

# SUNSTONE

VOLUME NINE, NUMBER TWO

THREE DOLLARS



**Are  
Children  
Almost  
Too Much  
to Bear?**

# SUNSTONE

VOLUME NINE, NUMBER TWO

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**PERVERSE ANTI-HAIR CRUSADE**

It wasn't necessary to know the details of his years of spiritual and intellectual struggle (SUNSTONE 8:6) to see the bias in William Russell's article on the historicity of the Book of Mormon (7:5) and to point out that only a desire to believe a previously held conclusion would allow someone of Russell's depth to ignore alternative explanations and inconvenient evidence not fitting his hypothesis. I simply suggested that liberalism be tempered with a greater awareness of other views, that we recognize that some questions will never be resolved and are not decisive, and that we concentrate on the issues where conclusions are somewhat easier to arrive at or are more important. Blake Ostler's approach in his review of *Book of Mormon Authorship* (Dialogue 16:4) reflects a responsible position.

Richard Van Wagoner's essay on the history of beards was amusing but for some perverse reason the anti-hair crusade in the Church has taken on serious dimensions, unless the Osmonds and Merlin Olsen can salvage the image of those of us who prefer the ways of our ancestors. For those interested in further discussion of the implications of grooming standards I'd be happy to send a copy of an article I did for *Seventh East Press* on the subject.

Scott S. Smith  
Thousand Oaks, California

**A HAIRY HISTORY**

Though now committed to clean-shavenness, I appreciated Van Wagoner's trifle on bearddom. I forgive his failure to mention what I consider to be the pre-eminent beard of Mormonism—Orson Pratt's. But I wish to note that, notwithstanding his praise of the beard:

1. Facial hair has long been associated with sin. Gulielmus Durandus's *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* (1459) notes that clerics must shave, "for cutting of the hair of the beard . . . denotes that we ought to cut away the vices and sins which are a superfluous growth in us." The shaven face is a symbol of innocence.

2. Du Cange, in his *Glossarium*, has an entry for *barbazatus*, a word taken from a document that suggests that Jews and Muslims for some time routinely shaved when becoming Christians—a sign of renunciation of their former heresies (haresies?).

3. There is a long Christian tradition, particularly before 1600, to the effect that Adam's beard sprouted only after the Fall. (As Lord Byron put it: "ever since the fall, man for his sin / Has had a beard entailed upon his chin.") To refute this doctrine, Giuseppe Valeriano de Vanetti wrote a remarkable tract, *Barbalogia ovvero ragionamento intorno all Barba* (1759), which attempts to prove that Adam was created with a beard, and that every man before the Flood had one too.

Finally, apropos Van Wagoner's title, "To Beard Or Not To Beard": he, perhaps unwittingly, has echoed a strange parody of the Hamlet soliloquy published in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 2 July 1845, which begins, "To shave or not to shave."

I recommend wetting the face well, applying whipped cream, and reading Reginald Reynold's book *Beards* (London, 1950).

Michael Hicks  
Urbana, Illinois

**BAD GUYS AND BEARDS**

"To Beard Or Not To Beard" (SUNSTONE 8:6) is a social, emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual problem not so much for the be-whiskered priesthood holder in the Church but for the general clean-shaven male and female leadership and membership.

My husband's greatest difficulties as a long-time bearded Mormon have centered around the "bad guy" attitudes directed at him. The following examples have been communicated through outright criticism, veiled suggestions, silent condemnation, employment edict, fatherly advice, and joking comradery:

Wearing a beard—

- 1. is a negative example to youth.
- 2. reveals flagrant disobedience

to Church dress and grooming standards.

- 3. shows excessive individualism.
  - 4. is an unhealthy practice akin to smoking.
  - 5. is a giant step on the road to apostasy.
  - 6. only promotes irritation and speculation on your worthiness, so why wear one?
  - 7. will prevent your getting ahead in the Church hierarchy.
  - 8. is not permitted at this Church-operated university/ cultural center/school facility so we cannot consider you for employment.
  - 9. hides your small chin, you say? Vanity, vanity!
  - 10. makes you look different from all the other Mormons; you know, peculiar.
  - 11. Today is different from the time of the Bible. They didn't have razors.
  - 12. makes you easy to spot in Church, Daddy.
  - 13. is a little unrighteous. You know what I mean?
  - 14. must bother your wife. [It doesn't.]
  - 15. must be taking all that hair from your bald head.
- My child came home from Church one Sunday and asked: "How come Daddy is the only one with a beard like Jesus?" You tell me.

Rubina Rivers Forester  
Laie, Hawaii

**THE CROSS A VEHICLE TO SALVATION**

I applaud Joyce Woodbury's effort to refocus our attention on Christianity's paramount symbol—the cross. It seems in our desire to disassociate ourselves with traditional Christian thought we have disaffirmed its significance. In addition to the ideas offered by Woodbury, I would like to suggest a couple others that might heighten our regard for the cross.

When carried over into Greek thought, the cross becomes the "golden mean," an aesthetical standard that has intrigued artists, philosophers, and mathematicians since antiquity. Going even further back in time we run into the *ankh*, a cross with a loop on the

top, meant by the Egyptians to represent eternal life. Of greater significance to many early Christians was the attitude of Christ's body as he hung on the cross. His outstretched hands (his "immortal pinions") became the attitude of prayer and worship ("His sign") whereby one could mount up to heaven. (See the *Odes of Solomon*.) This was the posture assumed by Moses when Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands the entire day to give Israel victory over the Amalekites. The cross also stands in contradistinction to Eden's Tree of Life as the Tree of Death which miraculously doubles back on itself to give us eternal life. Joseph the carpenter supposedly planted a branch of the Tree of Life in his garden from whose full-grown form the cross was fashioned and oil was extracted as an anointing for Christ's resurrection. (*Gospel of Phillip*.) The risen Savior gives us perhaps the best reason for taking the cross more seriously: "And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross . . . that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men, even so should men be lifted up by the Father" (3 Ne. 27:14). Nowhere is the deep paradox of the gospel better illustrated: Man in wrath and brutality lifted Christ up to death so that he might in mercy and love lift us up to life. The cross thus becomes a real vehicle to salvation for without it Christ could not have hung between earth and heaven and thereby become the Mediator between man and God.

David Grandy  
United States Army

### RESOLVING A DIVINE DILEMMA

In "The Atonement" (SUNSTONE 8:6), J. Clair Batty poses certain questions relative to this important concept: Why was payment, ransom, reconciliation, or sacrifice necessary? Who made the payment, ransom, or sacrifice? What did the payment or ransom consist of? To whom was the ransom or sacrifice made? What follows is one attempt to answer those questions and some others that arise in the process.

God the Father knows the thoughts, joys, miseries, pleasures, and pains of the premortal intelligences as fully and immediately as if they are his own (see Matt. 25:40). That they may know the joy that he knows, the Father prepared these intelligences to receive his knowledge and power by dividing a test or probation that will demonstrate whether they will do all things in harmony with his will.

Were it not for the Atonement, the consequence of sinning in any degree would be spiritual death, or separation from the Father and his influence (Hel. 14:15-18). Indeed, were it not for the Atonement, this would be the fate of all of the Father's children (except one), because they all sin (see Alma 42:7-11; Rom. 3:23).

Why must this be so? Perhaps the better question is, how could it be otherwise? Once we have shown ourselves to be willfully disobedient to the Father, causing pain to others and to him, why should he permit us to do so? Why should he not totally separate us from himself and his cognizance?

But, we may ask, is this reaction not extreme? Why could he not allow us time to change our ways, and, when we have changed sufficiently, grant us his fulness?

Those questions may be answered with other questions. Even assuming that we could change our ways, how long should he wait for us to do so? A day? A year? A thousand million years? Indefinitely into eternity? There must be an end to the evil that we do; otherwise, he would not be one to whom evil is intolerable (see D&C 1:31). For him to say, "Take as long as you like; commit as much evil as you choose; when you are ready to choose otherwise, I will just let bygones be bygones," would amount to saying, "It doesn't matter what you do." If it doesn't matter what we do, then there is no law; if there is no law, there is no governance in the universe; there is only chaos (see Alma 42:16-22). But it does matter to the Father what we do; and the consequence is that if we act contrary to his will, all that his nature logically permits him to do is to

protect himself from the sore of our contrariness by withdrawing himself from us. The Father's justice lies in the fact that it matters to him what we do; he does not act contrary to what he values (see Alma 42:17-22). Were he to do so, he would not be what he in fact is (see Alma 42:12-13).

How can he save us without contradicting his own nature? In other words, how can he extend mercy without denying justice? There has to be a consequence, but the very point is to protect us from the consequence. If we are not to suffer it, then who remains to do so but God himself?

Now a difficulty enters in here, because the ultimate consequence is spiritual death, the utter separation of the disobedient from the Father and all his influence. How can the Father separate himself from himself? He cannot, and so it is necessary that there be an intermediary—one who is fully equivalent to the Father, through whom the Father can suffer this death. The chosen intermediary was Jesus, who on the cross experienced in its fulness the terrible separation from the Father that is the spiritual death. If we are to take at face value the scriptural statements on the oneness of the Father and the Son (see D&C 93:3-4; Mosiah 14:2-5; John 17:22), then the Father *through* Christ also experienced the pain of that death.

At the same time, the death of Christ also resolved our separation from the body in physical death. As with the spiritual death, God the Father must have suffered it through the intermediation of God the Son.

Although this is not how the Atonement is normally understood by Latter-day Saints, it seems justified by the many scriptures about the oneness of the Father and the Son and the statement that "God himself" redeems his people (Mosiah 15:1).

The necessity for the Atonement can be understood as arising from God's own nature, and other explanations are but metaphors to help us grasp the all but inarticulate logic of a divine dilemma and of a truly amazing grace.

Colin B. Douglas  
Magna, Utah



DETAIL OF FRESCO BY TITIAN: MADONNA, CHURCH OF STA MARIA DEI FRARI, VENICE

# Are Children Almost Too Much to Bear?

By James Tunstead Burtchaell

Curiosity recently drew me on a journey of five years' duration, during which I studied abortion and infanticide. After some decades as an invited guest in other people's consciences, I had considered myself beyond surprise. This research project, however, would surprise me with surprises.

Deep within the movement for abortion freedom lies the conviction that no unwanted child should ever be born. I was of the same mind, but aware that the words held a different wisdom for me than they do for prochoice partisans. Every child, I believed, has a claim on our love: not only our own children, but those whose families cannot or will not receive them. Here were people who believed that if a mother had no welcome for her offspring, her child would be better off if eliminated before birth. We stood far divided. The same distance would separate supporters of Apartheid and partisans of racial equality, who might both proclaim that no unwanted blacks should exist in South Africa, but would have devastatingly different dreams of how that might be achieved.

The public wisdom in America, I learned from *Time* magazine, was that "without legal and affordable abortion, many lives in progress are hopelessly ruined; the unwanted children very often grow up unloved, battered, conscienceless, trapped, and criminal."<sup>1</sup> This was reinforced by a spokesman for Americans United for Separation of Church and State: "It is a low form of cruelty to insist ruthlessly on bringing into the world a child for whom there is no welcome . . ."<sup>2</sup> The same message came from Betty Benjamin, president of the Minnesota Abortion Rights Council: "Among the 800,000 unplanned,

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When Father James Burtchaell arrived at Notre Dame as a freshman in 1951, his first studies were in philosophy. Later he earned degrees in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome, the Catholic University in Washington, and Cambridge University in England, from which he holds the Ph.D. in divinity. His seventh book, *For Better, For Worse*, is on marriage and will appear in 1984. His last book, *Rachel Weeping, and Other Essays on Abortion* was given a Christopher Award as one of the best books of 1982. Father Burtchaell joined the regular faculty at Notre Dame in 1966, and now holds the rank of professor of theology. He has also served as department chairman, university provost and trustee, and member of most of Notre Dame's principal policy-making committees. Harvard and Vanderbilt Universities have appointed him to the visiting committees of their divinity schools, and his national colleagues in the American Academy of Religion, the professional association of scholars and teachers in his field, honored him by electing him president.

**I had been raised to think that crimes were more savage and detestable when their victims were weak or undefended or of low account.**

unwanted children born every year in the U.S., many become loved and wanted. Unfortunately, many others end up as battered children, delinquents, and criminals. Studies of battered children reveal a high percentage of unmarried and unwanted pregnancy, or forced marriage among the abusive parents."<sup>3</sup> Her implication that in order to be wanted a child must have been planned, and her assertion that 800,000 unwanted children are born here each year (a statistic which she contrived for the occasion), were not what snagged my attention. It was her argument that extermination of the unloved would somehow eliminate hostility toward children in our land.

Still, all this dogmatic assurance that unwanted children were at risk for mistreatment led me to the literature on child abuse. Here a surprise awaited me. Dr. E. F. Lenoski, then of the University of Southern California Medical School, had published research findings that battered or abused children were much more likely than normal children to issue from desired pregnancies. They were more likely to be of legitimate birth, and to have mothers who displayed satisfaction with their pregnancies. Here was a suggestion that abused children were, in some grotesque way, *wanted* children.<sup>4</sup> Ray Helfer, a leading authority in the field, has explained that abusive parents are often themselves the victims of estrangement and abuse as children, and crave a child as a person whom they can cherish and in whom they can find satisfaction. "Many young mothers who had every desire to get pregnant, with great expectations that the baby would resolve one of their many problems, find themselves even worse off than before. Their baby does not—or is not able to meet these needs."<sup>5</sup> Helfer's colleague, C. Henry Kempe, who coined the term "the battered child syndrome," observes: "Basic in the abuser's attitude toward infants is the conviction, largely unconscious, that children exist in order to satisfy parental needs."<sup>6</sup>

Quite contrary to the claims of those defending abortion, parents likely to abuse their children are *unlikely* to consider abortion. Aborting parents may not desire their children, but abusing parents do desire them, though in a pathetic way. If the two groups of parents have anything in common, according to another child abuse expert, Brandt Steele, it is "the assumption that the rights, desires, and ideas of the adult take full precedence over those of the child, and that children are essentially the property of parents who have the right to deal with their offspring as they see fit, without interference."<sup>7</sup>

Abortion and abuse stood together, I found, not at odds. Both stemmed from a conviction that children were chattels of their parents, to be disposed of in conformity with their parents' interests. This was, for me, a new and provocative insight.

Next I was caught up short by a view—

common enough today but strange to me—that infanticide, even if wrong, is not very wrong, because its victim is so insignificant. I had been raised to think that crimes were more savage and detestable when their victims were weak or undefended or of low account. It was particularly heartless to mug an elderly woman, or to defraud a refugee, or to abuse a lower-echelon employee. In Gandhi's words, "I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man."<sup>8</sup>

But to my astonishment here were distinguished scholars, like ethicist Charles Hartshorne, arguing that killing infants is only mildly objectionable because they are not yet our equals. To do away with the unborn is still less troubling, since they stand still farther from our grown status. The same for the hopelessly senile or others who have no claim to "the respect due to normal human beings."<sup>9</sup> Glanville Williams, a Cambridge law professor who was very influential in the abortion movement in both his country and ours, agrees with this perspective: "Infanticide appears to our generation to be a crime less heinous than ordinary murder. . . . The victim's mind is not sufficiently developed to enable it to suffer from the contemplation of approaching suffering or death. . . . It leaves no gap in any family circle, deprives no children of their breadwinner or their mother, no human being of a friend, helper, or companion."<sup>10</sup> I was left with much to reflect upon by this doctrine that it was worse to take on someone your own size than to pick on a kid.

There were other bewilderments to follow. I had known that youngsters born with various handicaps often perished before leaving hospital nurseries, because of decisions agreed upon by their parents and their doctors. Others were abandoned by their families to institutions. One imagined, especially, impoverished couples daunted by the expense of keeping a handicapped child close by. The evidence suggests, however, that it is the affluent, not the poor, who may be willing to free themselves of their handicapped young. As one doctor reports: "Couples who are success-oriented and have high expectations for their children are likely to institutionalize their mentally deficient offspring rather than keep them at home. The argument that mongoloids raised in the home perform better than those raised in an institution is rarely persuasive with such parents."<sup>11</sup> I thought this peculiar: that men and women with the means to provide their needy children with all that money can buy should withhold the things that are beyond price.

When medical staffs volunteer to eliminate unwanted infants, by denying them either nourishment or medical treatment, it can be quite painful—for them, the staff. Dr. Anthony Shaw, who has reported that the fatal neglect of handicapped infants is common practice at the University of Virginia Medical Center, complains of

this strain: "Standing by and watching a salvageable baby die is the most emotionally exhausting experience I know . . . to stand by in the nursery and watch as dehydration and infection wither a tiny being over hours and days . . . is a terrible ordeal for me and for the hospital staff—much more than for the parents who never set foot in the nursery."<sup>12</sup> Since the decision to let the child die rested ultimately with the parents, it was difficult to understand why the doctors accepted this task of destruction, which they described as "arduous, agonizing, distasteful." Since no further medical care was to be allowed, why not present the parents with their infant and send them home to starve him or her themselves? What would induce the medics to carry so undesirable a burden, if they profess to deplore it?

The next surprise which lay in wait cast some light back upon this one. Rosalyn Darling has studied the problems of parents of children with various chronic handicaps such as congenital blindness, spina bifida, etc. Most parents she found to be coping. They would have wished their children free of these disabilities, but they cherished their children and would not wish to have been deprived of them. Their dissatisfaction was not with their children, but with their physicians. Many had changed doctors in search of one who would take an interest in their youngster.

The doctors admitted to Darling that they felt unprepared to treat patients with chronic defects.

*A world-view that primarily involves sick people who get better may not leave room for the chronically ill or incurable patient whose defect cannot be "fixed." . . . "Success," in this view, seems somehow to be equated with complete normalcy of function, and the chronically ill or disabled present a moral dilemma to the physician so oriented. As my findings have indicated, a life defined by physicians as intolerable might come to be defined in a very different way by parents.<sup>13</sup>*

Even personnel skilled in physical rehabilitation or education of the retarded confess a falling off of interest when their efforts no longer yield measurable improvement. One has much to contemplate at the prospect of these helping professions who would not care simply to care.

My research put before me these and similar attitudes towards children: children unborn, blighted, helpless, unwanted. Was it sentimentality that made me so affronted by these attitudes? Or naivete? Or simple ignorance? It is difficult to know. In any case, these points of surprise came in time to form a grid that was gradually filled in. The resultant picture was sobering. History as we can recover it discloses a recurring disposition, not all that infrequent, to abort, abuse, and annihilate children when they are not welcome. This is done, not simply by psychotically hysterical mothers, underworld quacks, or denizens of perverse and primitive cultures. It is accomplished by your neighbors

down the street and by medical school professors who describe the process in learned journals. Ours is a country in which to be very young can be very risky, and where only the narrowest of presumptions assures children of love and protection. In many countries the medical profession struggles to reduce the rate of infant mortality, but in our country infant mortality is itself partly the work of physicians. This raises heavy questions for every man and woman among us, including those who will never raise a hand to smite or slay a child. And the more so for those who believe their Parent disclosed his presence to them by sending a child, and believe in a Lord who said we could be his intimates only if we were transformed and came to him as children.

What might a Christian think, in a world where children have such little value for so many adults?

A three-year-old girl, supplied with a sack of sandwiches and toys, is found on the steps of a Sunday school, abandoned by her twenty-two-year old mother and her mate. A newborn infant, with umbilical cord still attached, is heard crying at the bottom of a trash chute, discarded by her teenage mother. A couple nearing the ninth month of pregnancy suspect a handicap in their child and procure her abortion but the infant emerges alive; the father insists that the attending physicians destroy her "or he would throw her in the trash can himself"; one of them plunges a syringe into her heart to remove blood but is spooked when the child cries, and will go no further (she later suffered a nervous breakdown); the other dispatches the baby with a lethal injection, after which it becomes clear that she had been quite healthy all along. More than one and a half million offspring are aborted annually by American mothers. One out of every seven deaths in a nursery for newborn children at a prominent university medical center is revealed to result from purposeful withholding of food or treatment, and the doctors who disclose the fact become media personalities.

However grotesque we might consider this readiness to reject and victimize one's own young, it is too common an act and attitude for us to think of it as something abnormal, unaccountable, freakish. On the contrary, it is all too commonplace. We should be under no illusion that parental instinct alone will provide a welcome and a haven for children.

Several years ago a friend took me out to a stable to inspect her mare's new foal. Mare and colt were let out to pasture, and I marvelled at the mother's persistence in not letting him more than a few feet from her. I had not thought her to be a horse of very amiable disposition, but here she was, seized by a fierce maternal possessiveness that extinguished every other instinct. After five months of this total preoccupation, the mare had her foal taken from her to be weaned, in a scene of frantic and tumultuous

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maternal commotion. But two weeks later neither mother nor colt seemed to recognize one another. It had been a melodrama of hormones.

With the possible exception of the daytime soaps, human beings are not animated by such governing instincts. Prolactin and its companion hormones may draw a mother to nurture her newborn, but the lifelong duties of parenting are not accomplished on the strength of instinct alone. Nurture is natural only in virtuous human beings, and children require virtues in their parents that are diverse and disciplined. Indeed, to be a decent parent demands a more-than-decent maturity that is generous and sound.

The acceptance of children is a wilful act. It is a choice. It can be a duty. When one is with child, one is obliged to provide for that child. Nevertheless, not every necessity is necessarily honored. And this is one obligation of which women and men will not acquit themselves except by self-determination. There are adults in great number who do not rise to the occasion. It is no small thing to receive a small person into one's life.

Christians have reflected upon family in ways that should make this clear to them. We have observed that the instinct for mating runs athwart other vigorous instincts: random sexual hunger, greed, ambition, laziness. It is one thing for a person to bring another to bed, and quite another to lodge another surely and safely within one's life. This is a matter of commitment more than of chemistry: indeed, of commitment that will at times counteract chemistry.

It is an old notion among Christians that to accept someone else as yours, for better or for worse, until death, requires an onset of motivation and stamina and forbearance that only God could give. Men and women can mate or even marry with a lesser empowerment, but they cannot maintain. If this be our reckoning of the bonds of promise, no less could be true of the bonds of blood. In the Christian view, only the Father can enable us to be gracious enough to do something as natural as being good fathers or mothers. And if we do that, there is hardly anything humanly greater to which we could aspire.

If Christians have a high though heavy sense of what parenting requires, it behooves us at least to invite others to share it. What might be the lineaments of such a vision?

We believe that the sting of death has been drawn by a Messiah who was pierced for us. Jesus died at our hands to show us his love, a love he had from his Father and ours: a love stubborn enough to enfold children who turned their backs on him and then turned upon him to destroy. The staying power of such love, we believe, is not to be undone by death. We shall be close by him despite our deaths and because of his.

This hope frees us from children while at the same time it clasps them to us more surely. If all we can look forward to is going to be withered

by death, then we can have immortality in two things only: the accomplishments of our work and the offspring of our bodies. If we depend on children to give our lives resonance and bloom after we are gone, then we shall address ourselves to grooming and cultivating them with an eye to our own continuity and celebrity. But once we are freed from such a need to ready our children as our own memorials, we can begin to serve them as persons in their own right.

How ought parents address themselves to their children? Philip Abbott, in *The Family on Trial*, has noticed one reason why our age cast such a blind eye on domestic relationships. The public ethos of our time considers people as individuals, as free agents, and reckons that our dealings with each other should be controlled by rights.

*A rights model does little to explain those personal relationships that lie beneath the contractual view of life, and which set the tone for relationships among friends, lovers, parents, and children. . . . The main point, however, is that a rights model takes as its basis self-sufficient rational human beings. A good portion of humanity at any given moment does not fit that criterion and children and those who are about to become children make up the bulk of that segment of the population. Since a rights model is designed to make us aware of our self-sufficiency as moral agents, it says little about solidarity among human beings.*

On the view that people owe each other what their rights demand, one would be little disposed for one's children. Indeed, that is the stumbling point of any system that is interested only in rights.

*Children require great sacrifices of health, time, money, even emotional stability. Women submit to discomfort, pain and reduced sexual capacity during pregnancy. They bear stretch marks. Parents lose sleep, give up hobbies, lose mobility, money, privacy. Even with comfortable incomes and pregnancy leaves, these are large sacrifices. So large, in fact, that portions of a whole generation inbred with a rights model have decided to remain childless.<sup>14</sup>*

The Christian tradition has not understood parent-child relations as made up of rights. There are rights between us, of course, but we see that they are not central or governing from the fact that when they have to be invoked our affairs are already quite disturbed. Rights are a fall-back consideration. Much more are we bound together by needs. By this I mean less than children need parental care if they are to survive than that adults need children to care for if they are to survive. We can scarcely mature into adulthood if we have no young to be responsible for. Even vowed communities of Christian celibates find the service of the junior members by their elders to be an essential need.

Like all needs, our need for children has its pathologies. For instance, it is all too easy to consider children as a possession rather than as a trust. One can see a caricature of this in the Little League Father, who is unhappily working

out his own ego needs through the (unhealthily supervised) performance of his young son ("How could you be stupid enough to drop that fly ball?"). His female counterpart is the Drum Majorette Mother, who drills her preadolescent daughter for tournaments like a Pomeranian for a dog show. When these children grow older and make awkward or bold ventures into independence, parental trauma can reveal that the fathers' and mothers' attentions were often more self-satisfying than gracious.

Authentic parental care, as we Christians try to understand and cultivate it, reaches well beyond the needs and interests of our own children. This may cause us to withhold enthusiasm for the new and expensive techniques now becoming available to allow sterile couples to conceive. By accepting reproduction of one's own physical offspring as a virtual imperative, it may well be that some people are regressing to the feeling that children are a possession instead of a trust. Is it only coincidence that at the same time so many children are being deprived either of a family or of life itself because of a prejudice against adoption, as if a child would suffer if raised by any but its biological mother?

Indeed, we are to stand as godparents to the children of the world. Every youngster will require attention from scores, even hundreds, of generous adults, an offering of many kindnesses and services beyond what his or her parents could ever provide. So we are all under obligation to lend ourselves to the need of one another's children. We are stewards of them all.

A rightful nature for children has to observe a conscientious balance. One cannot slap one's own children into day-care so as to be free to get out and about, to a socially productive career. No one's children should have to pay the full price for their parents to be of help to others. But neither can one channel all one's ambitions into the development of one's own offspring ("My son, the brain surgeon!"), for any child will crumple under that burden. Somehow we must care for our own without turning our backs on others'. We are no more than stewards of our own children, and no less than stewards of others'.

This characteristically Christian vision of child-rearing is enough to make one blink. We need to have children to care for in order to grow ourselves. We need to hold fast to children, not as a possession but as a trust, not as an eventual credit to ourselves but as a credit to themselves. And in order to serve our own children selflessly we need to make other people's children an additional obligation on our care. This is no small calling.

I should think that if we were to follow that Christ call, we would inevitably display a favoritism for the handicapped. Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, has asked Christian families to form communities that take retarded persons in to live among them. His claim is that the mentally

handicapped thrive remarkably more in such a setting than in an institutional one. But he makes the even more startling claim that *we* thrive remarkably more if we have someone retarded living beside us, in our charge and care.

There are various lurches in life that bring us stumbling into someone else's doorway. I recall young women, pregnant and partnerless, who have been asked into strangers' homes only to find that this proved the dearest year of their lives. Estrangement had bestowed on them a new and lifelong family. The same with households that foster or adopt, and particularly those who take in youngsters who, because of race or blight or age, go begging for a home. Those are the children who bring the biggest blessing with them, who bring more to parents and brothers and sisters because they bring more out of them.

I should think too, that if we were to follow that Christ call, we would know it is our duty to stand as an example to others, to light a lamp for others to see children better, and to see themselves in a new light. I was instructed in the power of example by Dr. Germaine Greer, whose book, *The Female Eunuch*, had alerted us to our habitual ways of diminishing and degrading women. But a decade later, when she journeyed to the East as a guest of the Family Planning Association of India, she was staggered by the experience, in exactly the opposite way from what had been expected.

*"There were too many of them. The world was about to become lopsided because there are too many Indians standing shoulder to shoulder. But were there?"*

*In all the villages she visited, she said, she never found an unwanted child. Parents cherished their children because they had fought so hard against disease and malnutrition to have them. They looked upon Dr. Greer as an unfortunate woman because she had none.*

*She couldn't explain her failure to have children except to say that "in my society, there is no idea of continuum. In my society, the individual life is self-contained.*

*"That village hardly knew the use of the word 'I,'" she said. "It's 'we' every inch of the way."*

*Women who bear children gain seniority in their villages, she reported. "And they really have seniority. They were more important and more powerful in family affairs than the men were. The men were allowed the abstract discourse. The men were allowed sports. The women had the day-to-day running of the family. Nothing could be done without them."*

*When the family existed in America, she said, women's lives were more bearable. "But the American family was destroyed generations ago," she stated categorically, and that has taken away much of women's power.*

*Americans who advocate birth control for people in other cultures, she said, don't realize that not everyone has the American attitude toward sex. "In our society, sex is an indoor sport. But that's not the way it is in the rest of the world. The primary relationship is the family.*

*Dr. Greer said she doubts if there is really a problem of overpopulation in the world. She returned to the example of the Indian village to make her point. "The entire village*

**If we lived out our deepest convictions about family, we would startle both ourselves and our neighbors: to repel some, to be sure, but to benefit many.**

had squeezed into one half of a room, and had left the other half to me," she said. "When I looked at these people, I knew perfectly well who there were too many of. There were too many of me."<sup>15</sup>

If the treasuring of family and of children in Hindu villages could give such profound pause to this woman of strong convictions, we must ask: are the Christian communities in America displaying distinctive convictions in regard to children and family, or are we simply blending into the landscape? If we lived up to our inherited beliefs in this matter—openly and consciously—we would stand out as starkly as Lubavitcher Jews in Brooklyn, or Amish farmers in rural Pennsylvania, or Hare Krishna youngsters in the airports, or Jehovah's Witnesses ringing your doorbell. If we lived out our deepest convictions about family we would startle both ourselves and our neighbors: to repel some, to be sure, but to benefit many. It is so ironic that when we do take a stand on a family issue—abortion, for example—we arouse indignation because we appear imposing and arrogant. All things considered, are we not more craven and chameleon?

To take the abortion conflict as a telltale: any convictions we have that are faith-fostered ought to show forth. Instead of being unnerved by the red, white, and blue accusations that our faith is showing, we should be relieved that it is, and confess to chagrin if it is not. What could be more embarrassing to Christians than the public disclosure that on a crucial matter regarding the bearing of children, our religious beliefs turned us in no discernible direction?

*The divide between religionists on abortion is not one which cleaves one set of communions from another. The cleft follows two older fracture lines, and does not conform exactly to church boundaries. Most significantly, the religious groups that resist abortion are the same groups that traditionally have placed high value on the marriage bond. Those who advocate protection for the unborn, even at sharp sacrifice, are the same who have advocated fidelity in marriage, for better or for worse. They are prepared to withstand a cultural sympathy for abortion because they have long withstood a similar sympathy for divorce and remarriage. Those who have defended the bond of promise are, not surprisingly, also defenders of the bond of blood.*

*It has been said, but erroneously, that the precise point where religion properly enters the abortion debate is where the question arises: when does human life begin? Religion has much less to say to the question "Lord, who is my neighbor?" than to the distinctly different question of what to do with that neighbor. Christianity, in particular, has much less to say about the value of human life than it does about the value of human beings to our life. For it teaches that we have nothing better to do with our lives than to share them with others. The beam of insight in Christianity about human values is more focused on our own life than on that of another. For Jesus' teaching is that when one human eliminates another, worse damage befalls the killer*

*than the killed. Christian teaching on life-taking centers less on the value of human life in the abstract than on the need we have of sustaining others' lives lest we perish ourselves. The Christian stake in the status of the unborn is not simply that the unborn is human, but that he or she is our brother or sister; and, even more, it is that we shall thrive only if we nurture our brothers and sisters. The doctrine is about me more than about him or her. Christianity does not have its own peculiar answer to the question of whether the unborn are human. But it does have its own characteristic address to that question, for we aspire to be a community that is fit to welcome children into the world.*<sup>16</sup>

How true, on that view of the matter, that no unwanted child should ever be born. And how true, on that view of the matter, that we, and not the child, must bear the cost and the burden of this tenet. And, therefore, how unutterably peculiar and extravagantly Christian is that view of the matter.

## NOTES

1. Lance Morrow, "Of Abortion and the Unfairness of Life," *Time* essay, *Time*, 1 August 1977, p. 49.

2. U.S. Congress, Senate, *Abortion: Hearings on S.J. Res. 119 and S.J. Res. 130 before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 93d Congress, 2d session, 1 (1974): 593 (Statement of C. Stanley Lowell, Americans United for Separation of Church and State).

3. Betty Benjamin, "Pro-Choice: Keep Abortion a Private Matter," guest opinion column, *Minneapolis Star*, 31 January 1980, p. 8a.

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6. C. Henry Kempe, "Pediatric Implications of the Battered Baby Syndrome," *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 46 (1971): 30.

7. Brandt F. Steele, "Psychology of Infanticide Resulting from Maltreatment," in Marvin Kohl, ed., *Infanticide and the Value of Life* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1978), p. 76.

8. Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Gandhi's Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1949), part III, ch. 18, p. 290.

9. Charles Hartshorne, "Concerning Abortion: An Attempt at a Rational View," *The Christian Century* 98 (1981): 42-45.

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11. Anthony Shaw, "Doctor, Do We Have a Choice?" *New York Times Magazine*, 30 January 1972, p. 52.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

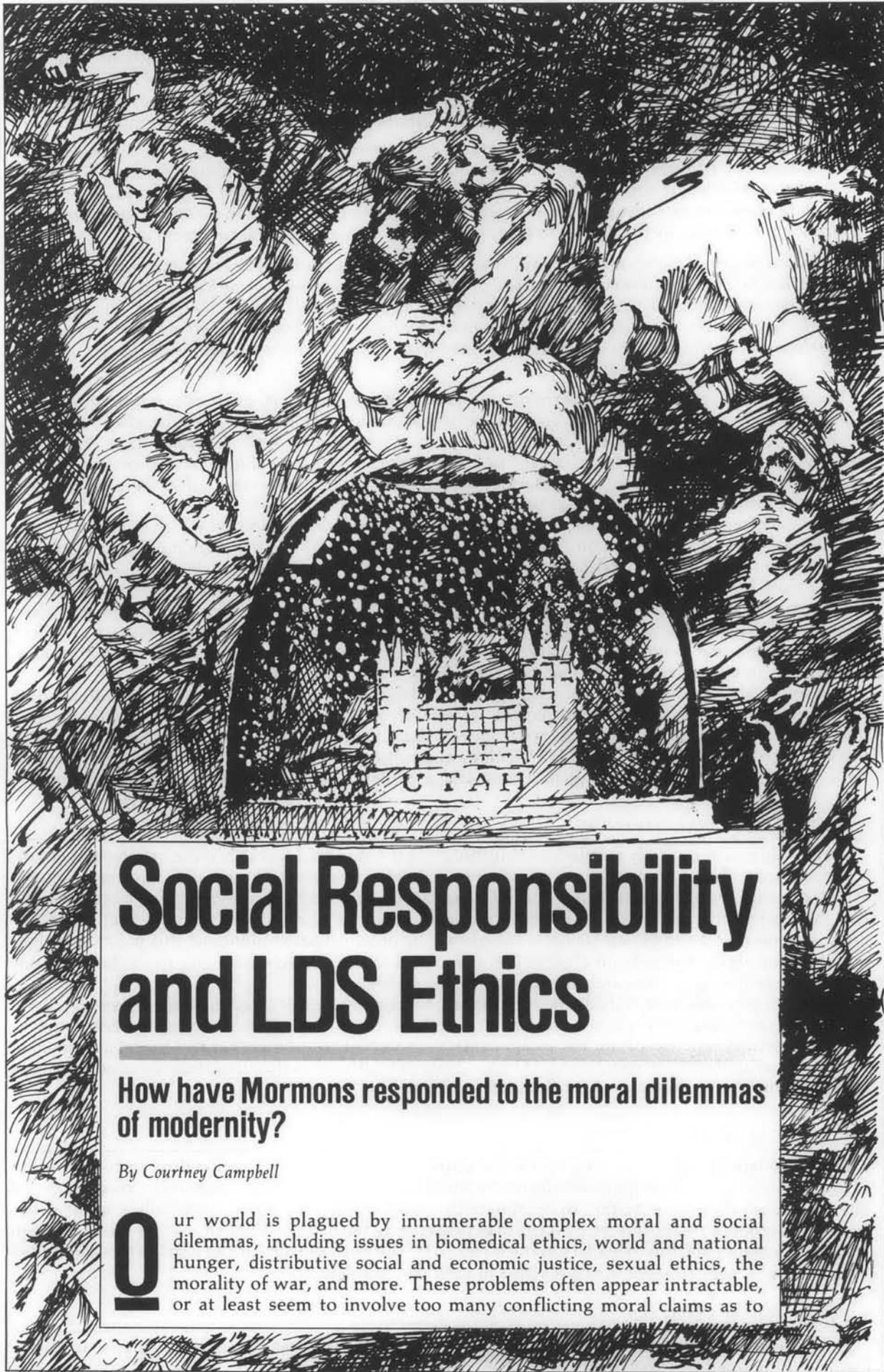
13. Rosalyn Benjamin Darling, "Parents, Physicians and Spina Bifida," *Hastings Center Report* 7 (August 1977): 13.

14. Philip Abbott, *The Family on Trial: Special Relationships in Modern Political Thought* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, [1981]), pp. 142-43.

15. Erika Sanchez, "Dr. Greer Changes Her Feminist Tune," *The Dalls Morning News*, 6 October 1981, p. 1c.

16. James Tunstead Burtchaell, *Rachel Weeping: The Case against Abortion* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), pp. 118-19.

**The staying power of Christ's love is not to be undone by death. We shall be close by him despite our deaths and because of his.**



# Social Responsibility and LDS Ethics

How have Mormons responded to the moral dilemmas of modernity?

By Courtney Campbell

**O**ur world is plagued by innumerable complex moral and social dilemmas, including issues in biomedical ethics, world and national hunger, distributive social and economic justice, sexual ethics, the morality of war, and more. These problems often appear intractable, or at least seem to involve too many conflicting moral claims as to

allow for any simple resolution. Some maintain that any church professing allegiance to Christ should address these challenges through a tradition of moral teaching which stresses social responsibility. Others, however, assert that Christian churches should not intervene in societal dilemmas, for to do so would represent an inappropriate intrusion into affairs outside their ecclesiastical domain.

It is important to probe the nature of the response of current leaders and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the moral dilemmas of modernity. Although some LDS authors have addressed specific social and ethical issues, Mormons generally have failed to reflect on and formulate responses to these problems. Indeed, many appear to deem involvement in social concerns entirely unnecessary. As President Hinckley observed in a recent general conference:

*There are those who would fracture our strength by leading us in the pursuit of objectives which are not pertinent to the central mission of the Church. We are constantly invited, yes, even strongly urged, to get out and march for this cause or that cause. There are some causes with which we should properly be involved, which are directly related to the Church, its mission, and the well-being of its people. The determination of these must be left to those called to leadership. Such causes will be few, since we must husband our strength for the far greater obligation to pursue a steady course in building the kingdom of God in the earth.<sup>1</sup>*

The ecclesiastical problem of determining responsibility to society is, of course, not unique to the LDS religious tradition; indeed, the issue has been designated by H. Richard Niebuhr as an "enduring problem" for all Christians and Christian churches. Historically, some religions have chosen to respond with a "strategy of withdrawal," or "separatism."<sup>2</sup> Withdrawal and separation involve the spoken and lived renunciation of all manifestations of a "secular" or even "Christianized" culture, including particular practices, such as participation in war or government.

To be sure, separatist tendencies operate within the LDS religious tradition which are not totally a function of geographical isolation.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the position of the institutional Church toward social responsibility and cultural dilemmas is more frequently one of passivism. While this response of silence does have certain advantages both for the Church and for its members, there are also significant risks implicit in such a strategy, one of these being callousness or complacency toward morally objectionable social practices or institutions. Unlike separatism, which expresses an explicit protest against moral evil and a desire to disassociate the religious community from that evil, a passivist strategy may represent a failure to avoid complicity with evil.

Moreover, this response of passivity, however adequate or inadequate for approaching moral dilemmas from an institutional perspective, is certainly not coincidental. As James Gustafson has pointed out, theology qualifies ethics, and it appears that LDS ethics have been significantly qualified, if not silenced, by certain tenets of LDS theology and culture. Among these are prophetic normativeness, suspicion of rationality, evangelical emphasis, providential appeal, and eschatological emphases.

### 1. PROPHETIC NORMATIVENESS

Latter-day Saints typically ascribe moral authority to the standard works and the prophetic word of Church leaders, believing that these sources provide definitive answers to many if not most of the ethical questions which plague other Christian moralists. As a result, a number of members assume that "when the prophet speaks, the debate is over," a popular phrase which implies that extended discussion on moral and ethical issues is valueless. The practical consequence of this position is that moral responsibility for difficult choices is surrendered to the Church, relieving the individual conscience of perplexing choices and simplifying the moral life.

While this approach to moral dilemmas has merit, ultimately it must be evaluated as unsatisfactory. Besides circumscribing the moral autonomy of members, recent First Presidency statements (such as those concerning abortion or nuclear weapons) lack consistent and comprehensive moral argumentation and thus are less than compelling. When subjected to ethical evaluation, these pronouncements tend to be more question-provoking than question-settling.

### 2. SUSPICION OF RATIONALITY

Ethical reflection necessarily requires a pronounced appeal to human rationality. In contrast, the LDS tradition repeatedly emphasizes the nonrational method of individual inspiration to resolve moral dilemmas, appealing to revelation to illuminate the proper course of action in morally unclear situations. This tendency is reinforced by scriptures proscribing faith in the "foolishness" of human reason and by statements of Church leaders to the effect that "the major reason for the world's troubles today is that men . . . seek to solve their problems in their own wisdom."<sup>4</sup>

### 3. EVANGELICAL EMPHASIS

Concern for social reformation in the LDS church, if expressed at all, is clearly secondary to its historically defined mission of spiritual conversion. Furthermore, this historical understanding is based on the assumption that men and women, religiously renewed and aided by the mediation of the

By deferring to the prophet, members surrender moral responsibility to the Church, relieving individual conscience of perplexing moral choices.

Church, will be able to adequately resolve the moral dilemmas and social challenges that confront them, thereby serving as a restraining force on cultural excesses. Thus, an emphasis on spiritual regeneration is seen to some degree as obviating attention to social concerns.

#### 4. PROVIDENTIAL APPEAL

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A common response to moral dilemmas among Mormons is to appeal to a belief in the providential direction of history: God's control of history suggests that some moral and social problems will perhaps be resolved as a matter of divine historical design. This belief is apparent in a statement by President Ezra Taft Benson, who, in responding to members' inquiries about the seeming indifference of the Church to problems of moral evil, unwanted cultural intrusions, and governmental excesses, affirmed that Church leaders were not "oblivious" to these problems and that members "should be assured that the Lord will take care of this [increase of evil] in His own time and in His own way."<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, the assumption that God will make everything turn out right can encourage complacency toward ethical reflection and neglect for social responsibility. Moreover, as John Bennett has pointed out, disassociation or nonresponsiveness to important moral issues "promises holiness to a limited group at the cost of evasion of one's responsibilities as a member of the larger community. Such holiness is itself illusory, for there is real participation in the sins of the larger community that is overlooked. Christians who withdraw from the world are guilty of sins of omission that involve responsibility for evils not prevented."<sup>6</sup>

#### 5. ESCHATOLOGY AND ETHICS

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The eschatological perspective common to Mormonism that Christ will return to earth in all his glory and that "the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" suggests that many contemporary moral and social problems cannot be resolved within history. Indeed, it is considered to be part of the divine design that such intractable matters will be settled and justice established when "there shall be time no longer." But while we pray and prepare for the coming of Christ, two-thirds of the world's population suffers from malnutrition, violations of human rights persist in every country on earth, and terrorism and war become increasingly rampant. Even when such occurrences are acknowledged, they are trivialized with the passive observation that "the contrast between the Church and the world will be increasingly marked in the future, which contrast we hope, will cause the Church to be more attractive to those in the world who desire to live according to God's plan."<sup>7</sup> Such a position of moral condemnation and ethical stupor seems an inadequate if not absolutely callous response to the moral demands of these issues.

While this list is not exhaustive, it does illustrate aspects of Mormon theology which seem to restrict the development of critical ethical reflection and discussion in the LDS tradition. Such obstacles to moral deliberation cannot be dismissed easily as they occupy a position of fundamental importance in the LDS belief system. How then is the Church to maintain fidelity to these fundamental tenets while displaying a more responsible approach to current moral dilemmas confronting our society?

Mormonism, of course, is not the first religious tradition to confront this challenge. Other religious and philosophical traditions have arrived at ethical strategies or contexts to assist individuals and groups in constructive discussion and reflection. While no one of these solutions is completely amenable to Mormonism, an overview of these approaches may provide insights which are relevant to the ethical reflection of Latter-day Saints.

#### THE CONTEXT OF NATURAL LAW

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The concept of natural law has been most frequently advanced by Catholic theologians as well as by Western philosophers such as John Locke and Immanuel Kant. In essence, this view suggests that there are fundamental moral principles or rules which have universal validity and are knowable by human reason. For the religious person, a clear advantage of this approach is that it does not necessarily require the abandonment of Christian ethics in favor of a secular standard of morality.

On first glance, there appear to be important parallels between the concept of natural law and elements of Mormon religious thought. For example, the LDS teaching that all individuals are endowed with the "light of Christ" enabling them to know good from evil seems to validate the notion of a universal moral law discernable by every human being. On closer examination, however, a number of difficulties become evident. For instance, most contemporary explications of natural law stress the sufficiency of human rationality, while Latter-day Saints often emphasize the fallibility of reason and the primacy of revelation. Moreover, Joseph Smith's assertion that "whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is,"<sup>8</sup> (best exemplified in the Book of Mormon account of Nephi slaying Laban) certainly contradicts basic assumptions of the natural law tradition. Thus, while this philosophical approach may have some utility for ethical reflection in the LDS faith, its applicability appears to be limited.

**The assumption that God will make everything turn out right can encourage complacency toward ethical reflection and neglect for social responsibility.**

## AN ETHIC OF SOCIAL CONTRAST

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Several religious traditions which have drawn a sharp distinction between church and world, as is common in Mormonism, have responded to moral and social concerns through a strategy of social contrast. This strategy emphasizes the *expression of moral values* and is intended to present a “witness” to the world of the establishment of an alternative model for social life. This approach assumes that Christian values must be not only spoken but lived in order to make apparent the contrast between God’s church and a godless culture. Social contrast, then, suggests that the most significant moral and ethical responsibility for the church is to be itself.

But the social contrast ethic involves assumptions that go beyond mere example-setting. Implicit in this approach is the confidence that the religion in question possesses solutions to moral, ethical, and social problems that others outside the religious tradition should be persuaded to adopt. Moreover, the ethics of social contrast expresses an essential pessimism concerning the nature of the world receiving the witness, and the necessity of establishing “high places” of holiness apart from a world that will always be the scene of violence and injustice.<sup>9</sup>

If nothing else, this type of ethical approach is at least implicit in much of the rhetoric of LDS church leaders. Values such as family unity, chaste sexual behavior, self-sufficiency, and ward responsibility for the needy or widowed not only function as religious norms for and in the Church, but have also been explicitly commended as methods of providing examples to the world of appropriate familial relationships, correct sexual norms, and procedures for establishing distributive socioeconomic justice.

Though this context for ethical reflection does appear to be compatible with many aspects of the LDS tradition, the problems inherent in the presumed sufficiency of such a strategy must also be explored. Such an ethic can result in a disturbing neglect of larger problems of justice and social order. Moreover, an ethic of social witness frequently displays a disquieting “us against them” mentality, ignoring the fact that “they” are really part of “us” under one God. There are, then, both virtues and vices involved in an ethic of social contrast.

**The danger with social Christianity is that those who have benefited from Christian concern may receive a welfare check or decent housing—and lose their souls.**

## THE ETHIC OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

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In contrast to defining responsibility to society in terms of social contrast and witness, the social gospel assumes that Christians have a genuine responsibility to make the history of the world turn out right. Thus, the ethical emphasis is placed not on expressing values but on *realizing goals* of social reform and progress. To be sure, the contemporary LDS leadership has maintained that the mission of the Church involves the achievement of certain goals, but these goals could hardly be considered a clarion call for social transformation.<sup>10</sup> While certain key phrases in LDS religious discourse, such as “building the kingdom of God on earth” or “the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man,” reflect significant affinities with the social gospel movement, the Church has generally avoided adopting measures associated with this strategy.<sup>11</sup>

The religious direction to the social gospel is held to come from Christ’s commandment to love our neighbors. Despite well-intentioned goals, this strategy too is not without its problems. Institutions employing a social gospel ethic frequently emphasize the social and leave out the gospel, turning the Christian faith into what C. S. Lewis called “Christianity and water.” A similar assessment has been expressed by Richard Cunningham: “The danger with social Christianity is that in its preoccupation with human concerns, the Church might die a quiet death. Those who have benefited from Christian concern may receive a cup of coffee, a welfare check, a better education, or decent housing—and lose their souls.”<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, a social gospel approach can sometimes incur disunity in an institution because of the diverse nature of moral and social causes requiring attention. For example, the Christian faith has been invoked to promote pacifism in North America and Europe, liberation theology in Latin America, the moral reforms of the American “Moral Majority,” and Marxist causes in other countries of the world. Unfortunately, the strategy of the social gospel provides little help in ranking the importance of two competing moral causes.

Thus, while a social gospel approach manifests a willingness to get involved in the affairs of society and ultimately history, there remain significant risks to this approach that must be recognized in considering whether it presents a viable strategy for ethical reflection and moral involvement. If the ethic of social contrast does not go far enough in fulfilling social responsibility, the social gospel ethic risks going too far, subordinating the essential religious message to the task of making the world turn out right.

## AN ETHIC OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

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As noted earlier, the LDS church maintains a stance of passivity toward social concerns, a position which has both advantages and disadvantages. By refusing to dictate normative positions on most

issues for its members, the Church places the burden of ethical choices and social involvement on the individual, thereby accentuating the theological tenet of individual agency and responsibility. However, while this approach may encourage individual responsibility, it runs the risk of implying that ethical reflection is unimportant and therefore unnecessary. Furthermore, by failing to provide a context for ethical reflection, such analysis and discussion as does take place may be directionless and result in a divisive polarization of positions held by various members. It therefore seems odd for the institutional Church to encourage member participation in civic and political affairs while itself refusing involvement in any or most social, moral, or ethical causes.<sup>13</sup>

Despite institutional passivity, individual Saints do have a moral obligation of social responsibility. Our devotion to “obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law” (A of F 12), for example, should not stop us from opposing and seeking in a lawful manner to change unjust legislation. Moreover, the Doctrine and Covenants stresses the significance of individual responsibility: “Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves” (D&C 58:26-29).

A developed ethic of individual responsibility requires more than the expression and exemplification of particular moral values. It also requires a greater sensitivity than is implicit in the attitude that “all is done” regarding social responsibility when eighteen months of a spiritual sabbatical are completed. While these practices are not to be dismissed as superfluous, neither ought they to be considered sufficient. Individual responsibility demands critical reflection on moral and social issues as well as courage and determination to act on those causes which are assessed as “good” in the community dialogue of the LDS tradition.

COURTNEY CAMPBELL is pursuing a doctorate in religious ethics at the University of Virginia. Acknowledgements go to Dr. James F. Childress of the University of Virginia and Michael and Nancy Harward, whose perceptive comments and criticisms are much appreciated.

## NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “He Slumbers Not, nor Sleeps,” *Ensign* 13 (May 1983): 5-8.
2. John C. Bennett, *Christian Ethics and Social Policy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946); H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956).
3. See, for example, Richard Ostling, “Mormonism Enters a New Era,” *Time*, 7 August 1978, pp. 54-56. Other reasonable discussions of the Christ-culture problem may be found in Marvin S. Hill and James B. Allen, eds., *Mormonism and American Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972); F. LaMond Tullis, ed., *Mormonism: A Faith for All Cultures* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978); Klaus J. Hansen, “Mormonism and American Culture: Some Tentative Hypotheses,” in *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History*, ed. Alma R. Blair, Paul M. Edwards, and F. Mark McKiernan (Lawrence, Kans.: Coronado Press, 1973), pp. 1-27.
4. Marion G. Romney, “Unity,” *Ensign* 13 (May 1983): 17-18, italics added.
5. Ezra Taft Benson, “May the Kingdom of God Go Forth,” *Ensign* 8 (May 1978): 32-34.
6. Bennett, *Christian Ethics and Social Policy*, p. 45.
7. Benson, “Kingdom of God,” pp. 32-34.
8. Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977), p. 256.
9. Bennett, *Christian Ethics and Social Policy*, pp. 41-46.
10. These goals include (1) teaching the restored gospel to all nations, (2) strengthening the LDS community, and (3) redemption of the dead.
11. It should be noted, however, that for at least a few years some attempt to institute social gospel principles was made through the Church’s Social Advisory Committee. See Thomas G. Alexander, “Between Revivalism and the Social Gospel: The Latter-day Saint Social Advisory Committee, 1916-1922,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 23 (Winter 1983): 19-39.
12. Richard B. Cunningham, *C. S. Lewis: Defender of the Faith* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p. 123. Although Cunningham appears to convey a negative assessment of Christian responsibility to society, it should be noted that the “dangers” he delineates are a result of a *preoccupation* and not the consequence of a commitment to social morality.
13. This emphasis on individual responsibility and member participation in civic and political matters also seems to be limited to certain cultures; such a strategy seems problematic or even inapplicable to members residing in Managua, San Salvador, Johannesburg, or Warsaw, for example. Members are always encouraged to “obey the laws of the land,” however morally objectionable they may seem, lest particular nations develop an antagonism towards the Church that will hinder its progress.

**By refusing to dictate normative positions, the ethic of individual responsibility runs the risk of implying that ethical reflection is unimportant.**

# The Language of Niceness

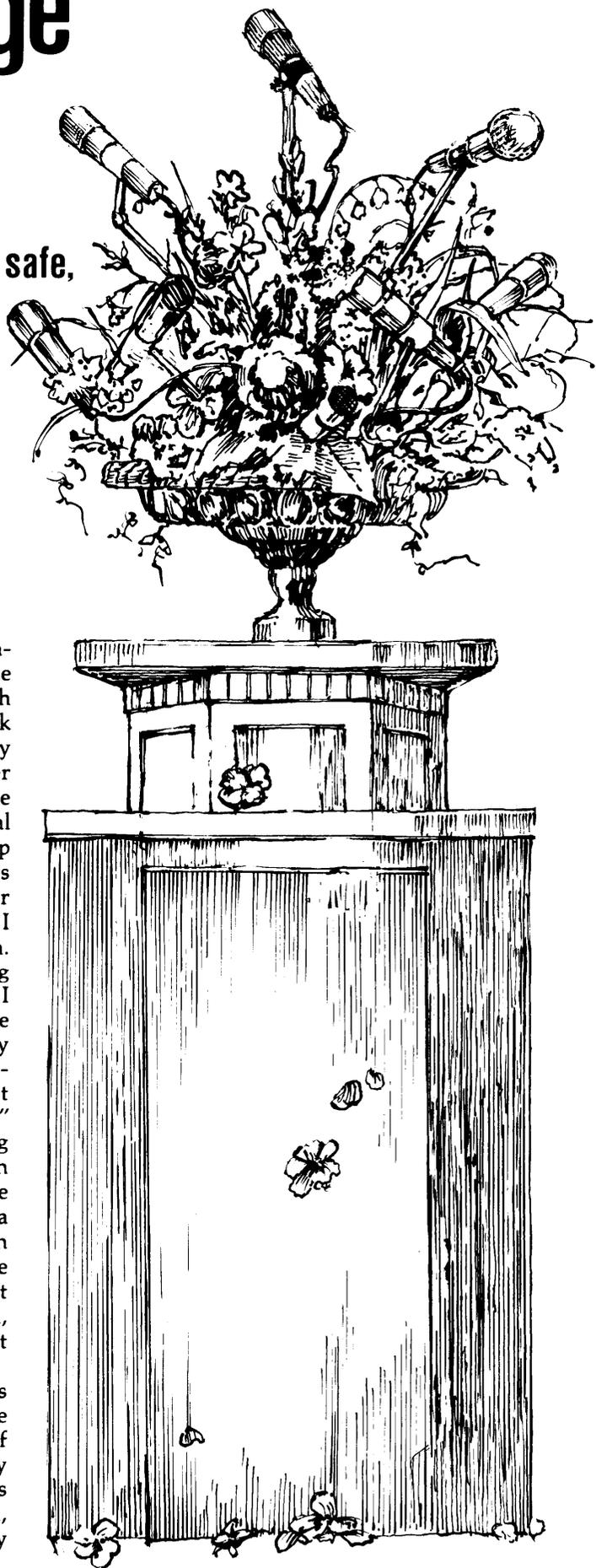
Our manner of speech is soft and safe, but like a lullaby it frequently puts us to sleep.

By Emma Rebecca Thomas

Several months ago I attended a stake conference which kept everyone in the stake murmuring nervously for weeks. A Church leader had asked a newly converted black woman to speak to us about missionary work. But as soon as she opened her mouth, everyone started to fidget and pale. The man beside me was so unnerved that his metal folding chair sounded like it was doing a tap dance on the cultural hall floor. The teenagers and mothers of toddlers in the foyer stuck their heads through the door in astonishment, while I directed my eyes toward my feet for the duration.

For starters, the new sister kept embarrassing us with a lot of talk about "Jeeeesus," a being I hadn't heard about in a Mormon chapel since Primary. Even then, it wasn't "Jeeeesus" my teachers had described, but "Jesus." Since growing up and graduating from Primary, the object of my worship has been "Christ," "the Lord," "the Savior," or "The Son of God." Hearing another adult talk about him from the pulpit in such a folksy, childlike way was a shock, like hearing someone presumptuously calling a stranger by his nickname. For young children still in need of having an older brother very close to them, this intimate term of endearment seems acceptable. For an adult Mormon, though, the name was too homey, too familiar—almost too tender.

Another troubling aspect of the talk was its intonation. There was a melody and definite rhythm which, I knew from my many hours of black-gospel radio listening, meant that at any moment we were all supposed to clap our hands and leap out of our chairs shouting "Hallelujah, right on!" Since I've been programmed from my



youth to sit stiffly in my seat during church services, this not-so-subtle vocal prompting to the contrary was most disturbing.

Perhaps because of my embarrassment, I listened to every word of the talk—something that almost never happens to me in stake conference. I strained my ear nervously to catch some treasonous false doctrine slipping from the lips of our newly converted Baptist sister. I scrutinized every word and when she wound up her declaration of joy at having found the true gospel of Jeeeesus, I looked gratefully at my husband and breathed a little more easily. The woman had nearly sent five hundred good-hearted folk running into the streets, in a frenzy of confusion, but she had borne one of the most powerful testimonies of the divinity of Christ that I had ever heard. And there wasn't a word of it that wasn't strictly orthodox. She hadn't preached any false doctrine; it only sounded that way.

I've been startled by other church talks which were controversial, not because of their content, but because of their style. I once participated in planning a "New Beginnings" program for the young women in my ward. While I did not know the speaker the girls suggested, their enthusiasm for this woman was so great that I didn't hesitate to put her on the program. The woman was dynamic in both her physical presence and in her style of speech, and the girls eagerly lapped up everything she said. The parents in the room, however, began stirring nervously as the fifty-year-old speaker talked earnestly about experiencing a "high" traveling down the Colorado River on a raft listening to the "tender warblings of the canyon wren." The adults found the whole mood too 1960s, too back-to-

the-earth, too much like something you'd read on the front page of a Sierra Club calender. A sigh of relief swelled the room when she finally concluded her "spontaneous me" remarks by telling the girls to get in touch with themselves and with the Holy Spirit.

It's obvious that we expect something specific from a church context. We expect to hear our own language spoken, with the appropriate examples, titles, and references to authority. We expect an intonation of piety: a sentence that starts out assertive and then trails off into what sounds like the beginning of an apology but is really an effort to seem humble. We expect to hear the Supreme Being referred to as "our Heavenly Father," not "my Father." Even too frequent references to "God" can make a talk sound foreign. We expect a distance between us and the speaker: no embarrassing intimacies of feeling, please—especially from men. We do not want to hear anything too strident. We do not like "mellowspeak," intellectual allusions, or "vision talk," the language of personal revelation. And we do not like talk that uses liberal political rhetoric of any kind.

What we want is talk as close to that of the General Authorities as possible. Perhaps because there are no sisters in the hierarchical ranks, women have more latitude of expression in the Church than men do—they can be more intimate, more sentimental. Still, for both sexes, our speech is constrained and compressed into a set format.

There are a few General Authorities who do not fit the mold: Hartman Rector, with his backwoods Virginia preacher hominess; George P.

Lee and Yoshihiko Kikuchi, non-WASP types with their intimate, personal intensity of feeling that makes them close to tears when they speak; Neal Maxwell, with his alliterations and carefully crafted verbal darts; and of course Bruce R. McConkie, with his language of finality. As a general rule, though, the talks we hear in general conference are all similar. They're chatty, full of stories about people the speaker has met in his travels, dripping with humility, but also businesslike and straightforward. This is the kind of talk that we are the most comfortable with, the kind of talk that instantly sounds like Truth to us.

There are several reasons for our uneasiness with variations on this approach, and why we squirm when unusual-sounding language creeps into our meetings. First of all, a different way of speaking frequently *does* mean a different thought. Who is the "Holy Spirit" that our New Beginnings speaker mentioned throughout her talk? Very probably, it is not the same being as the Holy Ghost, a distinct member of the Godhead with a body of spirit. The woman who made reference to the "Holy Spirit" in her talk grew up in the Church and is, I presume, familiar with the Mormon concept of the Godhead. Yet she chose to remain vague about which member she was referring to. Was she speaking of Jehovah, of the Father, of the Holy Ghost, or of some godlike, life-giving substance found in all physical objects on earth?

Similarly, the "Jeeeesus" spoken of by the woman in stake conference is probably not quite the same person as my "Savior." The very word implies a being with different attributes. While my formerly Baptist sister and I mean to suggest the same individual when we use our different names, the background that taught her to call him "Jeeeesus" has undoubtedly led her to discover different aspects of his personality than I have.

And when Bruce R. McConkie stands before us in general conference to verify that he's an Apostle of Jesus Christ, that's a different sentiment than that expressed by other Apostles who more obliquely say they know that the Church is run by men chosen of God.

There are other reasons why we are skittish in the face of the variations on our linguistic habits. From the inception of the Church, the Saints have been mortified at the thought of being identified with the thousands of sects and fanatics that crop up all of the time and which look, from the outside at least, uncomfortably similar to us. We are *not* Jesus freaks; hence an instant repudiation of anything that sounds like born-again mellowspeak punctuated with the word "Jesus." We are *not* Protestants; hence an audible murmur when someone talks about God's grace. We are *not* mindless fanatics; hence a raised eyebrow in response to someone whose language is too strident, too eager, too unrestrained. We are *not* wild-eyed Utopians—at least not anymore;

hence our abhorrence for socialist or communist political rhetoric. We want to impress mainstream America with our acceptability and respectability, consequently, we have easily adopted the language of middle-American values as our own. Business talk, government bureaucracy talk, sports talk, and lightweight sociology talk have all been easily assimilated into our jargon.

The biggest barrier to an acceptance of different forms of speech, though, is our obsession with the communal "we believe" as opposed to the individual "I believe." A while back a girl in one of my mutual classes raised her hand in consternation after my brief explanation of the marvelous Mormon notion that there's a part of every human being that wasn't created by anybody, but which has always existed. The girl had never heard the idea before and was obviously troubled by what I'd said. Her question to me was, "Is that what *you* believe, or what *we* believe?" I was pleased that she had taken the effort to question what I'd said at all, but her question revealed that she was already acutely sensitive, as I was at her young age, that there is an accepted body of doctrine in the Church and that straying from its confines can have disastrous results. Also implicit in her question was the notion that even if she hadn't heard the doctrine before, she already accepted it—not if it were true, but if it were the communally held belief.

Despite our lip service to the concept of personal revelation, we are leery of it and have no use for individually initiated spiritual promptings on questions of doctrine. A spiritual manifestation is only valid if it verifies what a priesthood authority has already declared as the truth. The quest for what "I believe" in and of itself is almost viewed as a sin. What "I believe," unless carefully directed by the brethren, is seen by some as only the philosophies of men mingled with scripture, the result of false intellectualism and pride. It may be, therefore, that those who seek to be faithful in all things carefully mimic the standard approach in order to keep from being too vain, too independent. It is the vain and independent who become apostates.

This is apparently the major reason for our nonassertive, "nice guy" manner of speech. Constantly on guard lest we say anything that could be construed as false doctrine or that could lead away the tender-testimonied, we keep our speech tight, constrained, as close to the accepted version as possible. The socially sensitive child or new convert feels our discomfort with varying forms of speech and eventually adopts the party language. The socially insensitive who don't conform rarely get positions of authority and are not often asked to speak to us.

There are obvious advantages to holding tight the verbal reins on ourselves and on each other. To keep the Church a separate, identifiable entity in the midst of a fragmented, pluralistic society, there is a need to control ideas and to

**We expect a distance between us and the speaker: no embarrassing intimacies of feeling, please—especially from men.**

foster unity of thought and expression. We are tighter than we need to be, though. For the sake of protecting the integrity of Church doctrine, we have paid an unnecessary price.

A few years ago when I lived in Idaho, there was a sister in our ward who had just dissolved a disastrous marriage to an alcoholic. Fortunately for her, someone had referred her to a counselor who was working miracles with her emotional health. Every time I saw her, she looked more and more radiant and finally on her strong recommendation, her counselor was asked to come and speak to the women in the ward on homemaking night.

Even though we knew beforehand that the man wasn't a member of the Church, it was still something of a shock when he walked through the door. He was a tall, thin, good-looking black man and his greeting revealed the strong accent associated with the black community. Since Idaho is not known for its huge black population, his appearance in the Relief Society room was quite an event.

The man was polished, though, and apparently accustomed to looks of surprise from people who expected something different in his appearance. After a short introduction from our sister, his client, he launched into his speech and for two and a half hours mesmerized the group. Only when the volunteers in the nursery started clawing on the door to the tune of screaming children did the sisters remember the necessity of returning home to their families.

Our speaker had a gospel style of speech, flavored with parapsychology lingo. He hit his points hard, used some shocking examples, and made frequent dramatic pauses. The women in the room were initially suspicious of his elocution, but soon warmed up to it. Perhaps they felt that since he wasn't a Mormon male, they didn't have to be concerned if he didn't sound like one.

The excitement generated by his presentation was considerable. In essence, he said that women are God's children and that it is not a sin to consider their own desires. Indeed, they have a responsibility to love and take care of themselves. When women constantly ignore themselves, other people, including their families, respond to this cue and conclude that these women and their ideas are insignificant.

The notion that you have to love yourself and take care of your own needs before you can help others has been expressed repeatedly by the brethren. But the way our Relief Society speaker outlined that idea was so bold, and more importantly, so specific to women that it gripped our newly divorced sister and the other women in the ward profoundly. They'd heard the message before, but it took hearing it in a stark, new-sounding, detailed way to make many of them react to it. For months afterwards, reference to that Relief Society speaker returned again and again in our conversation. For my part, it's the only homemaking meeting I can remember

attending in Idaho.

Since we rarely get the opportunity to hear things in new or dramatic ways, months can go by without a glimmer of insight carried with us beyond the chapel doors. Our language of niceness is soft and safe, but like a lullaby, it frequently puts us—especially our youth—to sleep. People get bored and finally feel alienated from talk and ideas that are perpetually the same and which begin to have less and less apparent interplay with the massive changes that are taking place in society and in the Church.

I am not suggesting that we pepper our speech with mere attention-getters (or, as they are called in my husband's priests study course "items for arousing attention"). I will never forget the disgust I felt when a Gospel Doctrine teacher once falsely told those of us in her class that a glass object on the table was something originally belonging to the Prophet Joseph Smith and then intentionally knocked it onto the floor, shattering it. I don't know what gospel principle she was trying to illustrate with this little scene, but when I found out the thing was only bric-a-brac from Grand Central, I was furious with her for duping me.

Nor will I forget a scene related to me by a friend who was the victim of imaginative attention arousal. It was a hot Idaho summer afternoon and the high councilor had rendered the congregation unconscious with boredom. It was now a young returned missionary's turn to speak and in an effort to attract attention, he stood at the podium before the dead masses and at the top of his lungs yelled "FIRE!" My friend, who had succumbed to a deep state of slumber during the previous speech, was instantly alarmed by this terrible cry and leaped to her feet with a loud shriek of "Oh my God!" as she ran hysterical from the chapel. Although this story has been a source of amusement at almost every party where I've related it since I heard it, the speaker's ploy did nothing to further the purpose of the sacrament meeting in question. I see no need for fostering that kind of false excitement in our lessons and speeches.

What we do need are fresh phrases, fresh expressions of our beliefs. Our public pronouncements need to push into more verbally rich territory. Intimate one-on-one conversations with dedicated Saints reveals to me a texture and variety of expression and thought that doesn't require gimmicks and libraries full of visual aids to be tapped. We have only to unleash the abundant diversity in our backgrounds and individual ideas to turn stale-sounding beliefs into the refreshing insights that should characterize the Restoration.

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**The woman had nearly sent five hundred good-hearted folk running into the streets, but she had borne a powerful testimony of Christ.**

**Because we cannot make ourselves subject to the law of God, we cannot repent unless God grants us that ability.**



# Understanding the Scope of the Grace of CHRIST

There is danger in trusting in the false gospel of works.

By Donald P. Olsen

**F**ew doctrines are as well supported in scripture yet as thoroughly misunderstood by Latter-day Saints as the doctrine of the grace of Christ. While many Mormons believe the gift of the resurrection comes by the grace of Christ, few consider grace to be sufficient apart from works to obtain eternal life. Indeed, Elder Bruce R. McConkie has recently labelled salvation by “grace alone without works” as the “second greatest heresy” of Christendom, saying the doctrine originated in the “courts of darkness” and “is akin to what Lucifer proposed” in heaven.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, members seldom speak of grace in church meetings.

In contrast, the word *grace* occurs 128 times in the New Testament, where it is translated from the Greek word *χαριτι* (kahar-i-ti), meaning an undeserved favor, an unearned blessing, a free gift (i.e., not one given as payment or reward for obedience and good works). In addition, the term *δωρον* (dor-on) also means gift and is used in connection with grace and the Atonement. The Book of Mormon uses the word *grace* only 20 times but makes many other references to the concept of grace. The Doctrine and Covenants repeatedly uses the term. At least 20 LDS hymns contain the word. These references to grace in the standard works present a view which, while not often heard among Mormons, enlarges considerably the scope of the grace of Christ.

## THE STATE OF MAN

In the scriptures, the concept of grace is closely related to teachings concerning the state of man: Humankind requires grace because they are in a lost, fallen, and corrupt state, incapable of regaining God's presence without divine intervention. While Latter-day Saints sometimes associate this idea with apostate Christendom, it is nevertheless taught in the standard works. For example, in the Book of Mormon King Benjamin proclaims that the “natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam” (Mosiah 3:19). Alma clarifies this notion when he states that “man became lost forever, yea, they became fallen man. . . . and the fall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual death as well as a temporal. . . . they had become carnal, sensual, and devilish, by nature. . . . And now, there was no means to reclaim men from this fallen state, which man had brought

upon himself because of his own disobedience.” (Alma 42:6-12.) Alma's discussion of “our first parents” makes it clear that man's carnal nature arises not through individual sin but as a consequence of Adam's fall (42:7). Moreover, this fallen state is not a product of man's upbringing but is part of his “nature”—an inevitable, natural result of being the offspring of Adam (42:9-10).

Paul writes of Adam that “by one man's disobedience many were made sinners” (Rom. 5:19). Paul further asserts that “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Rom. 8:7-8.) The Book of Mormon missionary Aaron carries this idea even further, saying that “since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself” (Alma 22:14). Perhaps this is what Isaiah has in mind when he says, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6).

In at least one way, the person under sin is not free. The bonds of justice prevent him from obtaining forgiveness of sins, righteousness, acceptable works, and eternal life. Paul alludes to this condition when he writes, “I am carnal, sold under sin” (Rom. 7:14). Paul also states that those who accept the gospel are “delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21). Alma seems to be referring to this slavery when he talks of being “in the grasp of justice” (Alma 42:14).

## THE FUTILITY OF WORKS

Not recognizing his innate bondage, man has vainly attempted to break the grip of justice and create a relationship with God through systems of obedience to law, ritual, mysticism, or good works. While all of these approaches have their strengths, they simply cannot achieve a reconciliation of man to God. A good example is the law of Moses, which had as its hallmarks obedience and ritual. Paul extols its value when he writes, “the law is holy . . . and just and good” (Rom. 7:12) and elsewhere adds, “if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal. 3:21). Unfortunately, no law, not even the law of Moses, provides a way to remove the effects of sin. Nephi

**The person who trusts in obedience to law believes in a false gospel, is foolish, cursed, and fallen from grace.**

makes this point when he says, “by the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off” (2 Ne. 2:5).

This does not mean the law was useless, however. Abinadi teaches his people that the Mosaic system provides a foreshadowing of Christ who will redeem man from sin (Mosiah 16:14-15). Paul explains that the law was a “school master to bring us unto Christ” (Gal. 3:24). He also observes that the law was given so “that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful” (Rom. 7:13) and that “all the world may become guilty before God. . . for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” (Rom. 3:19-20.) In other words, the law brings awareness of and responsibility for our sins and errors.

Nonetheless, misplaced devotion to law will sever us from the grace of Christ. Paul points this out in his letter to the Galatians, who believed circumcision and the law of Moses to be necessary augmentations of the gospel. In part, he accuses them of having “removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ into another gospel” (Gal. 1:6-8). He insists that those who rely on “the works of the law are under a curse” (3:10) and that those who seek to be “justified by the law . . . are fallen from grace” (5:4). Thus the person who trusts in obedience to law to any extent believes in a false gospel, is foolish, cursed, and fallen from grace.

The scriptures seem to categorically exclude works as a means of obtaining forgiveness and reconciliation with God. Paul explains that

*if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. . . . Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Rom. 4:2-8.)*

Paul clinches his argument by asking whether Abraham was justified before or after he was circumcised. He answers *before* (Rom. 4:10).

The mutual exclusiveness of grace and works as a basis for receiving blessings is further brought out by Paul when he says, “if [election is] by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” (Rom. 11:6.)

How then should we view our works? Even though Paul, referring to his background, says, “after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee” (Acts 26:5) and calls his “righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Phil. 3:6), he nevertheless chooses to “count them but dung” (3:8). This is not to suggest good works have no place, only that individuals cannot earn or activate a relationship with God through them.

In seeming contrast, a common Latter-day

Saint aphorism states that “obedience is the first law of heaven.” This is probably based on Joseph Smith’s instruction that “there is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundation of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God it is by obedience to the law upon which it is predicated.” (D&C 130:20-21.) At first it might appear that these verses vindicate the value of obedience or works in obtaining God’s favor. However, it is important to note the use of the singular article *a* preceding the phrase “law irrevocably decreed.” This indicates that our success or failure in obtaining blessings from God depends entirely upon our obedience to *one* law. Paul speaks of two laws, namely, the law of faith and the law of works (Rom. 3:27). Justice can only be satisfied by faith in the righteousness of Christ or by lifelong, sinless obedience to the whole law of Moses. Since the latter is impossible, our only hope is to trust in the grace of Christ by obeying the law of faith.

Thus, people must look to Christ and not to the law (or any set of laws) or their own good works for their redemption. Righteousness, justification, sanctification, salvation, eternal life, and a relationship with God can be received only and wholly through the grace of Christ.

#### JUSTIFICATION

Apostle Bruce McConkie, one of the few LDS authors to publish an interpretation of the law of justification, writes that “an act that is justified by the Spirit is one that is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, or in other words ratified and approved by the Holy Ghost.” That is, “no unrighteous performance will be binding on earth and in heaven, and . . . no person will add to his position or glory in the hereafter by gaining an unearned blessing.” Finally, Elder McConkie teaches that justification “becomes operative in the life of an individual only on conditions of personal righteousness.”<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, however, the scriptures appear to teach a different doctrine. In the New Testament, the word *justification* is translated from the Greek *δικαιωσις* (*dik-ah-yos-in'*), which has two distinct meanings. The first is the achieving of personal righteousness by virtue of perfect sinlessness. The second is imputed righteousness by virtue of the transfer of righteousness through declaration. That Paul intends the latter meaning is clear from his use of the word *ελογισθη* (*el-og'-is'tha*) (to impute, reckon, attribute, or put on account) in the same context (Rom. 4:6, 22-25). Thus, justification refers to the attributing of Christ’s righteousness to the undeserving sinner so that he appears righteous to God.

Developing this teaching, Paul observes that “by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. . . by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (Rom. 5:18-19.) Isaiah shows an understanding

of this process when he records, "In the LORD I have righteousness. . . . In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified" (Isa. 45:24-25). This justification comes "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past" (Rom. 3:24-25). In other words, because Christ has fully paid for past sins in the garden and on the cross, the justified sinner is not accountable for them. And just as Christ's righteousness is imputed to sinners, so mankind's sins are imputed to Christ: "[God] hath made [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

How is justification received? The scriptures show that this state is made available, received, and activated only through grace. For example, the Doctrine and Covenants teaches that "we believe that justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true" (D&C 20:30; see also Rom. 3:24). However, the fact that grace is an undeserved favor freely given does not mean justification is unconditional. First one must believe that justification is by the grace of Christ. As Paul puts it, "by [Christ] all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39; see also Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16). Christ clearly sets forth this view when his disciples ask, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:28-29.) Thus, belief in Christ is the work of God. Nevertheless, faith is real only if it leads to repentance and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37-38). Finally, one is justified by the Holy Ghost (Moses 6:60; 1 Cor. 6:11). Thus in becoming justified, one will comply with the principles stated in the fourth article of faith.

Not only does justification come by grace through this process, but even the ability and motivation to have faith, repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost must also come by grace. The Doctrine and Covenants explains that faith is a gift from God (D&C 46:11-14). Christ makes this clear when he says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). Later he comments, "no man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:65; 6:37; 17:2). Paul teaches that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). Thus those who possess faith sufficient for eternal life (as well as justification) receive that faith by the grace and will of God.

Furthermore, Paul even asserts that the carnal man cannot repent unless God wills it. Because the carnally minded cannot make themselves subject to the law of God, they are unable to repent unless God grants them that ability (Rom. 8:7-8). Perhaps this is why Luke writes,

"Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

Even the good work of baptism cannot be done by oneself. The candidate must receive this ordinance from God's priesthood holder, who acts as a proxy for Christ by authority which is available only through grace. The same is true for the act of confirmation. Thus, the ordinances of baptism and confirmation are received wholly through the grace of Christ.

This helps us understand what Nephi means when he addresses himself to those who have just received Christ (that is, the newly justified): "Ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save" (2 Ne. 31:19). As with Paul, Nephi implies this justification is received only when we rely "wholly upon the merits" of Christ—not upon our personal works or worthiness.

### SANCTIFICATION

The term *sanctification* is used two ways in scripture. Often it is synonymous with *justification*. In these instances, sanctification is said to be received through "the blood of the Lamb" (Alma 13:11-12), "the reception of the Holy Ghost" (3 Ne. 27:19-21), "by the grace of God" (Moro. 10:32-33), "through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (D&C 20:31), "by the Spirit" (D&C 84:33), "in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:2), "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" (Heb. 10:10), "with his own blood" (Heb. 13:12), and "by God" (Jude 1).<sup>3</sup>

Another, less frequent, usage of *sanctification* refers to a state of holiness or righteousness in behavior and thought. In this context, individuals are considered "sanctified by that [law of the Church] which ye have received" (D&C 43:9) or are told to sanctify themselves (D&C 43:11, 16; 133:4, 62).

In the first usage, each of the scriptures clearly speaks of the sanctification which is received by the grace of God. The second refers to the righteous behavior of the Christian. Yet it is important to note that in either case this state is attained through the grace of Christ. The personal righteousness of the justified person is motivated by God. Moroni teaches that even those who are cleansed (i.e., justified and therefore in the process of sanctification) are "relying alone upon the merits of Christ" (Moro. 6:4). Thus sanctification does not come as the result of personal merit, but is the means by which personal merit is obtained.

An apparent contradiction arises in the Doctrine and Covenants, which observes that "sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength" (D&C 20:31). While this seems to make sanctification dependent upon both service and grace, it is important to realize that service is not counted for righteousness

**The scriptures seem to categorically exclude works as a means of obtaining forgiveness and reconciliation with God.**

unless it is motivated by the grace of Christ. This is explained by Moroni, who writes that unless a person's works originate with Christ, such works are "not counted unto him for righteousness" (Moro. 7:3-12). Thus, in the justified person, both sanctification and acceptable service arise out of Christ's free gift of grace.

### SALVATION

Traditionally, Latter-day Saints use the term *salvation* to refer to the resurrection. Yet this is not consistent with many scriptures. In his letter to the Ephesian Saints, Paul explains that "by grace (*Χαριτι*) are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift (*δωρον*) of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-10.) Significantly, Paul uses the perfect passive tense (*σέσωσμενοι*) of the word *save*. This means that Paul believed his readers already possessed salvation. Clearly he is not referring to the resurrection with this term, for the Ephesians were not yet resurrected. Furthermore, the listing of faith as a prerequisite for salvation also precludes this interpretation.

This passage seems inconsistent with the traditional LDS views of the role of individual works. Elder McConkie suggests that the phrase "not of works" excludes only the works of the law of Moses, not the "higher works of the gospel."<sup>4</sup> But Paul excludes all works from consideration by using the phrase "lest any man should boast." Boasting is discouraged only when all personal works are excluded from the criteria for obtaining salvation. Furthermore, Paul's use of the term *Χαριτι* for *grace* and the term *δωρον* for *gift* emphasizes the free nature of salvation thereby precluding any dependence upon any works. Paul summarizes God's sovereignty in salvation when he says "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thes. 2:13).

Most Mormons take exception to the notion that grace is sufficient for receiving salvation, citing Nephi's teaching that "we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Ne. 25:23). From this they infer that we must do all that is possible for us to do in order to be saved by grace. There are several problems with this view. First, this interpretation is inconsistent with the definition of grace as a free gift. Second, such a view contradicts many other scriptures, including many Book of Mormon statements. Nephi's father, for example, teaches that "salvation is free" (2 Ne. 2:4). And his brother Jacob urges the Nephites to "remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is *only* in and through the grace of God that ye are saved" (2 Ne. 10:24, emphasis added).

In addition, this interpretation fails to ask what is "all we can do"? Except for Christ, no one has ever done literally all that he could do. It must therefore be asked whether *all* means all

works and righteousness or whether it limits the set of things required for salvation. Nephi outlines the prerequisites to reconciliation or justification as faith, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and continuing in faith to retain that state (2 Ne. 31:14-17). Thus, this is "all we can do."

Finally, it is important to consider the context of this scripture. In making his controversial observation, Nephi urges the people to keep the law of Moses even though the law was dead due to their belief in Christ (2 Ne. 25:24). That is, the law was irrelevant to salvation except insofar as it pointed them to Christ. Therefore it appears that Nephi was deemphasizing, not emphasizing, works. Perhaps he was trying to say that even if we do everything possible to try to merit salvation, we still can't earn it; we must still receive it on an unmerited basis (i.e., by grace). In other words, we are saved by grace *in spite of*, not *in addition to* all we can do.

### ETERNAL LIFE

Justification leads to sanctification which in turn leads to eternal life. This was summarized by Paul when he taught that "as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). Thus, even eternal life is an unmerited gift of God: Paul teaches "the gift (*Χαρισμα*) of God is eternal life" (Rom. 6:23). The Doctrine and Covenants echoes this doctrine, observing that "eternal life . . . is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7).

### THE ROLE OF WORKS

If justification, sanctification, salvation, and even eternal life are free gifts, what then is the purpose, value, and role of works? The scriptures teach that acceptable good works are the *result*—not the *cause*—of the grace of Christ operating in our lives. Paul remarks that God has foreordained the works to be done by each Christian when he says, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Similarly, Peter says that we are "elect . . . through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience" (1 Pet. 1:2). Paul again emphasizes this concept when he writes, "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). Or, as he writes elsewhere, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

Even Christ acknowledges God as the source of his power and works when he says to Phillip, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you he that believeth on me,

**Because Christ  
has paid for  
past sins in the  
garden and on  
the cross,  
the justified  
sinner is not  
accountable  
for them.**

the works that I do shall he do also." (John 14:10-12.) Perhaps Moroni makes the most sweeping statement on this subject when he writes, "Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God and that which is evil cometh of the devil. . . . But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually. . . . and all things which are good cometh of Christ." (Moro. 7:12-24.)

If good works neither earn Christ's grace nor win us justification, sanctification, salvation, or eternal life, what do they do? Christ said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Therefore our good works set an example for others which brings men to Christ and provides happiness to ourselves and others.

The true purpose of works is an important key in understanding certain teachings of James concerning justification by works (James 2:24). Contrary to popular Mormon belief, this scriptural discussion of works does not refer to justification before God. For example, James writes, "Show me thy faith. . . . and I will shew thee my faith" (2:18), and "Seest thou how faith wrought" (2:22). Such statements refer to works seen by men and do not address God's response to those works. Thus, the justification of which James speaks is the demonstration of good works to show men the existence of true faith.

These verses are further clarified by James's observations about Abraham. He states that Abraham was "justified by works, when he had offered Isaac" (2:21), but later says that the patriarch "believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness" (2:23). James's reference for Abraham's belief is Genesis 15:6, while the story of sacrificing Isaac is found in Genesis 22. In other words, Abraham was *first* justified by his faith, which *afterwards* brought forth good works. These good works continued up to at least fifteen years later, when Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac.

There are, of course, many references to the role of works in the final judgment. John, for example, beheld that the dead were "judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. . . . and they were judged every man according to their works." (Rev. 20:12-13.) At first this seems inconsistent with the doctrine of salvation by grace apart from works. However, the inconsistency is only apparent: The dead spoken of here are those who will be resurrected at the end of the millennium. These are the unjust who have not received the grace of Christ. Those who have received grace and thus salvation have already been resurrected: Verses four to six which describe the judgment of the saved, make no mention of the effect of works upon their status.

But what of the references which state that those who inherit celestial glory are judged on

the basis of works? Since these people have had the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, it seems reasonable to suppose that the good works which determine their favorable judgment are the works of Christ, not those of the individuals who received this gift. Paul refers to this transfer of righteous works when he writes, "They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. . . . by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. . . . by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:17-19; see also 2 Cor. 5:21). Therefore Christ provides our good works.

## CONCLUSION

Those who haven't received the grace of Christ or have tried to augment it with their own obedience and good works will find that their "righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Many Mormons appear to have fallen prey to trusting in this false gospel of works. The words of Paul concerning those without grace can in many cases be applied to these Latter-day Saints: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10:1-4.)

On the other hand, those who truly have the grace of Christ have faith unto repentance, receive baptism and the Holy Ghost, are justified, are in the process of becoming sanctified, have received salvation from sin, and may have received eternal life. These blessings will be theirs so long as they do not fall from grace by trusting in good works or by attempting to earn, merit, or deserve these blessings. Those who continue in grace will someday stand before God where Christ will plead their case saying to the Father, "I am their righteousness; I have paid justice for their sins." Then God will see only the good works of Christ and say to them, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

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## NOTES

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2. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. rev. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 408.
3. See also Moses 6:60; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 1 Thes. 5:23; 2 Thes. 2:13; 5:23; Heb. 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2.
4. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, [1965]-73), 2:500.

The scriptures teach that acceptable good works are the result—not the cause—of the grace of Christ operating in our lives.

# How General the Authority?

## Individual Conscience and De Facto Infallibility

By Cole R. Capener

One of the most compelling yet enigmatic teachings of the Restoration is the concept of divine revelation. Unlike many religions, Mormonism asserts that God has always communicated with mankind in two ways. First, he has imparted his will to his followers collectively. Second, God has rendered instruction to individuals. Both means are frequently referred to in the scriptures, ancient and modern; both means are represented to be effective in spanning the vast expanse that seemingly separates God and man.

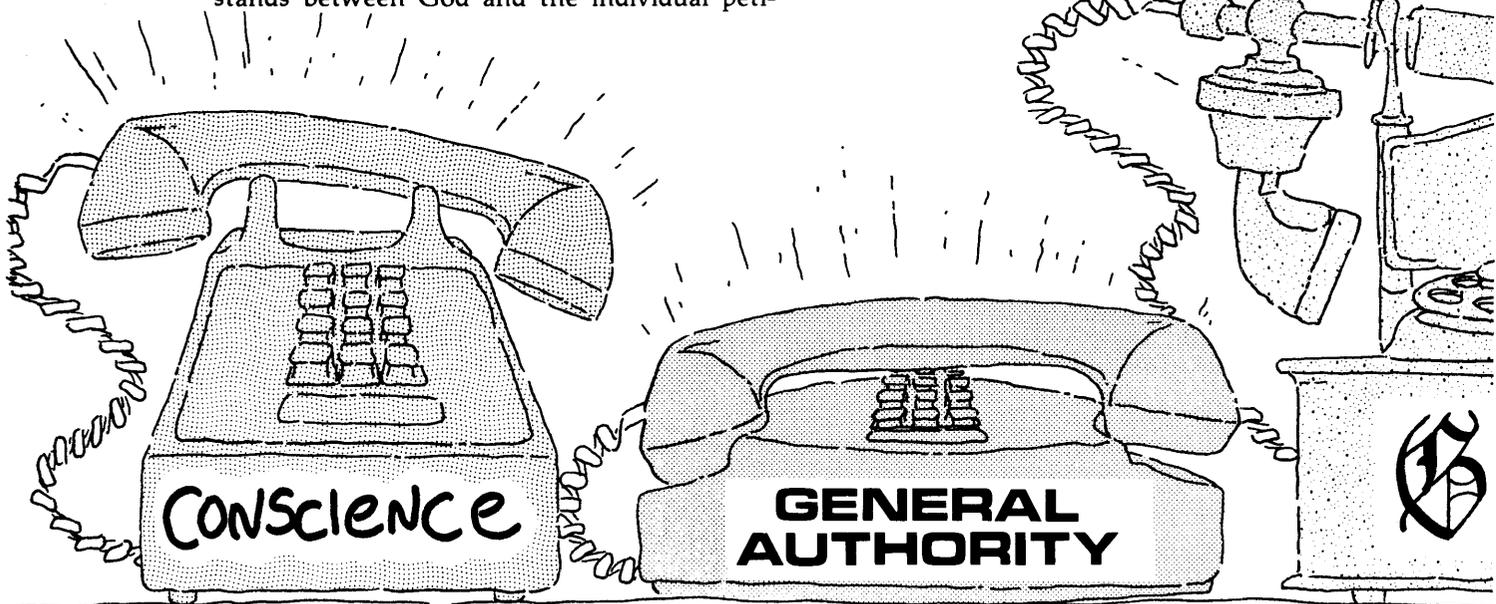
To make possible the first method of communication, God has consistently organized some sort of administrative vehicle, if sometimes rudimentary in form. The patriarchal order in Adam's time served this purpose and was followed in the Old Testament by the leadership of prophets. Christ built his church on Apostles and disciples. The modern Church was established with the perception that God presides at its head with the First Presidency located directly and immediately below him. The Council of the Twelve Apostles follows with stake presidents, bishops, and finally individual members occupying their ordered positions on this vertical scheme.

As a result of this hierarchical administrative structure, communication from the highest level to the lowest is necessarily indirect. However, God has always provided a method of direct communication which functions concurrent with and yet independent of the medium of the institution. No priest, minister, rabbi, or prophet stands between God and the individual peti-

tioner in prayer. Devoted believers have been promised that through supplication and the exercise of sincere faith they may receive counsel from on high (Matt. 7:7-8; James 1:5).

These two conduits of divine guidance are well recognized and accepted by Latter-day Saints everywhere. The common view is that the former is given for the benefit of the Church as a whole while the latter is limited to the individual's own application.

Unfortunately, the existence of these two distinct and separate paths of inspiration necessarily leads to occasional conflict. Such difficulties arise, I believe, for a variety of reasons. First, although God is not the author of confusion, whenever he communicates through human language, he is forced to contend with the limitations of that system (D&C 1:24). Early in the century, BYU Professor W. H. Chamberlin went so far as to assert that "revelation could not convey absolute truth since it is couched in human words which are tied to limited human conceptions. There is thus a human element both in expression and in interpretation; and the words of a revelation can convey to a man only what he is capable of receiving. For men there is no supernatural language."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, revelation seems rarely to be given in words and sentences, but tends to be amorphous in nature. As a result, recipients are forced to interject their own interpretations and the opportunity for



error is enhanced.

A second—and perhaps primary—reason for conflict is that God's church is led by fallible mortals. This is not to discredit those called to direct the Lord's kingdom. On the contrary, Church leaders are generally extraordinary individuals. Nevertheless, they are, like every one of us, subject to human limitations. As Elder Bruce R. McConkie has written, "Though general authorities are authorities in the sense of having power to administer Church affairs, they may or may not be authorities in the sense of doctrinal knowledge, the intricacies of church procedures, or the receipt of the promptings of the Spirit. A call to an administrative position itself adds little knowledge or power of discernment to an individual."<sup>2</sup> Or, as Joseph Smith put it, "a prophet is only a prophet when he [is] acting as such."<sup>3</sup>

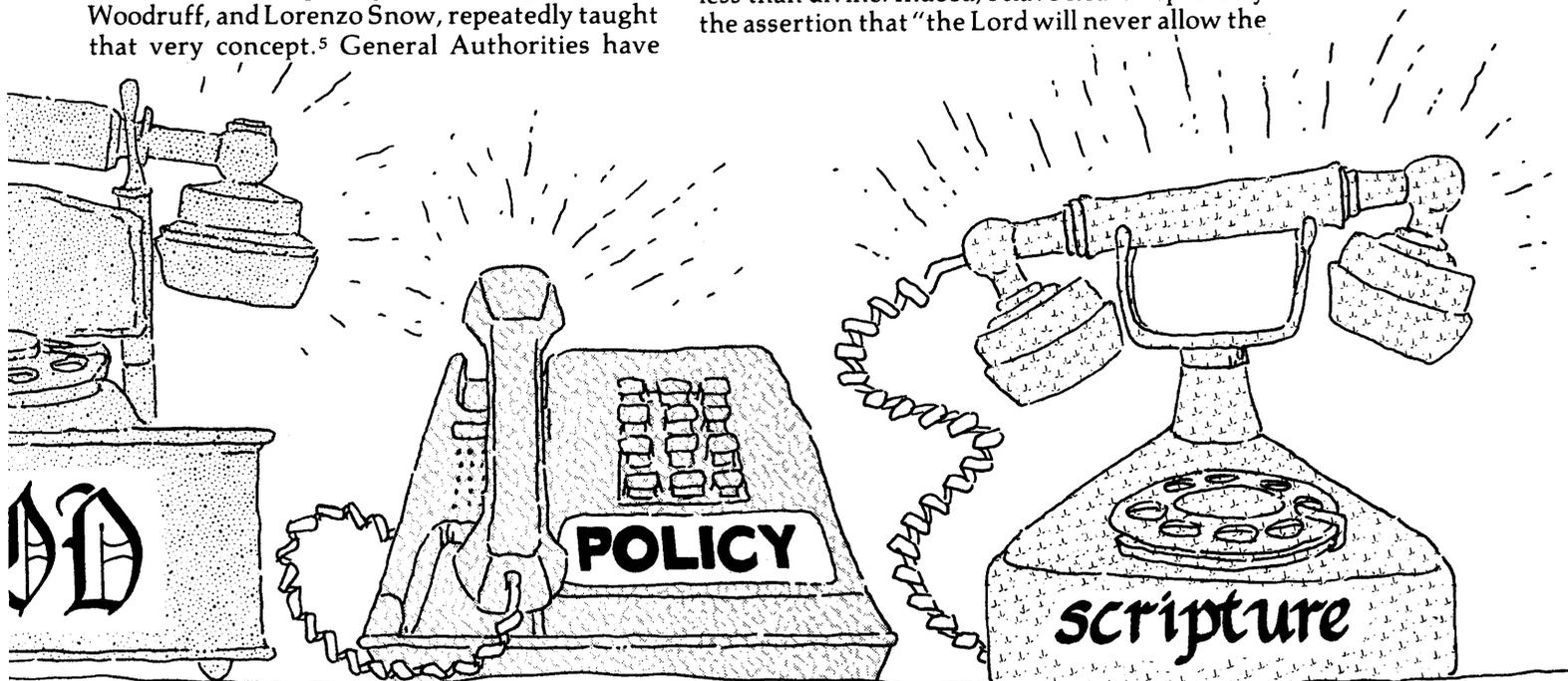
Mormonism thus rejects the doctrine of infallibility of Church leaders, acknowledging the possibility of error and disagreement over doctrinal teachings and other issues. As a result, it is not surprising to find General Authorities, Elder McConkie for example, labelling as heresy the notion of progression among the eternal kingdoms even though another Apostle, Elder James E. Talmage, found the idea entirely conceivable.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Elder Neal A. Maxwell and Elder McConkie have rejected the notion that God progresses in knowledge while earlier Church leaders, including Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow, repeatedly taught that very concept.<sup>5</sup> General Authorities have

also disagreed over political issues, as in the cases of Charles Nibley, Joseph Fielding Smith, and J. Reuben Clark, Jr., who opposed the League of Nations, and B. H. Roberts, Heber J. Grant, and George F. Richards, who supported it.<sup>6</sup>

Contrast this Mormon approach to the Catholic notion of infallibility. Catholicism teaches that as successors to the original Apostles, the pope and bishops are responsible for teaching the church and therefore hold "the charism of truth that does not fail." This assurance of infallibility, however, does not extend to individual bishops but only to the ecumenical council (the college of bishops and its head, the pope).

The Holy See also is considered infallible when he defines doctrine concerning faith or morals as the shepherd and teacher of all Christians. While this leaves room for error in some instances, the doctrine insists that the Lord guards the church against false teachings "even when a pope is unworthy in his office."<sup>7</sup>

Curiously, this latter point seems dangerously close to the view of some Latter-day Saints. In spite of Mormonism's theological rejection of infallibility, the doctrine maintains a stalwart de facto existence among many mainstream members of the Church, who continue to view General Authorities as something just less than divine. Indeed, I have heard repeatedly the assertion that "the Lord will never allow the



**In spite of Mormonism's rejection of infallibility, the doctrine maintains a de facto existence among many mainstream members of the Church.**

Church to be led astray. I will therefore follow all directions of Church leaders regardless of the nature and content of the counsel, and if my actions are wrong, it is the leader who is in error; he not I will be responsible." Too, learned Church members have more than once told me that "if the President of the Church told me to jump off a cliff today, I would do it."

Members who make these statements have apparently misunderstood that membership in the Church was never intended to replace one's decision-making processes. For example, when asked what members should do if they find themselves in disagreement with their bishop or stake president, Hugh B. Brown candidly replied, "Question everything, subject it to your own reasoning and your own sense; make it reasonable, make it understandable." In the same response, Elder Brown indicated that if after such an analysis the member still disagreed with local leaders, an appeal could be made to the General Authorities.<sup>8</sup>

Brigham Young also criticized the indiscriminate acceptance of leaders' statements:

*These persons do not depend upon themselves for salvation, but upon another of their poor, weak, fellow mortals. . . . I depend upon you, brother Joseph, upon you, brother Brigham, upon you, brother Heber, or upon you, brother James; I believe your judgment is superior to mine, and consequently I let you judge for me. . . . Now those men, or those women, who know no more about the power of God, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, than to be led entirely by another person, suspending their own understanding, and pinning their faith upon another's sleeve, will never be capable of entering into the celestial glory, to be crowned as they anticipate.<sup>9</sup>*

Brigham Young also proclaimed, *How often has it been taught that if you depend entirely upon the voice, judgment, and sagacity of those appointed to lead you, and neglect to enjoy the Spirit for yourselves, how easily you may be led into error.<sup>10</sup>*

And finally:

*I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by Him. I am fearful they settle down in a state of blind self-security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders with a reckless confidence.<sup>11</sup>*

Mormonism also rejects the Catholic notion of infallibility as a built-in safeguard over the Church. Fundamental to our understanding of God's purposes for us is the importance of human agency. Thus, both Church leaders and individual members alike often act free from his direct influence. This means that many actions, even those of considerable import, may originate not directly from God, but from leaders situated at various levels of the hierarchical order. For example, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley once told a group of missionaries that the addition in 1976 to the canon of scripture was initiated at the suggestion of one of the General Authorities. It was discussed, apparently over

some years, and after prayer, finally accepted by the Church hierarchy and membership. There was never a suggestion that God had initially directed the action.

Unfortunately, members often assume all leader-originated directives to be inspired, even when the leaders themselves make no such claim to revelation. Worse still, free agency makes it possible for stubborn and proud individuals and leaders occasionally to assert their own views with a divine imprimatur.

Instead of expecting God forcibly to restrain an errant Church leader, Mormon doctrine dictates that fallen leaders be called before a Church court to prevent further damage to the institution. This procedure, as set forth in the Doctrine and Covenants, even applies to the President of the Church:

*There is not any person belonging to the church who is exempt from this council of the church. And inasmuch as a President of the High Priesthood shall transgress, he shall be had in remembrance before the common council of the church, who shall be assisted by twelve counselors of the High Priesthood; And their decision upon his head shall be an end of the controversy surrounding him. Thus, none shall be exempted from the justice and laws of God. (D&C 107:81-84.)*

Indeed, even Joseph Smith was once tried under this procedure.<sup>12</sup>

A consideration of these issues leads to an important question: How should we act when our individual convictions run contrary to the counsel or religious teachings of Church leaders? Some would suggest that as in Catholicism, specific "tests" exist for determining whether the divine sanction falls on a given teaching of a Church leader. The most frequently mentioned test states that everything said by General Authorities during the general conference of the Church may be considered beyond error. However, the utility of this test seems somewhat questionable since talks given at general conferences over the past two decades have rarely revealed startling new dogma or prophecy or made unexpected requests of Church members. In other words, the issues which appear to cause the greatest conflict are seldom discussed in general conference.

Even when more substantive pronouncements have been made, they have not necessarily borne the fruit one would expect from inspired utterances. For example, in an April 1845 conference, Brigham Young declared that "as the Lord lives we shall build up Jackson county in this generation, (cries of amen,) and we will be far better off with regard to temporal things."<sup>13</sup> The fact that such prophecies did not come to pass casts doubt on the reliability of the general conference test.

Other members assert that instructions of divine origin will always be preceded by the words "thus saith the Lord." Interestingly, here again we see an analogue in Catholicism. Declarations falling within the sphere of infallibility

generally use certain prefatory language. Thus in proclaiming the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, Pius XII first declared: "Pronuntiamus, declaramus et definimus divinitus revelation dogma esse" ("we proclaim, declare, and define that this doctrine is a dogma divinely revealed").<sup>14</sup> For Mormons, the value of any such shibboleth is significantly undercut in modern times by the paucity if not total absence of its use by twentieth-century Church leaders.

Another such test may be called the "First Presidency signature test." This test insists that the occasional statements released by and over the signatures of the First Presidency invariably represent inspired direction. While it is of course true that most of the Church's significant actions are announced by such statements, this notion ignores the multifaceted scope of such statements. These declarations range from the revelation lifting the Church's priesthood prohibition to a letter encouraging a Utah congressman to oppose airline deregulation. Few would argue that all statements of the latter type are the result of vertical revelation.<sup>15</sup>

Still other Latter-day Saints attempt to discern the inspiration of leaders' instructions through private prayer. Unfortunately, many Church members assume that the only valid witness an individual can obtain is a confirming one. If the spiritual experience does not confirm the leader's teachings, something is presumed wrong with that individual, not the leader's counsel. Thus, the Church leader will always be "right" and it is incumbent upon the individual Saint to pray until he sees the light. Such an approach renders this test meaningless, for if only one answer is possible, there is no reason to petition God at all.

A test which is commonly advanced by members and General Authorities alike is the "standard works test." This test requires leaders' instructions to be consistent with the teachings of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. In many ways, this test appears to avoid the problems that arise in merely following leaders' admonitions blindly. For one thing, unlike many Church authorities, the scriptures do claim direct divine inspiration as their source. Too, the standard works have withstood the test of time, maintaining their moral, spiritual, and doctrinal relevance in a variety of cultures and through changing political, social, and ethical philosophies of men. Moreover, the scriptures have been subjected to canonization, a process whereby members, using their individual insight and inspiration, have the opportunity to cast their own vote for or against the acceptance of these books. As a result, the scriptures should occupy a position of authority outweighing statements by individual Church leaders.

Nevertheless, disagreements over the meaning of various passages of scripture are extremely common, a fact which limits their use as

the sole authoritative voice in Church government. Additional helps are needed.

Thus it cannot be fairly said that the general conference test, the thus saith the Lord test, the First Presidency signature test, the standard works test, and the personal revelation test (as commonly practiced) are by themselves flawless indicators of divine revelation. On the contrary, it is more likely any test will be deficient in some way. Even prayer and scripture study, avenues to divine information so direct and vital as to be indispensable, are not, as we have seen, without limitation. How then are we to reconcile conflicts between institutional directives and individual conscience?

Let me suggest an analysis that may be useful in resolving this problem. I believe that there is a body of doctrine in the Church that represents unchallengeable dogma. To choose to associate with the Church and identify oneself as a Mormon, one must not challenge this doctrinal base. At a minimum, I would think that this would include an acceptance of the existence of a personal god, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and of the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith. However, mingled with and surrounding this doctrinal core is a much greater body of policy, which has been gradually acquired from historical, environmental, and other sources, or developed by Church leaders themselves. In my view, everything that is not doctrine falls into the penumbral category of "policy." This distinction between "doctrine" and "policy" may provide guidance for the individual faced with the perplexing dilemma created when one's conscience goes against Church pronouncements.

How does one determine the difference between policy and doctrine? While the answer to this question is not always clear, an awareness of the practice of excommunication does suggest an important criterion in making this distinction. That is, individuals who, in spite of disagreements, desire to remain affiliated with the institutional Church will recognize excommunication as the final line which they do not wish to cross. The process of retaining Church membership thus becomes an extremely practical consideration in handling personal conflict with hierarchical directives.

An example of such conflict occurred over the Church's opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. Even as the media publicized the excommunication of Sonia Johnson—citing her support for the amendment as the reason underlying the Church's actions—the Church's spokesmen scrambled to clarify that pro-ERA activities or mere opposition to the Church's stand were insufficient grounds for excommunication. In doing so, however, the Church implicitly conceded that its opposition to the ERA was policy, not doctrine. For had the Church's position amounted to dogma formulated through revelation rather than policy, Sonia Johnson *could* have been excommunicated merely for activities in

**Learned Church members have more than once told me that "if the President of the Church told me to jump off a cliff today, I would do it."**

support of the ERA, just as several had been excommunicated for their opposition to the Church's extending the priesthood to the blacks in 1978.

The Church's statement opposing MX missile-basing provided yet another possible source of conflict between individual conviction and institutional policy. Yet here again there was no talk of excommunicating those in Utah and elsewhere who favored and worked for both the development of the missile and its basing in Utah. This appears to have been so because the Church's position represented policy not doctrine.

To be a self-avowed member of the Church means accepting (or at least not challenging) the established doctrines of Jesus Christ, as well as those pronouncements which seem clearly consistent with that gospel. By embracing the gospel and determining to abide therewith, one becomes a true disciple.

Such discipleship, however, may not mean accepting the ever-changing policies of the organized Church. The Church, as the administrative vehicle on earth intended to propagate the gospel and to nurture the members, has in the past adopted and will continue to adopt policies to cope with or react to contemporary developments. As new statements are issued from Church authorities concerning issues, religious or otherwise, that seem to create internal tension, members would be well advised thoughtfully and open-mindedly to form their own conclusions, as well as to seek individual direction from on high. If through study and sincere and fervent prayer we feel that certain counsel is incorrect and represents policy instead of doctrine, we should feel free not to accept it.

That there is risk in such a course of action cannot be gainsaid. Indeed it has been suggested that one assumes a far greater risk by rejecting a Church directive that may be from God than by accepting a directive that is of only human origin. Superficially, the suggestion seems persuasive; in truth, it cloaks a very real danger. Acting on a false man-made directive can have equally dire consequences. Consider, for example, the notion often taught in the Church that nonwhites who accept the gospel and join the Church gradually become white-skinned, or at least lighter colored. Statements of this type can easily inculcate racial chauvinism and bigotry in Church members. Adoption of attitudes like these which seem so antithetical to gospel principles can just as easily thwart the sincere member as can rejecting a directive from God. Needless to say, both pose significant barriers to true discipleship.

Conflicts between individual and institutional views are not resolved through dissidence or rebellion. Rather, the solution appears to lie in accepting the Church's denial of infallibility and pursuing active discipleship, individual thought, and sincere communication with God.

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## NOTES

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3. Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1932-51), 5:265; hereafter cited as *History of the Church*.
4. Bruce R. McConkie, "The Seven Deadly Heresies," 1980 *Devotional Speeches of the Year: BYU Devotional and Fireside Addresses* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1981), p. 78; James E. Talmage, *A Study of the Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1924), p. 409.
5. McConkie, "Seven Deadly Heresies," pp. 75-76; Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979), pp. 6-8; Discourse by Brigham Young, 31 July 1859, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-86; reprint ed., 1967), 6:344; Discourse by Wilford Woodruff, 6 December 1857, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:120; Discourse by Lorenzo Snow, *Conference Report*, 5 April 1901, p. 2.
6. James B. Allen, "Personal Faith and Public Policy: Some Timely Observations on the League of Nations Controversy in Utah," *Brigham Young University Studies* 14 (Autumn 1973): 77-98.
7. Ronald Lawler, Donald W. Wuerl, Thomas Comerford Lawler, eds., *The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1976), pp. 218, 219, 222, 227, 228. Unlike Mormonism, which connects infallibility with the divine origin of revelation, Catholicism considers the pope to be infallible simply by virtue of his office, and not as the result of any revelation or inspiration. Interestingly, the orthodox Catholic is expected to assent to all the authoritative teachings of the church, even when the church is not using its full infallible authority.
8. Hugh B. Brown, Questions from the Floor, recording of a student forum at the LDS Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Utah, 10 October 1969. Compare this related thought by Lowell Bennion: "It takes courage to disagree, to think for oneself. . . . Too few of us have the courage to express sincere disagreement with a . . . leader in church or state. It is easier to keep silent in public and talk privately with likeminded people behind backs of those with whom we disagree. Too often we love personal comfort more than we love the truth and right." (*Teachings of the New Testament* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union Board, 1953], pp. 105-6.)
9. Discourse by Brigham Young, 20 February 1853, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:312.
10. Discourse by Brigham Young, 20 May 1860, *Journal of Discourses*, 8:59.
11. Discourse by Brigham Young, 12 January 1862, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:150. For additional teachings on this subject, see *Journal of Discourses*, 3:45; 13:171; 14:204.
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13. Discourse by Brigham Young, *Times and Seasons* 6 (6 April 1845): 956.
14. Pius XII, *Munificentissus Deus*, reprinted in H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, ed., I.B. Umberg, 20th ed. (St. Louis: Herder Book Co., 1932), p. 282.
15. The notion of vertical revelation is discussed by George T. Boyd, who suggested that God "in his dealings with men is not limited to speaking vertically from above, but may and does work horizontally from within historical and social processes" (James B. Allen, Dale C. LeCheminant, and David Whittaker, comps., and eds., *Views on Man and Religion: Collected Essays of George T. Boyd* [Privately published, 1979], pp. 73-75).

**To be a self-avowed member of the Church means accepting (or at least not challenging) the core doctrines of the gospel.**

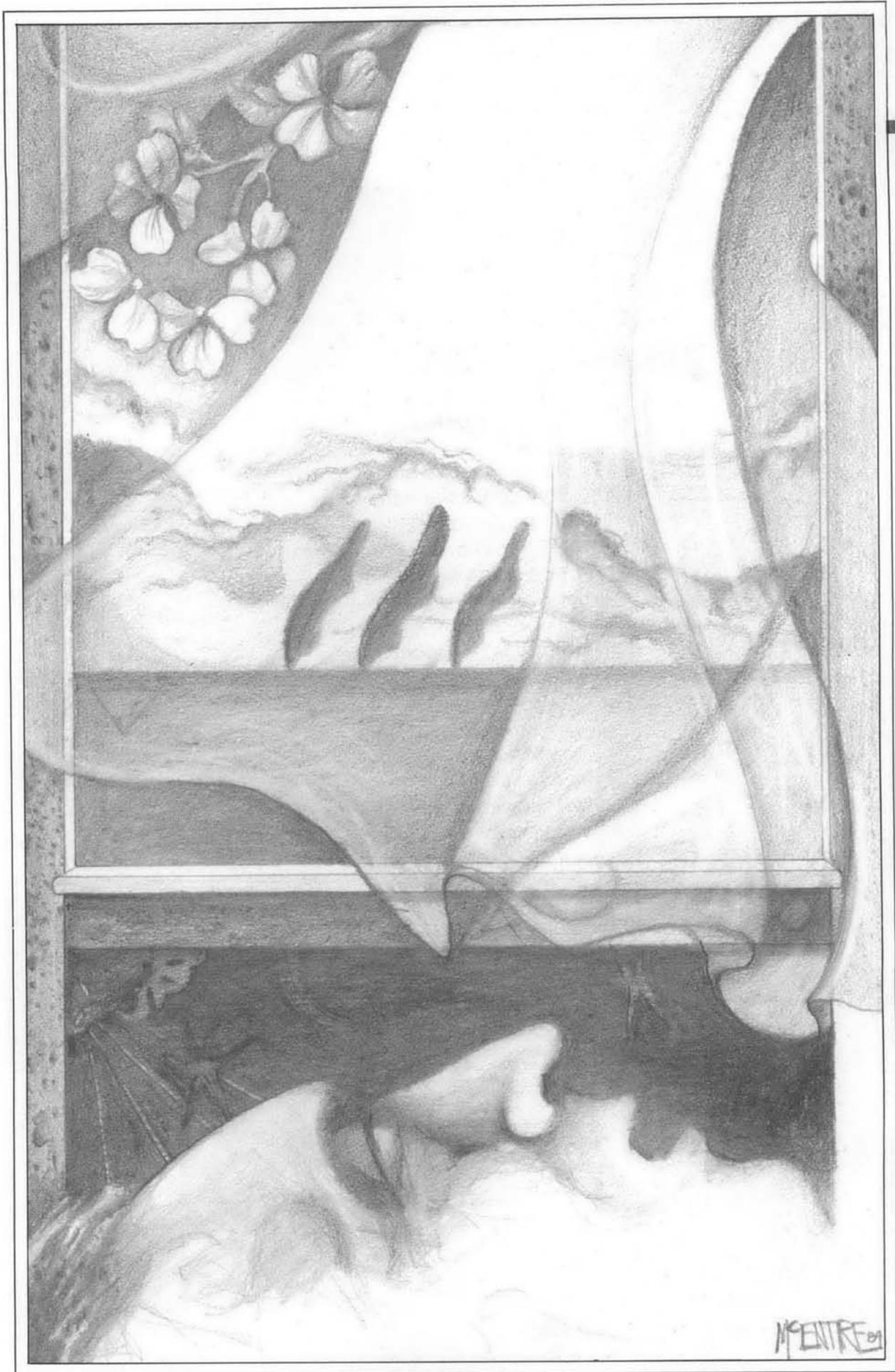


**THE JOURNALIST**

*you swooped in man  
with a thousand hands  
to flip over rocks  
questions burning your pockets  
theories 'round your head  
like our lost halos  
tipping us to  
who rolls our spotty dice  
in every game*

*and you can leave man  
your book boning up  
in your briefcase  
while we muck through the plot  
but your profit's  
not all you'll reckon with  
we marked you man  
wait and see  
how eternally unsame*

**LINDA SILLITOE**



# Mississippi Spring

Fiction by Rebecca Cornwall

One Mississippi morning in his seventy-fifth year, Abel Lindley awoke knowing it was time to die. This was no sudden realization—he'd been considering the measure since the last of his strokes three years earlier. His daughters had long since come to this conclusion, now and again whispering to Eleanor, "Mother, don't we need to let go?" The elders, too, each time summoned out to the farm to give him a blessing, would query Eleanor furtively with their eyes. Even the bishop, who shrank from asserting a view, had (at the sixth such errand in four months) murmured, "This is what you want?" Eleanor was sure. Abel had been, too.

It was hard to say what had brought him 'round. Certainly not her. She had gotten him through a dank winter by sheer faith—that, and by fluffing his pillow, bringing him drinks, reading to him, playing books on records obtained through the mail; in short, leaving him no time to die. She showed every intention of getting him through spring and summer in the same way. And Abel's principle was to bear with her ceremonies with patience—not that he could do otherwise, being unable to talk, sit up, feed himself, or walk to the bathroom.

But this morning Abel lay in the dim, once-flowered living room, and he could smell April. He knew the Luxipalila River had subsided, the roads and bridges been repaired of mud. On the Tombigbee River bank, in the graceful front yards of doctors' houses, camelias and magnolias made their debut. In the Negro suburb by the creosote plant, jaunty youths languished outside corner stores in the evenings. In every yard, wherever a householder had made the slightest invitation, azaleas exploded in scarlet.

This morning April surrounded his own house and sent licks through crannies in the siding. Abel could almost see the dogwood shout delicately out of the vined forest that had once been his cornfield. He recalled how its fragrance had always recharged his blood, pushing him

outside to oil motors and sharpen plows. It wanted to do that for him today.

Here inside the house, though Abel could no longer see clearly, there were welts in the linoleum he had always intended to replace. Eleanor didn't mind the welts. He could see the shapes of curtains wilting at the windows, just as they had even before he slipped into debilitation. Eleanor didn't mind the curtains.

She minded only that he be with her. Hearing her hum and putter at the stove, he knew she watched the dogwood gleaming white and wild, perhaps a mockingbird dive-bombing a squirrel. Eleanor looked forward to many springs. She refused to consider that he might not.

After a few minutes, carrying a cup and saucer, Eleanor came lightly into the room and let up a shade. Out of the corner of an eye Abel noted how her housedress limped from her body. Her brown-grey hair too fell straight and unkempt about a face becoming thin with servitude.

He wanted to greet her as usual by forming some endearment with his tongue or barely lifting a large, flaccid hand. But his mind quickly formed another plan. Today as Eleanor approached his bedside Abel stared, unacknowledging, at the foot of the bed. When she touched his shoulder with that gentle keenness that belied her steel, he did not turn his head to smile.

"I've brought you some tea," she said in a flat tone softened by a drawl. With one arm she cranked the bed into sitting position. Then, as she had done each morning throughout the winter, she lifted a cup of Postum to his lips.

Abel did not sip. Nor did he bumblingly squeeze her hand in the way that said "thanks" and "I love you" and "good morning."

"Please take some," she urged, not impatient but immediately alarmed. He set his jaw. In a few moments she sighed and carried the cup away.

Soon she was back with the bedpan. Now Abel sighed: He did not like this, though he had

learned to endure it for her sake.

Lowering the bed, she turned him onto his side, slid the pan into place, and rolled and lifted him onto it. She could do this noiselessly, as she had borne their eight children. He could stiffen his back so as to roll more easily, but today he did not want it to be easy for her. She chastized him by moaning as she lifted.

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**Abel sighed a second time as he heard her dial the telephone, hang up, and dial again. It would take the Lord speaking out of a whirlwind to make her see this time.**

Later, no longer humming, she worked in the kitchen. Abel lay in the greyness watching trees move across the ceiling. Shadows of oaks, ones he himself had planted. Ones he had been tending when Eleanor's sister called through the window, "You've got a boy." Their first boy, their only boy who lived, and scratchy from the start. Over him Abel and Eleanor had traded their only blow in all their years together. For the sole time (he'd thought) Abel had stood himself in her path and not backed down until he made her cry and see that she was smothering the child.

Her only seeing was the remedy. She wasn't a lioness, but a faithful hound.

He shut his eyes when she entered the room with his breakfast plate. She cranked the bed once again into upright position, then sat beside it, resting the plate on his covers. It wasn't easy resisting buttered toast, though he did it.

Her shoulders sank. "Oh, Abel," she said tremorously, placing a soft, thin hand on his forehead with such hesitance that he imagined for an instant he had won this easily. But when she spoke again her voice was clear. "I guess I had better call the doctor."

As she went to the telephone his eyes wandered up to the shadows. Like music they danced, gleeful yet melancholy. Like boy babies they danced, the ones he and Eleanor had buried together. Not the second, whom they had grieved, Eleanor at the sewing machine; he in the shed or field. But the later ones, for whom they had only wept, when dead things did not seem so lost to them. Even now it wasn't death

that terrified Eleanor.

She returned to take his pulse and blood pressure. He pretended to sleep. After she left he actually did doze until the clink of the doorbell nudged him.

"I cannot figure what's wrong with him," Eleanor said in even, resolute words to someone in the hallway. A moment later Abel's son-in-law—big, strapping—strode toward him.

"Doc says you got to be over by the window where it's sunny," said the son-in-law through chewing gum. First lowering the mattress, he grasped a rail and shoved Abel across the room as if the old man and his bed were of balsa.

In his new location Abel did not try to sit up or mumble something unintelligible to which the younger man could answer "Yeah, I guess so" and keep grinning. Instead Abel stared through watery, catarrhal eyes at the bare wall where he had been.

"He wouldn't eat at all this morning," Eleanor said to the son-in-law again at the door.

"Yep, something's wrong all right."

"He wouldn't take any breakfast. He always takes his meals unless he's sick."

"He's not hisself, that's for sure. You better call the elders."

Eleanor reentered the house as the truck pulled away. She stood for several moments in

the doorway then turned toward the kitchen. Abel sighed a second time as he heard her dial the telephone, hang up, and dial again. A loyal, faithful hound. It would take the Lord speaking out of a whirlwind to make her see this time.

By their youthful voices Abel knew who had come. He would have meant no offense had he been able to tell the elders he could not remember their names, though they had been here before. Even their faces were indistinguishable from a field of faces, beginning with those of the first missionaries who knocked on their door in the spring of 1935. Abel and Eleanor considered it a miracle the elders had found them and had answered this gift by housing and feeding scores of missionaries over the decades. Now when an occasional elder returned to visit with a wife and teenaged children, Abel could never recollect who he was or in which year he had stayed in their home.

Abel waited until Eleanor said in his ear, "The elders are here," before opening his eyes to two dark suits.

"How are you, Brother Lindley?" said one of the suits shyly. "We've come to give you a blessing."

Abel ignored her, so the elders proceeded. He resisted the warmth which entered his body as they spoke. He went deliberately to the shadows again, this time a daughter crippled with polio. They had found the Church by then and asked

for a blessing. The girl recovered. Once was all it took. From that time, whenever sickness or sorrow or simple orneriness struck the family, Eleanor called in the elders. When Abel attained the higher priesthood, she called upon him, until his powers failed.

Thus she had kept him alive, and he accepted each blessing of the past winter as right and appropriate. This one was not. The elders seemed to sense this, for upon "amen" they stood back, unsure. At the door one said without confidence to Eleanor, "Call us if there's anything we can do."

Eleanor waited for them to drive off before pulling an armchair to Abel's side. She sat with eyes closed, rubbing his chest. He stole a look at her tired face. He wished to say something to comfort her, but there was nothing to say. Tears flooded his eyes and jumped one by one onto a puffy, veined cheek.

He now knew that Eleanor had only begun her defense. That evening when he would not eat his dinner, she spoke again with the doctor, afterwards coming to his bedside.

"Dr. Pearson says not to worry," she told him almost defiantly. "If you can't eat tomorrow he'll find you a room in the hospital."

Abel stared at the ceiling.

The next morning an ambulance took Abel to the hospital. A needle was inserted into his arm, and nurses and orderlies took over monitoring his blood pressure while Eleanor watched from a corner. When once she came and touched him he turned his face to the wall.

Once too Dr. Pearson stopped in to read from Abel's chart, saying to Eleanor, "We don't know yet what's going on. Maybe he's just given up."

"But he's strong," Eleanor argued.

"I know," answered Dr. Pearson, patting her back. "I know."

During the afternoon a pink lady delivered something in a small vase. "Aren't they lovely?" Eleanor cried. Abel did not look at them.

In early evening the home teachers came, offering to give Abel another blessing. Eleanor told them the bishop would do so later. Abel was too weary to offer them sound or motion.

Toward night their daughters arrived. One took Eleanor to the cafeteria, the other keeping watch over her father. Several times Abel opened his eyes to meet hers and saw grief in them, though she smiled. Abel pressed her hand.

"Don't worry, Papa," she said. "We'll take care of her."

It was nine before the bishop appeared with his counselor. They conferred with the daughter in subdued voices. RELEASE HIM, Abel heard, and DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT MOTHER WILL SAY? Then Abel felt the bishop gently clasp his leg.

"Hello," the younger man said.

With effort, Abel looked up. The bishop seemed not much older than the missionaries. There

were milk stains on his lapel.

"Eleanor asked us to administer to you. Would that be all right?" This was said not in the officious tone of the doctor but as a quiet suggestion.

Abel only looked at him.

The bishop's counselor approached, removed from his pocket a small vial, and from it poured two drops of oil into Abel's thick white hair.

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**Even the Bishop, who shrank from asserting a view, had (at the sixth such errand in four months) murmured, "This is what you want?" Eleanor was sure.**

Their hands were heavy on his head, the counselor's voice low and dissonant. No shadows now, no scent of azaleas stealing down the corridor. Only greenhouse buds in feeble jars for bodies that could not work or turn or move. From Abel's throat came a rumble of dismay.

The hands shifted and the bishop paused as he prepared to complete the prayer. Now Abel roused himself. Trembling, he tried to raise up from the pillow to face them. But though he put all his will to it, he could barely mobilize a sluggish tongue. Peering into the bishop's eyes, all he said was, "Nuh."

The bishop looked puzzled. Abel's gaze wavered and he sank into the pillow.

The young bishop frowned, trying to understand. He studied the old man's heavy, lumpish body and then, again, the old man's face. Finally not a whirlwind at all but a gentle light came into the bishop's eyes. Abel saw it and relaxed.

Eleanor had returned and stood waiting in the doorway. Seeing this, the bishop slowly, regretfully approached her. No one in the room, least of all Abel, could have prompted him what to say.

But he didn't have to say anything. Eleanor only glanced at him before she burst out crying. He hugged her as a daughter closed in on each side.

A short time later Eleanor sat on the edge of a chair beside Abel. She had taken his hand and now kissed it and held it tightly while the men resumed their places opposite her. Abel squeezed her fingers ever so slightly, then closed his eyes and rested.

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# Jehovah as the Father

## The Development of the Mormon Jehovah Doctrine

By Boyd Kirkland

**T**oday in Mormon theology, Jesus Christ is considered to be Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets. Elohim is considered to be God the Father, the father of Jehovah (or Jesus Christ) and of the human race. The Church promotes this point of view in all of its current lesson manuals, periodicals and literature.<sup>1</sup> While there

is a natural tendency to assume that this current theology has been the position of Mormonism from 1830 to the present, actually several divergent views have been held.

In fact, Mormon perceptions about God and the Godhead have passed through several phases of development.<sup>2</sup> Mormon historian Thomas Alexander has pointed out that "before about

1835 the LDS doctrines on God and man were quite close to those of contemporary Protestant denominations.<sup>3</sup> Joseph Smith's earliest statements and scriptural writings describe God as an absolute, infinite, self-existent, spiritual being, perfect in all of his attributes and alone in his supremacy.<sup>4</sup> The Godhead was regularly defined with the trinitarian but nonbiblical formula, "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is one God."<sup>5</sup> The Book of Mormon speaks of only one God who could manifest himself either as the Father or the Son.<sup>6</sup> While Book of Mormon theology does not reflect a truly orthodox trinitarian view as codified in the Athanasian creed, it does reflect the common Christian layman's perception that in some manner, the Father and the Son were both representations of one God.<sup>7</sup>

Several scriptural passages given through Joseph indicate clearly that he saw no contradiction in having one god simultaneously be the Father who sent Jesus, as well as be Jesus.<sup>8</sup> For example, Ether 4:12 plainly states, "He that will not believe me will not believe the Father who sent me. For behold, I am the Father."

A close examination of Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible also reveals his early monotheistic beliefs. He consciously attempted to remove all references to a plurality of gods from the King James Bible.<sup>9</sup> He also changed several passages to identify the Father and the Son as the same god. For example, he revised Luke 10:22 to have Jesus teaching that "no man knoweth that the Son is the Father, and the Father is the Son, but him to whom the Son will reveal it." These observations provide significant insight into understanding Book of Mormon passages which

identify Jesus Christ as "God Himself," the "Holy One of Israel," the "Lord Omnipotent," the "Father of heaven and earth" who revealed himself to Moses and many of the ancient patriarchs. Apparently, Joseph's own early theology is reflected in his translation of the Book of Mormon. Similarly, some of Joseph Smith's early revelations freely switch the role of the God of Israel from the Son to the Father.<sup>10</sup>

Evidence indicates that by 1835, Joseph and other Mormon leaders began to make more of a distinction between the roles and natures of the Father and the Son. This is reflected perhaps most clearly in the Lectures on Faith published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The fifth lecture defined the Godhead as consisting of two personages: the Father, a personage of spirit, and the Son, a personage of tabernacle. The Holy Ghost was not considered to be a personage, but rather was defined as the "mind" of the Father and the Son.<sup>11</sup> Also, revelations Joseph received after 1833 contain less crossover in the roles and titles of the Father and the Son.<sup>12</sup> In fact, it appears that after May of 1833, Joseph never again referred to Jesus as the Father in any of his writings.

Predictably, prior to his study of Hebrew in

Kirtland, Ohio, Joseph's usage of *Elohim* and *Jehovah* reflects marked similarity to the King James Bible's (KJV) usage of these divine names. *Elohim* and *Jehovah* appear thousands of times in the original Hebrew Bible. However, they are generally translated as "God" and "Lord" in the KJV. The divine name *Jehovah* appears only six times in the KJV, while the name *Elohim* does not appear at all.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, *Jehovah* appears in the Book of Mormon only twice, one reference being an excerpt from Isaiah.<sup>14</sup> The name *Elohim* appears nowhere in the LDS standard works.

After Joseph's study of Hebrew in 1835-36, he began to use the name *Elohim* for the first time; he also began to use the name *Jehovah* more often. *Jehovah* appears for the first time in the Doctrine and Covenants after 1836. It appears twice in the first two chapters of the Book of Abraham, which was translated in 1835.<sup>15</sup>

With the interchangeability of the roles of the Father and the Son in earliest Mormon theology, it is impossible to identify specifically Joseph's first few *Jehovah* references as either the Father or the Son. However, after the identities of the Father and the Son were more carefully differentiated in Mormon theology around 1835, Joseph clearly began to use the divine name *Jehovah* to refer to the Father.<sup>16</sup> Significantly, he apparently never specifically identified *Jehovah* as Jesus, nor *Jehovah* as the Son of *Elohim*.<sup>17</sup> Rather, the Prophet followed the biblical Hebrew usage of the divine names and either combined them or used them interchangeably as epithets for God the Father. The following prayer, which he wrote in 1842, demonstrates this: "O Thou, who seest and knowest the hearts of all men—Thou eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent *Jehovah*—God—Thou *Eloheim*, that sittest, as saith the

Psalmist, 'enthroned in heaven,' look down upon Thy servant Joseph at this time; and let faith on the name of Thy Son Jesus Christ, to a greater degree than Thy servant ever yet has enjoyed, be conferred upon him."<sup>18</sup> On a few occasions, Joseph referred to the Father by just the title *Elohim* alone.<sup>19</sup>

Other Mormon writers during the 1830s followed this same pattern. They most often used *Jehovah* as the name of God the Father, and only occasionally used the name *Elohim*. They evidently also considered the Father to be the god who appeared in the Old Testament.<sup>20</sup> For example, the following was published in the *Times and Seasons* as the Mormon belief in 1841: "We believe in God the Father, who is the Great *Jehovah* and head of all things, and that Christ is the Son of God, co-eternal with the Father."<sup>21</sup>

During the Nauvoo period of Church history (1839-44), Joseph Smith's theology of the Godhead once again changed dramatically.<sup>22</sup> He began to denounce and reject the notion of the trinity. He emphasized that God the Father, as well as the Son, both had tangible bodies of flesh

**The Book of Mormon speaks of only one God who could manifest himself as either the Father or the Son.**

By the  
end of the  
year 1835,  
Joseph Smith  
began to use  
the divine name  
Jehovah to  
refer to the  
Father.

and bone (D&C 130:22). He also began to teach the plurality of gods and the related concept that men could become gods. God himself had a father upon whom he depended for his existence and authority. The Father had acted under the direction of a "head god" and a "council of gods" in the creation of the worlds. The plurality of creation gods is dramatically depicted in the Book of Abraham, chapters 2-5, which Joseph translated in 1842. All of these ideas were summed up by Joseph in April, 1844, in perhaps his most famous sermon: The King Follett Discourse.<sup>23</sup>

In connection with these ideas, the Prophet began to use the title *Elohim* as the proper name for the head god who presided at the creation of the world. He also taught that *Elohim* in the creation accounts of Genesis should be understood in a plural sense as referring to the council of the gods, who, under the direction of the head god, organized the heaven and the earth. Once the earth had been organized, "the heads of the Gods appointed one God for us."<sup>24</sup> From the context of Joseph's discussions of this head god, it is apparent that the Prophet considered this being to be a patriarchal superior to the father of Jesus.<sup>25</sup>

The gods involved in the creation were designated in Joseph's temple endowment ceremony as *Elohim*, *Jehovah*, and *Michael*.<sup>26</sup> Joseph had previously identified *Michael* as "Adam . . . the ancient of days" (D&C 27:11). Whether he identified either this *Elohim* or *Jehovah* to be God the Father as he had previously used these titles is unclear. We have seen that he used the title *Elohim* in various modes, none of which included Jesus, and he also used the name *Jehovah* to refer to the Father. Given all of these possibilities, Joseph's endowment ceremony, then, did not seem to include Jesus among the creation gods. This is a curious situation, since many scriptural passages previously produced through Joseph, as well as the Bible, attribute a major role in the creation to Jesus.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, Joseph Smith was killed before he was able to elaborate further on these newer, more esoteric ideas.

As Joseph Smith's successor and certainly one of his most devoted disciples, Brigham Young continued to teach Joseph's Nauvoo theology to the Church.<sup>28</sup> On numerous occasions, he clearly designated the God of the Old Testament as the Father.<sup>29</sup> He delighted in citing the theophanies of the Old Testament as evidence of the Father's physical, anthropomorphic nature:

*Our former religious traditions has [sic] taught us that our Father in heaven has no tabernacle, that his centre is everywhere and his circumference nowhere. Yet we read that "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran." "Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet," "And the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool." "Hast thou an arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?" "And I will*

*take away mine hand and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face thou shalt not see." "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry." The idea that the Lord our God is not a personage of tabernacle is entirely a mistaken notion. He was once a man.<sup>30</sup>*

Brigham likewise sometimes combined the names *Elohim-Jehovah* or used them interchangeably as designations for God the Father: "We obey the Lord, Him who is called *Jehovah*, the Great I Am, I am a man of war, *Elohim*, etc."<sup>31</sup>

But if Brigham Young used these names interchangeably, how did he perceive the identities of *Jehovah* and *Elohim* in the temple ceremony? This question can be answered by examining his teachings concerning *Michael*, the third figure in the temple creation story. Significantly, President Young considered *Michael*, or *Adam*, to be God the Father. Though not without controversy, this point has been extremely well documented.<sup>32</sup> For example, in one of his less ambiguous statements concerning his belief about the paternity of Jesus, Brigham Young said, "Who did beget him? . . . His Father; and his Father is our God, and the Father of our spirits, and he is the framer of the body, the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Who is he? He is Father *Adam*; *Michael*; the Ancient of Days."<sup>33</sup>

The fact that *Elohim* and *Jehovah* preside over and direct *Michael* in the temple creation account implies that, in this context at least, Brigham Young considered the pair to be patriarchal superiors to God the Father. Like Joseph, then, Brigham Young apparently did not see Jesus as being among the temple creation gods. References indicating who exactly Brigham Young did consider this *Elohim* and *Jehovah* to be, and their relationship to *Michael-Adam* are sparse and ambiguous.<sup>34</sup> However, the temple scenario itself depicts *Elohim* as the father of *Adam* and *Eve*. This coincides with Brigham's designation of *Elohim* as the grandfather of mankind.<sup>35</sup> It is also consistent with Joseph Smith's teaching that the creation was directed by a head god superior to our Father in Heaven.

Since President Young considered the Father to be *Adam*, and since he consistently designated the God of the Old Testament to be the Father, it is logical to suppose that he believed *Adam* to be the God of Israel. Indeed, on several occasions, he implied that this is the case:

*We begin with the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of our spirits—who is he? . . . [He is] that great and wise and glorious being that the children of Israel were afraid of, whose countenance shown so that they could not look upon him . . . that man [who] put his hands out before Moses in the cleft of rock until his glory passed by and would not suffer Moses to see his face but his parts only . . . I tell you this as my belief about the personage who is called the Ancient of Days, the Prince, and so on.<sup>36</sup>*

In general conference, 8 October 1854, Brigham Young specifically applied the title *Jehovah* to *Adam*, calling him "*Yahovah Michael*,"

who carried out the behests of Elohim in the creation of the world.<sup>37</sup>

President Young apparently believed that while God the Father was on the earth in the role of Adam, Elohim (the Grandfather in Heaven), assumed Adam's role as the Father of mankind. After his death Adam returned to his exalted station as God the Father, and as such presided over Israel designated by the divine names *Elohim* or *Jehovah*. He later begot Jesus, his firstborn spirit son, in the flesh.<sup>38</sup>

Thus a certain flexibility characterizes the way Brigham Young used the divine names: First, he never referred to Jesus as Jehovah. Second, he referred to God the Father variously as Jehovah, Elohim, Michael, Adam, Ancient of Days, I Am, and other Old Testament epithets. Finally, he also referred to gods superior to the Father as Elohim and Jehovah. Brigham's application of the titles *Elohim* and *Jehovah* to several different divine personalities has led to much confusion in understanding his true beliefs, especially with respect to the Adam-God doctrine.<sup>39</sup>

Scriptures contradicting the Adam-God doctrine, such as the accounts of Adam's creation, were dismissed by President Young as being "baby stories" given to men because of their spiritual immaturity and weakness.<sup>40</sup> During a discussion of the Adam-God doctrine at the Salt Lake City School of the Prophets, Brigham Young responded to the question of "why the scriptures seemed to put Jesus Christ on an equal footing with the Father" by explaining "that the writers of those scriptures wrote according to their best language and understanding,"<sup>41</sup> indicating that Brigham did not feel obligated to accept literally all scriptural accounts of the role of Christ.

While not all General Authorities contemporary with and succeeding Brigham Young agreed with his teachings concerning Michael, many of them did speak of Jehovah as the Father. John Taylor consistently did so in numerous sermons, as well as in his book, *The Mediation and Atonement*, which he wrote as President of the Church.<sup>42</sup> The following hymn, written by President Taylor, clearly identifies Jehovah as the Father:

*As in the heavens they all agree  
The record's given there by three,*

*...  
Jehovah, God the Father's one,  
Another His Eternal Son,  
The Spirit does with them agree,  
The witnesses in heaven are three.*<sup>43</sup>

In some 256 references to Elohim and Jehovah and the God of the Old Testament, in the *Journal of Discourses* (representing sermons of many of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve), the title *Jehovah* is only specifically applied to Jesus once. This occurred in 1885, when the new doctrine identifying Jesus as Jehovah was just beginning to be developed.

Not surprisingly, some confusion arose among members of the Church who had trouble reconciling their reading of the scriptures with Joseph's and Brigham's later doctrinal innovations. For example, the Book of Mormon's explicit identification of Jesus as God the Father led some members of the Church to believe that Jesus was literally the father of the spirits of mankind. This, coupled with Brigham Young's Adam-God doctrine, apparently led other Church members to identify Adam and Christ as the same being. Also, because of the Book of Mormon's equating of Jesus with the God of Israel, some General Authorities in the 1880s and 1890s began to speculate that all Old Testament appearances and revelations of God were in reality manifestations of the premortal Jesus. This concept eventually led to the identification of Jesus as Jehovah.

As early as 1849, Orson Pratt observed that there were "some [Saints] . . . who believed that the spirit of Christ, before taking a tabernacle, was the Father, exclusively of any other being. They suppose the fleshly tabernacle to be the Son, and the Spirit who came and dwelt in it to be the Father; hence they suppose the Father and Son were united in *one* person, and that when Jesus dwelt on the earth in the flesh, they suppose there was no distinct separate person from himself who was called the Father."

This was apparently a Book-of-Mormon-influenced idea which Elder Pratt resolved by demonstrating from other scriptures (mostly biblical), that the Father and Son were two separate personages. As part of his harmonizing technique, Elder Pratt qualified the sense in which Jesus is called the Father in the Book of Mormon. Interestingly, however, he still referred to God the Father as Jehovah in this same presentation.<sup>44</sup>

Apostle George Q. Cannon was one of the first Mormon leaders to assert that Jesus was "the Being who spoke to Moses in the wilderness and declared, 'I am that I am.'"<sup>45</sup> Eleven years after this 1871 declaration, Apostle Franklin D. Richards also identified Jesus Christ as "the same being who called Abraham from his native country, who led Israel out of the land of Egypt . . . and who made known to them his law amid the thunderings of Sinai."<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, President John Taylor, who throughout his life consistently referred to the Father as Jehovah, listed Jehovah among several other titles of the Father which might be applied to Jesus, since Jesus was perfectly obedient to and united with the Father.<sup>47</sup>

In August of 1885, Franklin D. Richards made the leap from merely considering Jesus to be Jehovah's representative (and thus worthy of the latter's title) to the position that Jesus' premortal name was Jehovah: "We learn that our Savior was born of a woman, and He was named Jesus the Christ. His name when He was a spiritual being, during the first half of the existence

**Brigham Young considered Elohim and Jehovah to be patriarchal superiors to Adam, the father of Jesus Christ.**

of the earth, before He was made flesh and blood, was Jehovah. . . . He was the spirit Being that directed, governed, and gave the law on Mount Sinai, where Moses was permitted to see Him in part."<sup>48</sup> That this was a new idea is indicated by the fact that just four months prior to this sermon, this same Apostle spoke of Jehovah as the Father.<sup>49</sup>

At these earliest stages of the development of the Jehovah-Christ doctrine, the major consideration seemed to be the identity of the divine being who appeared to Moses and gave him the law for Israel (cf. 3 Ne. 15:5). The Adam-God doctrine, with its concept of a divine being named Jehovah who presided over God the Father (Michael-Adam) in the creation, was not a consideration. This is indicated by the fact that both George Q. Cannon and Franklin D. Richards, major proponents of the Jehovah-Christ idea, also believed that Adam was God the Father.<sup>50</sup> In June 1889 George Q. Cannon, then a member of the First Presidency, related his beliefs on the Adam-God doctrine as well as the Jehovah-Christ doctrine to his son, Abraham H. Cannon, who wrote in his diary, "He believes that Jesus Christ is Jehovah, and that Adam is His Father and our God. . . . Jesus, in speaking of Himself as the very eternal Father speaks as one of the Godhead, etc."<sup>51</sup>

It is unclear whether George Q. Cannon and Franklin D. Richards considered the Jehovah of the temple ceremony to be Christ. They both, however, positively believed that Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, was Christ, which they continued to teach on several occasions.<sup>52</sup>

The identities and roles of the temple creation gods became the focus of a controversy between Bishop Edward Bunker and his counselor Myron Abbott in Bunkerville, Nevada in 1890. This controversy culminated in 1892 in a Stake High Council meeting attended by Church President Wilford Woodruff and his counselor George Q. Cannon. Bishop Bunker and his father, Edward Bunker, Sr., felt that the "Lecture before the Veil," as it was then presented in the St. George Temple, contained false doctrine. This lecture, dictated by Brigham Young in 1877, clearly implied that Adam was God the Father by explaining that prior to coming to this earth, Adam and Eve had been resurrected and exalted on a former world. In their exalted state they begot the spirits of all mankind. Under the direction of Elohim and Jehovah, gods of the creation council, Adam then created this earth and brought Eve here with him to fall in order to provide their spiritual offspring with physical tabernacles.<sup>53</sup> The Bunkers maintained that these ideas contradicted the scriptures and Joseph Smith's teachings. Father Bunker also argued that Jesus Christ was Jehovah, the God of Heaven, who presided over Michael in the creation and in the Garden of Eden. According to this argument, Michael could not possibly be the Father of Christ since he was subject to Jehovah-

Christ whom Bunker apparently also considered to be the Father.<sup>54</sup>

Presidents Woodruff and Cannon defended Brigham Young's Adam-God temple teachings, but did not expound upon them or force them upon the Bunkers. Rather, they instructed them to "let these things alone," and not to "spend time [arguing] over these mysteries." Scriptural contradictions to these ideas were swept aside by President Cannon with the observation that "God had, and would yet reveal many glorious things men could not prove, and search out of the old Bible."<sup>55</sup>

Although as a counselor to President Wilford Woodruff George Q. Cannon often preached that Jesus was Jehovah, President Woodruff was more noncommittal on the subject. As late as 1893, he still referred to Jehovah as the Father.<sup>56</sup>

Latter-day Saints were thus confronted with a confusing array of different authorities on the question of God's identity and roles. Apparently, many of these Church members wrote letters to the First Presidency, asking them for help in sorting out and understanding these matters. President Wilford Woodruff responded to these inquiries over the pulpit at general conference in April 1895 by simply telling Church members not to worry. Interestingly, he too remained noncommittal, neither condemning the Adam-God doctrine, nor endorsing the Jehovah-Christ doctrine:

*Before I sit down I want to say a word to the Elders of Israel on another subject. . . . Cease troubling yourselves about who God is; who Adam is, who Christ is, who Jehovah is. For heaven's sake, let these things alone. Why trouble yourselves about these things? . . . God is God. Christ is Christ. The Holy Ghost is the Holy Ghost. That should be enough for you and me to know. I say this because we are troubled every little while with inquiries from Elders anxious to know who God is, who Christ is, and who Adam is. I say to the Elders of Israel, stop this. . . . We have had letter after letter from Elders abroad wanting to know concerning these things. Adam is the first man. He was placed in the Garden of Eden, and is our great progenitor. God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are the same yesterday, today, and forever, that should be sufficient for us to know.<sup>57</sup>*

Not surprisingly, President Woodruff's advice did not end the controversy. In 1896, Edward Stevenson, one of the Seven Presidents of Seventy, had "a deep talk" with President Lorenzo Snow about the Adam-God doctrine. Afterwards, Stevenson wrote in his diary concerning the temple creation gods: "Certainly Heloheim and Jehovah stands before Adam, or else I am very much mistaken. Then 1st Heloheim, 2nd Jehovah, 3d Michael-Adam, 4th Jesus Christ, Our Elder Brother, in the other World from whence our spirits come. . . . Then Who is Jehovah? The only begoton [*sic*] Son of Heloheim on Jehovah's world."<sup>58</sup>

This reference clearly distinguishes between

**While not all General Authorities agreed with Brigham Young's Adam-God teachings, many of them did speak of Jehovah as the Father.**

the Jehovah who presided over Michael at the creation and Jesus. Unfortunately this distinction was not clearly made by General Authorities who were publicly promoting the idea that Jesus was the Jehovah-god of the Old Testament. Naturally, Church members continued to be confused.

With the passing of the Mormon practice of plural marriage around the turn of the century, anti-Mormon critics began to attack other doctrinal issues, notably the Adam-God doctrine.<sup>59</sup> Church leaders responded mainly by claiming that Brigham Young's published statements on the subject had either been misinterpreted, or were wrongly transcribed.<sup>60</sup> President Joseph F. Smith, who as an Apostle had earlier endorsed the doctrine, permitted Charles Penrose, his counselor in the First Presidency, to pursue this line of defense.<sup>61</sup>

While General Authorities had previously asserted that the Adam-God doctrine need not be justified scripturally, the First Presidency now moved to abate public criticism and internal controversy by citing the scriptures as the final, official word on this matter. For example, in 1912, they stated, "Dogmatic assertions do not take the place of revelation," and that "Prest. Brigham Young . . . only expressed his own views and that they were not corroborated [sic] by the word of the Lord in the Standard Works of the Church. . . . Now all doctrine if it can't be established by these standards is not to be taught or promulgated [sic] by members."<sup>62</sup>

At the same time, the *Improvement Era* carried a First Presidency message cautioning Church members not to speculate on "the career of Adam before he came to the earth." This was followed by an editorial responding to members who apparently considered Christ and Adam to be the same god: "From these statements, and from many others that might be quoted, it is clear that Adam and Christ are two persons—not the same person. It is erroneous doctrine to consider them one and the same person, for Jesus is the Christ, a member of the Trinity, the Godhead, and to whom Adam, the father of the human family upon this earth is amenable."<sup>63</sup> Many statements similar to this followed in Church publications.<sup>64</sup>

A major advancement in the identification of Jehovah as Jesus took place in September of 1915, when James E. Talmage's book, *Jesus the Christ*, was published under the direction and commission of the First Presidency. In his book, Elder Talmage asserted that:

*Jesus Christ was and is God the Creator, the God who revealed Himself to Adam, Enoch, and all the antediluvial patriarchs and prophets down to Noah; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God of Israel as a united people, and the God of Ephraim and Judah after the disruption of the Hebrew nation; the God who made Himself known to the prophets from Moses to Malachi; the God of the Old Testament record; and the God of the Nephites. We*

*affirm that Jesus Christ was and is Jehovah, the Eternal One.*

He also explained that "Elohim, as understood and used in the restored Church of Jesus Christ, is the name-title of God the Eternal Father, whose firstborn Son in the spirit is Jehovah—the Only Begotten in the flesh, Jesus Christ." A subtle rejection of Brigham Young's Adam-God doctrine seems to be present in Talmage's assertion that Adam was one of the prophets to whom the Father had revealed himself to attest "the Godship of the Christ."<sup>65</sup>

Members of the First Presidency continued to reinforce these ideas in conference talks and Church publications.<sup>66</sup> In addition to accommodating Book of Mormon theology (which described Jesus as the God of Israel), defining *Jehovah* exclusively to be Jesus, and *Elohim* exclusively to be God the Father permitted Church leaders to argue more effectively that the Adam-God doctrine had never been taught. The thrust of this argument was that since Elohim was the Father, and Jehovah was Jesus, and they both presided over Michael or Adam in the creation, Brigham Young therefore could not possibly have imagined that Adam was God the Father.<sup>67</sup>

This argument was effective, but it obviously would not suffice for Church members who had heard Brigham Young publicly preach the Adam-God doctrine, had read his sermons on the subject, or had witnessed the temple lecture he authored. As a result, many Church members continued to write to the First Presidency, apparently protesting their efforts via Charles Penrose and James E. Talmage to redefine and overturn the theological views of previous Mormon leaders. Charles Penrose referred to this resistance in the April 1916 general conference:

*The Church of Christ . . . should be perfectly united, especially in doctrine and principle, yet like it was in the early Christian church there are sometimes divisions among us in regard to many important things. . . . The reason I know about this is because I frequently personally receive letters from good friends in different parts of the Church, asking questions, and declaring that there is a division of opinion among our brethren in regard to them. And the First Presidency frequently receive communications from the brethren asking for a decision on certain points that are really not worth discussing. . . . There still remains, I can tell by the letters I have alluded to, an idea among some of the people that Adam was and is the Almighty and Eternal God.*

He also noted that some Church members still believed that Jesus and Adam were the same God:

*Now who is this person, this Jesus Christ? Is He Adam or a son of Adam? Not at all, except in the sense that Jesus of Nazareth was born of Mary . . . who was it that gave the law to Moses? We are told it was Jehovah. Well, was Jesus*

**The controversy over the identities of the temple creation gods culminated in a meeting with Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon.**

Jehovah? Yes, according to the scriptures, both ancient and modern, and that seems to be a stumbling block in the way of a few of our brethren.

Penrose then combined the newly developed theology of Elohim as the Father and Jesus as Jehovah with the temple account of creation in a classic apologetic use of these ideas to refute the Adam-God doctrine:

*We are told by revelation that in the creation of the earth there were three individuals personally engaged. This is more particularly for the Temple of God, but sufficient of it has been published over and over again to permit me to refer to it. [The title] Elohim . . . is attached to the individual who is the Father of all, the person whom we look to as the Great Eternal Father. Elohim, Jehovah and Michael were engaged in the construction fo this globe. Jehovah, commanded by Elohim, went down to where there was space, saying to Michael, "Let us go down." . . . You see, do you not, that Michael, became Adam, and that Adam was not the son Jehovah, and he was not Elohim the Father. He occupied his own place and position in the organization of the earth and in the production of mortal beings on the earth. Jesus of Nazareth was the Jehovah who was engaged with the Father in the beginning . . . I want to draw a clear distinction between these individuals that we may stop this discussion that is going on to no purpose.<sup>68</sup>*

**Many members wrote to the First Presidency, protesting their efforts to overturn the theological views of previous Mormon leaders.**

The theological problems concerning the Book of Mormon's identification of Jesus as the Father, the identity of Jehovah, the God of Israel, and the roles and identities of the temple creation gods as connected with the Adam-God doctrine were all finally "resolved" in a carefully worked out statement written by James E. Talmage. This statement was submitted to the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve for their approval on 29 June 1916. It was corrected and then issued the following day as "A Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency and the Twelve" on "The Father and the Son."<sup>69</sup> This exposition minimized the sense in which Jesus is called the Father in the Book of Mormon through harmonizing techniques. These same techniques were used to support the position that Jesus Christ was Jehovah, the God of Israel, and that Elohim was his father. Little biblical support for these ideas could be given, as the exposition was mainly dealing with problems inherent in the early LDS scriptures and the theology of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.<sup>70</sup> Achieving harmony was the chief goal of the 1916 doctrinal exposition. It therefore contains no historical, critical analysis and understanding of the problems it addresses. Its definitions of *Elohim* and *Jehovah* still remain the official position of Mormonism.

Today, Mormons who are aware of the various teachings of LDS scriptures and prophets are faced with a number of doctrinal possibilities. They can choose to accept the Book of Mormon theology, which varies from biblical theology, as well as from Joseph Smith's later plurality-of-gods theology. Adding to this con-

fusion is Brigham Young's Adam-God theology with its various divine gods using the names *Elohim* and *Jehovah* interchangeably. Finally, they are left to resolve the teachings of current General Authorities who identify Jesus as Jehovah with former-day General Authorities who spoke of Jehovah as the Father. While most are blithely unaware of the diversity that abounds in the history of Mormon doctrine, many Latter-day Saints since 1916 have, despite the risk of heresy, continued to believe privately or promote publicly many of the alternative Godhead theologies from Mormonism's past.<sup>71</sup>

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#### NOTES

1. See, for example, Bruce R. McConkie, "Christ and the Creation," *Ensign* 12 (June 1982): 11; *Old Testament Part Two: Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Supplement* (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980), pp. 102-5; *Old Testament: Genesis-2 Samuel* [Religion 301 student manual] (Salt Lake City: LDS Church Educational System, 1980), pp. 45-48. See also the entry "god" in the Bible Dictionary in the LDS edition of the King James Bible.

2. See Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *SUNSTONE* 5 (July-August 1980): 24-33, especially n. 23; Van Hale, "The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 215-16 and "Trinitarianism and the Earliest Mormon Concept of God," essay presented at Mormon History Association annual meeting, Omaha, Nebraska, May 1983; Marvin Hill, "The First Vision Controversy: A Critique and Reconciliation," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Summer 1982): 31-46; Mark Thomas, "Scholarship and the Future of the Book of Mormon," *SUNSTONE* 5 (May-June 1980): 25, 26, 28 n. 5.

3. Alexander, "Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine," p. 24.

4. See, for example, 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 9:20; Alma 18:18, 28; 22:9-11; 26:35; Morm. 9:9, 17, 19; Moro. 7:22; 8:18; D&C 20:17, 28; 38:1-3; 76:1-4, 70; Moses 1:3, 6.

5. 2 Ne. 31:21; Mosiah 15:4; Alma 11:44; 3 Ne. 11:27, 36; 28:10-11; Morm. 7:7; D&C 20:27-28. The only passage in the Bible containing the formula, "The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one," is 1 John 5:7, which is not found in any of the best and most ancient manuscripts or in the early church fathers. It was added to the text during the trinitarian controversies of the fourth century, and was carried in a few late Greek manuscripts upon which the KJV was based. All modern critical translations of the New Testament omit the passage (*Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1982], p. 939). Thus its appearance in the Book of Mormon, recounting events in the pre-Christian era, presents an interesting dilemma.

6. Book of Mormon, 1st ed., 1 Ne. 11:21, 28; in current editions, See Mosiah 3:5-8; 7:27; 15:1-5; Alma 11:28, 29, 38, 39, 44; 3 Ne. 1:14; Morm. 5:17; 9:9-12; Ether 3:14f; 4:12.

7. Some scriptural passages given through Joseph Smith imply that the Father and the Son, although one god, coexist eternally and are numerically distinct (3 Ne. 11-28; Ether 3:14-19; Moses 1:6; 2:26; 4:1-3; D&C 19:24; 20:24; 45:3-4; 76:13-14, 22-25, 39; 93:7-11, for example). This is confusing in light of the passages cited above in note 6. However, trinitarian theology permits such a paradox as having the Son on earth while the Father is in heaven as is depicted in

the New Testament and in 3 Nephi, while at the same time proclaiming there is only one God. I believe the more specific Book of Mormon statements on the relationship between the Father and the Son should serve as the framework for understanding the theology of 3 Nephi rather than vice-versa. (See Van Hale, "Earliest Mormon Concept of God," pp. 5, 7-8, 12-13.)

8. Ether 4:12; 2 Ne. 11:7; 3 Ne. 1:14; Moses 7:50f; JST, Luke 10:22.

9. Compare, for example, the JST revisions of the following KJV passages: Gen. 11:7; Ex. 7:1; 22:28; 1 Sam. 28:13; Matt. 9:15-16; 11:27; Mark 2:28; Luke 10:22; 1 Tim. 2:4; Rev. 1:6.

10. D&C 1:20; 6:2, 21; 11:2, 10, 28; 14:2, 9; 17:9; 18:33, 47; 19:1, 4, 10, 16, 18; 27:1; 29:1, 42, 46; 34:1-4; 38:1-4; 49:5, 28; etc. Book of Mormon, 1st ed., 1 Ne. 11:18, 21, 32; 13:40; in later editions also see 1 Ne. 19:10, 13; 2 Ne. 10:3-4; 11:7; 25:12; 26:12; 30:2; Mosiah 3:5, 8; 5:15; 7:27; 13:28, 33, 34; 15:1-5; 16:15; Alma 11:28-32, 35, 38, 39, 44; 42:15; Hel. 9:22-23; 14:12; 3 Ne. 1:14; 5:20; 11:14; 15:5; 19:18; Morm. 3:21; 9:11-12; Ether 3:14; 4:7, 12; Moses 1:16-17; D&C 84:19-25.

11. Because these teachings on the Godhead contradicted Mormon Godhead theology developed later, the Lectures on Faith were removed from the Doctrine and Covenants in 1921. See Leland H. Gentry, "What of the Lectures on Faith?" *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 11-12; Alexander, "Reconstruction," pp. 26, 29-30.

12. Alexander, "Reconstruction," p. 25. See also Hill, "First Vision Controversy," pp. 33, 35, 40, 42; Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), pp. 157, 159, 163,

13. Gen. 22:14; Ex. 6:3; 17:16; Judges 6:24; Psalms 83:18; Isa. 12:2.

14. 2 Ne. 22:2; Moro. 10:34.

15. D&C 109:34, 42, 56, 68; 110:3; 128:9; Abr. 1:16; 2:8.

16. D&C 109:4, 10, 14, 22, 24, 29, 34, 42, 47, 56, 68; Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1932-51), 5:94, 127; hereafter cited as *History of the Church*.

17. Many Latter-day Saints would point to D&C 110:3 as evidence that Joseph Smith identified Jesus as Jehovah. But the fact that Joseph called the Father Jehovah several times in his dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland temple just seven days earlier than this revelation (see note 16 above) suggests that other possible interpretations of this verse are more likely. Perhaps Joseph had not yet made a clear separation of the Father and the Son in his theology. Or, this verse in the Doctrine and Covenants might be describing the sound of Christ's voice as being like that of Jehovah's voice (rather than actually being Jehovah's voice). This interpretation is suggested by the previous parallel phrase which states "his voice as the sound of the rushing of great waters," not literally understood to be the sound of rushing waters.

18. *History of the Church*, 5:127.

19. See Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps., and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1980), pp. 198, 221, 229, and 356.

20. Parley P. Pratt, *A Short Account of a Shameful Outrage, Committed by a Part of the Inhabitants of the Town of Mentor, upon the Person of Elder Parley P. Pratt, While Delivering a Public Discourse upon the Subject of the Gospel, 7 April 1835* ([Kirtland? 1835]), p. 8; idem, *Mormonism Unveiled: Zion's Watchman Unmasked; and its Editor, Mr. L. R. Sunderland, Exposed: Truth Vindicated: The Devil Mad & Priestcraft in Danger* (New York: Published by author, 1838), p. 43. See also the *Millennial Star* 1 (January 1841): 217; 2 (April 1842): 184, 187; *Times and Seasons* 2 (1 September 1841): 524; *History of the Church*, 4:256. In the *History of the Church*, the name *Jehovah* is used ninety-nine times to mean simply God, fourteen times to mean the Father, and three times to mean Jesus. The name *Elohim* is used nine times to

mean the Father and three times to mean "head god" or "council of gods."

21. *Times and Seasons* 3 (15 November 1841): 578.

22. Hale, "Doctrinal Impact," pp. 212-13.

23. Stan Larsen, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *BYU Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 198-208.

24. Larsen, "Newly Amalgamated Text," pp. 202-3. Strictly speaking, Joseph translated the phrase *ROSH-ITH BARA ELOHIM* as "The Head Father of the Gods." With regard to the word *Elohim* in Genesis, Joseph said, "The word *Elohim* ought to be plural all the way through—Gods." (See Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, pp. 343, 358-59, 379.)

25. In his sermons discussing the head god, Joseph's major theses are to explain "how God came to be God" (Larsen, "Newly Amalgamated Text," p. 201), and to teach the existence of "a God above the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, pp. 378, 380). Our Father in Heaven was distinguished by Joseph as having been "appointed for us" by "the head of the Gods" (Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 379). Some Mormon expositors have misconstrued Joseph's teachings about this head god to claim that he was speaking only of our Father in Heaven, and that the "council of Gods [who] came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it" were the premortal spirits destined to come to this earth (e.g., Hyrum L. Andrus, *God, Man, and the Universe*, [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968], pp. 270-73). As indicated, however, a careful examination of Joseph's sermons on this topic does not substantiate this interpretation.

26. I am assuming here, in the absence of direct documentation, that the Nauvoo temple gods mentioned in Heber C. Kimball's journal in an entry dated 13 December 1845 (the year following Joseph Smith's death), were the same as had been given by Joseph himself. On the accuracy of Brigham Young's transmitting the endowment to the Church as it had been given privately by Joseph Smith, see Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982), p. 255 n. 72.

27. For example, see 2 Ne. 9:5; Mosiah 3:8; 4:2; 7:27; 26:23; Alma 5:15; Hel. 14:12; 3 Ne. 9:15; Ether 3:15-16; 4:7; D&C 14:9; 38:1-3; 45:1; 76:23-24; 88:7-10; 93:8-10; Moses 1:32-33; 2:1.

28. Brigham Young enjoyed referring to himself as "an apostle of Joseph Smith" (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saint's Book Depot, 1854-56; reprint ed., 1967], 5:296, 332; 9:364).

29. G. Homer Durham, ed., "Discourse by President Brigham Young Delivered in the Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, August 4, 1867," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 29 (1961): 68-69; *Journal of Discourses* 1:238; 2:30; 8:228; 9:240, 286; 11:327; 12:99; 13:236; 14:41.

30. *Journal of Discourses*, 9:286.

31. *Ibid.*, 12:99; see also James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 1:253.

32. The most unbiased and scholarly examinations of the evidence for Brigham Young's so-called Adam-God doctrine are Rodney Turner, "The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1953) and David John Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," *Dialogue* 15 (Spring 1982): 14-58. See also Gary James Bergera, "The Orson Pratt-Brigham Young Controversies," *Dialogue* 13 (Summer 1980): 13, 14, 26-27, 30-33, 41.

33. Discourse by Brigham Young, 19 February 1854, Brigham Young Collection, Library-Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; hereafter cited as Church Archives.

34. *Journal of Discourses*, 1:51; Diary of L. John Nuttall, 7 February 1877, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo.

35. *Journal of Discourses*, 4:215-19; 9:148; 13:311; Discourse by

**The First Presidency moved to abate public criticism and internal controversy by citing the scriptures as the final, official word on this matter.**

**The theological problems were all finally “resolved” in a carefully worked out statement written by James E. Talmage.**

- Brigham Young, 5 February 1852, Brigham Young Collection, Church Archives. See also Heber C. Kimball's comments in the *Journal of Discourses*, 1:356; 4:1.
36. Discourse by Brigham Young, 25 April 1855, Brigham Young Collection, Church Archives; *Journal of Discourses*, 9:286; 327.
37. As cited in Culley K. Christensen, *The Adam-God Maze* (Scottsdale, Ariz.: Independent Publishers, 1981), pp. 274-75.
38. Diary of L. John Nuttal, 7 February 1877.
39. Turner, "The Position of Adam," pp. 54-58; Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," pp. 43, 57 n. 109. Buerger himself seems to be confused on this point, maintaining that "Mormons had always distinguished 'Elohim'" from Adam (i.e., Michael) (p. 42), and that Brigham Young "could not have equated Adam with Elohim, for the President clearly saw them as two separate personages" (p. 47 n. 18). But as indicated here, Brigham sometimes did apply the term *Elohim* to God the Father (i.e., Adam).
40. *Journal of Discourses*, 2:6; Christensen, *The Adam-God Maze*, pp. 275-76.
41. Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minute Book, 9 June 1873, Church Archives.
42. John Taylor, *The Mediation and Atonement* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1882), pp. 150-51. Also see pp. 94, 123, 127, 138, 166, 192, and *Journal of Discourses*, 1:153-54, 223, 369-70; 10:50, 55; 11:22; 14:247-48; 15:217; 24:34, 125, 227; 25:305.
43. *Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1891), p. 295, no. 262.
44. *Millennial Star* 11 (15 September 1849): 281-84; 11 (15 October 1849): 309-12.
45. *Juvenile Instructor*, 6 (30 September 1871): 155; see also Orson Pratt's comments reported in the *Deseret News Weekly* 25 (20 September 1876): 530.
46. Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little, *A Compendium of the Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1882), pp. 78-79. Compare this with Richard's first edition of this book, where in a list of some forty-five "Names, Titles, and Characters Given to Jesus" in the scriptures, he does not even mention *Jehovah* (Liverpool: Orson Pratt, 1857), p. 150.
47. John Taylor, *The Mediation and Atonement*, p. 138.
48. *Journal of Discourses*, 26:300.
49. *Journal of Discourses*, 26:172.
50. Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," pp. 20, 31, 33-34, 37-38, 52 n. 74.
51. Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 23 June 1889, Church Archives.
52. *Deseret News Weekly*, 47 (7 October 1893): 506; *Millennial Star* 57 (24 January 1895): 52, 65; *Juvenile Instructor* 35 (1 February 1900): 90-91.
53. Christensen, *The Adam-God Maze*, pp. 206-37; Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," pp. 32-34, 53 n. 76; St. George Stake High Council Minutes, 13 December 1890, Church Archives.
54. St. George Stake High Council Minutes, 13 December 1890; see also the letter of Edward Bunker, Sr., recorded in these minutes, 15 May 1891, and also in the Edward Bunker Autobiography, pp. 32-49, Church Archives; and Joseph F. Smith to Bishop Bunker, 27 February 1902, Joseph F. Smith Letterbooks, Church Archives.
55. St. George High Council Minutes, 11 June 1892; see also the Charles Walker Journal, 11 June 1892, Church Archives.
56. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 3:243.
57. *Millennial Star* 57 (6 June 1895): 355-56.
58. Edward Stevenson Diary, 3 March and 28 February 1896, Church Archives.
59. Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," pp. 36-42.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-43.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 47 n. 19; 52 nn. 61, 63, 65, 68.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.
63. *Improvement Era* 15 (April 1912): 483-85; *Juvenile Instructor* 50 (October 1915): 649; Clark *Messages of the First Presidency*, 4:267.
65. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1915), pp. 32-41.
66. *Juvenile Instructor* 50 (October 1915): 649; *Improvement Era* 18 (September 1915): 1011.
67. This argument has provided the main defense for Church apologists down to the present day against the proposition that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine (see Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," pp. 43-44); see also Mark E. Petersen, *Adam: Who Is He?* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), pp. 13-16; Bruce R. McConkie, "The Seven Deadly Heresies," in *1980 Devotional Speeches of the Year: BYU Devotional and Fireside Addresses* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1981), p. 78. In a letter to me, Elder McConkie explained, "If you have been to the temple, you know perfectly well who Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael are" (B. D. Kirkland to Bruce R. McConkie, 25 March 1982 and Bruce R. McConkie to B. D. Kirkland, 9 April 1982, correspondence in private possession).
68. *Conference Report*, 6 April 1916, pp. 15-19.
69. Anthon H. Lund Diary, 29 June 1916, Church Archives; George F. Richards Diary, 29 June 1916, Church Archives; I am indebted to Thomas G. Alexander for pointing out this information. The doctrinal exposition was originally released in pamphlet form, and was later reprinted in the *Improvement Era* (19 [August 1916]: 934-42). Elder Talmage also reproduced it in his book, *The Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1901), pp. 465-73.
70. Although the explanations of the 1916 statement concerning the application of the title *Father* to Jesus in Mormon scriptures are well thought out and presented, they probably do not reflect Joseph Smith's understanding of the title when he translated the scriptures in question. As Van Hale noted concerning the argument that the Book of Mormon only considered Jesus to be the Father in some limited sense, "thus allowing that He has a Father, and thus [allowing] the existence of two Fathers": "Although appealing, and supported by the First Presidency's 'Doctrinal Exposition' of 1916, I feel it must be rejected. The early scriptures nowhere present such an explanation, and the verses which call Jesus Eternal God, Eternal Father, Everlasting God, and Lord God Omnipotent seem to be speaking of him as the one and only Supreme Being." (Hale, "Earliest Mormon Concept of God," p. 12.) On the LDS misunderstanding of the Old Testament due to Book-of-Mormon-based theology and the 1916 definitions of Elohim and Jehovah, see Melodie Moench, "The Christianizing of the Old Testament," and Lowell Bennion's "Response," *SUNSTONE* 5 (November-December 1980): 35-40.
71. Heber Bennion, an LDS bishop and a brother-in-law to Heber J. Grant, had an open lively disagreement with Church leaders and specifically with James E. Talmage over their handling of the Adam-God issue: Heber Bennion, *Gospel Problems* ([1920]; reprint, Dugway, Utah: Pioneer Press, n.d.), and *Supplement to Gospel Problems* ([Salt Lake City: The Theatre Book Shop, 1922?]). Promoting the idea that Jesus was God the Father is Edward S. Rich, *Jehovah-Christ, Is He Our Elder Brother?* (Salt Lake City, Published by author, n.d.).

# IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY CLOSETS

Marvin Rytting

**S**everal years ago, I heard Truman Madsen tell about a Protestant minister who had remarked, "You Mormons have a wonderful way of life, but your theology is an abomination." My immediate reaction was that he had it backwards—our theology is inspiring; the abominable part is the lifestyle.

For the half of my life that I have been struggling with being Mormon, I have compared notes with many "closet doubters." In the process, I have become aware that we differ both in what we find troubling as well as in what we find satisfying about being Mormon. I understand my own pattern of religious affirmation and disaffection best by explaining it as a function of my personality, but have come to realize that not everyone who doubts or struggles shares my personality characteristics. We each have our own pattern of believing and doubting. Some have problems with the theology; others with the lifestyle.

In my last column, "Gifts Differing," I presented a Jungian typology of personality which combines four dimensions. The *extraversion-introversion* continuum reflects the extent to which a person is interested mainly in the external world of action, people, and things or the internal world of concepts and ideas. The *sensing-intuition* dimension defines the preference for perceiving the immediate, real, practical facts of experience as opposed to looking for possibilities, relationships, and meanings in experience. The inclination to make decisions by objectively and impersonally considering causes and effects rather than by subjectively weighing values and their personal consequences is the basis for the *thinking-feeling* scale. And the *judgment-perception* dichotomy compares the preference for living in a planned, orderly, and controlling way against living in a spontaneous, flexible, and adapting way.

Everybody uses both poles of each of these continua, and to

have a well-balanced life we should attempt to develop both sides. But most people have a clear preference for one pole or the other on at least one of these dimensions and at least a mild preference on the others. The different combinations of these preferences produce different personality characteristics and areas of interest. For example, people who prefer sensing and thinking tend to be practical and matter-of-fact and to do well with technical skills. Those who combine sensing with feeling are inclined to be sympathetic and friendly and to enjoy providing practical help and services for people. The combination of intuition and feeling produces people who are enthusiastic and insightful and like using their abilities in understanding and communicating with people. And a preference for intuition plus thinking results in logical and ingenious people who enjoy theoretical and technical innovations.

All of these characteristics are useful to a religious organization. The sensing-thinking people make good administrators—the prototypical stake president. The sensing-feeling types find satisfaction in providing Christian service like the stereotypic Relief Society president. Pastoral counseling is the forte of the intuitive-feeling types—exactly what the ideal bishop ought to be (but seldom is). Those who combine intuition and thinking would make great theologians. Unfortunately, the latter two types and their skills are underutilized in the Mormon church, which seems to be dominated by the sensing types.

Another set of combinations differentiates possible approaches to knowledge. Introverted-sensing types, for example, are thoughtful realists for whom knowledge is important to establish truth. For the more action-oriented realists (extraverted-sensing), knowledge is valued for its practical uses. The extraverted-intuitives are action-oriented innovators who seek knowledge for its potential to create change, while the

introverted-intuitives acquire knowledge for its own sake. While all of these approaches to knowledge are equally valid, we tend to value one over the others (even if slightly) based on our personality preferences.

Earle C. Page has suggested some ways in which this Jungian typology relates to different spiritual paths. The primary arena for the extraverts is the external world, and their natural spiritual path is action or activity. They seek participation and avoid exclusion and loneliness. Focusing on God's role as the Creator who is revealed through scripture, events, and people, they take a social approach to religious experience.

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rience and enjoy group prayer. The natural spiritual path for introverts, on the other hand, is reflection. Consequently, these disciples receive God's revelation through individual experience and inspiration, and prefer private prayer and solitary religious experience. They seek fulfillment and avoid intrusions and confusion.

Service is the natural spiritual path of the sensing types. With their focus on the body, the most significant aspect of God is the incarnation. Because they prefer sensory reality, details, and the status quo, they see God revealed within society and institutions like the church and have a practical and literal approach to the Bible and religious experience. They seek for obedience and faithfulness and avoid ambiguity. In contrast, the spirit is the primary arena of the intuitives and their natural spiritual path is awareness. With their preference for possibilities, patterns, and change, they receive God's revelation

through insight and imagination, and tend to take a symbolic or metaphorical approach to the scriptures and religious experience. They seek harmony and mystical union and avoid restriction and repetition.

Because the primary arena of the thinking types is the mind, their natural spiritual path is knowledge, and they focus on God's principles which are revealed through reason and speculation. They like cognitive prayer and have an analytical and abstract approach to scripture and religious experience. Seeking enlightenment, justice, and truth, they avoid inconsistency and ignorance. Feeling types, on the other hand, focus on the heart. For them, the

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most natural spiritual path is devotion. They see God in familial terms (Father and Mother) and experience God's revelation through relationships and emotions. Their approach to the scriptures and religious experience is personal and immediate and they prefer affective prayer. They seek communion and appreciation and avoid conflict and estrangement.

Judging types naturally follow the spiritual path of discipline and do so with initiative. They seek productivity and closure and avoid helplessness and disorder. As a natural result, they take a systematic approach to religious experience and prefer planned prayer. They see God as a judge and ruler who is revealed through order and a set of "oughts." Perceptive types, however, have a natural affinity for spontaneity as a spiritual path

which they follow in a responsive way. They seek openness and receptivity and avoid regimentation and deadlines. For them God is a redeemer and healer, experienced through the revelatory windows of serendipity and "what is."

None of these spiritual paths is inherently preferable and they each have pitfalls. This means that we should monitor the way we follow our own spiritual paths rather than try to change paths. For example, the discipline of the judging types can produce competence but can also lead to inappropriate, rigid control and judging of others. They are especially vulnerable to the temptation of self-righteousness. The spontaneity of the perceptive types reflects an acceptance or serenity, but can also result in passivity, impulsiveness, and procrastination. The special temptation for them is their vulnerability to rebelliousness and carelessness.

This analysis illuminates the difficulties I have with the Mormon lifestyle, particularly regarding what people like me avoid (which Page parenthetically labels as "hell"). Being introverted, intuitive, feeling, and perceptive, I dislike intrusions, restriction, repetition, conflict, estrangement, regimentation, and deadlines—and I avoid them like hell. I often encounter these qualities in the Church, which sometimes causes feelings of conflict and estrangement. On the other hand, being introverted, I find it quite easy to ignore the external conflict and focus instead upon my personal relationship to God. I feel like I do not need the Church, but I am not inclined to fight it or leave it. I simply want to be allowed to follow my own path of reflective awareness and spontaneous devotion. This approach gives me a religious temperament, but not a very Mormon one. Indeed, we seldom hear Mormon exhortations to reflection, awareness, devotion, and spontaneity—well, maybe devotion. However, we are often encouraged to activity, service, knowledge, and discipline.

Of course, my path is not the only one that can have rocky terrain. Any form of affirmation can become a path of disaffection. The extraverts, for example, are likely to feel participation and inclusion in the Church, but they are also vulnerable to taking seriously any feelings of exclusion—the type of Mormon who goes inactive

because of something the bishop said or did not say. Sensory types tend to be faithful and obedient, but they can be bothered by changes in the Church and if they sense too much ambiguity or learn about too many historical skeletons, they are apt to be converted to another set of absolute truths. The Saints Alive people fit this pattern of leaving the Church over theological issues. Other Mormons likely to have problems with the theology are the thinking types who can become dissatisfied with inconsistencies or perturbed by the rejection of critical analysis. The judging types tend to fit well into the Church, but could easily decide that it has become too worldly and needs a good

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**Those of us uncomfortable with the Church's lack of balance need to avoid making the same mistake. We need to recognize that our closets are not the same: We certainly do not want to waste our time and energy criticizing each other's wardrobes.**

retrenchment. As a result, they may form a group that will adhere to a strict observance of the rules. There are many ways of falling away.

Like blind people arguing about the nature of elephants, we experience the Church differently because we look from different perspectives. Our differences often arise at the level of personal experience and personality preference. Disputations at this level are irrelevant, even meaningless. It is more productive not only to accept our differences but to value them, actively promoting the expression of every spiritual path, knowing that we are all enriched by a diversity of perspectives.

In Jungian psychology, the psyche is most at risk when it is one-sided—when the preferred poles of these dimensions are

relied upon too heavily and the opposite ends are neglected. Psychological health comes from balance, from developing all modes of perceiving and judging. The preferences are not eliminated by balance, however, because the development is never exactly equal.

I believe that the Church suffers from one-sidedness in not acknowledging the value of the introverted, intuitive, and perceptive spiritual paths, and that it needs the influence of these perspectives for its own spiritual health. Those of us for whom this lack of balance makes it uncomfor-

table to be typical Mormons need to avoid making the same mistake in the opposite direction. We need to recognize that our closets are not the same and may not contain the same clothes—nor the same doubts. We certainly do not want to waste our time and energy criticizing each other's wardrobes.

# THE TONGUE OF THE DUMB

Michael Hicks

**A**s you read this, you to whom I am blind are mute. Your tongue may be moving in your jaw, the muscles of your cheek may tighten and relax, your lips may touch and part as though to speak. But you are silent, and you have been this way before on an earlier page, on a chapel bench while someone prayed, as you lay sleeping or awake. You may even be quite literally speechless, by birth or by injury. But your silence now probably bespeaks the act of your mind as it transforms black shapes on a clean page into a voice in your thoughts, with all its dimly felt gestures and quiet images.

"But, gentlemen of the jury, there are many kinds of silence." So spoke Cromwell at Thomas More's trial in *A Man for All Seasons*. "Silence can, according to circumstances, speak." The stilling of speech, like speech itself, has intentions, has an attitude and a rhetoric. So as you silently read, and I speak only in the voice of your mind, the telling of silence is my theme.

There is a silence of affirmation. More spoke of it: *qui tacet consentire*, silence gives consent. Refusing to disrupt the existing order of sound and thought, speechlessness consents to and affirms things as they are. Worshipful silence, what we teach to children as "reverence," is not in its pure state a suppression of the word but rather the expression of the absence of necessity: The presence of The Word is sufficient. No speech arises to the lips to confound the balance of God's world. The cultivation of this silence has always been the labor

of mystics, whose surrender to God is affirmed by the extinction of thought. The word—the precious definer of humanity—is sacrificed that man may return to God and banish the curse of Babel.

This silence is the perfect embodiment of divine mystery, unutterability. It consents to a cosmic order of which man has no right to speak. For either his conceptions will be fragmentary and misleading or that which he understands well he will expose to the uncomprehending darkness. Key words, revealed by God in secret places, must not be spoken openly where beasts may mimic them. For this reason the Prophet Joseph's motto concerning the endowment was "be faithful and silent." And regarding those who speak out of turn, not knowing what they say, Joseph prayed that they would "shut their mouths in everlasting silence."

Speaking has perils, but so has silence, as when affirmation is stood on its head. There is a silence that Cromwell called the "most eloquent denial." It does not consent, nor surrender, but refuses to surrender. It is the silence of protest. Summoned to obey, More confronts the princes with silence, just as Christ had held his tongue before the priests and elders. For Jesus and Sir Thomas it was as though to speak would be to release the soul through the tongue, never to recover it, to break the shell of silence, let the spirit slip like an egg into the fire. We who believe and who think are not all called to face princes, but I believe we are all sometime called to be bereft of words in the face of foolishness or

malignancy, even though our silence may leave a scar in the palms, or worse.

In those instances there comes at last the silence of the consummation of belief and the completion of thought. There is a mental cadence that comes when thought and belief have created, if only for

**I believe we are all sometime called to be bereft of words in the face of foolishness or malignancy. In those instances there comes at last the silence of the consummation of belief and the completion of thought. There is a mental cadence that comes when thought and belief have created, if only for a moment, a small order amid the chaos.**

a moment, a small order amid the chaos. (Not that God has failed, but that he corrects himself through human lives well lived.) Here is the silence of More's severed head. The profound silence of the death of great men and women is an ordinary quietness raised to a higher power, not unlike in its essence the still small awe at the close of a nicely turned phrase or a shadow of thought. Good lives, like good books or even good essays, find their seriousness confirmed in the period that closes them, sealing their last rhythm with a sign of silence. Only those who truly think and solemnly believe can hear it. You and I approach one now together, a period, a metaphor of the close of life, a quiet completion of thought in which, faintly, the tongue of the dumb does sing.

# WORDS OF WISDOM

James N. Kimball

One of the best kept secrets in the Kimball family was Uncle Golden's problems with the Word of Wisdom. He struggled with it all of his life and his diary reveals some very interesting insights into his handling of this problem. He said that by the time Heber Grant got serious about it, it was a little too late. He had been drinking coffee since he was a young boy working in the Bear River Valley driving mules. He said oftentimes that's all there was for breakfast. Even in the mission field he relates that if he ever had a dime in his pocket, which was very rare, he would take a nickel of it and buy a stamp and write his mother and take the other nickel and buy a cup of coffee.

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

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

Golden sometimes said, "If it weren't for my nephew, Ranch Kimball, it would be a lot easier for me to overcome this habit of drinking coffee. But Ranch comes down and picks me up at the Church Office Building every now and then and on a nice day we drive all the way up City Creek Canyon, way up to the top. Nobody's there; we're just by ourselves, and on a beautiful day we'll park and Ranch'll put a pot of coffee on. When it perks, he'll pour out two tin cups full and we'll sit there and drink coffee and reminisce about the family, the days in Round Valley, and the things that are happening in the Church and in the world. I remember one day Ranch turned to me and said, 'Uncle Golden, does this bother you sitting up here and drinking coffee with me and being a General Authority?' and I said to

him, 'Hell no.' And he said, 'Why not?' and I said, 'It's simple, Ranch; the eighty-ninth section doesn't apply at this altitude.'"

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

At 4:00 A.M. the next morning Brother McKay and Uncle Golden left Salt Lake and drove with a team of horses north to Brigham City. In some places where there were heavy snow drifts, they had to get out and change from a wagon to a sled borrowed from a farmer. Finally about 8:00 in the morning they got to Brigham City. It was cold, and Uncle Golden was frozen right to the bone. He said he needed a little stimulant to get him going, but he didn't know quite how to handle it with Brother McKay. The meeting didn't begin until 9:00, and Uncle Golden noticed a restaurant, the Idle Isle, on Main Street. He turned to Brother McKay and said, "Why don't we go over and have a little breakfast; we've got an hour and it's not fast Sunday." Brother McKay thought it a marvelous idea.

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

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

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

Golden later related that Brother McKay thought that was awfully funny, and he laughed so hard and so long that he couldn't even eat his breakfast. But the problem was that after that Brother McKay would go around the Church and every time he was asked to speak, he would tell that story to people. In his diary, Uncle Golden wrote he wished McKay would keep his damn mouth shut, but then added, "Maybe Heber will release him, and we won't hear any more about him."

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

# BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES THE 1984 DAVID WOOLLEY EVANS & BEATRICE EVANS BIOGRAPHY AWARD

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A prize of \$10,000 will be awarded for a distinguished biography of any person significant in the culture or history of what may be called Mormon Country. (Mormon Country is generally regarded as extending throughout the Intermountain West of the United States but also includes Southern Canada and Northern Mexico.) If manuscripts are submitted, they should be book length and ready for publication. If books are submitted, they should have been published within 1984. All authors, regardless of religious affiliation, are invited to submit entries. Entries are not limited to Mormon subjects.

This award is made possible by a generous grant to Brigham Young University from David Wooley Evans, Beatrice Cannon Evans, and other members and friends of the Evans family. The judging will be by members of the governing board of the biography award or other qualified judges appointed by them. Among others, board members include:

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**JEFFREY R. HOLLAND**, *president of Brigham Young University*

**HOWARD LAMAR**, *Coe Professor of American history, Yale University.*

**MERLO PUSEY**, *eminent biographer and former associate editor of the Washington Post.*

Decisions of the judges will be final. Manuscripts may be submitted to Neal E. Lambert, associate academic vice president, D-367 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602. The deadline for submissions for the 1984 prize is 31 December 1984. The university expects to announce the winner by 1 April 1985. Subsequent awards will be given annually.

For further information write to Neal E. Lambert at the above address.

# EVANS BIOGRAPHY AWARD

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