a "feel" for it that I don't have for anything else.



# Let the women be silent

A non-Mormon scholar argues that Paul's advice was misunderstood

LAURENCE R. IANNACCONE

I Corinthians 14:34-36 is a problem text, an embarrassment to liberal and conservative alike. It is no surprise that few feminists applaud the command to silence women, but the demand for total silence outdoes even the most militant traditionalists as well. Those who invoke the command themselves only obey it in part, and thereby invite others to reject it altogether. As a weapon in the war of the sexes, I Corinthians 14 usually backfires. No doubt it would be ignored completely—banished to the land of difficult passages—were it not central to any discussion of women in the church. The growing concern over women's roles highlights the need for a new interpretation, one which can be believed and put into practice.

## Observations on the Text

Before proceeding to the various interpretations of I Corinthians 14:34-36, let us review the text itself and draw attention to its key words and concepts.

"The women should keep silence in the churches." The phrase "should keep silence" is a translation of the Greek verb *sigao*, which in its nine New Testament occurrences always denotes complete silence, rather than mere quietness (Luke 9:36; 20:26; Acts 12:17; 15:12, 13; Romans 16:25; I Cor. 14:28, 30, 34). Indeed, the same word appears two other times in the fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians and both times means true silence.

"For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate." "To speak" presumably refers to asking questions, speaking in tongues, praying, or prophesying. The Greek verb *laleo*, here translated "to speak," denotes normal conversation as well as formal speaking. Moreover, verse 35 explicitly states that even asking

## Editors' Note

A version of this paper was given at the 1981 Sunstone Theological Symposium.

questions is prohibited. The ban thus applies to all forms of speech in church, not merely to giving sermons or directing services.

". . . as even the law says." This allusion to the law is very puzzling, for nowhere in the Old Testament are women denied the right to speak in religious assembly. On the other hand, rabbinic oral law, which reflected the Jewish customs of Paul's day, did explicitly silence women in the synagogues.

"If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home." When rabbis taught in a synagogue or at the Temple, it was both normal and proper for the listeners to ask questions and interject comments. The statement above denies women the right to participate in this standard give and take learning process. If a woman desires clarification or has something to contribute, she must wait until she has returned home, and there, in private, may speak to her husband. It follows that a woman who is unmarried, widowed, or married to an unbeliever lacks even this indirect means of expression (although, perhaps, she may speak through other male relatives such as a father, brother, or son).

"For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church." The prohibitions in verses 34 and 35 are reinforced with a very strong word (*aiskron*, here translated as "shameful," and appearing also in I Cor. 11:6, Eph. 5:12, and Titus 1:11). The author seems to regard the very sound of a woman's voice in church as a sin against God and a crime against nature.

"What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?" The exclamation combines anger and disbelief. Paul appears to be accusing his readers of taking the word of God into their own hands. It is not altogether clear, however, just what or whom he is attacking.

### The Traditional Interpretation

Traditionally, Christians have interpreted I Corinthians 14:34-36 as a scathing attack on anyone who dared permit women to pray, prophesy, or ask questions in public. Allowing a woman to say anything in church was so obviously inexcusable that the apostle Paul dismissed the practice in a mere five sentences, saying: (1) Women are to maintain total silence in church (as is the custom everywhere). (2) This ruling is supported by God's law (i.e., the Old Testament scriptures). (3) If women must express themselves, it should only be in private and through their husbands. (4) Anything more is a "shameful" violation of tradition, tantamount to rewriting God's word. The final verses of the chapter possibly extend this argument by emphasizing Paul's apostolic authority but more likely return to and conclude the discussion of spiritual gifts which comprises most of chapters 12 through 14. Thus, verses 34-36 are seen as Paul's stern response to a flagrant and infuriating heresy.

It should be no surprise that this interpretation has been used to drastically limit the ministries of Christian women and to justify all manner of sex discrimination in Christian churches. Despite its longstanding popularity, however, the traditional interpretation is flawed and untenable. It is loaded with inconsistencies and contradictions.

### DESPITE ITS LONGSTANDING POPULARITY, THE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION IS FLAWED AND UNTENABLE, LOADED WITH INCONSISTENCIES AND CONTRADICTIONS.

#### *Problems of Context*

The command to silence women appears as a new and unrelated topic in an otherwise unbroken exposition on the gifts and life of the Christian body, beginning in chapter 12 and extending through chapter 14. The transitions both to and from the topic are so abrupt that several commentators conclude that verses 34-36 were inserted by an overly zealous scribe, and even the proponents of the traditional interpretation concede that Paul must have added these verses as a parenthetical afterthought, since a better place for them would have been together with his earlier discussion of women in chapter 11.

#### *Problems of Authority*

Verses 34 and 35 demand silence as a matter of obedience to the law: "The women . . . are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says." Now, Paul never referred to non-biblical writings, or traditions, or personal opinions as "the law." Instead, he either used the term abstractly, to denote God's old Covenant with Israel<sup>2</sup>, or concretely, to refer to specific Old Testament passages. (See, for example, verse 21,

where "the law" refers to Isaiah 28:11-12.) But verses 34 and 35 violate this pattern, for although Jewish tradition and rabbinic oral law required women to remain silent during religious services, the Old Testament clearly did not. Apart from Paul's own writings, not one verse in all the Bible suggests that "the women should keep silence in the churches." It follows that the command to keep silence either (1) was based on a misinterpretation of scripture, or (2) was derived from Jewish customs and rabbinic sayings.

Since neither of these alternatives enhances the apostle's image, scholars have often suggested that "the law" was an allusion to Genesis 3:16. But Genesis 3:16 says nothing about silence, concerns marital relationships rather than sex roles in general, and in any case is a curse, not a commandment.<sup>3</sup>

To the woman he [God] said, "I will greatly multiply thy pains and thy groanings; in pain thou shalt bring forth children, yet thou art turning to thy husband and he will rule over thee." (Septuagint Version.)<sup>4</sup>

It is true that Jewish rabbis often reworked this statement into elaborate proofs of woman's inferiority, and Saul the Pharisee was probably familiar with such stories; but it is hard to believe that Paul the Apostle would have based his teachings on speculative legends concerning "the ten curses of Eve."<sup>5</sup> Otherwise, one is forced to accept Barclay's conclusion that "Paul, in his conception of the place of women within the church, was unable to rise above the [rabbinic] ideas which he had known all his life."<sup>6</sup> In short, the unsubstantiated reference to "the law" is totally uncharacteristic of Paul.

#### *Problems of Consistency*

Nowhere else in his epistle to the Corinthians does Paul indicate that women ought to remain silent. On the contrary, his statements in chapter 11 clearly imply that they may both pray and prophesy in public:

Any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head . . . Judge for yourselves; is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? (I Cor. 11:5, 13.)

Now, it would have been senseless for Paul to encourage women to wear veils while prophesying, if at the same time he was insisting that they not even speak. Following the traditional interpretation one must surely conclude that the real offense in Corinth was not that women were prophesying *unveiled*, but that they were prophesying *at all!* This contradiction is especially striking given the proximity of the two statements; scarcely an hour of dictation could have separated 11:5 from 14:34. It would appear that the apostle either deliberately contradicted himself or else was blind to the obvious inconsistency of his statements.

Some commentators seek to resolve this dilemma by suggesting that Paul had difficulty making up his mind about women, that he initially allowed them to pray and prophesy and then later decided to silence them. But the language of 14:34-36 is not the least bit indecisive—its author claims to stand firmly on the word of God, and the length and language of the discussion in chapter 11 indicate a position that is no less strong or carefully considered. Moreover, if Paul had decided to reverse his original position, he would have explained his reasons or

would have removed his original statements; he certainly would not have rebuked the Corinthians for believing what he himself had advocated just hours before!

The command to silence women also contradicts the general spirit of Paul's epistle. Chapters 12 through 14 repeatedly emphasize that the church is an organic unity, a body in which each member is indispensable and none may be excluded:

For by one Spirit we were *all* baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and *all* were made to drink of one Spirit. . . . there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable. (1 Cor. 12:13, 20-22.)

The traditional interpretation implies that after claiming "We are all baptised into one body . . . [so that] the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,'" Paul proceeded with an apostolic wave of his hand to tell his

### IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SENSELESS FOR PAUL TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO WEAR VEILS WHILE PROPHECYING, IF AT THE SAME TIME HE WAS INSISTING THAT THEY NOT EVEN SPEAK.

Christian sisters, "I have no need of you." Yet in chapter 14 itself, Paul repeatedly stressed that the church is most effective when "all" participate in its services:

Now I want you *all* to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy (14:5).

If *all* prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by *all*, he is called to account by *all*, . . . (14:24).

For you can *all* prophesy one by one, so that *all* may learn and *all* be encouraged. . . (14:31).

Verse 26 demonstrates that the group may participate in instruction and hymn singing as well as tongues and prophecy:

When you come together, *each one* has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation (14:26).

And Paul concluded his argument with a plea to let the gifts flow freely:

So my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues, . . . (14:40).

According to the traditional interpretation, Paul broke off this extended sermon on church unity, in four sentences disenfranchised half the congregation from ever contributing a word in public, and never saw a contradiction. In other words, he really had meant:

Now I want all you [men] to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy.

If all [the men] prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider

enters, he is convicted by all [the men], he is called to account by all [the men].

For you [men] can all prophesy one by one. . .

When you come together, each one [man] has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.

So, my [male] brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid [the men] speaking in tongues, [but do forbid the women].

If this is indeed what Paul meant, then he must never even have considered women a part of the "all" that comprised the congregation, and when he wrote, "we are all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all made to drink of one Spirit" he must have excluded women as a matter of course. To accuse the apostle of such blind and irrational prejudice is both distasteful and unreasonable. After all, it was Paul himself who in Galatians 3 boldly claimed that the church transcends all boundaries of nationality, social status, and sex.<sup>8</sup>

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are *all* one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:27-28.)

#### *Problems of Application*

According to the traditional interpretation, Paul silenced women as a matter of obedience to divine law. His statements in I Corinthians merely reiterated what had always been the standard procedure ordained by God. But, in fact, there is not one trace of scriptural evidence that silence ever was standard. Not only does the Bible not require it, it actually records numerous examples of the very opposite! We have already seen that Paul himself implicitly permitted women to pray and prophesy in public, and explicitly encouraged "all" to prophesy and contribute "a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation" when they assembled together. Many other scriptures also affirm the right of women to speak in public and in the presence of men. Huldah instructed Israel's most powerful leaders concerning the law of Moses (II Kings 22:14-20). The prophetess Deborah used to sit under a palm tree "in the hill country of Ephraim; and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment" (Judges 4:4-5). Miriam, Noadiah, and Isaiah's wife are also described as prophetesses. In the New Testament, Luke records Mary's prophetic song (Luke 1:46-55) and mentions that Phillip had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:8-9). He also tells of Priscilla, who with her husband Aquila instructed the great preacher and evangelist Apollos concerning the Holy Spirit (Acts 18:24-26). One might quibble as to whether these women actually spoke "in church" (although, clearly, this is quibbling, since the New Testament always speaks of "the church" as the group of believers rather than the place where they meet or the services they attend) but in at least two cases even this objection fails. The first occurred when Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the temple to be circumcised, and there in the temple a prophetess named Anna "spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:36-38). The second was at Pentacost when the believers "were *all* together in one place. . . and

they were *all* filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues . . . telling the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:1-4, 11).

If the traditional interpretation is hard to reconcile with the actual ministries of women in the Bible, it is even harder to reconcile with the activities of women today. Rhetoric notwithstanding, nobody really accepts the demands of I Corinthians 14:34-35. People cling to the traditional interpretation not because they believe it (the demand for total silence outdoes even the most uncompromising traditionalist) but rather because it helps to justify traditional sex roles and male dominance in the church.

Consider the most militant supporters of the traditional interpretation. Typically they are fundamentalists who steadfastly affirm that "the Bible must be taken literally." Yet, in practice they refuse to apply their own standards of interpretation to the passage. While insisting that Paul decreed total silence, they themselves use the text only to limit certain forms of speech in certain situations. They introduce numerous distinctions that have nothing to do with Corinthians 14.

For example, in many churches a woman may pray or testify from a pew but not from the pulpit, whereas she may sing or read from either location. In many she may teach children and teenagers, but only until they grow up. Among adults she is permitted to comment and ask questions but not to "lead"—that is, unless no adult males are present, in which case she again becomes qualified to teach. In some churches a woman may lead "discussions" but not "studies"; in others she may lead Bible studies but only in the presence of a male "co-director"; and in still others she may "teach" but not "preach."

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If there is biblical basis to any of these distinctions it certainly is not I Corinthians, and any attempt to rationalize such regulations with appeals to it rests solely on sophistry and prejudice. Apart from private conversations with one's husband, the Corinthian demand for silence knows no exceptions. Many will object that requiring women to be truly silent in church is carrying things too far, but that is just the point. If the interpretation leads to conclusions that are absurd and unchristian, then the appropriate response is not to gloss over that fact but to question the interpretation in the light of it. The fundamentalist must endure the logic of his position. He must either totally silence women or

else abandon the traditional interpretation and until he has found an acceptable alternative refuse to apply the passage at all. He is not free simply to pick and choose; he cannot require others to accept "the law" that he himself only obeys in part. Otherwise he engages in the kind of hypocrisy that Paul denounced in Romans 2:1-3.

Therefore you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. . . . Do you suppose, O man, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God?

*Conclusion*

What can be said for the traditional interpretation? Very little. Had it not been so useful for keeping women in "their place" it would have died out long ago. It implies that in I Corinthians 14:34-36 Paul made a series of statements which were out of context, out of character, unsubstantiated, inconsistent with the rest of his epistle, contradicted by the actual ministries of women in the Bible, and impossible to apply to today's churches. Perhaps any one of these problems could be dismissed or ignored if it stood alone, but together they leave us no rational alternative but to reject the traditional interpretation and search for a more reasonable explanation.

**Alternative Interpretations**

Finding an acceptable alternative to the traditional interpretation is easier said than done. The standard suggestions rely on tenuous assumptions and often create more problems than they solve.

As already indicated, it is difficult to defend the contention that Paul never intended to literally "silence" women, only to keep them quiet and submissive. The passage in fact demands "silence," using a Greek word which denotes complete silence and applies not only to sermons and prophecy but also to ordinary conversations.

What about the theory that Paul meant only to silence the women in Corinth, that verses 34-36 applied to a special problem unique to the Corinthian church?<sup>9</sup> In a sense this solves the problems of application, but the problems of context, authority, and consistency still remain. (Why does the command appear in chapter 14? What is "the law?" Why require "silence" after permitting prayer and prophecy in chapter 11?) Moreover, there is not the slightest indication that Paul was discussing a special case. On the contrary, the language and logic of the passage are universal. "The law" should apply equally to all, and indeed the command is directed toward "the churches," not just the one in Corinth.

Some commentators have suggested that Paul did not write verses 34-36, that they were added as a marginal note in a time when male dominance was thought more important than the freedom of the Spirit and were accidentally incorporated into the main text by some overly zealous copyist anxious to keep women in their place. But this is pure speculation, an unsubstantiated theory that solves problems only by ignoring them. The textual evidence all points toward the authenticity of verses 34-36; they appear in every existing manuscript of the epistle, and there are not even significant

variations in wording among them.<sup>10</sup> Challenging the authenticity of verses 34-36 is a desperation tactic that substitutes wishful thinking for scholarly evidence.

There are, of course, other interpretations of the passage that have been suggested by scholars, but most are merely variations on the ones above.<sup>11</sup>

## PAUL'S OPPOSITION TO SEX DISCRIMINATION IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS COMMITMENT TO CHRISTIAN UNITY AND HIS OTHER STATEMENTS CONCERNING WOMEN.

### A New Approach

We seem to be caught on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, there is strong evidence that Paul would never have silenced his sisters in Christ. And yet, on the other hand, there is no doubt that such a command appears in his epistle. The apparent paradox can be resolved only by interpreting verses 34 and 35 as a quotation, a statement which first appeared in a letter the Corinthians sent Paul. In his reply (the epistle we call I Corinthians), Paul quoted the Corinthian statement and then sharply criticized it in the verses which followed. Thus, the command to silence women neither originated with Paul nor received his approval. On the contrary, it rested on rabbinic tradition and exemplified the kind of Pharisaic legalism that he always opposed.<sup>12</sup>

The quotation would naturally have originated among the Judaizers, Pharisaic Christians who insisted that salvation required obedience to "the law of Moses" (Acts 15:1, 5). The Pharisees taught that only part of the Mosaic law had been recorded in the scriptures; the rest was embodied in traditions known as the "oral" law. Since women were required to maintain total silence in Jewish synagogues, the Judaizers naturally extended this custom to Christian circles as a matter of obedience to "the law." But Paul was not about to accede to their demands (any more than he was about to revert to circumcision). He replied, "What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached? [How dare you take God's words into your own hands, quoting oral law as though it carried the weight of scripture or revelation?] If any one thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing you [namely, that "all may prophesy"] is a command of the Lord. If any one does not recognize this he is not recognized." And he concluded with a plea to let God's gifts flow freely: "So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues." Thus, an amplified version of the text might read as follows:

What then, brethren? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. . . . For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn

and all be encouraged. . . . [Now, some of you claim that,] The women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

[But I reply,] What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached? If any one thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing you [that "all may prophesy"] is a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. (I Cor. 14:26, 31, 34-39.)

This reading resolves all major problems of the text. Paul's opposition to sex discrimination is completely consistent with his previous commitment to Christian unity. It is also consistent with his other statements concerning women<sup>13</sup> and the actual ministries of women recorded in the Bible. Previously, verses 34-36 seemed out of context, but now one may appreciate Paul's choice of background. He deliberately placed the Corinthian quotation where its perversity would be most evident. Having devoted nearly three chapters to the theme of Christian unity, it was perfectly natural for him to cite and attack their restriction on women. By placing the quotation after chapters 12-14, Paul effectively said, "Look, discriminating against our sisters contradicts everything I've been saying about unity and cooperation within the church."

### *Evident that 34-35 is a Quotation*

Ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament contain none of the punctuation or quotation marks that appear in our English Bibles; the marks have been added by translators in order to facilitate readings and interpretation. They reflect the judgment of the translators but not necessarily the intent of the original author. Usually, the appropriate marks are evident from the context, but some cases are less obvious. Identifying quotations that are not introduced by the formula "So and so said" is especially difficult. A quotation is likely whenever (a) other quotations are found in the document, (b) the probable identity of the speaker is easily determined, and (c) the statement in question makes more sense coming from that speaker than from the author of the document. It turns out that verses 34 and 35 of I Corinthians 14 satisfy all of these conditions.

1. I Corinthians is a response to the problems of the Corinthian church, problems which had been "reported" to Paul and written to him in an official church letter. For example, his "appeal. . . that there be no dissention" in the church is a response to the fact that "it has been reported . . . that there is quarreling" (I Cor. 1:10-11). Chapter five responds to the fact that "it is actually reported that there is immorality among you. . ." (I Cor. 5:1). And chapter fifteen concerns the resurrection because "some of you say there is no resurrection from the dead" (I Cor. 15:12). Since most of the issues Paul addressed had been first raised by the Corinthians, it would be perfectly natural for him to preface many of his remarks with references to theirs.

2. The letter which the Corinthian church sent Paul

must have included questions about male-female relationships, since Paul's discussion of marriage in chapter 7 begins with the statement, "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote," and his discussion

### THE COMMAND TO SILENCE WOMEN ALMOST CERTAINLY DERIVED FROM JEWISH ORAL LAW, TRADITIONS PASSED DOWN BY PHARISAIC RABBIS AND ULTI- MATELY WRITTEN IN THE TALMUD.

about women veiling begins with the admonition, "I commend you because you . . . maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you" (I Cor. 11:2). Indeed, no other epistle devotes so much attention to women. Whatever else the Corinthians may have asked, we know that the issue of women was one of their main concerns.

3. There is little doubt that Paul quoted portions of the Corinthians' letter in his epistle. At least eight passages have been identified as quotations by many scholars, and the Revised Standard Version distinguishes quotations in each of the passages below.<sup>14</sup>

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. (I Cor. 6:12, 13.)

Now concerning food offered to idols, we know that "all of us possess knowledge." "Knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. (I Cor. 8:1).

Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one." (I Cor. 8:4.)

But some will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish man, what you sow does not come to life unless it dies. (I Cor. 15:35-36.)

Notice that in most cases the quotations are not introduced by the formula "So and so says." Moreover, Paul only quotes statements that he wishes to criticize or modify and often follows them with an attack on the positions they reflect. Verses 34 and 35 thus conform to the pattern of the other quotations in the epistle.

4. The command to silence women almost certainly derived from Jewish oral law, traditions that were passed down by Pharisaic rabbis and ultimately committed to writing in the Talmud. The majority of Talmudic sayings concerning male-female relationships clearly favored male dominance and male superiority. Rabbi Eliezer, a contemporary of Paul, claimed that only males should be instructed in the law, and that "whoever teaches his daughter the law teaches her obscenity." He also claimed that there was no wisdom in a woman beyond her spinning and decreed, "Let the words of the

law be burned rather than committed to women."<sup>15</sup> Philo, another contemporary of Paul, wrote at length concerning the inferiority of women, whom he described as "imperfect and depraved by nature."<sup>16</sup> In the temple, women could go no farther than the court of the women, which was located only five steps below the court of the Gentiles and fifteen steps below the court of the men. In the synagogues they were likewise segregated—kept behind screens and in separate chambers. A prayer to be recited daily by orthodox males stated, "Praise be to God . . . that he has not created me a woman."<sup>17</sup> Moreover, a number of Talmudic sayings explicitly denied women the right to speak in public: "Out of respect to the congregation, a woman should not herself read law." "It is a shame for a woman to let her voice be heard among men." "The voice of a woman is filthy nakedness."<sup>18</sup> Verses 34-35 of I Corinthians 14 virtually recite these sayings verbatim. Thus, the command to "keep silence . . . as even the law says" almost certainly refers to rabbinic oral law. Given Paul's consistent opposition to Pharisaic legalism, it is much more likely to have come from his Judaizing opponents than from Paul himself.

### VIEWED AS A QUOTATION WHICH PAUL CONDEMNED, THE DEMAND FOR SILENCE NO LONGER SEEMS INCONSISTENT AND OUT OF CONTEXT.

5. Although Paul did not explicitly refer to Judaizers in Corinth, they probably were present in the church by the time he wrote his first epistle to them. We know that "dissensions" and "quarreling" and led to "divisions" and "factions" within the church (I Cor. 1:10-13; 11:17-19). The group who claimed, "I belong to Cephas," probably were Judaizers. Paul had opposed Cephas (Peter) in Galatia in a dispute over Jewish tradition (Gal. 2:11-15), so it should be no surprise if those opposing Paul's liberal, Gentile orientation chose Peter, "the apostle to the Jews," as their figurehead. The opposition to eating foods offered to idols (chapters 8-10) and the insistence that women wear veils (chapter 11) also seem to reflect the concerns of Jewish Christians, and it is unlikely that Judaizers could have become Paul's major concern by the time he wrote his second epistle (see II Cor. 3:1-4:4) had they not been present when he wrote his first.

### Conclusion

The preceding discussion provides a radically different perspective on the biblical ministries of women. The very text which seemed to condone sex discrimination may really have condemned it. In this view, the traditional interpretation has been entirely transformed: what was heralded as God's law has been

exposed as an infuriating heresy, and a classic proof of male superiority has given way to a case for sexual equality.

It is both ironic and tragic that rather than "all may prophesy" and that "there is neither male nor female in Christ," Christians traditionally have demanded that "the women should keep silence." In restricting the ministries of their sisters they have sided with the very people Paul denounced and adopted the very slogans he abhorred. It was unintentional, of course. Yet the fact remains that when it comes to women, Christians may have more readily accepted the attitude of Paul's opponents than that of Paul himself. Rabbinic sexism has permeated the church. This is not the sort of sin that can be atoned for merely by saying, "Sorry. We were wrong." Christians must go beyond apologies and purge their churches of the sexist institutions that grew up around the traditional interpret I Corinthians; for if the interpretation is wrong then certainly the regulations derived from it are no better. Rather than being the sacred guardians of male supremacy, Christians must accept the biblical imperative to counter any form of discrimination with the words, "What! Did the word of God originate in you, or are you the only ones it has reached?" The Church is one body—no member may be disenfranchised, no minority may be muzzled. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

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#### Notes

1. Some translations add the last portion of verse 33 to the beginning of verse 34 so as to emphasize the universal scope of the command: "As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. . . ." But, it is more likely that "as in all the churches of the saints" is the conclusion to the first part of verse 33. See Barrett, p. 330, and Robertson and Plummer, p. 324.

2. Romans 7, II Corinthians 3, Galatians 3, etc.

3. For a detailed discussion, this verse and other aspects of Genesis 1-3 that relate to marriage and sex roles, see Iannaccone, pp. 29-57.

4. I have quoted from the Septuagint in this case, since it was the version most common in Paul's day and the one from which he usually quoted.

5. Bushnell, par. 105-106.

6. Barclay, p. 151.

7. Barrett, p. 331.

8. Galatians 3:27-28, I Corinthians 12:13, and the "alls" in I Corinthians 14 clearly refer to the same corporate entity: the church, to which all baptised Christians belong.

9. Barrett, p. 331.

10. The Western Text places verses 34-36 after verse 40, but most commentators conclude that this variation represents a scribal attempt to smooth out the passage by moving the command to a less conspicuous location, and in any case even this family of manuscripts does not omit it completely. See Barrett, p. 332, Schmithals, p. 327, *The Interpreter's Bible*, p. 213.

11. The most popular explanation not covered in the text is a variation on the traditional interpretation that might be called the "male chauvinist" theory. It accepts that Paul did indeed mean to silence women but views this as the consequence of his rabbinic upbringing and personal prejudice. Thus, the command is ignored because it is tainted with sexism. In the words of William Barclay, "Paul, in his conception of the place of women within the church, was unable to rise above the ideas which he had known all his life." But this conclusion is contradicted by the many times Paul clearly did rise above those ideas, particularly in Galatians 3:28. Moreover, it does not resolve the problems of context, authority, or consistency which plague the traditional interpretation; it just excuses them with apologies for Paul's irrationality. See Barclay, p. 151-152, Andrews p. 95-98, *The Interpreter's Bible*, p. 125-129, 212-213.

12. Katherine C. Bushnell, in her book, *God's Word to Women*, was the first Bible scholar in modern times to argue that I Corinthians 14:34-35 is a quotation. Helen B. Montgomery, an eminent missionary and president of the American Baptist denomination from 1921 to 1922, designated the text as a quotation in her *Centenary Translation of the New Testament*, and Lee A. Starr, Jessie Penn-Lewis, and Dorothy Pape also refer to Bushnell's interpretation. Apart from these five, however, virtually no other commentators discuss the possibility of verses 34 and 35 being a quotation. They seem to be entirely unaware of that interpretation.

13. It is important to recognize that I Timothy 2:11-12, the text most often quoted in conjunction with I Corinthians 14:34-36, concerns marital relationships, not church sex roles, and encourages wives merely to be "quiet," not silent. Like the submission passages in Ephesians, Colossians, and I Peter, the Timothy text is concerned solely with domestic relationships. See Iannaccone, pp. 89-141.

14. See Hurd, p. 68, for a list of over fifteen commentators who each think at least five of the following are quotations: 6:12; 6:13; 7:1; 8:1; 8:4; 8:5f; 8:8; 11:2. In 15:35 Paul quotes a question which he anticipates and which was implicit in the position taken by some of the Corinthians.

15. See Bushnell, p. 202, Swidler, p. 154-157, and *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 776-789, for complete citations and extensive discussion of women in the Talmud and Jewish traditions.

16. Andrews, p. 97.

17. Swidler, p. 155.

18. Bushnell, p. 202.

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# THE AESTHETICS OF THE ENDOWMENT

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Artistic considerations weigh against abandoning the live-action endowment

Michael Hicks

FOR all the discussion of “Mormon” art, its potentials and pitfalls, little, if anything, has been said of our most significant and indigenous artistic model, the endowment. Certainly its most immediate effect is sensory, aesthetic. As a complex ritual it combines in unique architectural settings elements of narrative, acting, recitation, pantomime, costume, painting, and more recently, lighting effects and film. This blend can and ought to be evaluated in aesthetic terms—particularly now, a time in which the trend is toward replacing live-action endowment with film endowment, a crucial aesthetic alteration.

The endowment is not just theatre, nor film, nor pantomime, and so on. It is, in design and intent, a unique form in contemporary western culture. But for our purposes it is useful to work from this premise: the traditional endowment is most closely akin to theatre. It is so in a general way, simply by its use of a basic theatrical feature—acted-out narrative. More specifically, the endowment contains several features generally associated with the theatre of the *avant-garde*.<sup>1</sup>

First, in the traditional endowment, actors and audience are enclosed in one setting. There is no stage; or, more accurately, performers and spectators are on stage simultaneously, thus blurring the distinction between the two. That distinction is further confused by the use of alternating narrative sequences that shift in

point of view. In some, certain characters are explicitly to be identified with by the spectators. In other sequences, the spectators are to be referred to and addressed as separate characters in their own right, namely a congregation. Endowments performed for the dead are even more complicated. One is told to identify himself with a person who is dead—a person usually never known before and, in effect, experienced only in the imagination of the vicarious worker—for whom the endowment is being experienced. In these cases the relationship of performer to spectator, and spectator to aesthetic space, is clearly as complex as in the most experimental theatre, if not more so.

Second, because all participants begin enclosed together in a fixed aesthetic space, scene changes are effected by a physical exodus of actors and audience and their entry (direct or indirect) into another setting. Such physical movement from setting to setting is qualitatively different from between-scenes blackouts, a common feature of recent traditional western theatre. It also constitutes more than mere reorientation to the reality of physical surroundings, as opposed to represented surroundings, and real time, as opposed to represented time. Rather, by the orderly fashion in which it is carried out, it constitutes a separate artistic gesture, that of a conventionalized processional.

A third “experimental” feature of the endowment is

the transposition and mingling of widely variegated historical time, place, and incident into one aesthetic time, place, and incident. Because of this, certain unique effects are inevitable. Characters, for example, can function as themselves, when placed in their proper historical situation; at other times, by displacement, they can become symbols or types.

Fourth, there is a certain improvisatory quality to each rendition of the endowment ceremony. Performers very often work together for the first time in a performance itself. There is no rehearsal, no director, no controlling human intelligence orchestrating individual

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performances into a cohesive whole. In practice this creates a texture of varying approaches and interpretations. This lack of cohesion can sometimes be extreme. Thus, one frequently encounters a strange fluctuation between plain recitation, wherein a performer seems to believe the text carries its full import devoid of human expression or emotional interpretation; and heightened speech, wherein the performer feels free to *act*, to freely express and emote.

At the center of such conflicting styles of rendition lies a unique feature of the endowment: its text has little or no aesthetic existence outside of its performance. It cannot be contemplated or appreciated for itself (as can a play). This is not to say there is no script. But it is deliberately made unavailable for contemplation. Let us qualify this. The written particulars of the endowment are accessible to a relative handful of people—temple leaders, high church officials, and so on. Various transcriptions of witnessed endowments are occasionally published as expose, but these are not comparable to authoritative scripts in theatre or screen plays in film, wherein a text is authored first to be read and then later produced. That most Latter-day Saints simply refuse to study these transcriptions (aside from the question of their accuracy) reflects perhaps an intuitive sense of the endowment's essential integrity of medium, as much as a mistrust of the documents' sources. Reading such transcriptions leaves one cold, not merely for the betrayal of the promises of secrecy once made by their authors, but for the aesthetic implausibility of reducing the endowment to the printed word; it becomes thin, bloodless. Reading these transcriptions is somewhat analogous to listening to piano reductions of a well-known symphony.

Another unique feature of the endowment is its

extreme elitist quality. It is a far cry from the public art to which we have become accustomed, one in which there is no criterion for admission but money. Performances of the endowment are circumscribed by worthiness recommends and are only to be appreciated by those who have proven themselves spiritually sensible.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the ritual can be performed only in ceremonially sanctified buildings which are erected for few other purposes than to house its enactment. A corollary of this elitist quality is the endowment's lack of commercial potential. It is unquestionably art; yet it is produced outside the realm of commission, profit



motive, or any sense of "box-office." Whatever pressures are brought to bear on the ritual, then, will be of a significantly different order than many of the pressures on theatre or film creation and performance.

Because these aesthetic and cultural features of the endowment are so rarely considered, radical changes in presentation are readily made and accepted. This fact and the fact that so much discussion of the temple focuses on the "meaning" behind the endowment together confirm the existence of what we may call the *interpretive fallacy* of the endowment. This fallacy reveals itself in the preoccupation with what any myth, ritual, or art *means*, rather than what it *is*, and, more importantly, what it by nature *does*. Susan Sontag wisely suggests that one who is thus bent on interpretation really says that he finds the work in question somehow unacceptable or outmoded in terms other than its own. When figurative scripture or ritual is viewed only in this way, the emphasis shifts from experience to "comprehension": what does the endowment, the ritual drama, mean? rather than, what is it to be endowed?

Consider our colloquial terminology. We often hear of "taking out" endowments, as though the actual endowment were something to be extracted from the ritual experience, something we get out of it, rather than the experience itself. A more precise and helpful terminology would speak of "being endowed." This suggests that the experience itself does something to us, changes of itself our spiritual status and perceptive powers (compare "being baptized"). Continually looking for what can be gotten from the endowment, what message or moral or theological truth might be contained in it, ignores the unconventional beauty of construction and visceral power that constitute this endowment—that is, gift—from God. Proper

appreciation of these and other features demands that we be less caught up with hermeneutics and be content to “feel more than we understand.”<sup>3</sup>

If we thus concern ourselves with what the endowment is and does, we must then ask, can film by its nature do the same things as live performers? In some sense, yes. It can visually transmit human form, expression, gesture, and, through the recorded soundtrack, language. But even if visual, auditory, and other sensuous impressions could be accurately duplicated and transmitted, our belief in extra-sensory spiritual existence would compel us to admit a



qualitative difference between real beings and even the most meticulous representations of them. The sharpest, cleanest film images in the endowment can never compensate for the fact that movies are essentially discrete, without spirit, while human experience is continuous, spiritually charged. In live-action endowment there is a potential for spiritual and energetic transmission not found in film endowment. This is so by the nature and consistency of the different media.<sup>4</sup> And, beyond this, the illusive character of the film medium inverts a basic theme of temple experience: instead of inculcating the sensation that what is not seen is really there, film reinforces its disturbing opposite—that what is seen is not really there.

When presenting narrative characters, the film medium creates a specific and problematic consideration, namely the fixity of characterization. The problem of film characterization is most succinctly explained by Erwin Panofsky in his essay, “Style and Medium in the Motion Picture.”<sup>5</sup> He insists that, in contrast to theatre characters, the characters portrayed in film “have no aesthetic existence outside of the actors” because they are created to be played once only. This assessment is reasonable for most film characters, but is not strictly accurate in the case of the endowment for two reasons. First, film endowment is designed to be regularly refilmed using different actors. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the characters appear and are referred to in other contexts such as the scriptures. On the other hand, numerous viewings of a fixed, undeviating performance—the exception for general film viewing, but the rule for the endowment—create strong associations and identifications. Therefore when a new film appears one may feel alienated from the work for a time; or, when a character is encountered in

another context one may easily begin to have a film-conditioned image of him. If, however, one is not alienated from a new film, it will often be because one prefers the new film, or specifically, the portrayal of one or more characters. In any case, because of fixity of performance—especially with more stylized roles such as Satan—one may be at odds with the same endowment performance for years, and thereby be driven from aesthetic satisfaction in the characters.

The unique properties of film art are rarely argued in terms of enhancing characterization, however, but rather in terms of film’s potential to expand aesthetic or

**B**y continuing the live-action endowment we will enrich the imaginative processes best suited to deep endowment experience.

contemplated space. Again, Panofsky: in the theatre “space is static, that is, the space represented on the stage, as well as the spatial relation of the beholder to the spectacle, are unalterably fixed.” In movies, he continues, the situation is reversed. The spectator is in constant aesthetic motion, the contemplated space continually shifting as the “eye identifies itself with the lens of the camera.” He is correct in a sense. Yet one must constantly remember that it is the *illusion* of space that film creates and plays upon. Whether this is a desirable alternative in endowment practice is debatable, particularly if we compare it to the aesthetic enclosure of endowment rooms and the physical movement of participants from setting to setting—clearly different from the theatrical situation Panofsky envisions. Although the simulation of spatial interest and variety is achieved by the lens-eye identification, the net effect is the reduction of the area of contemplated space. Instead of the traditional head-turning to study the enclosing surfaces, their architecture and decoration, we are drawn to a relatively small rectangular surface of reflected light in an otherwise darkened room. Less of the actual physical space is appreciated or appreciable.

There is, admittedly, a certain value to literal film representation of natural scenic beauty in creation sequences. It incites to a contemplation of the majesty and beauty of God’s works. Were this the only intent of the endowment, however, the temple enclosure itself would be unnecessary, even self-defeating. It is reasonable to propose an intrinsic purpose to the design and enclosure of endowment rooms which are themselves representational. One function of the temple is to heighten perception of what is there to be appreciated, among which are the inherent properties of sacred architecture, craftsmanship, and temple space.

The tendency of film is to divert the mind from its physical location to another location that is literally yet illusively depicted by moving pictures.

Moreover, the quest for literalism in the endowment has extended far beyond on-location scenic filming. It has engendered the use of sets, props, costuming, make-up, and special effects. These, of course, are scarcely present in a traditional live-action endowment wherein we find a "poor theatre," using Grotowski's non-pejorative terminology.<sup>6</sup> "Poor theatre" is theatre stripped of unessentials, one that focuses on gesture. As Grotowski argues, the acceptance of such a poverty in

the movie house, our most immediate response is to production values: is it good special effects technique? Specifically, are the effects adequate to create the illusion of reality? rather than, do they illuminate and excite to a contemplation of the miracle of creation itself? Refinement of production values can produce a positive response to the former question but not necessarily to the latter. Ritual values disregard the former entirely, unconcerned as they are with conventional experience of the world.

The same difficulties arise in connection with other production values. In the end, a film may or may not be

**T**he nearer we attempt film literalism, the more we risk screening the essence of the endowment with technique.



theatre will reveal "not only the backbone of the medium but also the deep riches which lie in the very nature of the art-form." We cannot rehearse his entire uniqueness argument here. Suffice it to say, by continuing the "impoverished" live-action endowment we will probably enrich the imaginative processes best suited to deep endowment experience. For, accepting that the endowment narrative is highly imaginative in construction and untrue to conventional experience, it is logical to present it in a highly imaginative way. The nearer we attempt film literalism, the more we risk screening the essence with technique.

But confusion of values is perhaps the greater danger. Confusion of values is the natural result of transposing the endowment from a form with which we in the West are basically unfamiliar, into a form with which we are quite familiar. We have few preconceived ideas about ritual. We sense the foreignness of the medium and are more bound to accept it on its own terms. However, by the time we are mature enough to be endowed we are usually far more familiar with film. We often have a relatively refined, if inarticulate, sense of production values and technical achievement and consequently a strong sense of taste in the medium. When ritual experience is converted to film experience, confusion of values is almost inevitable. In such a case, one responds negatively or positively to what is a value of the film and unknowingly takes it for a response to the endowment per se.

Consider special effects. The film world has shown itself increasingly prodigious in creating by special effects the illusion of the miraculous, the unprecedented, and the majestic. Therefore, when we view less sophisticated, even simplistic effects—scenes of earth's creation for example, whether in the temple or

comparable even to other films, or a ritual to other rituals. But since film is from its origins a medium of technology, even when housing a ritual drama it cannot be approached without technological concerns. These concerns can easily mask the direct, unencumbered features of the endowment. The mixture of these two media makes each clumsy and difficult to properly appreciate or evaluate.

My point is simple: whatever the utilitarian advantages of film endowments in terms of pace, accuracy, dependability, multi-lingual use, and conservation of human energy, there are aesthetic considerations of potentially great consequence that weight heavily against the abandonment of live-action endowment. Whether one agrees with the specifics of this endowment theory or not, the need for such discussions should be apparent. Only active, ever-broadening perception of all the features of our religious experience will reveal the texture and worth of it.

#### Notes

1. However these are really permutations and borrowings from the techniques of ritual.
2. Though not necessarily aesthetically sensible. A fault of much so-called temple preparation is the neglect of aesthetic preparation. This could well include attendance at dramatic productions, and the public rituals of other faiths, e.g. the Catholic mass, Orthodox weddings, etc.
3. See Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (New York: Scribner's, 1964), p. 75.
4. This, incidentally, is the argument of some avant-garde theorists, e.g. Grotowski, who argue the unique expressive capabilities of live theatre.
5. See *Critique* 1 (January-February 1947).
6. Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968).

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PETER STEINFELS

# ABORTION, RELIGION AND THE CONSTITUTION

*A Catholic writer explores a divisive issue*

**A**BORTION is a terribly difficult matter to discuss. When I explained to a friend that I was talking on "Abortion, Religion, and the Constitution" in Salt Lake City, she gave me a strange look—as though to check whether my eyes were bloodshot or I was frothing a little at the mouth.

"In Salt Lake City?" she asked.

I nodded.

"Before an audience you know nothing about, right?"

I nodded.

"On *abortion*?"

I nodded again.

"Well," she said, "I'm not exactly sure what your position on abortion is, but obviously you have no moral objections to suicide!"

If one accepted as true the impression of each side in the abortion debate that one gets from the other side—if pro-choicers are right about right-to-lifers and if right-to-lifers are right about pro-choicers—then one would have to conclude that a special mechanism was at work here: some kind of political and religious filtering device that sorted out from the entire American population the most hypocritical, the most repressive, the most self-centered, the most callous, the most authoritarian, the most elitist, the most just plain nasty people in the society and distributed them evenly between the

activists in the pro-choice and right-to-life ranks. However, my impression is quite the opposite—some of the most concerned and conscientious people in our society are to be found highly visible in the ranks of both sides.

Why, then, this focus on all the shortcomings of the opposition? One reason is that abortion involves death. Just what it is that dies—and whether that death is justified—is, of course, part of the debate. But death there is, and death is hard to deal with—which is why it is easier to look at a lot of peripheral questions like the moral failings or inconsistencies of our opponents.

I edited a book about death—but I'm not very good at dealing with it. I'm not very good at condolences, for example. Partly because I'm a coward. Partly because I'm a writer and an editor and I have a strong sense of the cheapness, almost the tawdriness, of all but the greatest prayers and poems in the face of death. That is the way, I need hardly add, that I feel about words in the face of abortion. Whether we think of the terrible toll of a million and a half abortions a year or the single abortion that is chosen in anguish by a friend, an acquaintance, or family member, words pale before the reality. But words are all I have to work with this evening. So I take courage from something the Catholic theologian Richard McCormick wrote:

**B**oth positions reflect a sad fact about our culture—the belief among too many that our deepest values cannot be challenged and reformed or affirmed by reasonable discussion.

Abortion is a matter that is morally problematic, pastorally delicate, legislatively thorny, constitutionally insecure, ecumenically divisive, medically normless, humanly anguishing, racially provocative, journalistically abused, personally biased, and widely performed. It demands a most extraordinary discipline of moral thought, one that is penetrating without being impenetrable, humanly compassionate without being morally compromising, legally realistic without being morally positivistic, instructed by cognate disciplines without being determined by them, informed by tradition without being enslaved by it. . . . Abortion, therefore, is a severe testing ground for moral reflection.

Noting that abortion may well be “a paradigm of the way we will face other human problems in the future,” he adds, “Many of us are bone-weary of the subject, but we cannot afford to indulge this fatigue. . . .” (Richard McCormick, *How Brave a New World*, 118-19.)

I see three ways in which abortion is thought of as a “religious issue.” At least one of these ways has been argued to have a direct bearing on the constitutionality of legislation restricting abortion. All affect the way that abortion should be treated in a pluralistic society.

**T**HE first way in which abortion is said to be a “religious issue” has usually been put forward by those opposed to laws restricting access to abortion. It is true that the views on abortion of some pro-choice advocates have a religious basis. But when they describe abortion as a religious issue, what they usually mean is that the *opposition* to abortion is essentially religious in nature. Religious here refers to something beyond ordinary grasp of reasoning, something that can be known and held only by an act of faith, something that is defined by a theology and affirmed, taught, and celebrated by an existing tradition, faith, or church.

Now the opposition to abortion rests largely on a belief about the human fetus—that it is the sort of entity (some would say a human *life*, or a human *individual*, or a human *person*) that is as deserving of protection from destruction as the newborn infant or the grown adult. And this belief, say at least some pro-choice spokespeople, is—can only be—a religious one. It is the result of theological doctrine or church teaching or a supernatural experience. It may depend, for example, on an authoritative interpretation of passages in sacred scripture. Or it may derive from the notion that every human individual is animated with an immortal soul directly or indirectly created by God at the first moment of life, a soul of infinite value in the eyes of God and demanding respect and protection from human society.

If people want to hold such religious beliefs, and act on them in their own cases, continue these pro-choice advocates, all fine and good. That is their right. But by insisting that *others* be obliged to act in accordance with such religious beliefs, anti-abortionists cross the line set up by the First Amendment that separates church and state and prohibits the legal establishment of religion.

Jehovah's Witnesses, to choose another example, have every right to exercise their religious beliefs by refusing blood transfusions for themselves, but it would be unconstitutional if they extended this religious proscription to the rest of the nation by somehow instituting a law prohibiting blood transfusions for everyone. To ban abortion, in this view of the matter, is to force others to conform to religious beliefs which they do not hold, which they may even have considered carefully and conscientiously rejected.

What are we to make of this argument? The first thing is to recognize the evidence that no doubt makes it persuasive to those who put it forward. It is undeniably the case, first of all, that throughout history, religious beliefs have been the major source of attitudes toward abortion and that it is within specific theological traditions that most of the debates about hard cases concerning abortion have been conducted. It is also true that religious beliefs are a major source today of Americans' views on abortion. Orthodox Judaism, Mormonism, some branches of Lutheranism, and a good part of evangelical Protestantism are agreed with Roman Catholicism in concluding that abortion is rarely, if ever, permissible. And no one can deny the crucial role taken by the Catholic church and religious activists from these other traditions in organizing the opposition to the Supreme Court's 1973 decision on abortion.

Is all this sufficient evidence to support the case that abortion is a religious issue—a religious issue in precisely the sense that to ban abortion, or to limit access to it, would be an unconstitutional imposition of religious beliefs and a violation both of church-state separation and the accepted norms of American pluralism?

My answer, of course, is no. And this is the answer, also, of the courts that have authoritatively dealt with the question. One gets a hint of why this should turn out to be the case as soon as one notices that list of faiths which have been outstanding in their anti-abortion posture. Orthodox Judaism, Mormonism, Roman Catholicism, and evangelical Protestantism—a curious list, indeed. Could one possibly find—at least in this nation—a grouping with more dramatic differences in doctrine—even as regards abortion itself—and with so many historical suspicions and antagonisms? How is it that such different faiths, different theologies, different structures and traditions of teaching authority, have converged on the same practical conclusion? One immediately suspects that there is some more general moral intuition at work here, an intuition these various doctrines each express in their particularistic ways. The same suspicion arises when one studies public opinion on abortion and discovers how much the division of opinion falls within churches as well as between them; and how even among Catholics, despite their church's clear-cut and uncompromising position, the rejection and toleration of abortion is shaded in a way not conforming to the church's formal teaching. Clearly

**M**any of us are bone-weary of the subject, but we cannot afford to indulge this fatigue.

there are other grounds for making up one's mind on this agonizing subject. Clearly there are grounds independent of theological or religious authority.

Of course there are such grounds. Orthodox Jews may originally derive their views on abortion from the Torah or Talmud, Catholics from the church fathers or the popes, Lutherans from Martin Luther or their synods. But all can offer to their fellow Americans an array of philosophical or non-religious ethical grounds for opposing abortion. These are grounds having to do with the common good, with consistency in defining and protecting human life, with the implications of our society's fundamental political and legal principles. Not all these arguments may be equally persuasive—or persuasive at all. But no one who is aware of the sizable library of philosophical and legal and medical literature on abortion and on the definition and rights of fetal life can deny that such arguments, whatever their worth, are there, and that they are not *religious* in the sense that they rely on an act of faith or on religious authority.

Return to the case of the Jehovah's Witnesses and blood transfusions. Is it truly parallel to the question of abortion? We might note, to begin with, that in regard to the morality of blood transfusions, there exist no body of nonreligious literature comparable to that on the morality of abortion. But let us imagine that such nonreligious literature did exist. Let us imagine that a significant current of opinion grew up, perhaps even prompted by Jehovah's Witnesses, holding that blood transfusions were somehow unhealthy, or discriminatory, or demeaning to free and equal citizens, or a wasteful use of a limited natural resource; and that, therefore, such transfusions should be banned. Such arguments might be ludicrous, but ludicrous theories have been known to gain wide followings; and if that one should win over a majority and a ban on transfusions be written into law, it might be unfortunate, it might be unconstitutional on some other grounds, but it would not be a "religious" matter that violated the principle of church-state separation.

Now let us quit fantasy for an actual episode in this century's history—Prohibition. Whether or not the movement for Prohibition of alcoholic beverages was prompted by the religious beliefs of temperance leaders, Methodists, and otherwise, there were still plenty of non-religious, secular grounds for instituting a ban on this powerful and widely-abused drug. The Great Experiment, as it turned out, failed. It was self-defeating. It only partially prevented the evils it took aim at, while provoking a mass of new evils it had not anticipated. Perhaps the religious leanings and longings of its proponents caused them to advance the multiple *secular* reasons for Prohibition without sufficient care and caution, but that does not expunge the fact that such secular reasons did exist. Prohibition may have been—I believe it was—a terrible political mistake; it was not an unconstitutional one.

It was in the litigation about Medicaid funding for

abortion that pro-choice lawyers proposed the idea that opposition to abortion was so exclusively or predominantly a religious matter that Congress could not legislate in this area without trampling on the First Amendment. Two courts commented on this notion, and although they divided on other matters, they agreed in rejecting the pro-choice argument about religion.

Wrote Judge John F. Dooling of the U.S. District Court in Brooklyn: "The argument from the establishment clause must be rejected." Even if the enactments under challenge reflected one religious view, he wrote, that "would not be decisive." In any case, he reminded his readers, the Hyde amendment reflected a view represented "in most state statutes of a generation ago"; it did not become a narrowly religious view "because, after 1973, the most vigorous spokesmen for it put their case in religious terms, and grounded them in religious reasons."

It is clear that the healthy working of our political order cannot safely forego the political action of the churches, or discourage it. The reliance, as always, must be on giving an alert and critical hearing to every informed voice, and the spokesmen of religious institutions must not be discouraged, nor inhibited by the fear that their support of legislation, or explicit lobbying for such legislation, will result in its being constitutionally suspect.

The Supreme Court was more terse: The fact that a statute "happens to coincide or harmonize with the tenets of some or all religions," wrote the Court, does not mean it violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment. "That the Judaeo-Christian religions oppose stealing does not mean that a state or the federal government may not, consistent with the establishment clause, enact laws prohibiting larceny."

In the course of characterizing opposition to abortion as essentially "religious" in nature, some pro-choice advocates proposed a sharp contrast between *scientifically* established truths and *religious* ones. Only the former, they said, should be allowed into the forum of discussion when laws are being passed. Since science could reach no agreement about whether conception or any other moment in fetal development entitled the unborn entity to all the rights of a "person," then there was no other basis—except, of course the improper one—for reaching a decision on this crucial question.

Now this set of alternatives—either a scientifically-based truth or a religiously-based one—is surely too narrow. The fact is that science provides no consensus on many, if not most, of the deepest human questions. Throughout history, there has been no scientific agreement that individuals, or races, or sexes, are fundamentally equal. There is no scientific agreement that societies that elevate individual liberty or care for the weak or allow open discussion or practice representative democracy or refrain from wars of conquest are necessarily longer lasting. Must we therefore abstain from judgment on the basic questions of social morality while we await a scientific verdict?

**I**n our day doubts have been expressed about whether confidence in human intervention combined with dismissal of older, limiting kinds of wisdom and morality can lead us anywhere but toward catastrophe.

What this false set of alternatives leaves out is that there is a kind of moral reasoning, informed by science, informed by philosophy and political thought, informed by religious traditions and by common experience, that can legitimately be the basis for majority decisions in a pluralistic society.

Curiously enough, anti-abortion activists have frequently erected a kind of mirror version of the pro-choice argument about the absence of a scientific consensus. In effect, they *agree* that the moral status of fetal life can be settled by science. It can be shown that the complete "genetic package" of a distinct human individual is present from the time of conception—and that settles that. This was the drift of the hearings that Senator John East held a year ago on the question of when human life begins. But, in fact, that doesn't settle that. The question under debate is not whether the fetus, from the moment of conception, is human life as opposed to, say, vegetable or fish life. The question is not even whether the fetus, although dependent upon its mother, is in fact an independent and self-developing organism. The question is ultimately whether this stage of development—a dynamic but still microscopic being of a handful of cells—is deserving of the full protection under law that is the accepted right of the child or adult. I understand the case of those who answer that question yes; I even find their case plausible. But they are mistaken if they think it rests on scientific facts alone without the additional support of a number of philosophical principles and moral values.

Sometimes this appeal by anti-abortionists to hard, scientific fact is made in reaction—in *overreaction*—to the charge that their case is a religious one. In their different sorts of appeals to science, both these defenders and these opponents of abortion short-circuit the discussion. The one says, look, in the absence of a scientific or medical consensus on the value of fetal life, we have no other resources for reaching a conclusion about the morality of abortion. The other says, look, in view of the scientific fact about conception marking the beginning of a genetically distinct individual, we *need* no other resources for reaching a decision about the morality of abortion. Both positions reflect a decision about the morality of abortion. Both positions reflect a sad fact about the state of our culture: the belief among too many people that our deepest values cannot be discussed and challenged and reformed or affirmed by reasonable discussion—that they must be, on the one hand, scientifically verifiable or, on the other hand, a matter of either religious faith or mere arbitrary opinion.

**I** WOULD like to turn now to a second sense in which the abortion issue has been described as "religious." This is the sense of "religious" that refers less to the source of beliefs and more to the manner in which they are held. For many people, abortion is an issue that stirs fervor, that compels them in a way we associate with religion. Abortion presents them with a challenge, an

imperative, an obligation that goes beyond the everyday ones. The issue is presented in religious language, with religiously evocative references and symbols. I have recently read two books by opponents of abortion: one was titled *Slaughter of the Innocents*, the other *Rachel Weeping*. Even when the political debate and contest is conducted, strictly speaking, in secular terms, it is infused with religious feeling; it becomes part of a cosmic struggle of good and evil, life and death; it elicits condemnations; it refuses compromise.

This is what pro-choice spokespeople have in mind, at least in part, when they refer to the anti-abortion movement as "absolutist." They are usually unaware of the extent to which their own efforts partake of the same or of a parallel spirit. But the religious element—which is, after all, an outstanding element in almost all American political struggles—does present problems. It should not be left to non-believers to recall the tragic results to which religious militancy has often given rise—the persecutions, violence, wars, hatreds, that so dismayed and disgusted many of the educated classes of Europe in the centuries after the Reformation that they turned to scepticism and laid the foundations for what various fundamentalists are today wont to denounce as secular humanism.

When a political struggle takes on the character of a religious crusade, there are at least three dangers that readily present themselves. The first is to assume that the adversaries' adherence to a different position stems not from a difference of principle or even from a commonly respected value that is held by the other side in different proportion, or applied in a different way, but that it stems from moral laxity. The second is to assume that law and morality should be identical. The third is to assume that compromise is impossible.

I have already mentioned my impression that the abortion issue, when compared to other political struggles, probably has a much higher, rather than lower, proportion of morally conscientious and concerned people engaged on both sides. But both sides have enormous blind spots in regard to the other. The pro-choice activists refuse—at least publicly—to take seriously the anti-abortionists' concern for fetal life. The anti-abortionists, on the other hand, refuse to perceive that the question of fetal life is simply not so clear, particularly in its earlier stages. After all, one of the world's great faiths, the parent of Christianity, has never recognized the fetus as a "person" in the full sense, even when it would not allow abortion on other grounds. If this was true for a great religion, true even in regard to the fully developed fetus, is it surprising that others do not perceive the moral status of the developing human individual at stages of early cell division, or before the heart starts beating, or the basic spinal and nervous structure is present, or before brain activity begins, or before the fetus has taken on even a miniscule human resemblance, or before it can feel pain? Anti-abortionists can present their reasons—and they are not inconsiderable ones—why fetal life even at these stages

**S**ome of the most concerned and conscientious people in our society are to be found highly visible in the ranks of both sides of the abortion question.

should be valued so highly that tragic consequences must be incurred by the fully grown adult who is the mother. But anti-abortionists are wrong if they assume, as I believe they often do, that those reasons have the same compelling clarity as, say, their protests of later-stage abortions, when the fetus has so visibly and completely the aspects of a tiny infant.

In their religious dedication, anti-abortionists are also apt to assume that law and morality must be congruent. Yet one principle of morality, in fact in Aristotle's view the guiding principle for the practical application of morality, is *prudence*. Prudence takes into account the actual circumstances in which morality must be realized. As regards the law, prudence allows for the fact that if it is to be respected, law cannot deviate too far from the public consensus on an issue, even if that consensus does not represent the highest morality. Now we know that the public's views on abortion are considerably at odds with those enacted into law by the Supreme Court's decision of 1973. Most Americans believe that the unborn individual deserves greater legal protection than the justices would grant; most reject abortion-on-demand; most oppose abortions after the first trimester; most are unhappy with the idea of abortion as a means of family planning or for social and economic reasons rather than because of a serious threat to the mother or a serious genetic deformity.

But it must be equally noted that the public's views of abortion are also considerably at odds with the alternative proposal of the right-to-life movement—a constitutional amendment banning almost all abortions. A constitutional amendment of that sort will be widely flouted in practice; when enforced it will create sympathetic martyrs, and martyrs will enlarge public aggravation with the anti-abortion position and undermine its moral credibility. Just as Protestant political influence in America was never regained after the demise of Prohibition, so I believe that the anti-abortion forces will destroy their own influence by passing legislation that far outstrips what is the public consensus on abortion and the significance of fetal life. Of course, it is easy to understand how the logic of the anti-abortion position pushes them to that conclusion. But does not the ancient virtue of prudence dictate that they should not try to enforce by law *everything* that they believe should be observed by morality?

This brings me to my last point under this heading. Can there be a compromise on this issue? It has often been noted that a question like abortion, unlike one such as economic equality or tax reform or a labor dispute, does not lend itself to compromise. You cannot very well "split the difference." But I believe that the possibilities for compromise are greater than have been recognized. One form of compromise, of course, is the proposal to return the question to the individual states, where it was before the Supreme Court's 1973 intervention. That would result in an uneven pattern of laws across the country—an unsatisfactory resolution in many ways,

but one, nonetheless, that allows for the uneven views of the public to be better expressed. A second form of compromise would be a constitutional amendment that prohibited abortion, except in life-threatening circumstances, after the point—either 10 or 12 weeks\*—by which time the most dramatic development of the fetus is complete—and reserved any further limits on earlier abortions to the individual states. At this point, neither the pro-choice nor right-to-life movements are willing to entertain thoughts of compromise. Such thoughts offend the religious spirit that animates them both.

I have so far considered two senses in which the abortion is said to be "religious." I have argued that it is not *religious* in the sense that opposition to abortion can be based only on an act of faith or a theological authority. I have argued that it *is* religious in the sense that it draws upon our strongest sentiments about good and bad and that therefore it risks the danger, on both sides, of reducing adversaries to morally blameworthy caricatures and of making any sane and viable compromise impossible.

**F**INALLY, I would like to discuss a third sense in which the abortion issue has been said to be "religious." This is the broadest meaning of that word—the sense in which it indicates some very fundamental stance toward the world and life. In this sense, again, it could be said that both sides in the abortion dispute are "religious." Since the pro-choice movement generally presents itself as secular, one has to discover for oneself what "religious" stance the movement actually represents. Many would say, the religion of choice itself, a deep commitment to individual autonomy against socially imposed norms. And this, no doubt, is part of the story.

Yet it is a puzzling part of the story. For once again, it leaves the fetus out of the picture. If the fetus is *not* left out of the picture, then it must be admitted that abortion certainly cuts off any possibility of *its* ever expressing choice, of the fetus ever enjoying any individual autonomy. A deep commitment to choice and autonomy does not explain why the boundaries of those who are to enjoy this self-direction should be circumscribed in this particular way, so as to exclude the living but not-yet-born.

I think the answer to that puzzle lies in another deep moral impulse that informs the pro-choice movement. And that is the heritage of humanitarianism which for two centuries has recoiled from and then striven to eliminate *visible* suffering. In demanding deliberate measures to remove obvious evils, this effort has often had to affirm the validity of planned human intervention

\*Further reading and reflection on the facts of fetal development and their implications for a moral-political judgment in this area have convinced me that these dates are too late and that a legal limit would be more appropriately set at 8 weeks. I argued the case for a law of this sort in the 20 November 1981 issue of *Commonweal*.

# Must we abstain from judgment on the basic questions of social morality while we await a scientific verdict?

against those who insisted that the status quo reflected some underlying natural order which society could not impiously disrupt without suffering some eventual natural retribution. Though humanitarianism often protested the conditions consequent upon industrialization and urbanization, though occasionally it nursed a nostalgia for a stable, pastoral world, it was in fact a sharer in the optimistic, dynamic spirit that brushed aside pre-modern custom and religion in its headlong dismissal of pre-modern attitudes toward natural limits. In our own day, however, doubts, and even anguish, have been expressed about whether this confidence in human intervention combined with a dismissal of older, limiting kinds of wisdom and morality can lead us anywhere but toward catastrophe. Industrialization ignored the values that were not productive in the near term; humanitarianism has ignored the denials of human dignity that could not be directly seen and felt. In reacting to the depredations of nature that the first of these forces has caused, one Supreme Court justice even urged that swamps and woodpeckers be considered legal persons entitled to due process protection. "The problem," wrote William O. Douglas, "is to make certain that the inanimate objects, which are the very core of America's beauty, have spokesmen before they are destroyed." One wonders whether those who would recognize swamps and woodpeckers and inanimate objects as legal persons will admit the tragic irony of their denial of legal personhood to the unborn human—and will possibly admit that fetal lives, too, deserve to "have spokesmen before they are destroyed."

Just as the determining deep commitment of the pro-choice movement may appear to be individual autonomy, the fundamental stance of the anti-abortion movement is sometimes described as pro-family, a term which evokes images of discipline and stability to its admirers, of sexual repression and patriarchy to its critics. Yet again, this cannot be the whole story, no matter whose version one prefers. There is no conclusive evidence I know of showing that abortion cannot coexist comfortably, as in Japanese society, with strong family attachments, discipline, and stability. Many of those middle-class women who avail themselves of abortion can no doubt argue that they are doing so for the stability and well-being of their existing family. As for patriarchy, one of the fiercest examples of the patriarchal family—the Roman—was associated with the legitimacy of abortion and even infanticide. It was against this very patriarchal order that Christianity raised a challenge—insisting that there were values overriding parental rights and there were claims that transcended family ties.

So while it is true that a cluster of attitudes about sexuality and the family does often mark the right-to-life movement, I would argue that the fundamental impulse of the anti-abortion position needs to be located elsewhere. One Christian ethicist—a West Texas Methodist who calls himself a high-church Mennonite

and teaches in a theology department at a Catholic university—has written that "what is at stake in the fetus's existence is a fundamental option about our status as" humans, specifically, that "we must learn to regard another's life as good because it has being, not just because it is useful." And Richard McCormick has seen the traditional Christian position opposing abortion as rooted in an understanding of "God's special and costing love for each individual—for fetal life, infant life, senescent life, disabled life, captive life, enslaved life, yes, and most of all, unwanted life."

If this is the case, then—that at the deepest level the anti-abortion position is an affirmation that the universe, in some godly way, does really want the unwanted—well, it has profound implications beyond the abortion issue itself. It means for example a strong contradiction with any outlook that honors the robust and the productive individual at the expense of the vulnerable and the dependent. If the essential equality of all human creatures before God is at the root of the anti-abortion impulse, then right-to-lifers ought to consider the position of a friend of mine who is both a feminist and an opponent of abortion—and who believes that the same moral force underlies both the Human Life Amendment for the unborn and the Equal Rights Amendment for women. And if the right-to-life movement claims that there is a common humanity that must outweigh our desires for independence and our individual strivings, then it ought to recognize the curious coincidence between the slogan "freedom of choice" and the title "Freedom to Choose" that was chosen by Milton Friedman to sum up the *laissez-faire* economic philosophy now so honored in our nation's capital.

Abortion, I have argued, is not a religious issue in the sense that would bring the recognition of the rights of the unborn under the constitutional prohibition of a religious establishment. Abortion, I have argued, has been all-too-religious an issue insofar as it has frequently provoked the worst excesses of religious strife. And finally, as a problem that reveals or forces us back to our very fundamental stances toward the world and our place in it, abortion is indeed a religious issue and one that ought to pose even further and broader questions to those who have taken a stand on it.

But at this point, what was to be a lecture runs the risk of becoming a sermon, and for that you may want to invite a guest with a different kind of credentials.

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# AUNT TEO

A STORY BY ALISON BOOTH

**T**HE only time I ever saw Aunt Teo was in 1913; I know because she died before the War. She came home by train to Ogden in the spring, and Father went up there to get her. I just have this picture of a tall elegant woman getting down from the wagon as though she was leaving such things behind; her gloved hand trailing, her head bowed under the auburn hair and gauze and feathers, not really seeing us. I nearly died: there was Father in overalls. Our wagon had no springs, wasn't even painted. Here was tragedy come home, and we had flies in our kitchen. I was twenty-two then.

Daphne was married by then, and I was going up to North Fork to work in the camp again that summer, it

seemed to help my asthma, so Aunt Teo was put in our bed, wrapped in miles of lace. My sister Hilda told me years later it frightened her to death having to bring up the tray of bread and milk—you know how we broke up the bread into the glass of milk with honey—Aunt Teo said in all her life she'd never tasted anything better, and that's all she would eat by then. Hilda said she'd never seen such hair, almost purple, and she got so skinny and yellow toward the end. We were surprised that anyone from California could look like she'd lived in a hospital.

Mother was furious at the funeral—it must have been September, I was back home by then—when only five Caldwells besides us showed up. I heard from some of them afterward that they just didn't know what to make of Theodora's coming back here; by the time they got used to it, she died and it just seemed too late to make it up.

#### Editor's Note

*This story won third place in the 1982 D.K. Brown Memorial Fiction Contest.*

You see Grandfather, your great-great grandfather Caldwell, had three wives, Martha, Harriet, and Stella. Mother said you could always tell which wife a Caldwell came from, and it's true down to your generation. Martha was Mother's mother; Harriet was Teo's. Martha's children were better off in every way, but Harriet's were a lot more interesting to watch. Stella's just seemed to fade away.

Mother dates all the trouble in the family from when Harriet, Teo's mother, arrived on the scene. Grandma had got used to having her husband to herself, you see. Then one spring Grandpa came back from Conference in Salt Lake with a dozen fruit tree seedlings, five horses (he was in the livestock business), and Harriet Dinton, a young convert just in from England. She looked refreshed from her long walk across the Plains, and Grandmother used to say that should have been a warning: anyone who could thrive on that—Grandmother had been through it herself—had to be made of different stuff.

A man in Grandfather's position would have felt like a soldier who refused to fight if he didn't practice celestial marriage—as they called polygamy then. A plural wife shared and enhanced her husband's glory in heaven, however she complicated things here. Aunt Teo's mother was a catch, a devout, handsome, skillful woman, but I gather she knew how to drive everyone crazy. But this comes from Mother, who saw everything from the main house, through Grandmother's eyes.

In the photograph, Aunt Harriet looks like a queen, a little skinny by their standards, really exotic. She had been a steamstress for highborn ladies and thought a lot of herself; there was nothing she couldn't do almost better than Grandmother. She always had her way with Grandfather. But there were no fights outright; they were living in the manner of the Old Testament Patriarchs, and no one was going to be the first to complain. If Grandfather spent more time than he ought to over in Aunt Harriet's adobe cottage, I never heard about it. She had ten children—she died in childbirth when Aunt Teo was twelve—but Grandmother had nine, and Stella, before she died at thirty, had four little angels that didn't live long. Aunt Harriet made Grandfather promise all her children an education, but she didn't live to keep him to it. He wasn't mean, just that every hand was needed, and children worked from the day they could walk. Everyone said Harriet had put grand ideas in her children's heads that spoiled them for useful work. They were dreamers, really. Three of the boys ran away to the railroad.

When Harriet died, Martha set things straight again. She was the only living mother to twenty-three children, and there just wasn't enough to go around. In the main house, Martha got to the sacks of flour and beans, the year's shoes or cloth, first. Mother

remembered looking out the kitchen window, seeing the chickens scatter and calling, "Here comes Teo!" the way they used to call, "Here come the Indians!" It got to be a joke, Teo storming up for an equal share of goods. She just didn't have her mother's icy way of getting things.

It must have been awful, a little girl trying to take care of five little children—the four others were old enough to do for themselves. She just decided early on that everyone was against her. Once, Mother said, a neighbor who was none too good a housekeeper herself saw Teo's baby sister and said, "Oh, you poor little thing, you wouldn't look like that if your mother was alive." Teo took it all very much to heart. She never got over when Grandfather sent Mother to the Academy and wouldn't send her. He didn't like her temper. Anyone so fast off the handle wasn't suited to teach, he said, and I have to agree; you need the patience of Job, which was always my trouble in the classroom.

Later she seemed to settle down a bit; she stopped throwing tantrums. She had a way of dressing herself like a fashionplate, her corsets tight and her hair curled, that was a torment to Grandfather. He made her go back and straighten up before she went out. Supposedly she was plain, but she never stood out a dance, and Mother said she kept her beaux as busy with each other as with her. Grandfather once stepped into the dancefloor and took her out for forgetting herself. She stormed out of the hall and couldn't be found when the family went home. In the morning she walked home still in her spotless frilled dress. No one could get out of her where she had been all night, but Grandfather confined her to her house for a week.

The summer she was eighteen she just took off for Salt Lake City. That was a great distance then, though it was only sixty miles, for a girl to travel alone. She sent a postcard saying she had work in the Z.C.M.I. and was rooming with Aunt Martha's second cousin. She told Mother after Grandfather had gone and got her home that she had also been a waitress in the Coffee Shop of Hotel Utah, but she didn't want to tell her father that. Other girls at the time might have done what Teo did and no one would mind, but Grandfather had some notions about what was right for his girls; shop work was too common. Besides, it was really a battle by then, her defying him.

That fall he brought a young man to stay with them, a returned missionary named Hollis Granger. He was to teach the younger children for his keep, though it was obvious to everyone but Teo that he was really there to marry her. Fortunately for Grandfather's scheme, Granger was a smooth man. He had been to Europe, spoke a kind of French, dressed better than any man Teo had seen. He lent her books, danced with her, complimented her taste in hats, but didn't gape or mewl over her. In fact, Mother said he hardly seemed

interested, he spent so much time talking Church business with Grandfather. It was too much for Teo; she fell madly in love.

Mother said it was a terrible marriage right from the start. After the wedding night in Logan—they had to go up there to the Temple, that was before the one in Salt Lake was finished—she came sulking home alone. Brother Granger had only told her then that he'd been called by the Church to Washington, couldn't even see her home. Once again she wasn't getting her share, she thought. And living at home again, she was just impossible.

Eventually Granger put her in a house of her own down in Provo, and Mother lost sight of her for a while. Then suddenly she turned up on Mother's doorstep with a baby—Camille—and a trunk of her fine things; Mother had married by then and was living here in Delphi. Teo refused to speak of her husband, but when women showed up on doorsteps back then—it was during all the persecution for polygamy—no one pried. Then she took off again with her baby, leaving her pretty linens and trinkets, and they're still in our family. She had cousins in Idaho, an aunt in Alberta; once Mother got a letter from Butte announcing a son, Roland. Granger paid her visits when their travels crossed. So long as everyone kept moving, there was hope of keeping out of the federal agent's hands.

The next thing anyone heard, Teo was in Salt Lake City and Granger was serving a sentence for cohabitation. That was five years after she married. He had five wives, it turned out—probably as much news to Teo as to anyone else. Toward the end, the wives were kept secret from each other so that they couldn't testify against their husbands. There was no shame in going to jail for that; I've seen framed pictures of men in prison stripes displayed on people's pianos. But I'm not sure that man wasn't better off in jail; there was something about Church money. Mother said she never did trust him, and she had pretty harsh words for a man who didn't look after his wives.

Grandfather drove to Salt Lake after Teo again, but came back with Camille and Roland instead. Everyone thought he was sorry for Granger, he was so downcast, but then Mother saw his copy of the Salt Lake Tribune, the Gentile paper, and that was how they found out that Teo had turned her husband in.

That took a lot of thinking and praying. Mother dreamed that Teo lost the war in heaven and cast herself down on burning wings. She was quoted in the papers saying some awful things about the Church, saying her father had sold her off and her husband had left her to work for her bread and then taken money from her when he came to enjoy his conjugal rights. She said women were no better than slaves in Mormondom, that the Church Fathers used tithings for their own benefit.

The family thought she must have fallen in with bad company, or someone had forced her to say such things. Gossip made the rounds that a Fed had seduced her—or she had flung herself at him, depending on who told it. No Caldwell allowed that, until Aunt Maggie said she had seen Teo alone on the train with a man in a mustache and gaiters. Mother's heart sank, figuring Teo had found a man fancier than Granger and could not resist.

Aunt Teo didn't have to be told to keep away. She never saw Grandfather again, and he would have refused to see her. He kept her children from her, and Aunt Elysia raised them as her own. Teo tried to make a legal objection to that, but she'd lost her credibility in the Gentile courts, too.

I don't think anyone in our family, except maybe Teo, felt worse after the Manifesto in 1890. Mother said when the Church gave in to the Supreme Court and banned polygamy everyone sighed, as though we could finally admit this is the earth and not heaven after all. But there were a lot of widows overnight, and after seven years of living hand to mouth and pillar to post, Teo must have felt cheated of a cause. Her marriage had been annulled two years by then, and she had been busy living as free as she could. In the nineties, the early days of Deseret must have seemed long gone. Salt Lake was a city, Gentiles were everywhere, the railroads and the mines had made everything racier, and the Church was in a bad way since the U.S. Government had tried to take it apart. About this time the Church invested in a salt factory out by the lakeshore and a big resort concern called Saltair. By the time I saw it, it was past its glory, but it still looked like a mirage, peaks and columns and grilles plunked down at the edge of that lifeless stretch of water. There were hundreds of private bathhouses, you were supposed to swim, but you know how it stings, all that salt, and won't wash off. I suppose the ladies liked it because you can float sitting without wetting your hair, if you can beat off the flies.

It was quite an excursion back then, the train from Salt Lake City, and a stroll on the boardwalk while the band played. Mother said the only thing to beat it was the steamboat to Antelope Island on Utah Lake, or possibly coasting down American Fork Canyon on the caboose. Father took her there for their anniversary—they'd never managed a honeymoon, and he felt rich, having just sold the farm. She said she just got Father to sit at one of the tables when who should wait on them but Aunt Teo in a red dress that showed her ankles and bright useless shoes. Mother blushed, and Teo dropped a menu and spent a long time looking for it under the cloth. Father said something about how hard it was to find work; he hoped they treated her decently. "Don't worry if it's decent," Teo said. They ordered lemonade but while they waited—she was gone so long she might never have come back—Father noticed the rows of

colored bottles on a mirrored shelf in the next room, and they weren't doctor's remedies either. For once Mother wanted to overlook it, and even fought her way to the kitchen to look for Teo, but Father wasn't staying another minute. He thought he saw fancy men and women playing cards in the smoke in the other room.

Father and Mother had to stand out in the sun by the tracks, as far away from Saltair as possible, to wait for the next train. The whole time Mother kept hoping Aunt Teo would come running out after them. For years she reproached herself as though she could have just reached down and helped her half-sister out of the quicksand.

After that Mother had her hands full with us, and with Father's doing so poorly with the sheep she had to take in boarders much of the time. She said she couldn't have been more surprised when Aunt Teo's letter came from San Francisco saying she was engaged to a Mr. Manuel, a wealthy cattleman from Argentina; would Mother come to the wedding?

Mother thought if she was ever going to set foot outside Utah, this was it. Father's mother was living close by, and I was old enough to take care of things for a while—as old as Teo was when *her* mother died—and Mother had saved a little from what Grandpa had left her. I really think that was the big event of Mother's life, her trip to California. The train was the best part, she said: a perfect little Pullman sleeper, a shining black man to tuck her into it, the red carnations bobbing in the silver vases while dinner came to her and the mountains rumbled by. The Eastern ladies bustled around in more silk for one dress than all of Brigham's wives saw in their lives; their hats were like birds that had died and gone to heaven.

Mr. Manuel's carriage met her at the station in San Francisco and drove up streets so steep she thought they'd fall over backwards. She came to a huge Spanish-style mansion with long verandas and a walled-in garden. Servants settled her in a room full of heavy Spanish furniture and then brought her to see her sister.

Teo wore a gown of smoke-grey silk, her hair the color of dried roses, a diamond on her finger. She was Mrs. Manuel already, she announced. She welcomed Mother as though she couldn't remember begging her to come but wouldn't mind if she stayed. Mother felt the whole house was in a trance. Teo moved slowly, her spine so straight she might have been suspended from the ceiling by invisible wires. She said she had wanted to see someone of the family before she left on their world tour. She led her in to a candlelit dinner where Mr. Manuel, very tan with a sharp little beard, ate two or three bites from thirty dishes—he was too far away for Mother to see just what the delicacies were—and sipped liquors the colors of jewels from a series of crystal stemglasses. Sometimes he spoke to Aunt Teo in

Spanish, and she nodded without passing it along to Mother. There was some relief when he left the table, but Teo refused to talk. She played the piano—where she had learned how, Mother wondered—and described the places they would go on their tour, but she was stony about the past. Mother said this would be a fairy palace for children to grow up in, and Aunt Teo gave her an awful look. For more than a week Mother kept watch for an opening, a chance to help, but Aunt Teo didn't want help, she wanted to show her.

On the train home, Mother was sitting in the observation car, and there across the bone-meal desert saw the mountains above Salt Lake. She had a fit, laughed and laughed hysterically, so that they had to pound her back and lay her out on a seat. After she calmed down, she said, it was like returning from a drowning. She had her breath back.

No one knew if Teo got her world tour. Mr. Manuel died in 1905, but it wasn't until 1913 that anyone saw Teo again.

She told Mother, while I was away that summer, Granger had been married the whole time to a woman who lived just around the corner from the Caldwell's place; he had a wife and four kids right there under everyone's nose. When the agent came and told her Granger had married four more times, she just broke. "I couldn't go on having nightmares about my children starving while theirs ran around in new shoes," she told Mother.

After she made it to San Francisco, Mr. Manuel spotted her in a saloon and said she looked like Cleopatra. He treated her like his wife; he was married to someone he would never see again, in Argentina. Teo knew he had other women, he never lied to her. He took perfect care of her, he cultivated her tastes, and when he was with her his attention was devoted. But he made her promise first, never to present him with a child and second, never to entangle him with her family. Mother's visit had been his one concession, and Teo would not tell how or why she had won it from him any more than she would say what she was dying of. Or maybe Mother wouldn't tell me, I don't know. She was only forty-nine. She was buried Theodora Caldwell, as though she had been a spinster.

I saw one of Camille's grandchildren the other day; she said she had framed a sampler of the Articles of Faith which her great grandmother Teo had sewn as a girl. According to her, when Aunt Teo came to the "Man will be punished for his own sins and not for Adam's transgressions," she left out the "not"—but I find that hard to believe.

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dealing blackjack (only blackjack Mormons, I guess), but there are good Mormons who own financial interest in casinos. Maybe some inventive souls will come up with a toy money casino where good Mormons could deal and gamble (and drink guilt-free booze) without straying a step from the letter of the law. Come to think of it, I haven't run into too many Mormons who oppose real gambling or who avoid the fleshpots of our neighbor state to the west when the chance comes to lose a few bucks.

I don't know if the no-alcohol wine will thrive here, but I hope it does. If this kind of thinking prevails, it won't be long before we will have a no-smoke cigarette, or, even more ingenious, no-sex adultery. That will be a real triumph of appearance over reality, and the inventor is bound to make a bundle.

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## P aradoxes and Perplexities

### IN DANGER OF THE SPEWING

Marv Rytting

In the latest issue of *Dialogue*, Jan Shippo tells what it is like to be "An 'Inside-Outsider' in Zion." This essay is important for many reasons, not the least of which is simply as an introduction to Jan Shippo. People who are interested in Mormon history or Mormon culture, especially from an academic perspective, should know Jan Shippo. For those who have not had the pleasure of meeting her in person, her essay is a delightful way to meet her vicariously. It also illustrates the value of writing disciplined reflection upon our personal experiences. Too often we save our analytic skills for academic or scholarly writing. We need more thoughtful personal sharing in our culture.

According to Jan, the process of becoming a Mormon—an insider— involves two things: accepting the truth claims of the religion and becoming part of the community, identifying with the culture. Although these are usually thought of as occurring together as a single process, they are separable. Jan has experienced becoming part of the community. But she has bracketed out the truth questions. "In all honesty,"

she says, "the matter of whether, in some ultimate sense, Latter-day Saints are or are not correct when they bear their formulaic testimonies that 'Mormonism is true' is simply not on my agenda of things to find out." If she were to conclude that the Church is true, she would become an insider. If she were to decide that it is obviously false, she would then be an outsider. By not being concerned with this question, she becomes an inside-outsider.

This stance causes many people considerable consternation. Those who are trying to prove that the Church is true and those who are trying to prove that it is false both suspect that Jan is secretly in the other camp because both groups share the opinion that there is no middle ground (a view which is becoming very common). Jan's experience contradicts this opinion.

And so does mine. If Jan Shippo is an inside-outsider in Zion, then I am an outside-insider. I am part of the community but I have also bracketed off the literal truth claims as being unimportant—and I have done so without leaving the community of the Saints or losing my identification with the culture. For Mormonism was bred into me. Biologically I am Mormon (tribe of Ephraim). Psychologically I

am Mormon (my world view is indelibly Mormon). Culturally, I am Mormon (part of the community of the Saints). I am even "active in the Church." I am incorrigibly Mormon. I could never be anything else. But I never did—at least in this mortal life—consciously choose to be Mormon.

It is ironic that I became aware of this most forcefully on my mission. My first companion observed after I had been out only a couple of months that if I had not been born a Mormon, I would never have joined the Church. How could that be true of me? All of my life I had been an almost perfect Mormon boy.

In nineteen years of socialization and compliance, complete with eleven straight years of perfect attendance at all of my meetings (except MIA, of course), I had only recently shown signs of even a subtle rebellion (I turned down my seventh Individual Award because by then it seemed superfluous). I never questioned the idea of going on a mission—of course I would go. My reputation was that of a spiritual giant. I would not join the Church? True. I would not join. I am not good convert material. I am not a true believer—in anything. I am blessed/cursed with the ability/compulsion to see both sides of every issue.

The paradox, I have come to realize, is that my Mormonness is so much ingrained within me that this does not matter; the literal truth claims of the Church are as irrelevant to me as they are to Jan Shippo. I am—and shall continue to be—Mormon irrespective of whether the LDS church is the only true church on the face of the earth or not. Even if someone could conclusively prove to me that Joseph Smith was not a prophet, I would continue to revere the man and value his philosophy. Even if they were to kick me out of the Church, I would still be a Mormon. It is an ethnic thing. I can no more cease to be Mormon than a Jew can cease to be Jewish, no matter the level of religious commitment. If this is the case, what difference does it make whether everything the Church teaches is literally true or not?

Some would argue that still it would be nice to know if we are indeed correct in our view of reality. I agree, but here we get into an epistemological question which defines the main reason that I am not concerned with the truth questions. I am a phenomenologist in the Kantian tradition. I do not believe that we can

experience reality directly but rather that we only experience our perceptions and that they can be distorted in a multitude of ways. It may be that we can experience reality subjectively (I think we can), but subjective experience is not appropriate for learning facts or knowing literal truths, only for understanding meanings. Thus I do not think it is possible to know for a certainty that the Church is true in a literal sense.

What is it like to be an outside-insider in Zion? In many ways it is similar to being an inside-outsider, which Jan Shipps describes as "sometimes uncomfortable, very often misunderstood, but none the less exciting, from time to time exhilarating. . . ." There is a continual subtle pressure upon me because practically everyone says that I am wrong—that there is no middle ground for Mormons. There are thousands of dedicated Mormons out there waiting to call me to repentance and testify that if I would only have more faith, I would know. There are scriptural reminders of what happens to the lukewarm and how easy it is for the devil to cheat our souls and lead us carefully down to hell. And there is no assurance that I am not being led in that direction. It is definitely a risk I am taking.

My motives are often suspect. In a recent letter to the editor of *Dialogue*, I was included in a list of elitist, liberal, intellectual snobs who specialize in condescending and belittling attitudes towards the faithful. There is some justification for the first half of this accusation—I do value my intellect, I am liberal, and I may on occasion entertain an elitist thought or two, but there is an irony to the rest of the charge. What I write—especially the *Dialogue* and *Sunstone* pieces—are personal expressions of my own perplexity. I do not claim to know the truth. I never try to convert anyone to my point of view (the missionary role fits me even less comfortably than the convert role). I only ask that different voices be heard so that we can share each other's journeys and that I be allowed to define my own experience for myself. Personally, I find nothing quite so condescending and belittling as the smug assurances of the religious elite that as soon as I am as humble as they are and truly receive the spirit, I too will know the truth and be no longer deceived—and of course agree with them. Yet, simply because I do not fit into the mold—or the fold—I am automatically accused of being a snob.

It is not only from the Mormon

community that I must confront the argument that there is no middle ground. My non-Mormon friends call me a "walking contradiction," wonder why I stay in a religion which causes me so much conflict and pain, and tell me that my balance is too precarious. Someday, they say, I shall have to choose one or the other. They do not pressure me to reject the Church, they simply have a difficult time understanding why I have not already done so.

Another problem with being an outside-insider is that people tend to lump us all together with the rest of the unfaithful. I am not an inactive Mormon. I am not a jack-Mormon. I am not even a "cultural Mormon." I am a committed Mormon—although committed to my way of experiencing Mormonism. I am a religious person—although I define and react to religion in a way that is not typical of orthodox Mormons. I am a believer, but not a true believer. I am aware that I choose to believe, that I could choose not to believe, and that reality owes no allegiance to my choice of beliefs.

A recent study of the relationship between religion and political views in the United States Congress points out that the traditional ways we have of thinking about religion are not very useful for research on the effects of religious commitment upon attitudes. Religious affiliation has very little to do with political and social attitudes when affiliation is defined as simply membership in a particular religious denomination. What is important is *how* we relate to whatever religion we choose or inherit.

In this research, a fairly sophisticated statistical procedure identified six distinct packages of religious values—ways of being religious. *Legalistic religionists*, for example, emphasize rules and restrictions and self-control. *Self-concerned religionists* focus on their personal relationship with God. *People-concerned religionists* are mostly concerned with relationships with other people and with religion as a challenge to work for change and social justice. *Integrated religionists* balance these themes. These are all legitimate perspectives for people in any religious group but these types of religious people are markedly different from each other. Legalistic and self-concerned religionists in Congress (and probably in general) tend to be politically and socially conservative, while people-concerned religionists are drawn to liberal positions and the integrated religionists are likely to be political moderates.

Our current orthodox Mormonism focuses on the legalistic and self-concerned themes, but I maintain that there ought to be room for those of us who are people-centered or integrated, even though we are more likely to agree politically with people-centered Gentiles than we are with other Mormons. I definitely do not want to be confused with (nor classified with) *nominal* Mormons who—if the research can be generalized—are likely to be closer in attitude to the orthodox Mormons than they are to me. Outside-insiders like me have very little in common with jack-Mormons or anti-Mormons. We are like other religious people who are concerned with ethical issues and moral living, but our religious energy is more directed to other people than to rules or to "truth" or even to God.

There are compensations in being an outside-insider. From this vantage point, it is easy to see the paradoxes and perplexities of the Mormon experience. Some people may not consider this an advantage, but for me it is. I love paradox. It is the source of the thinker's passion and opens up worlds to explore. It leads to a level of understanding of myself and the Church and our culture that I value. It also provides a breadth of experience that the true believer does not have access to. Granted that in return, I give up a depth of experience that the true believer can have, I value the variety of perspectives which I can explore.

In the final analysis, however, a discussion of advantages and disadvantages of being an outside-insider in Zion may be irrelevant. It is not useful as a way of trying to decide whether to be one or not nor is this description meant to convince anyone that it is good to be one. It is simply what I am. I do not advocate it. I am not trying to justify it. I am only defining it. I suspect that I did not choose this way of being any more than I chose to be Mormon. There is some research which indicates that fourth-born children tend to be outside-insiders in their families. They have the ability to step outside of the family and observe the dynamics within it. Such people often become students of the family. As a fourth-born child, this is certainly true of me with respect to my family and my profession as well as my church and culture, and perhaps my birth order is the reason. But the explanation for why I am an outside-insider is also irrelevant (I could as easily claim that it is because I am a Gemini). Irrespective of pros and cons, causes

and effects, I am what I am (or as Popeye would say it, "I yam what I yam"). And I choose to affirm and

value what I am. In the back of my mind, I hope—and expect—not to be spewed out because of it.

# I ssues of Intimacy

## GUILT AND INTIMACY Marybeth Raynes

A long-term client came through the door that Monday looking at the wall instead of me, sat down, and fixed his gaze on the bookcases. We had gone through periods of silence with each other before, but this time his agitation prefaced what his later stuttering words gradually revealed: overwhelming guilt about sexual abuse inflicted on him as a teenager by some members of his priesthood quorum and other neighborhood youths. The forcible abuse continued over several years and has greatly affected his life today.

An early-adolescent girl sobbed through a faltering and difficult admission to her parents about the guilt she feels for failing them: not being popular enough, not being obedient enough to them or to the Church, being angry with them at times. To their surprise, she had perceived their occasional anger at her as saying she was bad to the core.

A mother, six years after her son married outside of the Church, reports grilling herself daily about all the events in the past that she might have done differently so that he would not have taken that step. "I am such a failure as a mother because of this, and I'm feeling more shaky about everything I say to my other children now."

Guilt about stealing, cheating, or dishonesty, about being the victim of rape or incest, for having hit or yelled at someone, for not having done enough, for having been insensitive, for being responsible for parental conflict or divorce surfaces again and

again as I work with people who want to change their lives. At the center of all the guilt at least two issues consistently appear with Mormon clients of mine: *Unworthiness* and *Inhibited Intimacy*. Persistent or overwhelming guilt eventually erodes self esteem to feelings of "I am not worthy, not good enough, not whole—I am bad." The core belief about the self becomes negative. Continuing guilt builds barriers instead of bonds in relationships.

How does this happen? When one feels whole, accepted, and positive about personal emotions and experience, intimacy is easy. But guilt is negative and unsafe. Feeling guilty about a perceived wrong in a relationship almost always causes a person to pull away, to lose closeness not only with a particular person, but often with everyone else. He or she withdraws into an internal world of suffering. It is hard to reach out, to share.

Withdrawal is fed by the many rejection fantasies which accompany guilt: "The Lord doesn't love me." "What will my mother think?" "I will be ostracized by my ward." The answer to the title question of John Powell's book *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* is "Because if I tell you, you may reject me." Many feel that if we share the negative, shameful parts of our lives, we will be rejected and left alone with nothing. Sometimes that is true, but the usual paradox is that if any significant trust exists, sharing pain and struggle fosters acceptance by destroying the illusion of perfection.

The free-flowing acceptance of self and others as they are rather than as they should be cannot develop, however, if a relationship is built on

the assumption that rules are more important than personal concerns. Intimacy rarely develops between two people obsessed with condemnation (external blame) and guilt (internal blame). Given the Mormon proclivity for commandments, a stressful relationship can develop if the rules are used as clubs rather than as guidelines both parties freely accept.

Examining the nature of guilt is preliminary to dealing with these issues. Guilt encompasses a host of other emotions because it is a secondary emotion, a reaction to more primary feelings. Just as anger is often a result of more basic feelings of helplessness, frustration, or rejection, guilt can be a reaction to shame, worthlessness, loss, and anger. Further, guilt may be a composite emotion. A simplified model might be: guilt=remorse+anger at self. Each half of the equation can be felt in many ways. Remorse can be experienced as sadness, loss, or regret; anger at oneself as shame, self deprecation, blame. (These lists are suggestive, not conclusive.)

Feelings of guilt, so layered and complex, make sorting everything out hard. We feel terrible, cannot see the end of it, ruminate about the situation again and again. What we want most is to get away from the thoughts and feelings. "If I had only" or "I haven't done enough" or "I will never be good enough," we say. Rather than carrying a scarlet "A" on our breasts, we struggle inside with a burdensome black "G." Often being around the person we feel guilty about reminds us of the pain, so we flee. As though suffering some unavoidable, painful disease, we take a pill of distraction or amnesia and let guilt run its course—or run us.

In light of all the negatives, is guilt bad? I believe not. As clearly as pain warns of something wrong physically, guilt often signals that something is wrong interpersonally.

Besides, it takes a certain amount of sensitivity to another person's feelings and needs to even feel guilty. Sociopaths are sociopaths because they do not feel the impact of others or society's (the collective other) needs, rules, or norms. Consequently they feel little guilt and have few internal constraints. So the question is not, "Is guilt bad?" but "When is it appropriate and how can it be resolved?"

I remember spending a year struggling with the idea of appropriate and inappropriate guilt. Every time I felt guilty about coming

fifteen minutes late to an appointment, not writing a thank you note, replying harshly to my child, accidentally running over a rabbit, or having an urge to try something I felt was wrong, I tried to discover if the feeling was appropriate to the situation. Although I don't have my feelings in neat categories yet (and hope I never have them compulsively tied down), I did emerge from those sessions with three general guidelines: (1) It is appropriate to feel guilty about things I have control over in my life (scheduling appointments, tone of voice with others) and inappropriate to feel guilty about things not in my control that occur by accident or luck, even if it is a disaster that results in injury or loss of life. (Deep grief and searching for what I might have done differently always occur, but not guilt which assumes blame.) (2) It is appropriate to feel guilty about values inappropriate to feel guilty about values that others hold but I do not. For example, for a long time I felt guilty when the visiting teachers found my house messy even though I do not believe a clean house is always important. (3) It is appropriate to feel guilty about actions I consciously commit or thoughts and fantasies I willfully indulge in that I think are out of bounds, but inappropriate to feel guilty about natural sensations, thoughts, and needs that everyone has or that occur unconsciously (sexual impulses or dreams, occasional thoughts of violence or death).

These guidelines may be helpful for putting guilt in balance with our inner thoughts and needs. Mormons, however, often struggle long and hard with the second category. Taught from youth to respond to external rules by parents who used strong reinforcements if we did not conform, we react in essentially the same way to a parental church. Feeling more intense guilt about rules and commandments than about principles creates a narrow rather than broad focus for our actions, a lack of perspective that becomes evident when we worry more about not smoking or about not fulfilling a Church assignment than about loving one another regardless of religious, social, or racial barriers. Although the function of the Church is to teach right and wrong and to help people wire in guilt for wrong actions and peace and contentment for right ones, once that wiring is complete we need to find our own way. We need to sort out which principles encourage continued growth in adult roles. This is the long, difficult journey into

adulthood. Our ethical and spiritual path must ultimately be our own responsibility, with helps and guidelines, to be sure, but still in all, our own.

How to put guilt in perspective so that it helps rather than hinders change? Results of research about anxiety and learning seem applicable. New information is most effectively learned when there is a moderate amount of anxiety accompanying the process. Too little anxiety fails to motivate; too much overrides and blocks new information. So with guilt. Short term or moderate guilt that spurs one to change is healthy as is guilt that contains larger components of remorse and loss than of self-anger. On the other hand, mild guilt only pinpricks the conscience momentarily. Severe guilt immobilizes by overwhelming any other thought or feeling. All guilt, however, is oriented in the past and cannot change behavior. Only subsequent thought and action can do that.

To help balance guilt with other emotions in life, I recommend the following:

1. When feeling guilty about something you did (or did not do) in a relationship with another person, try to separate your feelings about that person from the action to see which deeper sentiments sift out. Maybe it is not guilt but another feeling such as mistrust that is bothering you. A friend related feeling guilty about not getting close to her sister. Upon introspection she realized that she didn't trust her. The guilt cleared, and the problem then became "How do I build trust?"
2. Acknowledge that in every event you feel guilty about there are a number of emotions involved as well as a number of parts to the event—some for which you bear responsibility, some not. The key question is: which principle did I violate? Then, rather than condemn yourself, figure out something to do that matches the depth of the violation. The past is healed only in the present.
3. Talk to someone. You often don't know what you think or feel until you say it out loud. If a neutral person who has no investment in the action or the outcome is not available, seek a therapist or counselor who can not only help you sift out the guilt and what you can do about it but also can help you find friends who will support, not condemn.

A story that I hope is true was related in stake conference several years ago.

A young woman had slept with her boyfriend when she was 16 years old, one time only. Even though she never repeated her action, she felt tremendously guilty and carried it within her silently. In her mid-twenties she decided to go on a mission. In consultation with her bishop she passed over the morality question, but by the time she approached the stake president with her application her guilt was overpowering. She told him about the incident and about how terrible she felt. The stake president replied that the only thing she needed to do for clearance was to go home and tell her parents. In horror she replied that this truth would destroy them. He insisted; she did. Upon hearing her painful story, her father put his arms around her and said, "I am only sorry that you have carried this burden by yourself all these years."

4. Learn the fine art of self forgiveness. I am convinced that an outside authority's statement of forgiveness only releases us to do the forgiving within ourselves. The rational, loving parts of ourselves can speak to the hurting, guilty parts. Being your own therapist and gently persuading, caring, and forgiving yourself in troubled times sounds funny only until you have tried it. Inner, not outer peace, is the final resolution to guilt.

If the guilt is minor you should be able to handle the feelings and the actions fairly easily. If the guilt is major, realize that it generally takes weeks or months to deal with a major emotional crisis. Give yourself time to heal. If the cause of your guilt is continuing, separate yourself from the situation even if some drastic action needs to be taken. Broken feelings like broken limbs cannot heal under continuing stress.

My client who was sexually abused has come to understand that those past events were out of his control and were not his fault but that his resultant sexual fantasies are inappropriate to the sexual relationship he wants with his wife. He has acted to change them. His guilt is lifting. The mother is gradually realizing that expending all her thoughts on her son's action over which she had no control is robbing her of the energy she needs to change her life. I'm still feeling guilty these days, but I'm not overwhelmed anymore. Instead, guilt is becoming a particularly trusted guide for me. I find myself welcoming it as an indicator that I am getting off my internal track.

# Give and Take

## THE CHRISTIAN REVOLUTIONARY Elbert Eugene Peck

As I ponder the divisive national debate about the Equal Rights Amendment and the pained cries for reform by many women in the Church, I find myself in an ambivalent position. On the one hand, I am very sympathetic with the causes espoused. On the other, my Christian sensibilities are disturbed by the impatient discontent and increasing militancy of these groups. I feel the same way about almost every campaign for either political or ecclesiastical reform.

For me, some worthy causes include: an economic system based on cooperation instead of competition, the use of participative instead of authoritarian styles of leadership based on mutual esteem rather than position, unassuming service instead of careerism, and the adorning of the heart instead of the body.

Although I support the purposes of those who champion the above and other causes, I am persuaded that the methods by which a Christian dissents—rebels—to effect change are radically different from those legitimately used in political systems. It seems to me that Mormons who would be revolutionaries should consider the following.

1. The Church and its members should indeed be revolutionary. Joseph Smith worked to "lay the foundation that will revolutionize the world," and Brigham Young tirelessly labored to establish a society that would overturn "every foolish and unprofitable custom, every unjust and oppressive law, and what ever else that is oppressive to man." Harold B. Lee reaffirmed that the Church stands "as a continuing revolution against the norms of a society that fall below the standards of the Gospel."

2. Christians should also be conservative about righteous things. "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good," explained Paul.

However, too often Mormons reflexively hold fast to that which simply is—regardless of its worth. And as a result of our indiscriminate conservation we are rarely in the forefront of worthy revolutionary causes. "With some of us it is the custom to do very much that what the world does," lamented Joseph F. Smith. "We dress as the world. We seek its pleasures; we follow its customs; and . . . those things bring us into conflict with things the Lord has . . . commanded us to do." Fortunately, by following the world we often champion some good causes, too. But there is no guarantee that we do so in the proper manner or that such causes are the most important ones.

## THE IMPATIENCE OF MOST CAUSE FIGHTERS RESULTS IN CONTEN- TION AND CREATES MORE PROBLEMS THAN IT SOLVES.

3. Christians effect change through love. "If you have not charity you can do nothing," asserted Paul. Is it any mystery, then, why most reform efforts fail? Political contention—any contention—lacks love. Christian revolutionaries must love and forgive their enemies, persuade but never coerce. They are bold but never overbearing, meek and humble rather than proud and self-assured. Polarization between good people is not Christian.

4. The Christian revolutionary begins with the individual and ends with society. The Zion utopia requires citizens whose basic natures are better—the "born again" individual instead of the "natural man." Hence the Christian revolution is first of all internal. Then it is interpersonal, through strengthening the Saints and proselyting others.

Finally, when enough people have been converted, the revolution can be collective, affecting governments and other social institutions.

In contrast the world's revolutionaries alter governments, compel behavior, but rarely change hearts. The world's revolutions focus on appearance, Christ's on substance.

This is why Christian revolutionaries cannot be touched by governments and are usually not seen as threats to sovereignty. Indeed, Christians support governments, which provide needed order and services, while they labor for a better system.

5. Christian revolutionaries are patient. Impatience results from lack of faith in a cause. Because of their faith, Christians are sure of ultimate success. The impatience of most cause fighters—in society and the Church—results in contention and creates more problems than are remedied. Most revolutionaries have grievances, but Christians have griefs.

6. There is a hierarchy of causes. Revolutionaries cannot fight all worthy causes and therefore must first select the weightier over the lighter and more diverting ones. Concerning selecting causes, President Kimball has counseled: "Be careful to select good causes. There are so many to which you can give yourself fully and freely and which will produce much joy and happiness for you and for those you serve. There are other causes . . . which may seem more fashionable and which may produce the applause of the world, but they are usually more selfish in nature. These latter causes tend to arise out of what the scriptures call the 'commandments of men' rather than the commandments of God. Such causes have some virtues and some usefulness, but they are not as important as those causes which grow out of keeping the commandments of God."

That this paradoxically meek, humble, and non-threatening style can truly effect change is shown in the remarkable life of Christ, in his dealings with people and governments, and in the lives of many of his disciples, including Ammon, the son of Mosiah, who, finding himself in a polarized political world, brought revolutionary change in his lifetime through non-threatening love and service.

The marvel and the wonder of the latter-days is how the "weak things" of the world overthrew it nonviolently.

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