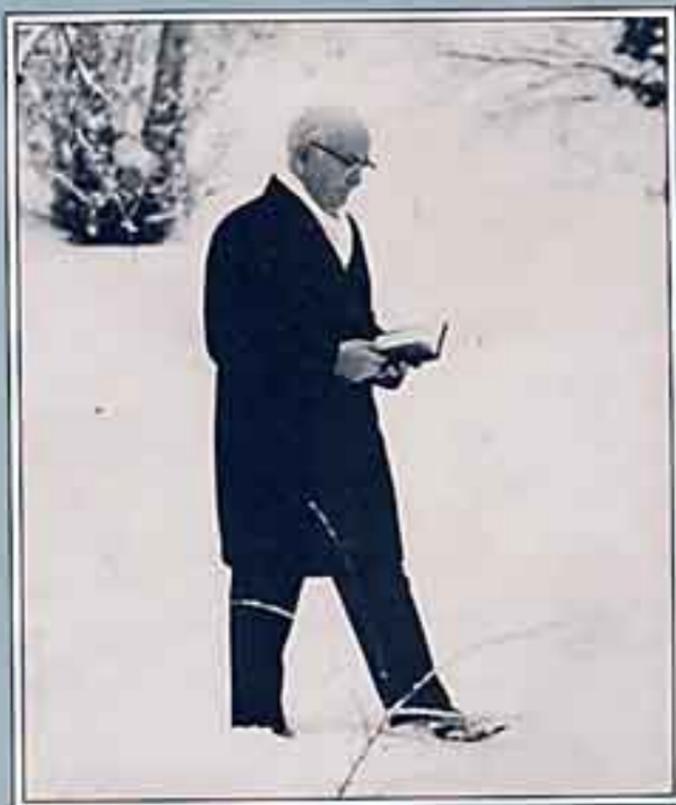


SUNSTONE



A TIME OF REACHING OUT:
THE ADMINISTRATION OF
SPENCER W. KIMBALL

BY EDWARD L. KIMBALL

SUNSTONE

March 1987

Volume 11:2

Issue 58



SUNSTONE is published by the Sunstone Foundation, a non-profit corporation with no official connection to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Articles represent the attitudes of the writers only and not necessarily those of the LDS Church.

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Send all correspondence and manuscripts to:

SUNSTONE
331 South Rio Grande Street
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Salt Lake City, UT 84101

United States subscriptions to SUNSTONE are \$32 for twelve issues. International subscriptions are \$45 for airmail to Canada and Mexico and surface mail to all other countries. Other airmail subscriptions are \$62 for Europe and South America and \$70 for Asia, Africa and Australia.

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THE PRINTING OF THIS MAGAZINE WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE
GENEROUS DONATION OF RAINER AND TRIX DAHL.

SUNSTONE

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PEGGY FLETCHER 1978-1986

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READERS FORUM

UN-CHRISTIANS VS. NON-MORMONS

I am compelled to respond to two letters concerning feeding the poor and the sinful nature of Mother Teresa and Desmond Tutu (SUNSTONE, vol. 10, no. 9). I find the attitudes expressed in these letters appalling and extremely un-Christian, not to mention the simple fact that they are based on an obvious misunderstanding of the teachings of Christ and the theology of Mormonism. To put it bluntly, these two individuals are embracing the false doctrine that has spread through the Church over the past several years that frees us from the responsibility to care for the poor. This negative apologetics not only allows us to feel safe in our material gluttony, it also keeps us from seeing the needs of those around us and the good works that others outside the Church are accomplishing.

Both writers comment that the Church does more for the poor by giving them the gospel, which then allows them to support and care for themselves. I have heard this argument since I was a missionary in Brazil and had to face the Church's apparent disinterest in the poor who surrounded us. We were told to approach the rich areas of town first because the well-to-do would be more useful to the Church. I have never been able to understand how having the Book of Mormon in hand is more advantageous than a bowl of gruel to a person who is starving to death. I cannot understand how having the Gospel will give a person the means to support themselves. Passy states that "the Lord did not sow grain to feed the poor. . . ." I suppose that he has forgotten the several occasions in the New Testament when the apostles did not have the resources to feed all the people listening to the Lord. The apostles asked the Lord to send the multitude away. I don't remember Christ making the statement that since they now had the word, the people could fend for themselves. Rather he performed a miracle and fed the multitude. Christ repeatedly admonishes us to take care of the poor and the homeless when he says, "If you have done it unto the least of these my brethren you have done it unto me." In this same passage he mentions feeding the poor as a specific act.

Paul Brigham condemns Mother Teresa and

Desmond Tutu for teaching false doctrine. Yet we are told that the just men of the earth will receive glory of the Son; that hardly sounds to me as if they are going to Hell. How can we judge the actions of those who are fighting to save the less fortunate as being sins? As Christ said, "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone."

I have a very difficult time comparing Church service with the work of one like Mother Teresa. I cannot see how doing my home teaching, paying my tithing, going to meetings, supporting Ward budget dinners, contributing to the Scouting program, etc., can truly be seen as Christian service. The Lord chastised the early Church and I believe that this applies to us today as well. In D&C 105:2-3 he explains why Zion had not yet been redeemed. The reason was simple: ". . . they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, to the poor and afflicted." Isn't it about time we let go of our materialism and started acting like the Christians we profess to be?

Clay Cook
Rohnert Park, CA

GOD AND THE GAMBLERS

I was amused at the restraint of M. Barker's very thoughtful and thought-provoking "The Xenophobic Mormon" article (SUNSTONE vol. 11 no. 1). The author avoided comparing Mormon and Soviet societies in terms of their patriarchal oligarchies (meaning simply government by the few, who happen to be men although women work en masse in support of these respective societies).

What a delight to chew on Karl Sandberg's discussion of "Pascal's Wager on the Mormon Roulette Wheel" (SUNSTONE vol. 11 no. 1). I've always been utterly fascinated by the scriptural notion that faith banishes fear, because it is so contrary to my own experience. Faith always generated hope, but the degree of hope was always matched by a degree of fear, perhaps simply fear that the faith and hope were unfounded. But without opposition of fear, hope loses its perspective. Perhaps fear and

hope are like positrons and electrons, while faith is like neutrons. The number of neutrons determines the nature of the atom, but it is the balanced positive and negative particles that determine the nature of the interactions and combinations possible with other atoms, thereby controlling the types of molecules and substances we can become a part of. The upshot is that Sandberg shed some light on my long term fascination, but in that new light I don't quite know what it is I'm seeing yet.

On a more critical note, Sandberg did let pass and even reinforce Pascal's notion that the choice is between belief-morality and unbelief-immorality, using morality to mean that there is love in our hearts for our fellow creatures and we act accordingly. This notion is a "chauvinism-of-all believers," I feel, and I heartily recommend M. Barker's discussion of Mormon xenophobia as at least a partial antidote. The idea that without loving, believing in, or fearing a Supreme Being one cannot have a solid foundation for a moral outlook or a sufficient impetus for living a moral life is extremely xenophobic: it only means we're still at the roulette wheel hoping and fearing and have not come to grips with the finite possibility that there is no wager, there is only you for a short time, and the real question is only

whether you will to do good or evil with the resources so temporarily at your disposal. There are many who feel the good they do is the only transcendence they can believe in and have faith in. And who knows, perhaps by being certain of their cosmological aloneness and their temporariness, and by conscientiously willing to do good for love of good and for the immediate self-satisfaction that it offers, expecting absolutely no additional reward except a clear conscience on a death-bed, they are actually the only ones who win the wager.

Abe Van Luik
Richland, WA

CLONING QUETZALCOATL

A couple of necessary corrections for Brant Gardner's article on Quetzalcoatl:

1. The Spanish word "ropa" does not mean "robe" but "clothing." The pseudo-cognate is misleading. When my Mother would tell me "Ponte la ropa," she was not saying "Put your robe on," but "Put your clothes on." Referring

to Quetzalcoatl's clothes as clothes is hardly an attempt to westernize him.

2. Gardner assumes and implies that Ce Acatl (the High Priest born 843 AD), Kukulkan (the Toltec conqueror of Yucatan in the tenth century CE) and the god Quetzalcoatl, the main (perhaps the sole) deity worshipped during the Mesoamerican period of peace and equality from ca. 50 to 200 AD, are also the same individual. If that is so, he lived nearly a thousand years, undergoing drastic changes of personality during that millennium. Not to mention being literally born again at least once.

Polemicists who have taken the viewpoint opposite to Gardner's have made the same mistake of mingling and confusing the various Quetzalcoatl's, carelessly ignoring the centuries and deep differences that separate them. But that is no excuse.

Benjamin Urrutia
Pasadena, CA

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"GRACE, DID YOU HAVE TO OPEN YOUR COAT WHEN THE PROPHET
CAME THROUGH THE CROWD AND SHOOK MY HAND?"

FROM THE EDITOR

DUMAS MALONE: SCHOLARSHIP WITH CHARITY

by Elbert Eugene Peck

Last December Dumas Malone, the renowned Jefferson biographer, died. He had spent over half of his life researching America's third president and writing a six-volume biography for which he earned a Pulitzer prize. His obituaries called him "the greatest American biographer." Dumas Malone is important to me because his works opened my eyes to the possibilities for Mormon history. As a BYU freshman, I first purchased and later much later, much later, began reading Malone's six-volume biography. Like many Americans, I worshipped Jefferson, although I didn't know much about him beyond the popular quotes and stories. However, as a Virginia boy, I knew Jefferson was a great man and I wanted to be like him. Six volumes was a lot, but I figured that if I had read Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* eleven times, I could read Malone once. I finished the first volume and then got involved in other intellectual pursuits. Ten years later I returned to Jefferson and Malone. In the meantime, however, I had become greatly interested in the issues of writing history. I had been in study groups where my understanding of Mormon history was challenged and revised. I had grappled with unflattering facts about individuals I held as models, sparred with friends who were angry at people I respected, read articles and speeches and listened to talks on faithful vs. honest history. So when I started reading again, I found myself studying not only what Malone wrote, but how he wrote history.

By coincidence I began reading Malone during July 4 week at a beach trip to Naags Head,

North Carolina. His work was so engrossing that while others swam and played, I was engaged with these historical tomes, not exactly oceanside reading. But Malone spoke to me about how to honestly write about historical characters I admired.

First, he always let the reader know how certain were his conclusions. When something was unmistakable he referred to the wealth of evidence. But when the story was not so clear he softened his judgment with phrases like, "it would appear that," and "there is no indication that...." And when he was employing a little more guess work he would write "it may be that he planned to..." or "he could not have been pleased with..." and "One can only wonder what Jefferson thought, perhaps it was..." Throughout the books I came to love that care Malone took to tell his readers how certain he was of his facts.

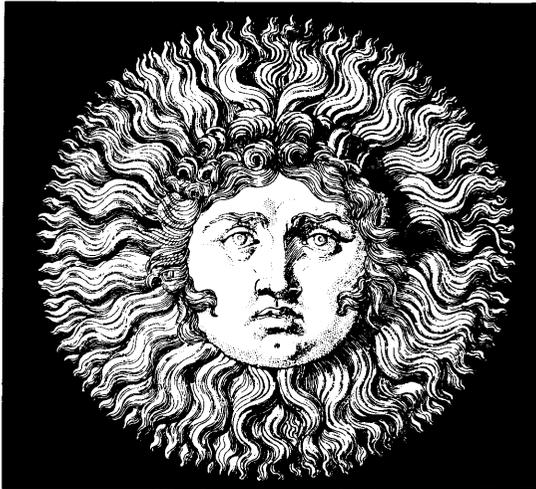
I was even more impressed with what I came to call "charitable history" and what Richard Bushman has called "loving the people you write about." While Malone did not shy away from acknowledging Jefferson's faults, he showed tolerance when describing the faults of all individuals in the book. After quoting an especially biting criticism of Alexander Hamilton, Jefferson's political rival, Malone says "Of course, a friend of Hamilton could use these words to more kindly describe the same attributes...." Acknowledging that a Jefferson account of the revolution was "too simple," Malone writes "On the verge of Revolution Jefferson could not be expected to be dispassionate; he

had long since weighed the conflicting arguments, and the preponderance on the Patriots' side seemed so great that he had no need for apothecary's scales.... His task as a statesman was to grasp the essence of the controversy, and as the penman of independence, to set it forth—not in neutral shades but in bold contrasts of black and white." This method of separately stating facts and judgments and putting them in context of the times helped me see how we might have the same gracious honesty in LDS history.

I don't know if Malone would feel comfortable with the phrase "charitable history," but he believed that "the biographer cannot escape the obligation of thought and judgment" and that "every man has a right to be judged against the background of the age in which he lived," which was why he titled the six book series *Jefferson and His Time*. Malone has been called a historian "of the old school." He was taught in part by another Virginia historian, Douglas Southall Freeman, author of the acclaimed multi-volume works on George Washington and Robert E. Lee. Malone, like Freeman, believed in the greatness of the individuals, and while acknowledging "foibles and peccadillos" said "we owe it to our countrymen, as well as the Fathers, to measure their services as a whole...."

Finally, from Malone's acknowledgments it is evident that he could not have mastered Thomas Jefferson without his continual association with the library staffs at Princeton University, which is publishing the complete works of Jefferson, and the University of Virginia. The luxury of having Jefferson's documents already collected and catalogued and the opportunity to refine his judgments with scholars who knew the documents were essential to his work. Credit should also be given to Little Brown & Company for their 40-year commitment to publish an important series they were not sure would sell.

I dream of the day when we will have multi-volume biographies of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and collections of their complete works. We must also have universities and other publishers willing to subsidize the publication of them. We are seeing the beginning of this with the diligent long-suffering work of Rori Walker on Heber J. Grant, a biography which may fill several volumes. The publication of important early Mormon diaries is another important step toward this goal. We have been told that Mormonism will yet have its Shakespeares and Miltons; I would like to add to the list our Dumas Malones and our Princeton University Presses.



TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

Arthur R. Bassett

MOTHER'S DAY: A MINORITY REPORT

LET'S FACE IT. Mother's Day can be a real downer. Don't get me wrong, I'd be the first in line to honor mothers for what they do, and what they have done—nobody deserves it more—but I have come to think that we often go about it in the wrong way.

I haven't always felt that way. My earliest recollections of Mother's Day are among my best, because I had one of those saintly mothers that we typically eulogize. Mother's Day was always *That Wonderful Mother Of Mine* and *Mother Macree* and all the other great songs. Sometimes it was my dad (who was also my bishop) who sang them in services. Sometimes as a young boy, I got to solo during the sacrament services (this goes way back) while my mother (who was the ward organist) accompanied me on the piano. But, whoever was singing, I loved it all because I felt it all so genuinely and deeply.

Later, I got called to the mission field in England. Over there they had what they called Mothering Sunday—only it was much more low key, just a card and a simple “thank you.” I was always upset because I thought that mothers deserved so much more.

Eventually I got married and we started rearing a family of our own. Two Mother's Days went by before we had our first child. I remember how embarrassed my wife was when they would give her a flower at Sunday School, and she wasn't even a full-fledged, bona fide mother. Even when she was seven months pregnant with our first son, somehow she felt that she had not yet achieved that magical stature of motherhood.

Then, after a couple more children, I observed that my wife was beginning to express an uneasiness (if not a down-right antagonism) toward Mother's Day, and to talk about how guilty it made her feel. I noted her

ARTHUR BASSETT is the father of three daughters and three sons and the husband of one wife, Janet.

friends expressing the same feelings, and I started listening more carefully to what they were saying. It didn't take much to realize that Mother's Day was becoming one major guilt trip for many, if not all of them. So I started to think about it.

I concluded that basically we do two things wrong. The first is that we put women on a pedestal. I, for one, was honestly sincere in doing that (as I said, I had one of those mothers who probably deserved to be there), but I have since realized that that is in reality a very cruel thing to do to anyone. It puts a terrible sense of responsibility on them which leads to that sense of guilt—they know that they are not equal to the image we create. I began to notice that Father's Day was not handled in the same way. Men (who controlled the Sunday School) never assigned talks about ideal fathers on Father's Day. They used to run the little ones in for a song or two, or invite the dads into the Junior Sunday School (if they wanted to come in), but they never gave flowers, gifts, eulogies, etc. It was all rather generic. And I have yet to hear one complaint from a father who felt guilt on Father's Day as a consequence of the Sunday services.

I know we do it with good intent. The brethren of the Church have been placing women on these pedestals at least since Brigham Young's time. Historians tell us that this attitude evolved around the time of the Victorian age, with the growth of the business world. No longer was the wife viewed—as she had been in the agrarian age—simply as a helpful and loving companion. Now she had to be the one to guard the home while the fathers collectively ventured out into the shoddy world of business where they could not avoid becoming tarnished. That was acceptable for the father (life required that someone do battle with the world), but the mother was to remain at home, the paragon of purity; the bastion of morality; the gentle retreat from the sordid world of business; the soft-spoken, unruffled,

self-sacrificing guardian of the hearth. She became essential to the very stability of society, there in her immaculately clean and orderly world over which she presided. In a word, she needed to be above it all, uncompromising and untainted, the very prototype of heaven dwelling among us. Gone for a season was the helpmate from the farming years.

The second problem is even more subtle. It has to do with the image of ideal motherhood that we fabricate in the Church. Everyone who has been to Relief Society knows what I am talking about—it's like that song we use to sing on Mother's Day. “M is for the many things she gave me.” Have you ever listened to what that song suggests concerning mothers? A mother is someone who is growing older with a heart of gold, with eyes that are alternately shining with love's light or bedimmed with tears being shed to save us. She is a person who has given us much and is always right. And in the Church there are many other characteristics added. She is Patti Perfect growing old gracefully.

One thing that bothers me is the origin of this idealized model. Where did it come from? I'm convinced that it is not scriptural. We don't have any lives of women delineated that well in the scriptures—not even the life of Mary, the mother of the Savior. All we have of her are those few wonderful vignettes of her early experience, given by Luke. The next thing we know is that she is chastising Jesus for running away and for being, for the moment, a source of deep concern for herself and Joseph. Then we have a scene when she and her other children come looking for Jesus, when he, pointing to his disciples, remarks that they are now his mother and his brothers, etc. (Matt. 12). The last scenes before those of the resurrection (where, incidentally, Mary does not play a dominant role) is at the foot of the cross during those moments when Jesus gives her as a charge to John.

Unfortunately, we do not find a well-defined female role for women anywhere in the scriptures. The closest thing we come to it is some advice from the last chapter of Proverbs. This becomes doubly interesting if it was Solomon who wrote Proverbs, for Solomon was the son of Bathsheba. I do not recall having heard one Mother's Day talk on Bathsheba. And yet I think one of the most beautiful stories of mothering is associated with her. It is found in the scenes that follow the death of David. You may recall that he had promised Bathsheba that their son, Solomon, would be heir to the throne. However, rather than an orderly transferral of power, there had been an attempt to overthrow Solomon and to make Adonijah the

king. At that point Bathsheba and Nathan, the prophet, entered into an alliance in an effort to preserve the throne for Solomon. Nathan (the same prophet who earlier chastised David for taking Bathsheba as his wife) was now her closest friend and counselor, advising her what to do in order that her son might rule as David had intended. The relationship described between Nathan and Bathsheba creates a beautiful, moving story.

She is also one of the women listed in the genealogy Matthew gives of Christ. And, incidentally, if you haven't looked at the list lately, it is a fascinating one. Five women are noted. The first, Tamar, became the mother of twins by posing as a prostitute and entering into a union with her father-in-law, Judah, to give birth to Pharez—that's a great Mother's Day story, isn't it? There is also a Rachab in that genealogy that some scholars believe is Rahab—the harlot spoken of by James, the brother of Jesus, in his epistle, the one who preserved the lives of the spies when Israel scouted the promised land during the days of Joshua. Then there is Ruth, the Moabite (the descendant of an incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughter). In point of fact, if Rachab is indeed Rahab, that would make both Boaz's mother and his wife gentiles. Bathsheba is the fourth mother mentioned, and Mary the fifth. This is certainly an interesting group of mothers listed in the lineage of the Savior, and yet I'm sure that each, in her own way, had much to teach us in a positive sense

about the role of motherhood.

I'm also convinced that the stereotype mentioned above is not derived from any one of the wives of the modern-day prophets, although it might well have resembled some of them. In short, I don't know where the model came from, or how it came to be so widespread throughout the Church. I do know what's wrong with it, though. Like any stereotype, it is too narrow to hold the beautiful breadth of reality. It's akin to saying we ought to have one true flower, and that all flowers ought to emulate the rose. That's going to leave a lot of frustrated orchids. We never make an attempt to talk about the ideal daughter; why do we feel the need to define the ideal mother? Part of the enjoyment and beauty of life lies in the variety of the species. Through it we can all draw upon the wonder of the unique contribution that everyone has to make.

I would hope that on Mother's Day we would be thankful for the unique strengths and the desires that each mother has. That is the key to her unique contribution to the good of the whole, and we should all thank God for that uniqueness. Of course none has reached the heights she knows that she can achieve. We all know that because we all share in that same frustration—which brings us back to the problem of placing people on pedestals. Having a day like Mother's Day can simply intensify those frustrations of failure we all know so well. Better, mothers—especially on Mother's Day—should try to remember how they felt

about their own mothers and why, and then realize that is all that children are trying to express about their mothers—that they are happy to be having the experiences with them that they are. We ought to make this a day of just being glad that God has provided us this kind of relationship to share, rather than making it a day of inflated eulogies and the accompanying sense of guilt.

On that day we are honoring womanhood as much as motherhood. And nobody knows what a woman is—or should be. Women have had fewer role models than men, and in some ways that should be more exciting for them; it gives them the freedom to discover their own lifestyles. At least it is more challenging. And frequently more frustrating. Women, especially this year, probably have to cope with more mixed signals about what they should be doing than men get. And it becomes their task to sort through all these signals, to decide which are for them, and to use some creativity on their own, in making their very own version of what womanhood means, as *each* chooses to put all the options together. In a very real sense, in this way at least, they can become their own creators. They ought to be able to experience more freedom of choice as a consequence. I realize that they often don't but I think that they should.

Our generation is currently more actively engaged than others have been for some time in defining some of the possibilities for women. Consider how much we have learned about intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual possibilities for women. We are only now (in the life span of many of us) beginning to encourage women to develop their intellectual gifts to any degree. Socially we have not yet begun to scratch the surface of women's potential.

Certainly, we have much to do in the examination of spiritual varieties amongst us. Some years ago I began a quest to understand *the* spiritual stance (thinking that it would be monolithic in nature), turning to a study of the lives of the presidents of the Church as my sample. Much to my surprise I found that in significant ways each was extremely different in his personality. Lorenzo Snow came the closest to what I thought a spiritual giant would be, but he was nothing like Heber J. Grant, or Brigham Young, or Joseph Smith. I began to suspect that spirituality may demonstrate itself very differently in one person than it does in another. (And, incidentally, few of the presidents have been filled with that "sweetness and light," that undefinable saccharine, syrupy-sweet personality that often gets confused with spirituality in the standard stereotype of

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women.)

I have to smile and cry inside when I think of the physical possibilities of women, because that hits a little closer to me in my own life. I grew up in a family of three boys and one girl. My sister was several years younger than I, and had only three brothers for role models. All of the boys led a life that revolved to some degree around basketball, and somehow she picked up all the skills that none of us could quite develop. Our coach told my dad that my little sister could beat any member of our varsity in a game of "one-on-one" in basketball. That made me furious because it was so "un-feminine." I used to hide my basketball from her and beg my mom to intercede and say something to her about what that was going to do in affecting her choice of a husband, etc.—to say nothing of what it was doing to my social position among the guys. Swimming, tennis, and what else? Those were the sports for girls.

Then I had my own daughters, and I worried about the same problem all over again when my oldest daughter began to want to play ball like her big brother. I purposely did not spend time with her in those pursuits like I did with him. I was trying to "protect" her from her own "misguided" interests. And you can imagine the rest. Now I would do much to have some of those days over again. I for one welcome the revolution that has occurred in our lifetime, although initially it was not easy for me to accept.

I remember when BYU started using girls on ground crews—mowing lawns, shoveling snow (and I still have a hard time with that one), etc. I had to put my hand up like a blinder so that I couldn't see this exploitation of feminine labor, whenever I drove past. Now when I drive home, all the way along the road I see girls playing on basketball standards on their homes. When I was growing up that was the domain of the male and the gathering place of the girls who came to watch the boys—or on occasion to express their femininity by showing how inept they were in trying to make baskets—and we loved it. And now I enjoy watching them, with all their grace, participating in a little wider sphere of life, asking myself, "How could I have been so blind and narrow before?"

One of the things I resent most about the image of motherhood we hold up is that element of the self-sacrificing mother, who supposedly gives up all for her husband and children. I once had a friend who had one of those signs that read, "I am third." When I turned it around it said, "God is first, my fellowman is

second." In some important ways that obviously is true, but what do I have to give unless I take care of some of my own basic needs as well? Even the Savior found the need from time to time to be by himself and to recharge his strength through being alone with his Father.

We each have the need to expand our own knowledge through study and experience. We have the need for emotional well-being, the need to feel that we have something of value to offer—and nothing of value comes without time, experience, and sacrifice on our part. When female students come to me to tell me that they are going to drop out of school and sacrifice for their husbands to put them through school, I always want to say, "If you're so keen on sacrificing, why not sacrifice some time together for a couple more years, in order to finish your own education?" Ultimately, it may mean that you have more to give to your husband and to your marriage, and even to your children—not always, but certainly in some cases. I cannot help feeling that we need not feel guilty if we don't give in every time in an effort to please others and their desires.

Now, I've likely said enough—perhaps too much for some, and not enough for others. This is probably something a woman ought to be saying. However, there are many more issues that should be addressed on Mother's Day. For example, one problem involves a group that I became aware of in Syracuse, New York, where I was working on my doctorate. It centered on those women who had adopted children because they had been unable to have them on their own. I was never aware of how much we hurt them inadvertently on Mother's Day when we evoked the image of going down into the shadows of death in childbirth—as if somehow those who could not have children were relegated to second-class status because they hadn't paid the dues for full-fledged motherhood. They hadn't suffered enough to bind them to their children. That hurt of course is totally unintentional. We know that other types of pain are always awaiting any who will venture into motherhood. Mothers who have not gone down into those depths of child-bearing should be thankful that they were spared that trauma—they've certainly got more than enough of their share of problems however motherhood is involved.

Another group I would like to address at greater length, although space does not permit, is those who have not married and had families of their own, but have been so willing to teach and care for the children of others. By becoming, in effect, surrogate mothers, they have taught me and my children so much about what it means to be a woman. When I

think of this, literally dozens of faces come to mind. I honor them especially for their role in life, and want them to know how much they have meant to me and to my children and to make them a vital part of that special day. I have watched them often out of the corner of my eye on Mother's Day, and have shared inwardly just a little of their pain of neglect.

That is the trouble with events like Mother's Day. Every time we choose to honor anyone, we often choose to dishonor others through neglect. I for one would be very happy if we gave up any type of award events. They usually mean so little in terms of things that really matter in life, and they are so artificial—and I think un-Christian in their insensitivity. Maybe that's because I'm usually not the one being honored; but when I have been, all I can think of is those who deserve veneration so much more than me.

I shall be eternally thankful for a thoughtful scouter some years back who taught me a valuable lesson in life in the context of a Pine-wood Derby in Cub Scouts. I watched two of my little guys with broken hearts year after year (the last year my third son finally won) as somebody else walked off with the prizes. It made me feel so bad; it was as if it were my fault and I had let them down. Then this scouter, who probably had sons of his own, taught me a simple but powerful lesson. He quickly dispensed with all the "big" awards—the fastest car, the best decorated, etc. He, like all of us, knew that the fastest cars were usually more the work of the dads than they were of the boys anyway. Then he made a big fuss about awarding each of the other boys a "safe driving" award, since that is what makes our highways usable for the rest of us. I wish that more people who always seem so eager to give out awards could be so thoughtful and careful of people's feelings.

And it's with that spirit in mind that I always feel the need to honor all women on Mother's Day. There are none of them that should think of herself as an "also-ran." Each excels in her own way, different as it may be—and that's what we like about them. They all teach us something different about what life can be in a positive sense. What we should honor on Mother's Day is the very concept of womanhood, in all its different stances, and the chance we all have to participate in it in our own way. So I hope that they each have a guiltless Mother's Day. We love them all for what they are; and what they are not, should rarely, if ever, cross our minds. Certainly it shouldn't on that day.

A Time of Reaching Out

THE ADMINISTRATION OF SPENCER W. KIMBALL

By *Edward L. Kimball*

IN 1980 SEVERAL CHURCH LEADERS RETURNED TOGETHER from the Saint Louis area conference on an airplane. Elder Ronald Poelman got up to walk in the aisle. President Kimball caught his arm and asked, "Where are you going?" "I was just stretching my legs," Elder Poelman replied. "You don't need to do that," said President Kimball, "they're long enough already. It's little people like me who need to stretch their legs."

That anecdote suggests several important personal characteristics of Spencer Kimball. For one, he loved to interact with people; for another, he had a sense of humor; for a third, he had a feeling of personal insignificance or inadequacy; for a fourth, he did stretch his legs, he did lengthen his stride, he did try harder than anyone else.

There is not much in twentieth century Mormon history that can match the excitement and significance of the twelve years during which Spencer Woolley Kimball was president of the Church. The pace of growth was breathtaking, but many other things happened that do not revolve around numbers. Twenty-five years from now we'll be able to make better judgments, but from our present vantage point—even with all the unanswered questions—it looks like we have just passed through a period of real moment in Church history.

A perennial question is whether great men make history or history makes men great. Many people regard President Kimball as a great agent for change, while others may think he was simply there to ride the crest of a wave, and pretty much the same things would have happened whoever occupied his place.

My father's own view would probably have straddled that fence. In 1951, when he had not the slightest reason to expect ever to be president of the Church, he said, "I am positive that the appointments of His Twelve by the Lord and the subsequent deaths control the Presidency of the Church. No man will live

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long enough to become President of this Church ever who is not the proper one to give it leadership. Each leader in his own peculiar way has made a great contribution to the onward march of the Church. No one of the nine Presidents had all the virtues nor all the abilities. Each in his own way and time filled a special need and made his great contribution. This I know. This I know."¹

If I may paraphrase, the individual who is Church president does indeed make a difference, but he is there, when and where he can make that difference, because God has chosen him. The question is the same as "Would there have been a Restoration without Joseph Smith?" It relates to the interplay between man's free agency and God's foreknowledge or omniscience.

During the twelve years of his presidency, President Kimball's personal activity fell into three periods. For six years, from 1974 to 1979, he was at his most vigorous, racing around the world at an exhausting pace, conducting more than forty area conferences and nearly sixty solemn assemblies, seeing to major changes in the Church's administrative structure, receiving the revelation on priesthood, and engaging in a multitude of other activities.

Then in late 1979 he had brain surgery that left him weak but still pressing forward. For the next two years he continued the same kinds of activities, but at a slower pace.

After his third operation in late 1981 came four years of relatively passive leadership, when the only vigorous member of the First Presidency was Gordon B. Hinckley.

The first period opened with the surprising death of Harold B. Lee. Apparently no one had a clue that President Lee might die when he did. He was exhausted and not well, but his sudden death caught us all unprepared. After the first shock I wondered whether, considering my father's age and health history, he could survive the stress of the presidency for a year. The Church expected a brief, caretaker presidency. Elder Bangerter described it: "We knew, of course, that he would manage somehow, until the next great leader arose, but it would not be easy for him . . . 'O Lord,' we prayed, 'please bless President Kimball. He needs all

the help you can give him.'"²

One of his first tasks as president was to hold a press conference. I remember how he fretted the evening before that conference. I doubt that anyone every worried more about a press conference than he did. And it never got much easier. As Arthur Haycock said to me recently, "Your father would do *anything* for the Kingdom, even hold a press conference." He suffered from a sense of personal inadequacy to his high calling, and he was acutely aware of how readily a hostile reporter could pounce upon any slip of the tongue to discredit the Church. He dreaded these occasions.

But that first meeting with the press produced no fireworks. He said he would stress home, family, and the training of youth; missionary service; encouragement to Indians of North and South America; loyalty to country; and temple work. That all sounded very tame. He pointed out that for thirty years he had been active in helping develop the Church's programs and he did not foresee much change under his leadership. In that he was just as mistaken as the rest of us.

It would be a mistake to emphasize only the changes and not to acknowledge that the main stream of the Church's programs simply moved ahead in an orderly fashion.

HOME, FAMILY, AND THE TRAINING OF YOUTH

A large portion of President Kimball's addresses, especially at area conferences, dealt with the area of home and family and the training of the youth, things he had said he intended to stress. What he said stirred little controversy, because it simply restated the Church's long-standing values of morality, fidelity, and responsibility. But in addition to these generally accepted values the Church stepped into the public arena with several First Presidency statements. The one relating to homosexuality in 1975 produced little response. The Church continued its vigorous opposition to abortion on demand; its policy defined the only appropriate circumstances for abortion as serious harm to the mother and impregnation by rape or incest. Those who asserted that abortion fell within a woman's right to control her own body often had harsh words to say about the Church's position on this issue.

Even greater public clamor arose in response to the statement

opposing the Equal Rights Amendment. That statement recognized the validity of the end that many promoters of the amendment had in view—fair treatment for women—but it considered the amendment an unwise shortcut, posing too high a risk of further eroding the already struggling family, and of weakening traditional moral values relating to sexuality. The excommunication of Sonia Johnson fanned the flames of publicity, and the furor continued for some time after the extended period for ratification expired in June 1982. Since then things have been relatively quiet.

While many women were dissatisfied with the pace, it is clear that during President Kimball's administration there was increased institutional recognition of the importance of women. At President Kimball's funeral Barbara Smith was invited to speak and she referred to his efforts. In 1978 the first all-Church women's meeting was held. Similar meetings for young women

followed in 1980. Women leaders participated more in these meetings and in general conferences. The statuary park in Nauvoo, dedicated as a monument to women in 1978, also reflected President Kimball's attitude. A long-standing custom of having only men pray at sacrament meetings was dropped in 1978. And while women who could stay home to nurture their children were encouraged to do so, there was new recognition that women often did not have that choice. A call by some for ordaining women to the priesthood, however, brought no response.

President Kimball's stress on home and family can also be seen in his emphasis on journal-keeping and writing family history, planting and tending gardens, and fixing and cleaning up our property. There is no question that he was true to that prediction at his first press conference that he would stress home, family, and the training of youth.

MISSIONARY SERVICE

A second matter President Kimball said he would stress was missionary service. Three months after President Lee's death President Kimball presided over general conference for the first time. A dramatic moment occurred in the meeting for regional



representatives held before the public sessions. This was his first major address as president. In it he set out a conception of expanded missionary work. Elder Bangerter described the experience:

"[It was] the 4th of April. There were gathered that morning in the Church Office Building...leaders from around the world. We were to be instructed once again, as we had been periodically during the past seven years. On each preceding occasion Harold B. Lee had given us our direction and sounded the trump of leadership. Now he was no longer there, and we all felt his absence deeply. [President Kimball spoke to us.]...As he proceeded with his address, however, he had not spoken very long when a new awareness seemed to fall on the congregation. We became alert to an astonishing spiritual presence, and we realized that we were listening to something unusual, powerful, different from any of our previous meetings. It was as if, spiritually speaking, our hair began to stand on end. Our minds were suddenly vibrant and marveling at the transcendent message that was coming to our ears. With a perceptiveness we realized that President Kimball was opening spiritual windows and beckoning to us to come and gaze with him on the plans of eternity. It was as if he were drawing back the curtains which covered the purpose of the Almighty and inviting us to view with him the destiny of the gospel and the vision of its ministry. I doubt that any person present that day will ever forget that occasion.. .

"The Spirit of the Lord was upon President Kimball and it proceeded from him to us as a tangible presence, which was at once both moving and shocking. He unrolled to our view a glorious vision...for an hour and ten minutes. It was a message totally unlike any other in my experience. I realized that it was similar to the occasion on the 8th of August, 1844, when Brigham Young spoke to the Saints in Nauvoo following the death of the Prophet Joseph. ...When President Kimball concluded, President Ezra Taft Benson arose and with a voice filled with emotion, echoing the feeling of all present, said, in substance, 'President Kimball, through all the years that these meetings have been held, we have never heard such an address as you have just given. Truly, there is a prophet in Israel...' Think of what President Kimball says and does! With a word he has called forth nearly 10,000 new missionaries..."⁸

President Kimball taught, "Every normal boy in the Church

should keep his life righteous so that he could fill a mission." "Every boy *ought* to go on a mission. There may be some who can't, but they *ought* to go on a mission." "In addition, many young women [and many couples] have a desire to serve a full time mission, and they are also welcome in the Lord's service. This responsibility is not on them as it is on the elders, but they will receive rich blessings for their unselfish sacrifice."⁴

It is not as though President Kimball invented missionary work—the number of missionaries was already rising rapidly when he came to office—but the first half of his administration still saw a remarkably steep growth curve in the number of full-time missionaries.

In 1982 the term of missionary service for young men was shortened to 18 months, the same as for young women. The change made it possible for some young men in other countries

to serve who, because of military obligations or the like, had previously been unable to do so. But these newly available men did not offset the 6000 or so fewer missionaries in the field at any one time that resulted from the shorter period of service. There was also a loss of effectiveness, since no one was able to figure out how to cut off the first six struggling months instead of the last six productive months of the two year mission. After nearly three years the elders were again being called to serve for 24 months and the numbers rose back again to previous levels. Today there are about 32,000 missionaries in the field.

The very success of missionary work has presented the Church with one of its greatest challenges: absorbing new members, acculturating them so they feel comfortable with the life-patterns

in a new church, and training leaders to influence others only by persuasion rather than command.

TEMPLE WORK

Because President Kimball had served long years on the Church missionary committee, one could hardly be surprised at that emphasis. But nothing prepared me for what happened in the area of temple work. In my father's 30 years of service he had never, so far as I can recall, had a substantial assignment respecting temple work. When in his first press conference he listed temple work, I assumed he meant routine encouragement to members to attend the temples. The burst of temple building that happened in President Kimball's administration left me amazed.



PHOTOGRAPH: PRESIDENTS LEE AND KIMBALL

The Washington, D.C., temple was nearing completion when he became president. That was the sixteenth temple built since the Saints crossed the plains. When the eight temples presently underway are completed, there will be three times as many as when Spencer Kimball became president. Most of the recent temples are smaller, many only 10,500 square feet. That allows them to be built at much less cost and in many more areas, to be accessible to the Saints around the world.

President Kimball's seriousness about temple work is also reflected in the substantial time that he spent personally in temple ordinance work.

Temple work and missionary work are in fact closely related. For one thing, temple work is a part of missionary work among the dead. But for another, nothing draws more attention—both positive and negative—to the Church in an area than the building or remodeling of a temple. The opening of a temple to the public prior to dedication or rededication serves as a first introduction to the Church for many and stimulates them to ask important questions. More than eight thousand non-members went through the Hawaiian temple before its rededication. Three quarters of a million people visited the Washington, D.C., temple and nineteen hundred baptisms are known to have come directly from referral cards signed there. And who can guess how much wider the circle of influence will spread?

LOYALTY TO COUNTRY

The building of a temple in a communist country brings us back to President Kimball's saying that he intended to stress loyalty to country. When we who are in the United States think of patriotism, we think of the Stars and Stripes. But as President Kimball met with heads of state or government officials he explained to them that Church members have a responsibility to be loyal to the country in which they live. If pushed he would have explained that there can be times in any country when obligation to gospel principles might take precedence, but he made the simpler point that Mormons are by and large good citizens. It is this relative political passivity of the Church that allowed the construction of a temple in East Germany for the benefit of the Saints there and has allowed the delicate beginnings of Church activity in places like Poland, Yugoslavia, and China.

President Kimball held no brief for dictatorship of either right or left and had a deep commitment to the principles of freedom

espoused by the United States Constitution, but he felt that the Church should now subordinate political considerations to spreading the gospel and to serving its members wherever they might live.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO MINORITIES

The one other objective mentioned in President Kimball's first press conference—offering encouragement to the Indians of North and South America—is hard to document. President Kimball spoke to a number of Indian groups in the Church and continued his long-standing identification with Indian interests. And no one could ever doubt his continuing concern. But his focus had necessarily broadened over time, from his early assignment as a young apostle to work with the Indian tribes of North

America, to his special concern for the welfare of the native peoples of Central and South America and the islands of the Pacific, and ultimately to his inclusion of all peoples.

One might, however, see the revelation on priesthood as a related development, offering encouragement to the one minority with which the Church had historically least to do.

That revelation is unquestionably the single most striking event of the twelve years. I remember exactly where I was in Massachusetts that day in June 1978 when someone told me about the revelation. And I remember the mixture of joy and incredulity with which I greeted it. At first I was afraid that it might be just a garbled story or a false rumor. But when we heard confirmation on the television newscast later that day, we

bubbled with elation. There was great joy that the time had come for full inclusion of all worthy men and women in the Church. And there was excitement that this important revelation should come in our time. We had been quoting those leaders who said that the day would eventually come, but we really had no expectation of seeing it happen while we were around. (I think the Second Coming will be like that for many of us.) And for me personally there was special satisfaction that the revelation could come through Spencer Kimball.

My father was not a particularly prejudiced man, as his years of working with American Indians and individuals of other races in an open and completely accepting manner showed. And I am not aware of any personal antipathy toward blacks. But I have no sense that this change was on his personal agenda. As he himself



said, he had spent a long lifetime defending the Church position that blacks were properly denied the priesthood. And he knew that change would be identified by many as capitulation to pressures and thus evidence of the humanness of the Church.

Putting spiritual witness aside, I say without the slightest doubt that President Kimball would never have made the change unless he was sure that it was the Lord's will. Whatever his personal feelings of compassion, he was simply not a man who could have acted from expediency in such a matter.

As he described events, the revelation came not as a voice from heaven but as an unshakeable assurance growing through a time of earnest prayer and pondering, often alone in the temple. All objections melted away, leaving him clear about God's will. Then, in a temple meeting with the First Presidency and the Twelve there was a shared spiritual experience that let them all know that the decision was one with divine sanction.

The men who were participants were advised to let the announcement stand on its own and not to editorialize. As a consequence, they have been very cautious in what they have said and the rest of us have only had glimpses of what happened. People who have only one concept of revelation—that it comes by a voice or a vision—join their skepticism to those who do not believe in revelation at all. But those who have had their own spiritual

experiences of various kinds, or who rely on the absolute integrity of others who have, will understand, at least in a measure, what happened. I look forward to the day we'll have more information, but only to satisfy my human curiosity, not to persuade me of the genuineness of the revelation.

I recall one day arriving to visit my father and coming in on the end of a conversation that he was having with my mother about the revelation. "That never happened," he said. I caught my breath. Unaware of my reaction he went on, and it soon became clear that he was talking about stories of heavenly appearances and voices from heaven. "There was no voice," he said. Then I exhaled. But he also said, as earnestly as ever I heard him speak, that there was a revelation. "It is true," he said.

My mother had sensed the anxiety in him for some little while before the announcement. She heard him pray with special fervor. When she learned of the revelation one of her first thoughts was, "Will the people accept it?" I believe his anxiety

was not about the revelation itself, but about the preparedness of the people to accept it, about the possible divisiveness of the change. One of the things that pleased him greatly was the high level of acceptance among the Saints.

PERSONALITY

By the end of President Kimball's administration nearly half the Church had known no other president. In those circumstances, the personality of the president has special meaning. The prophet is the most visible individual in the Church. People name their children after him, in some degree pattern their lives after him. What he is and does has unusual significance.

As I have thought about my father's personal characteristics a few stand out. He cared about people; he was truly humble; he was diligent and worked hard; he was capable of enduring a great

deal; he was good natured; he was intelligent; he was open to change; he was honest. You might list a hundred other characteristics, but in my view they are either less significant or reasonably included under one of these headings. I consider all of these to be positive characteristics. Try as I will, I cannot think of any significant negative ones. That could be because I am a biased observer, but I do not know anything even his detractors have



said against him, other than to conclude that because he was obviously wrong he must be a liar.

This is not to say he was perfect, because there were occasions when he was irritable, annoyed, hasty. But the occasions that I observed in my many years of association with him are so few that they are remarkable. I remember with a kind of perverse pleasure a time when I was a child and my father was milking the cow. The cow stuck her foot in the milk bucket, then again, and again. After the third time he kicked her in the side and said, "Damn you!" And I recall more recently his hitting his head on the corner of a cabinet door and shouting, "Damn it," while my mother chuckled. It proved that he knew the words, if not the music.

Probably no president in modern times has been so well known by the members of the Church. For thirty years he had visited stakes and toured missions and counseled innumerable people in trouble. But in addition there was the publication of his

life story, portraying him as a person of struggles and insecurities that we could identify with. To know him in his weakness was not to scorn him, but to love him more. The very publication of so candid a book with his blessing bore its own message about the man. But to the great relief of the authors, there were no troubling skeletons to worry about.

The character of the president's wife also made a difference in his administration. Camilla Eyring Kimball is one of only a few presidents' wives to play an important role. Emma Hale Smith is unquestionably the most significant. After her time, plural marriage and old age kept wives from the spotlight until 1951, when Emma Ray Riggs McKay became the first lady of the Church. From then until 1970 she remained identified in the public mind primarily as the object of her courtly husband's regard, the sweet mother of their family. Jessie Evans Smith, by contrast, had an identity apart from her husband. She was widely known as a singer and as a lively fun-loving character. But her husband's tenure lasted only thirty months and she died in the middle of his presidency. Similarly, President Lee's wife had too little time to become well known in the Church.

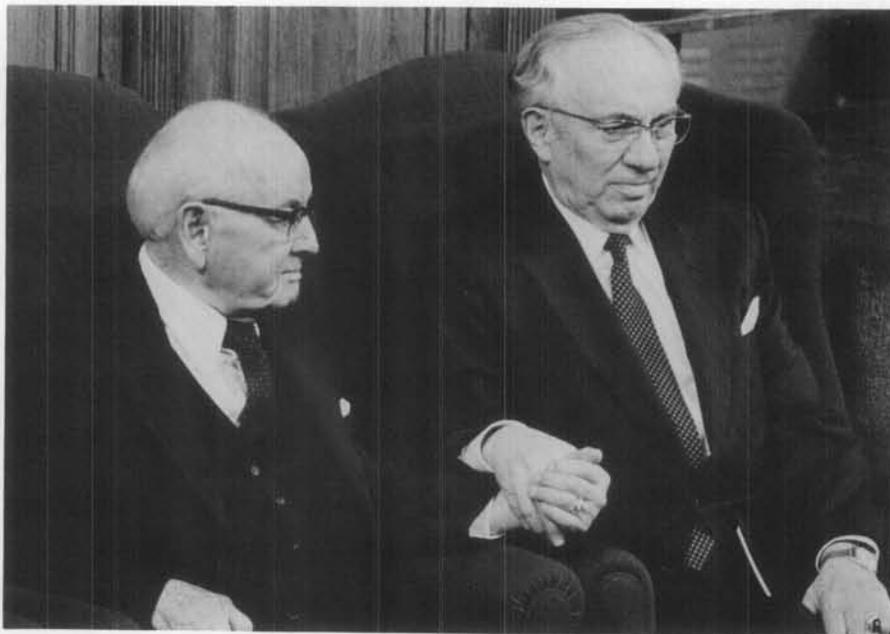
On the other hand, Camilla Eyring had twelve years to be identified and scrutinized. Her personal qualities of modesty and supportiveness on the one side, but intelligence, endless curiosity, and independent spirit on the other side, helped her serve as a role model

for many women who wanted to be faithful and supportive without being subordinate. The dedication of her husband's biography "To Camilla Eyring Kimball, equal partner," said it well. The fact that a biography of her life appeared in 1980 helped even more to bring her to people's awareness. That Spencer Kimball loved, married and admired such a woman conveyed its own message. He once said to a group of missionaries, "I brought my wife to give you men a mark to aim for. Marry someone better than you are. I would never be in the Council of the Twelve if I had married some of the girls I have known. Sister Kimball kept me growing and never let me be satisfied with mediocrity."

The second phase of President Kimball's administration began in the summer of 1979 with a frightening dizzy spell that the doctor diagnosed as a tiny stroke. When President Kimball complained, "I have no sense of balance," Dr. Russell Nelson

reassured him, "That will pass." Then came the wry response, "What won't?"

Because his eyesight was fading with cataracts, at the Toronto area conference President Kimball turned his talk over to someone else. An operation was scheduled in September to remove the cataracts and in preparation he stopped the anticoagulant medicine he had been taking since his open heart surgery in 1972. When he went to BYU a few days later to speak to an audience of 20,000, he had to ask BYU President Dallin Oaks to finish reading his talk and he needed steadying as he walked. But the problem was with his body, not with his sense of humor. After a lunch for him and his family members he expressed thanks to President Oaks: "It is a treat to be able to eat with our family without having to provide the food." The next day he could hardly move. After having examined him, the doctor had him taken to the hospital immediately for examination. There his condition was diagnosed as a subdural hematoma (fluid inside



the skull pressing on the brain). The fact that the president was providentially already off anti-coagulants made it possible for the necessary emergency brain surgery to take place immediately. There was so much pressure that when a burr hole was drilled through his skull the fluid spurted out two feet.

The doctor thought the president might be able to attend October conference a month later,

but felt he would not be able to participate. But President Kimball was determined to be there and he spoke five times at that general conference. And that same month he traveled to Jerusalem to dedicate the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden on the Mount of Olives.

About Thanksgiving time there was a recurrence of pressure on the brain and a second operation. Within two months he had recovered enough to be able to participate rather fully in all his work. But he never again had the old vigor. Even so, in April Conference 1981 he reported that in the six months since the previous conference he had traveled 50,000 miles, holding area conferences in the Orient, in the Pacific, and in South America; he was 86 years old.

During this second part of his administration the consolidated meeting schedule was instituted, non-members were allowed to attend priesthood meetings, the new edition of the scriptures became available, construction on the new Church museum and

genealogy library started, and the First Presidency issued its statement against deployment of the MX missile.

In July 1981 the third phase of the Kimball administration began. President Kimball called Gordon B. Hinckley to be a third counselor in the First Presidency. Very shortly thereafter he suffered a sharp decline. A brain scan showed a third subdural hematoma. This time more than a burr hole was needed and a substantial oval of bone was removed. Recovery from this major operation was slow and incomplete. President Kimball never again managed to go out among the people as he had before. For the remaining four years of his life he remained cloistered. Not only was he protected from the unnecessary strain, but the Church was protected from having to pity the shell of the man they had known. He was available to his counselors, he attended most of the meetings in the temple, he attended General Conference, but his last public talk was in April 1982.

Press reports were factually accurate, but may have conveyed the impression of more vigor than existed. As reported, the president was up and about his apartment, with someone at his elbow to steady him; but he became blind and somewhat discouraged at being so little able to carry out his responsibilities. He prayed for the Lord to relieve him, and asked plaintively why he was not released. I told him repeatedly, "Dad, I'm sorry, but we're not in charge of that department. The Lord must have a reason to want you to stay a bit longer."

Though the sense of humor showed through less often, a flash of wit came through now and then. A nurse asked, teasingly, "President Kimball, can you tell me when the Second Coming will be?" He replied, "Why? Are you ready?"

My wife, Bee, once reported to him, "You remember the last time we were here that I complained that my zucchini just weren't growing right? Well, they're starting to grow now." He said, "You should have complained sooner."

And one day the nurse was shaving him with his electric shaver because he was too weak to do it himself. She worked for several minutes, back and forth, around and around, with no results. Finally President Kimball said, "Perhaps it would work better if you took the cap off."

By hindsight, the calling of President Hinckley in 1981 was a

critical event. Presidents Kimball, Tanner and Romney were all ailing. From the time in 1982 when President Tanner died, President Hinckley bore nearly the whole load of the First Presidency's leadership. He was here and there, conducting area conferences, dedicating temples, handling the myriad organizational questions that are the presidency's responsibility. But he never handled anything except routine matters without coming to consult with the president. Though President Kimball no longer had the strength to initiate much, he still had the ability and responsibility to approve or disapprove. No one could have been more considerate or respectful than President Hinckley, who was always careful to acknowledge that he acted by express delegation, and always discussed matters of moment with both President Kimball and the Quorum of the Twelve.

Some might think it regrettable that President Kimball lived on when he no longer could offer the active leadership that had been characteristic of him until his third operation. But for those of us who believe that the Lord has a hand in all matters, the answer

has to be that it simply was not yet time for President Benson to assume the responsibility. And perhaps we also needed an example of love, humility, and patience—an example of enduring, faithful to the end.

In one of the meetings in the temple when the apostles came in turn to offer greeting to the blind prophet, Marvin J. Ashton said, "President Kimball, I am Marvin Ashton." The president took his hand and finally said

softly, "Marv Ashton, I love you." That was all he said, all he needed to say.

When he had been president for five years, Spencer Kimball said, "I still wonder what the Lord was thinking about, making a little country boy like me [president of the Church], unless he knew that I didn't have any sense and would just keep on working." For capacity to love and to work and to change, I know of no one better. No little man ever had a longer stride.

NOTES

1. Kimball, Edward L., *Spencer W. Kimball* (Bookcraft, 1977) p. 269.
2. Bangerter, W. Grant., *Conference Reports*, October 1977, p. 38.
3. Bangerter, pp. 38-39.
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Moving Gracefully Toward Godhood

WAS THE BOOK OF MORMON BURIED WITH KING FOLLETT?

By J. Frederic Voros, Jr.

SOTERIOLOGY IS THE THEOLOGY OF SALVATION AND, IN ITS narrow sense, the study of how the atonement of Jesus Christ works. Although soteriology has historically been a theological battleground, Mormons have shown only passing interest in it. But recently, a controversy has been quietly brewing within Mormonism that is distinctly soteriological, in the larger sense of the word. Opinion divides roughly into two camps, the redemptive view and the progressive view.

The redemptive view tends to be theocentric: it emphasizes the Fall, rebirth, and redemption by grace. It is skeptical of human effort and insists upon God's active role in the salvation process. Its defenders look primarily to Paul's letters and the Book of Mormon for support.

The progressive view tends to be anthropocentric: without denying the supernatural, it focuses primarily on the personal progress of the individual. It is also progressive in the sense that it emphasizes the goodness of human nature, human potential, and human effort; it is skeptical of reliance on God and insists that man can earn salvation. Its defenders look primarily to the King Follett discourse for support.

Most rank and file members of the Church probably do not hold a clear view on the subject. My casual observation is that many assume that "Mormons don't believe in grace" and put a high premium on "earning" or "being worthy of" exaltation—in short, "making it." But they also struggle with feelings of their own unworthiness and sense that unless Christ intervenes decisively they have no hope.

However, Mormon meetings generally reflect little of this ambivalence. There, the hegemony of the progressive view seems nearly complete. Judging from public statements, if the average Mormon is clear on anything, it is that he is a child of God, who has sent him to parents kind and dear, who will teach him all that he must do to live with God someday. In fact, "I Am a Child of God" virtually circumscribes our doctrinal discourse in the Church, which is then reduced to an attempt to inculcate moral precepts, the "all that I must do."

To many Mormons, the Fall, redemption, mercy, and grace are at best mysteries, and at worst "protestant," a distinctly pejorative term in popular Mormon parlance. For them, Paul's writings are dead letters: complex, probably mistranslated, best left alone. The Book of Mormon fares a little better, but it too is largely a sealed book. The occasional sacrament meeting Book of Mormon quotation generally falls into one of three categories: admonitions to obedience, patriotic encomiums to America as the promised land, and the annual Mother's Day quotation from the stripling warriors. Its more doctrinal passages are seldom cited.

Many scholars of Mormonism have also tended to ignore the Book of Mormon. For example, Sterling McMurrin's book purporting to explicate the theological foundations of the Mormon religion contains thirty-two references to specifically Mormon sources, of which only three are to the Book of Mormon.¹ This omission is explainable in part by the fact that few past or present Mormon authorities have cited the book for its doctrine, and in part perhaps by McMurrin's stated belief that the Book of Mormon is not a revealed text.

Some scholarly proponents of progressive Mormonism have not been content merely to ignore the book, but have sought to eclipse it by superimposing an evolutionary model on Joseph's soteriological views. According to this model, the Book of Mormon is the product of Joseph's early thought, shaped by the evangelical and revivalist influences in early nineteenth century New England. The King Follett discourse then becomes a product of Joseph's more mature thought—in effect, a revision of his earlier and less original views, almost as if Joseph had let fly a tub of rock on the doctrine of Nephi and Jacob, and then interred it with the body of Elder Follett.

The Book of Mormon is indeed replete with traditional Christian concepts such as the Fall, rebirth, and redemption by grace. It teaches that because of the Fall of Adam, human nature is "carnal, sensual, and devilish" (Alma 42:10), and man himself "an enemy to God" (Mosiah 3:18). Mortals are caught in a worthless and fallen state (Mosiah 4:5; see also 4:11). This natural or fallen state is typified by willful self-interest and the

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proclivity to gratify one's own appetites and ego.

Unlike Calvinism, which teaches that the human will is so depraved it cannot even desire God, the Book of Mormon stresses free will: though in a fallen state, the individual can at least seek and accept God's saving power. But free will alone provides no escape from the Fall, since mortals tend to exercise their freedom to satisfy their own wills. Left alone, and bearing the seeds of spiritual as well as temporal death, man, like ripe fruit, has a tendency to spoil, and, taught Alma, "must unavoidably perish" (Alma 34:9).

Jacob's assessment is stark: free or not, had there been no atonement, "our spirits must have become like unto [the devil], and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God" (2 Ne. 9:9). Thus, while human beings are, as some Mormons are fond of repeating, "gods in embryo" in the sense that they are the spirit offspring of a divine being, the Book of Mormon teaches that humans are also devils in embryo in the sense that, without a savior, they would naturally devolve into diabolical, not divine, beings.

In addition to asserting that men inherit the effects of the Fall, the Book of Mormon holds that all humans also commit personal sin, so that "by the law no flesh is justified;" in fact, "by the law men are cut off" from happiness (2 Ne. 2:5).

The Book of Mormon explains how humans are rescued from this predicament. Alma the Younger states that "all mankind . . . must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters . . ." (Mosiah 27:25). So, revising the metaphor, the natural man is less like a god in embryo than an ovum whose development will inevitably be truncated unless it is fertilized by "holy seed;" it is only the resulting zygote, the son or daughter of God, whose natural end is godhood.

This redemption comes "in and through the Holy Messiah" who "offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and contrite spirit" (2 Ne. 2:6-7). The gateway to salvation is "repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost." These acts are "the commandments of the Father and the Son" (2 Ne. 31:17-18).

But after baptism, what? More of the same, continues Nephi: having come thus far by "relying wholly upon the merits of [Christ], . . . ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, . . . Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Ne. 31:19-20).

The Book of Mormon is also sprinkled with disconcerting references to salvation by grace. For instance, Nephi states, "It is by grace that we are saved, after all that we can do" (2 Ne. 25:23). In an attempt to construe grace out of this passage, commentators often interpret it to mean that God will bestow eternal life only upon those righteous ones who have earned it by amassing sufficient works. This interpretation does obvious violence to the notion of grace as a gift. A less strained interpretation is that, while

followers of Christ should (and will) perform many good works, it is still his grace, not their works, that saves them.

In keeping with the doctrine of grace, the Book of Mormon specifically teaches that salvation cannot be earned. King Benjamin describes even the most diligent disciples as "unprofitable servants" (Mosiah 2:21). Again, some attempt to circumvent grace by distinguishing between salvation, which according to their explanation comes by grace, and exaltation, which must be earned. This distinction leaves unexplained how people whose supreme effort cannot earn the lesser blessing can possibly earn the greater. Nor does Moroni seem to observe this distinction when he speaks of being "by the grace of God . . . perfect in Christ" (Moro. 10:32-33; emphasis added).

The concept of grace is elucidated by other passages which explain that a person is saved, not by his own merits, but by the merits of Christ. We read that since man had fallen he could not merit anything himself" (Alma 22:14); consequently, "no flesh . . . can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah" (2 Ne. 2:8).

Although the Book of Mormon does refer repeatedly to a judgment in which men are judged by their works, such references never purport to establish a scheme of salvation based on human merit. They can best be understood as prophetic exhortations to avoid that judgment by exercising faith in Christ. Your choice, in other words, is to be judged yourself, on your own merit, or to allow Christ to be judged in your stead, in which case you are judged on his merit. Thus Alma warns that all men shall reap the "reward of their works . . . if they have been righteous they shall reap the salvation of their souls, according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ" (Alma 9:28, emphasis added; see also D&C 45:3-5).

Third Nephi records Christ himself stating that men will stand before him to be judged of their works, where he, Christ, will hold guiltless those who have repented, been baptized, and endured to the end (3 Ne. 27:16). He will hold the repentant guiltless because he will take upon himself their transgressions; they are redeemed, in Lehi's words, "because of the righteousness of [their] redeemer" (2 Ne. 2:3). This is the gospel: our sinfulness imputed to him, his righteousness imputed to us.

Only the faithless person is "exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice" (Alma 34:16); only he is judged according to his own personal works. Unlike those whose sins are born by the Lord, he will exclaim, says Jacob, "my transgressions are mine . . ." (2 Ne. 9:46). After portraying this fearful prospect, Jacob, quoting Isaiah, invites his listeners, "every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price" (2 Ne. 9:50).

This essentially Christian message, that mortals are redeemed from their fallen state through the merits of Jesus Christ, is the bright thread running through the Book of Mormon.

To my knowledge, all students of Joseph Smith, regardless of where they fall along the spectrum of faith, agree that certain of

his views on doctrine changed over time. The King Follett discourse, which expands the frontiers of Mormon doctrine far beyond Book of Mormon teachings, is obviously a dramatic example: the one, changeless God of the Book of Mormon becomes a plurality of exalted persons in King Follett. Dwelling with God in glory becomes dwelling as a god in glory. Other examples could be cited. Significant doctrinal evolution, expansion, amplification, ramification—in a word, change—had taken place by 1844.

On the other hand, evolution of a particular doctrine must be demonstrated, not merely assumed, especially when the claim would invalidate a view clearly associated with the Prophet. To read King Follett as a wholesale repudiation of the Book of Mormon's doctrines of the Fall and redemption by grace is irresponsible, considering the evidence indicating that Joseph himself never abandoned those central doctrines.

Brother King Follett was crushed to death by a tub of rock while attempting to wall up the inside of a Nauvoo well. His family prevailed upon the Prophet to speak in his honor at the next general conference. What has come to be called the King Follett discourse was delivered by Joseph Smith in the groves of Nauvoo on 7 April 1844.

"My first object," he stated, "is to go back and find out the character of the only wise and true God and what kind of being He is." And what kind of being is he? Declared Joseph, "God Himself who sits enthroned in yonder heavens is a Man like unto one of yourselves—that is the great secret!" Proclaiming, "I will show it from the Bible," Joseph paraphrased a number of scriptures, including John 5:26, stating, "What did Jesus say?—As the Father has power in Himself, even so has the Son power in himself. To do what? Why, what the Father did." In other words, the Father was once mortal. Joseph also touched upon the plurality of Gods, explaining that the Biblical creation in fact began when "the Head God brought forth Head Gods in the grand, head council."²

Joseph then shifted his focus from God to man. He called the idea that God himself is a self-existent God "correct enough," but continued: "Man existed in spirit; the mind of man—the intel-

ligent part—is as immortal as, and coequal with, God Himself. . . there is no creation about it." He then exhorted his listeners "to learn how to make yourselves Gods in order to save yourselves and be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done—by going from a small capacity to a great capacity, from a small degree to another, from grace to grace."³

These then are the salient doctrines of the King Follett discourse: (1) God is an exalted man; (2) there are many Gods; (3) the mind of man is self-existent and eternal; and (4) man himself can become a God.

If the evolutionary hypothesis is true, we would expect to find that Joseph first adhered to the Book of Mormon and only later taught the doctrines of King Follett. In fact, the evidence presents

quite a different picture: even after teaching the doctrines we now associate with the King Follett discourse, Joseph continued to assert the authenticity of the Book of Mormon and the truth of its doctrine.

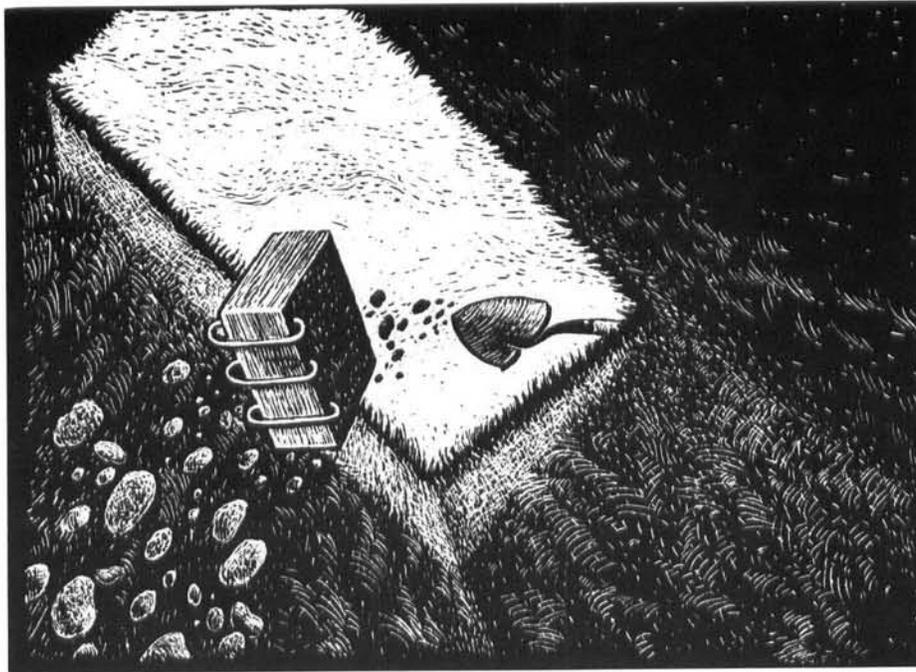
Although Joseph's manner of expression suggests that he was introducing new doctrine on that day in April 1844—and for many of his audience it may indeed have been new—Van Hale has shown that the King Follett discourse actually con-

tained no doctrines Joseph had not previously taught.⁴

For example, Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants, revealed in February 1832, describes the heirs of the celestial kingdom "as gods, even the sons of God . . ." (D&C 76:58). Similarly, Section 88, revealed in December 1832, declares that "the saints shall be filled with his glory, and receive their inheritance and be made equal with him" (D&C 88:107). These verses clearly "scoop" King Follett on the exaltation of man by twelve years. Section 93, revealed in May 1833, does the same regarding his eternity: "Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can it be" (D&C 93:29).

And yet six years later, in July 1839, Joseph declared, "What art thou O man but dust and from whom dost thou receive thy power and blessing but from God,"⁵ A statement redolent of the Book of Mormon.

And in February 1840 he juxtaposed Book of Mormon and



King Follett concepts, proclaiming, "I believe in the fall of man, as recorded in the Bible; . . . I believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and that He died for the sins of all men, who in Adam had fallen[;] I believe that the *soul* is eternal; and had no beginning; it can have no end."⁶

In January 1841, Joseph quoted John 5:26, the same verse he would cite three years later in King Follett, as evidence that "God the father took life unto himself precisely as Jesus did." In the same sermon he asserted that "spirits are eternal."⁷ Yet later that same year, in November 1841, he stated that the Book of Mormon was the most correct book of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion . . ."⁸ Joseph seems never to have repudiated the book or its redemptive doctrines.

Nor had he reason to do so. The ideas expressed in the King Follett discourse, which have often been described as a radical departure from traditional Christianity, reach further than the Book of Mormon's teaching that fallen man must be redeemed through the merits and grace of Christ, but they do not contradict it.

The Book of Mormon is preoccupied with the redemption of man in mortality: in it the veil of birth is parted only once or twice and then only briefly; the veil of death is parted only enough to establish the resurrection and final judgment. In contrast, in the King Follett discourse Joseph speaks little concerning mortality; he stresses the relative mysteries of the premortal and eternal existence of man's spirit and the postmortal exaltation of man. But it is entirely consistent that this self-existent, exaltable intelligence should, by voluntarily entering mortality, inherit the effects of Adam's fall, assume a fallen nature, and thereafter commit personal sin. Likewise, Joseph offers no basis to conclude that a spirit coequal with God" can earn salvation by personal merit, or receive exaltation other than through the "merits, mercy, and grace" of Jesus Christ.

By stressing man's premortal existence and postmortal possibilities, Joseph amply fulfilled his stated purpose of dwelling upon a subject "calculated to exalt man."⁹ But remember that he was speaking to converted Protestants who undoubtedly brought into the Church a belief in the Fall and in salvation by some form of grace, and read the same doctrines in the Book of Mormon. Although he could easily have done so, Joseph did not disparage these doctrines. Consequently, the effect of this discourse, and apparently its intended effect, was to overlay King Follett's expansive vision upon a foundation of redemptive Christianity, thereby creating a dramatic and paradoxical definition of the nature of man.

Such an integrated and distinctively Mormon definition imbues human nature with a texture and poignancy absent from either the redemptive position or the progressive position viewed in isolation. To say only that mortals are by nature fallen, carnal, and self-seeking is true, but incomplete. For within that fallen nature is a crystalline core that is eternal, self-existent, and exaltable. It does not make mortals naturally good, but it makes them ultimately perfectible.

Conversely, to say only that man is eternal and capable of becoming like God reveals part of the story, but it also conceals part. And to conceal the mortal predicament insulates a person from the very knowledge necessary to begin the transition to godhood.

Consider also how the King Follett discourse enriches the doctrine of the Fall. The Fall is no longer an event—albeit of mythic proportion—that befell our first parents, an event whose effects are thrust upon unwitting humans at birth. The Fall becomes a metaphor for birth, through which all humans experience their own personal falls from a presumably more Edenic premortality.

To create a false dichotomy between the Book of Mormon and the King Follett discourse splinters the integrated nature of man as taught by the Prophet. Redemptive Mormonism, which can embrace both the Book of Mormon and King Follett, accommodates the entirety of Joseph's vision. But progressive Mormonism cannot, for it rejects the doctrine of the Book of Mormon.

The fundamental reason for this rejection is not that the book contradicts the King Follett discourse, or for that matter any of Joseph Smith's stated views, but that it contradicts progressive Mormonism itself. For progressive Mormonism's pillars are that man is innately good; that godhood is his natural destiny; and that this destiny is achievable solely by the wise exercise of one's innate power and freedom.

This theology of self-reliance, self-will, and self-fulfillment is at bottom the cloying residue of Romanticism inflated to cosmic proportions: man is not merely good, he is eternal; he is destined not merely for greatness, but for godhood; he is captain not merely of his fate, but of his cosmos. It is a distortion of Joseph's views caused by surgically removing the King Follett discourse from the body of Mormon doctrine and expanding it into a new theology congenial to the late twentieth century's obsession with self.

This is not the doctrine of the revelations, it is not the doctrine of Jesus, and it certainly not the doctrine of the man who in 1839 declared, "See to it that you do not betray heaven, that you do not betray Jesus Christ, . . . and that you do not betray the revelations of God whether in the Bible, Book of Mormon, or Doctrine and Covenants, or any of the word of God."¹⁰

NOTES

1. Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (1965).
2. Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *BYU Studies* 18:2 (Winter 1978) pp. 200-202; hereinafter, "Larson."
3. Larson p. 203; p. 204; p.201.
4. Van Hale, "The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse," *BYU Studies* 18:2 (Winter 1978) 209.
5. Ehat, Andrew F. and Cook, Lyndon W., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Religious Studies Center, 1980), p. 7; hereinafter "WJS."
6. WJS p. 33.
7. WJS p. 60.
8. *Documentary History of the Church* 4:461.
9. Larson p. 203.
10. WJS p. 8.

 Second Place Winner in the D.K. Brown Fiction Contest

LOVE DADDY LOVE

By Craig Witham

MARK WAKES FROM A DREAM IN WHICH HE IS SEXUALLY abusing his seven-year-old daughter, Cindy. A nightmare, he thinks. But this realization isn't enough. It's not like the relief he has felt before, waking from a nightmare of murder and blood so real that discovering he was dreaming took him by surprise. Then, the relief was immense. It was complete—a quiet sliding out of guilt—clean as water. This is uneasy relief, like waking from a recurring childhood nightmare, relief at its unreality mixed with the horror of realizing your mind has played it back again. It was *your* mind doing it, so you must have wanted to see it.

It must be symbolic of something, he thinks. But this thought offers little consolation.

He turns on the lamp that goosenecks out of his clock radio like a seedpod. On the wall above a string of books on the floor—everything from *Identity and the Life Cycle* to *Rabbit Redux* are three yellow Post-it notes. One reads, “Check impound account refund thing. Correct?” Another, “See doctor about eye;” the third reads, “Cindy. 1. Cut negative comments. 2. Spend more time alone with her. 3. Take fishing.”

The fishing fiasco. Last Thursday Mark took Cindy fishing. Cindy got a nice nine-inch trout. Mark landed it and killed it. Cindy cried all the way home. She had said, “He's cute. Are you going to kill him?”

“Of course. We'll have it for lunch.”

“No, Daddy. Please don't kill him. Can't we keep him in the aquarium?”

Mark laughed. “He's too big. He'll take up the whole aquarium.”

“Can we get a bigger aquarium?”

Mark had thought that this would be a good opportunity to teach her a lesson about life. About animals eating one another and the law of nature or something.

He remembers now that his father had done something like this to him when he was about Cindy's age. Only then it was an elk, not a fish. The animal reared like it was going to jump, but the hind legs never left the ground. It fell forward on the knees of its front legs and panted until Mark's father shot it twice through the neck and it fell over on its antlers, gurgled and died.

Mark still remembers the confused look in the animal's eyes; how it jerked its legs in the dust. He can still see the steam rising from a neat pile of intestines, stomach, yellow gall bladder, big meaty heart, and jello liver. Mark never became a hunter.

With fish it was different, though. They were already cold, like meat. They were easy to kill. Mark had wanted to demonstrate to Cindy how easy and painless it was. He slapped its head against a rock, but the fish wouldn't die. It went into spasms and he hit it three more times, but it still wouldn't die. He finally had to stick his knife into its brain to kill it.

On the way home, he had tried to explain to her how hamburger comes from cows, and bacon and ham from pigs. “Somebody has to kill them, too.” Before this, she had always thought the animals gave us the meat, like bees give honey and cows give milk.

Mark gets up and heads down the hall towards the bathroom. The hallway is a gallery of photographs of Linda, Mark, and Cindy. Mostly Cindy. Mark's favorite one is of Cindy and himself when Cindy was two, their faces looking forward with the same reddish skin, and the same eyes in sunset light. They seem to be different editions of the same person.

Last night before bed, Mark sat with Cindy on the love seat and read from *The Sesame Street Story Book*. Grover was doing every impossible thing to deliver messages of love between an orange prince and a pink princess separated by a wall their fathers had built to keep them apart. He jumped over the wall via trampoline, see-saw, a butt from a goat. Finally, riding a skateboard, clad in a suit of armor, he smashed a Grover-sized, Grover-shaped hole in the wall through which the pink princess stepped into the orange prince's arms. The story was called “Grover, Messenger of Love.”

Before the prince and princess even kissed, Cindy was lying asleep on Mark's shoulder. Mark looked down into the curve of her eyelashes. They dipped up from the bottom of the same downward curve the lids took in the other direction. The light from the lamp behind washed a feathery shadow of lashes across her cheek.

He looks at his own face in the bathroom mirror. A two-day beard completely dominates the picture. Mark rubs his chin,

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cheeks, neck. The beard seems alien to his skin, like some horde of black insects. Mark remembers how, as a child, he used to wonder where hair came from. He remembers coming to the conclusion, after rejecting the adult explanation "it just grows," that hair is your insides coming out. And once all your insides had come out that's when you died. Some people died young, some died old. That was because some people had more insides than others. That's why Samson was so strong. He didn't cut out any of his insides. And when he was tricked into doing so, he turned to silly putty, all those correspondence-course muscles turned to Jell-o.

Mark's eyes are veined in red; the whites are pinks. A spider legs its way up the wall and across the top of the mirror—a moderately small spider, one Cindy would call giant—Daddy! Come here quick, there's a GIANT spider in here; come and get it! The spider falls off the edge of the mirror, almost into a disposable bathroom cup. Its line breaks the fall. Mark snaps the cup over the spider and squeezes it shut, then crushes it in a fist, hoping not to feel the "pop" that you sometimes do when you squash a spider in Kleenex.

The dream was symbolic. It had to be. Mark can only think of one or two things worse than sexually abusing a child. In his work as psychiatric social worker, he has met girls who are so full of self-loathing for having submitted to incest with their fathers that they are driven to stab their own wrists and knees with needles; sear their own flesh with curling irons. One girl stapled a seam across one breast, through the nipple, and halfway across the other, just to punish herself.

Mark had developed the attitude over his years at the hospital that anyone is capable of anything. And that not admitting you were capable of the worst evil was the first step toward committing the worst evil.

Was the dream a warning? Maybe his subconscious was trying to tell him that something he was doing as a parent was going to have a serious negative impact on Cindy's later emotional life. Mark believed that most promiscuity in girls, homosexuality in boys reflected their search for the love from a man to make up for the love they never felt from their fathers.

He didn't even want to consider the other possibility, the Freudian one, that he secretly really desired his daughter. He didn't like Freud. He didn't believe in Freud. But there is an occasional gnawing, like guilt, at the back of his brain that maybe Freud was right; maybe everything does have its roots in thwarted childhood sexuality. Mark shudders and throws off the thought.

One last look into vampire-red eyes, and he bats the light switch off and makes his way back down the dark hallway, past Cindy's room where light from the night light bounces off the glass butterfly lamp. Cindy is on her back with one arm growing horizontally from the edge of the mattress. Her long brown hair is a thundercloud against the white pillow; the hair rains off the pillow over one shoulder and onto her white nightgown. Mark folds her arm back over her chest, tucks her into the covers, and goes to kiss her, but doesn't. He walks the rest of the way down the hall. His eyes almost reaccustomed to the dark, he sees the

picture again.

Mark lies awake for some time, the picture of Cindy and himself the only image his mind is able to hold. When sleep comes, the picture takes on a silvery glow: every light a diamond, every shadow, emerald gold. He sleeps dreamless; dark and heavy.

Linda has brewed coffee. The aroma reminds Mark, fresh out of the shower, that life can be worth living. He guiltily savors the non-decaffeinated stuff. He hasn't yet taken Dr. Welby's advice, but remains a member, along with Jane Curtin, the rock group Queen, and Kurt Vonnegut, of the "New Coffee Generation, the movers, the achievers, the" Bullshit.

Linda has made breakfast. Cindy walks into the kitchen rubbing her nose.

"I thought I told you not to pick your nose. Now go wash your hands and get ready for breakfast."

"But, Daddy, I . . ."

"I don't want to hear any whining; I don't want to hear any excuses. Just do what I tell you."

Linda gives him the slow-down-jerk look; he shrugs and walks out the back door. The door's slamming chops off the last half of Cindy's "Goodbye, Daddy."

Cindy is at the window waving. She had to run to the window to wave goodbye. Mark stops the car in neutral with the brake on, engine running. He waves, pulls a squeegee across the windshield, adjusts the seat, seatbelt, mirror. He pulls back out and around. When he drives past the mailbox, he glances to the side. Cindy is staring unfocused out in front of herself; her nose and lips and one cheek are pressed against the glass.

The hospital is only three and a half miles away, but it takes twenty minutes to get there because of the traffic. Mark knows all the arguments, all the philosophies and theories. How Cindy's recent obsessive concern with honesty and exactitude is supposed to have arisen out of deep guilt feelings; how every action can be explained in terms of libido, the sexual or life energy, the repressing of which is supposed to be the cause of neurosis.

"Libido shibido," he says to himself as he pulls into a stall marked "Psychiatric Staff Only." Of course not all, not even most psychologists agree with Freud's negative overemphasis on sex. But he said it, and there's no taking it back now. It'll probably keep nagging us like a bitchy chihuahua until we die.

Mark's nameplate in the left-hand corner of the window in the door to his office reads, "Mark Coral M.S. M.S.W. M.F.T." and under that, "Psychiatry." Sometimes patients call him "Dr. Coral." He says, "I usually go by Mark," or "call me Mark." He doesn't correct them for calling him "Doctor." He doesn't care one way or the other. What he does care about, though, is the fact that the guys who really are doctors are making sixty to his twenty dollars an hour, and they do the same things he does. Those are the psychologists. The psychiatrist makes a hundred dollars an hour; and he does nothing but prescribe drugs. Oh well, he had accepted long ago that life isn't fair; you just try to make things as fair as possible.

The person in the waiting room says, "I'm so glad you're here, Dr. Corral."

"It's Coral. Mr. Coral."

"Oh, I'm sorry, I . . ."

"No problem. You can call me Mark."

"Okay, Mark. My name is Barbie."

"Come into my office, Barbie."

Barbie's eyes are as deep and chocolate as Cindy's; her hair is almost as long.

Mark is to assess the problem, help if he can. If he can't, he refers the client up the line to a psychologist; Dr. Gregson (fat, lazy) or Dr. Franklin (stupid). And if they can't help, the patient is sent up to Mr. Oz: Dr. (M.D. Psychiatry, pompous ass) Williams, for a quick fix.

Barbie tells him her mind feels like it's not inside of her body; it's floating approximately two feet above her right temple. That's why she can look dispassionately down at her body doing things she normally wouldn't want her body to do. "Like last week, I went to bed—well, not really to bed—to car, to couch, to lawn, and oh yes once to bed with four different guys. And you know what else, I think people can hear my thoughts. I know it's true, 'cause I was thinking I would rather have a Coors Lite than Oly, and Gary, the guy last night, orders me a Coors Lite.

And I know I can read their thoughts: like last week, I could see their thoughts that all they wanted was to screw, and I was right."

Mark thinks, you're just a nervy little nympho. . . .

"And you, right now, are thinking I'm a nymphomaniac, which isn't true, like I told you, it's like my head is outside my head . . ."

"No, I try to avoid making any judgments until I feel I have all the facts at hand. Let me tell you, though, I think you should go

up the hall and see Doctor Gregson, he's the psychologist, and I think he can help you better than I can."

"Oh, I thought . . ."

"Here, let me write you a referral."

Gregson will love Barbie. He loves listening to nymphos. Besides, I'm in no shape to take on a mind reader today.

On her way up the hall, Barbie shakes her head back like

Cindy does. Her hair waterfalls, like Cindy's, over her shoulders and down her back, almost touching her rear end, like Cindy's, only this one's an adult rear end packed invitingly into Jordache denim.

Mark pages his secretary, Marcie. "I'll be out for about twenty minutes. Thanks."

"Thanks, Mark."

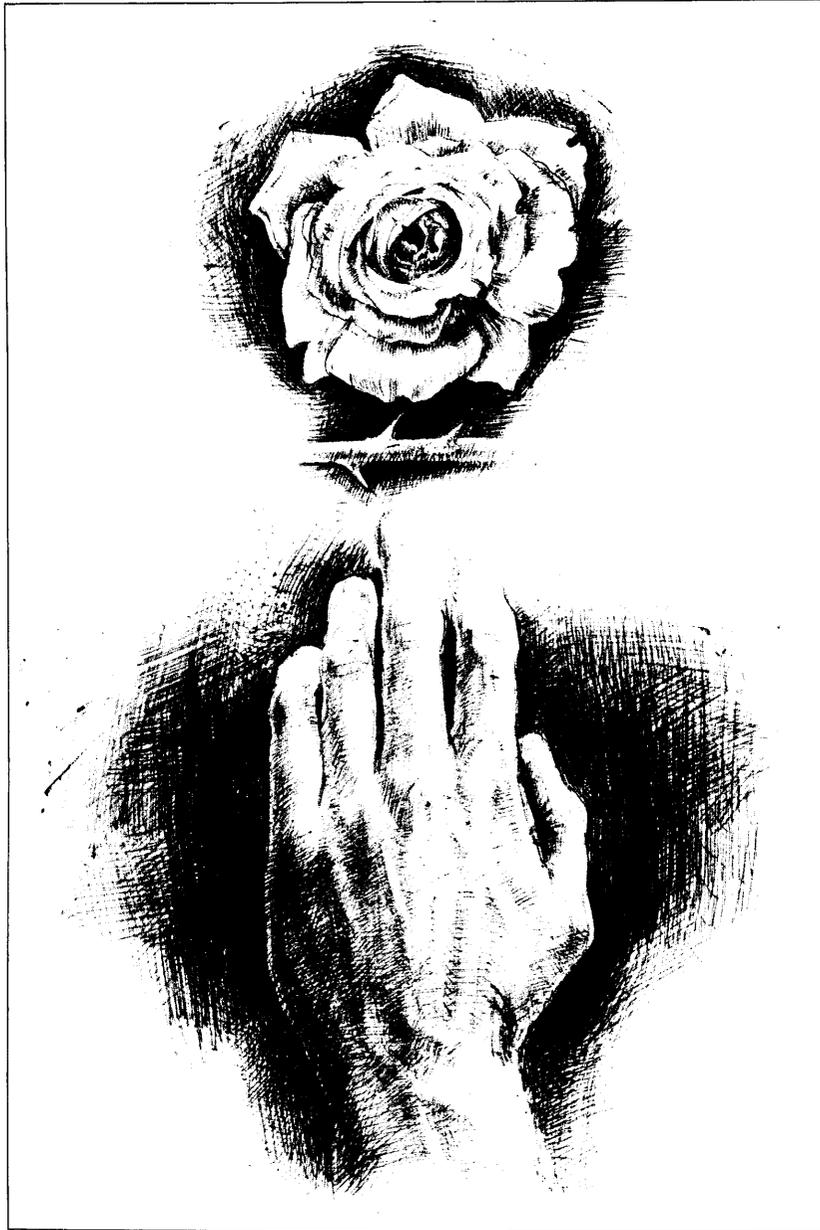
The east exit takes you straight out onto a hill wilder than you'd expect for a city so large, under a sky so brown. Mark is always surprised. It's easy to forget that under the eggshell crust of asphalt is a living breathing monster with melted rocks.

The birds never let you completely forget, though. Even the boring, citified little brown ones, or the starlings mathematically spaced on a wire, won't let you forget that under the makeup is the skin, and under the skin, the blood.

Out here, the starlings are different. Just a five minute walk up the hill

and into the canyon takes you completely, except for the beer cans, away from the city. Out of sight, out of hearing.

The hill is covered with golden grass, the kind Cindy used to think was wheat and would pick and try to extract kernels from the heads. Mark always wondered which of these grasses out here was poisonous, and which edible, but he hadn't gotten around to doing anything about his curiosity, except almost buying a catalogue of North American grasses that had been discounted



five times all the way down to only a dollar at the bookstore.

The grass is garnished by an occasional live oak. This morning, a congregation of starlings is doing a wind ballet for no apparent reason other than the fun of it. They wash back and forth above Mark over the trail, then disappear like tide into the grass; then they lift, an amoeba-like oneness of burnt-caramel feathers alternately reflecting and diffusing the sunlight through translucent wings.

Mrs. Toll, Cindy's second grade teacher, is a tyrant, seething with authoritarianism like Barbie seethes with passion. Cindy said that once Mrs. Toll force-fed lunch to a girl with a stomach-ache. Cindy told the story. "The girl said, 'My mother said I don't have to eat it if I'm not hungry!' Then Mrs. Toll stuck the sandwich in Cammy's mouth and said, 'I'm not your mother, now eat!' Cammy was crying and couldn't chew. Mrs. Toll said, 'Chew! Chew!' Cammy chewed and swallowed and chewed and swallowed and cried and cried until she was all done."

Mark use to think he could listen forever to Cindy telling stories with all her expressions and gestures. But not now.

Mrs. Toll dictates their every breath. And Cindy has been coming home apprehensive and insecure. She had recently started a ritual daily confessional with Linda where she would pour out, teary-eyed, distraught, things like, "When Vicky went up front for Share Time, I picked up her Hello Kitty book bag and looked at it, it has a pretty rainbow on it, then I put it back. Is that like stealing?" And, "Last week, I spilled some Jell-o on my dress and wiped it up without telling Mrs. Toll."

On swimming day, Mrs. Toll said to the children, "You must roll up your panties inside your towel, and wear your swimsuit under your clothes. Bring an empty bread bag to put your wet towel and swimsuit in. After swimming, you must wring out your swimsuit by stepping on it on the side of the swimming pool." When Linda tried to give Cindy a Baggie instead of a bread bag, Cindy just about started crying. She takes everything Mrs. Toll says to be law. The Toll Commandments.

The starlings have commandeered a small live oak, and are chattering down waterfalls of sound. The wind is up and the dry grass moves in waves like water; Mark walks partway up the hill and sits at the base of a dead live oak. The sun, straight up in the sky and hazy from smog, blasts through the trees, reticulating the grass with varicose shadows. The heat on his legs feels good. Mark would like to melt into the trunk of the tree and let his legs grow out in thick roots that soak sun all day.

Cindy told Mark last week her friend Julie brought a piece of coral to class for Share Time. Mrs. Toll said that coral is a colonial animal and that if you cut yourself on a coral, and a piece stays in the cut, it will grow in your bones. Cindy said, Mrs. Toll said some of the natives have hobby knees because of it. . . . "Dad, what are hobby knees?"

"She probably said 'knobby knees,' that means bumpy."

"No. I know she said *hobby* knees."

"Oh, well, I don't know what 'hobby knees' are."

"Dad, why are we Corals?"

Mark explained that it had nothing to do with the animal, but that it came from her great-great-great-grandfather who was a

clerk for Ralston County and used to sign his name, "John, Co. Ral."

Some boys teased Cindy that afternoon, and called her a colonial animal and said, "Ugh! Don't touch her, she'll grow in your bones!" Cindy cried during Numbers, but was too embarrassed to tell Mrs. Toll why, so Mrs. Toll punished her by making her sit on a stool in front of the class until she stopped.

Mark wonders how he could quietly kill Mrs. Toll and get away with it. Maybe he wouldn't have to kill her; maybe he would just get her committed to the State Mental Hospital. That shouldn't be too difficult. But just as his reverie has Derek Twinborn, the Mental Health Cowboy (or "Sanity Officer," for short) armed with dozens of already-signed judicial orders of hospitalization knocking at her door with four police officers, a magpie screams from a limb way up high and jolts him back to reality, which is: a smoggy orange sun in a cloudless sky, a five-minute walk back to his office, and already fifteen minutes later than he told his secretary, a caffeine-stimulated bladder screaming for relief, and a horrendous Civil Liberties Union suit for even thinking about committing someone for personal reasons.

Barbie is waiting at his door again.

"Dr. Gregson is in consultation and won't be available until after three." She shows Mark a superficial scratch across her wrist. "I need to talk to someone. Now!"

Mark invites her in.

"Mark . . . I can call you Mark, Mark?"

"That's my name."

"Mark, my biggest problem right now is that I'm pregnant and I have no idea who the father is. I can't stand having an abortion, Mark, but I can't have a baby either, so I think the best thing to do would be to kill—"

Barbie takes a cigarette and lighter out of her purse. "Mind if I smoke," she says, lighting the cigarette. "—myself, but I'm afraid God would be mad. Would he?"

"Do you think he would?" Mark offers Barbie a clean ashtray.

"Oh, no thanks." She pulls a pill bottle out of her purse. The label reads: "Barbara Johnson. Valium 5 mg. One tablet four times daily as needed for stress." She takes off the top and shakes the cigarette ashes into the bottle. "The least I can do if I'm going to smoke in public is not leave my smelly ashes all over the place, right?" Barbie leans back in her chair, takes a long drag on her cigarette. "So, what do you think? Will God be mad?"

Mark turns his face to Barbie and looks in her eyes. "How the hell should I know!" He turns away and frames the bridge of his nose with the fingers of one hand, shuts his eyes and breathes twice. He opens his eyes and slams his fist on the desk. "Shit! Excuse me! I'm sorry, I don't mean to yell. I've had a hard week. But I really do have to level with you; I'm getting the feeling that you're not all that concerned about what you're telling me. Why is that?"

"Not all that concerned! Not all that concerned!" Barbie thrusts her wrist under Mark's nose. "What do you think this is!"

"Listen, Cindy, you've got to get ahold of yourself . . . you're

going through a hard time now. You've just got to get ahold of yourself."

"Cindy! Who's Cindy!"

"Did I call you Cindy?"

"Oh, hey, thanks a lot for all your great help, Mr. Coral, but I think I will take your referral and go down the hall to Dr. Gregson."

"Yes, I think that would be a good idea."

"Goodbye. And thanks. For nothing . . . By the way, what does M.S. M.S.W. stand for anyway? Oh, never mind, I think I know—Master of Shit Wit." Barbie twists on her toes and bounces down the hall like a cheerleader.

Mark sits in the client's chair to the side of his desk. "Get ahold of yourself?" What is this, *General Hospital*? From this side, the desk looks like a big blonde holdover from the fifties. The pictures of Cindy and Linda are boring. Typical poses; boring phony smiles. Why doesn't he have the one of Cindy, three years old, grinning impishly with his boots backwards on her feet; the one of Linda, sultry, back-lit by the living room window, looking like Miss October with clothes. Mark picks up the frames and throws them together into the garbage can, glass flying. He moves to the other side of the desk with the intent of cleaning out his drawers, but when he gets there, he is struck with sudden exhaustion. He drops into his chair and closes his eyes. He feels like something is pouring from his skin and knees and toes. Like sand, or salt.

The phone jerks him awake. "It's Linda. Mark, I don't know what to do. Cindy just came home from school. From what I can get out of her, it looks like Mrs. Toll asked her if she had double-checked her numbers. When Cindy asked, 'What?' Mrs. Toll repeated the question while pounding on Cindy's desk. When Cindy still didn't answer, Mrs. Toll knocked her on the head and said, 'Is there anything in there? I don't know what to do, but something has to be done, now. Cindy's a wreck. And then the kids all laughed and Cindy ran out. She's still crying. She says she wants you.'

"She wants me?"

"Can you come home now?"

"I guess so. Yes."

"Good. Besides, I need someone to stay with her while I go murder Mrs. Toll."

"I'll go talk to Mrs. Toll if you want."

"No. That's all right. I think you really need to be here with Cindy. She keeps saying, 'Where's Daddy? I want Daddy.'"

"Yeah. I'll come right now."

Mark hangs up with his forefinger, and holds the receiver in his other hand the way he always does when he's thinking after a phone call, then drops it into its cradle like an exclamation point. He exits into the hallway right into Dr. Gregson's face.

"Mark, I've got to talk to you about some of your referrals lately."

"No time right now, Dick, I have to get home and take care of a family problem."

"Listen, Mark. This Bambi, or Barbie, or whatever she is . . ."

"I'm sorry, Dick, I have to go home now."

Dr. Gregson holds Mark's arm. "Listen . . ."

Mark pulls away. "Don't ever do that again, unless you want your dentures soaking in gastric acid. I'll talk to you later; don't worry, it'll keep."

Linda meets him at the door. "She's on her bed crying."

Cindy is lying on her side, facing the My Little Pony poster on the wall. Her slightly broken breathing is the only sign of crying at first.

"Mommy said you came home early."

"Yes."

"How come?"

"Teacher told me to."

"Mrs. Toll?"

"Uh huh."

"What happened?"

Cindy tries to say something, but she can only cry. After about a minute, she says, "Daddy, will you hold me?"

He hears, but says, "What?"

"Daddy, will you hold me?" Cindy says, no louder.

He thinks, I'm being a bigger jerk than Frank Burns; but he can't make himself move.

Cindy turns back to the My Little Pony poster. It's Cotton Candy with a tightly braided tail, and a be-ribboned mane, standing in front of the My Little Pony Castle. Behind Cindy's back on the dresser is an exact replica of Cotton Candy on the poster: pink, with pink hair, right down to the braids and ribbons, except Cindy's pony's ribbons are pink instead of white.

Mark sees Cindy as she was four years ago. He's holding her in his lap sitting on her bed, rocking her and humming. He can't remember the song. He remembers the feeling of wanting to protect her, to hold her completely protected within himself, like a mother's unborn child, only more than this, he wanted to become her; he wanted her to melt into his flesh so he could absorb her pain. Jillian's brother, Michael, had called her an "asshole." She didn't know what the word meant exactly, but sensed that it was something really bad. She ran right home and cried and cried and cried until she slept, limp in Mark's arms.

Part of a biblical quotation enters his head from he doesn't know where. "Cleave unto her and the twain shall become one flesh." That's how he felt that time.

The dream comes back in full videotape-playback color: a dull pain in the gut at the thought of horribly abusing the very one his duty it was to protect from abuse.

Cindy is rocking her head back and forth. Her arms are wrapped across her chest like an embrace. He remembers the song he sang to her that time, and remembers how absurd he thought it was at first, of a Sunday, flipping through the channels for the best sports program and stopping at the massive sight of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's hundreds underneath an unbelievable set of organ pipes like a factory, singing this simple song, and how it embarrassed him when he cried. The song went, "I am a child of God, and he has sent me here, has given me an earthly home, with parents kind and dear . . ." The mood of the

dream still lingering, Mark sits on the bed next to Cindy. He places his hand on an unresponsive shoulder. He wants to say: are you feeling all right now, or, it's not so bad now, or something, but nothing will come.

Cindy turns her head towards him. "Daddy?"

"Yes, Honey."

"Do you remember the cake I made one day from my bake set? The one with chocolate frosting?"

"No."

"You remember. The one that said, 'Love, Daddy' on it."

"Oh, yeah. I think I do,"

Cindy had made the cake from her 96 Piece Deluxe Wilton Bake and Decorate Set. On the top she wrote in green frosting, "LOVE DADDY LOVE." Mark yelled at her to "clean up the mess, and don't forget to wipe the table."

After she had cleaned up, Cindy said, "Don't you want some of the cake, Daddy? I made it for you."

Mark said, "No thanks, Honey. I'm pretty full from lunch. Why don't you invite Shareen over to help you eat it?"

"But, Daddy . . ."

"No 'but Daddy,' you do what I ask now. I'm tired and I need

to be left alone for awhile."

Mark remembers hating himself for how he acted, but it was the same thing then. He had just been reading in *The American Journal of Psychiatry* about the pervasiveness of incest, and how it occurred within virtually every socio-economic level; years of education or religious creed apparently had little to do with its incidence. He was having a hard time making himself be any warmer than indifferent towards Cindy.

"It said, 'Love Daddy Love' on it . . . Daddy, weren't you hungry?"

"No, Baby," he barely whispers, "I wasn't." Mark feels his skin release like melting, and the tears come an involuntary seeping of spring waters from a crack in the rock. His arms melt into Cindy's body and he buries his face in the crook of her neck.

"No, Baby, I wasn't hungry." Mark shuts his eyes. With his eyes closed he can't feel where he ends and Cindy begins. His head seems to expand to envelope both of them, then opens up to take in the whole room and beyond.

Mark is rocking Cindy; they are rocking together now, as one. One flesh. One flesh, one world.

THE WEDDING DRESS

It has been cleaned—
dull streaks of age,
dusty years,
have vanished.

It ripples in satin waves, mother-of-pearl lustre
antiqued mellow ivory.

I take my scissors to shear
wisps from hem
that flutter down,
a serene chore
amid enervating bustle
of wedding flowers and food.

A narrow double-rowed hem
in a straight hyphenated path
edges circle skirt.

I think of the old seamstress,
her white hair, aged yellow too,
bent, treadling to stitch the gown
in her dank lonely house.

I was there for a fitting,
stifled in airless room,
irritable in stiff satin,
high-buttoned neck,
long sleeves pointed at wrist,

multitude of covered buttons
too large for loops
I had to pull and press
to make them fit.

All these years
I've let it hang carelessly
with winter coats
or wrinkle in a chest

until, "Mother, may I wear your dress?"

Threads lie in soft foamy heaps
where patiently I have been clipping
small segments of time
to get the circle right.

Sun breaks tarnished clouds,
glows upon dress.
Cloth is warm and supple,
loops slide now around
each button easily.

JULIA E. BARRETT

Are You What You Read?

THE IMPLIED READER OF CHURCH-RELATED PUBLICATIONS

By Dorice Elliott

RECENTLY A NEW ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE, SEARCHING for words to describe her husband, finally blurted out, "Well, he's not the type that would ever read a SUNSTONE all the way through!" Consciously or not, many of us in the Church make judgments about people and their religious attitudes according to which Church or Church-related publications they read and respect. What allows us to make these judgments is an intuitive sense of the implied reader of those publications.

The term "implied reader" is borrowed from the study of narrative theory. It refers not to any actual, live reader or group of readers, but to a construct of characteristics encoded *within* a text. The implied reader cannot be gleaned from either surveys of readership or conversations with any real readers, because all actual readers are *outside* the text. The implied reader has a given set of characteristics, attitudes, and presuppositions which is relatively stable. When an actual reader approaches any given text, he sheds some of his own attitudes and characteristics and, theoretically, selects only those which enable him to become temporarily the implied reader—the reader *implied* or *intended* by the text. Wayne Booth calls this contract between the actual and implied reader "suspension of belief."¹ Of course this theoretical complete agreement between the author's implied reader and the real reader never actually occurs. It may, in fact, yield a more interesting reading if the real reader does not agree with the role prescribed for him by the implied reader. Each reader reads differently, interpreting or, in a sense, rewriting the text as he reads.

If a real reader consciously and voluntarily refuses to take on his role as a sympathetic implied reader, he is able to view the text from a detached, even analytical, standpoint. If he *cannot* take on that role, he will likely feel uncomfortable reading the text, experiencing a lack of understanding and/or identification. Rather than being drawn *into* the text, he will remain outside. If the text happens to be an official or unofficial publication closely related to a specific group or ideology, such as the LDS Church,

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the actual reader's relation to the reader implied by the publication can even partially condition his responses to the group itself.

We have probably all had the experience of reading a book or some other type of publication which just seemed somehow not to click for us. I had such an experience reading Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*. I knew the book was well written, significant, even humorous—but I simply couldn't enjoy it, much to the disappointment of the friend who shared his copy with me. Later, when I encountered the concept of the implied reader in a graduate class, it occurred to me that the implied reader of *Henderson the Rain King* is distinctly male. It occurred to me that perhaps my difficulty in fully relating to the story was that I was female, and my experiences had not prepared me to adopt the stance of the implied reader of that book.

The concept of the implied reader may be even more significant for periodicals than it is for narrative fiction. While an author writing a novel or story probably somewhat vaguely imagines an ideal reader to whom his writing is addressed, for the editor faced with the necessity of marketing a magazine, the reader is a real and present force.

The editor uses his notions about his *real* audience to make editorial decisions about what will appear in his publication. In a sense, the real reader creates the text. But the text itself still contains an implied reader separate from those real readers. Usually the implied reader of a magazine, journal, or newspaper is fairly close to the majority of the publication's actual readers; but occasionally the implied reader perceivable in the text differs from the readers the editor and writer think they are writing for. Thus, being able to identify the implied reader encoded in a text could be useful to an editor or writer, as well as to the reader approaching the text.

How then do we construct or identify this implied reader? Daniel Wilson defines the implied reader as "the behavior, attitudes, and backgrounds. . . necessary for a proper understanding for the text"² —in other words, what the text assumes about the knowledge, beliefs, and abilities of its implied reader. The remainder of this article explains a taxonomy of characteristics of implied readers, using six Church and Church-related periodicals for examples, and discusses the implications of

VOCABULARY SAMPLES		
	Clichés	Most Difficult Words
CHURCH NEWS	fine wonderful precious sweet great blessing	archelological accomodated multicultural caliber turbulent
ENSIGN		veneer debilitating attendant surrogate laudable hyperbole (defined twice in same article
THIS PEOPLE	Whadda ya think unique bunch of people	utilitarian circuitous discomfiture sabbatical declassè impeccable
EXPONENT II	Two plus two equals more guilt trip	conundrum narcissicism insouciance dialectical peripatetic oxymoronic
SUNSTONE		nihilism derogation egregious acrimonious sentient endemic
DIALOGUE		exigency pusillanimous cryogenically parousia rapprochement enussary

Figure 1

EXAMPLES OF UNEXPLAINED ALLUSIONS		
CHURCH NEWS	virtually none (except standard subculture references—Priesthood, Relief Society, ward, stake, etc.)	
ENSIGN	Trojan War	
THIS PEOPLE	Renaissance Man Thoreau Isaac Asimov several scientific concepts	Buck Rogers Mary Poppins “Good Morning America” Ding Dongs Johnny Carson Lee Iacocca Peter Vidmar
EXPONENT II	Esquire Ms. Katherine Anne Porter Byron Chaucer	
SUNSTONE	Coke, Blackstone, and Hohfeld Italian Renaissance Machiavellian Galileo Magnus Malcolm Muggeridge	Eldridge Cleaver Carl Sagan Leo Tolstoy Mark Twain Tamburlaine
DIALOGUE	Socialist realism Cognitive dissonance Philistine mindset Cultural Revolution <i>Prometheus Bound</i> <i>Prometheus Unbound</i> Mantovani & Mozart (and aesthetic difference between them) Neruda Gu Cheng	

Figure 2

approaching these publications from the standpoint of the implied reader. The publications are the *Ensign*, March 1985 issue; the *Church News*, 5 May 1985 issue; *This People*, May 1985 issue; *Exponent II*, Winter 1985 issue; *SUNSTONE*, March 1985; and *Dialogue*, Spring 1985 issue.

The most basic assumptions any text makes about the implied reader concern language—language of nationality, general linguistic competence in using that language (or languages), and an understanding and recognition of connotative language. The length of sentences, complexity of syntax, and level of vocabulary are some indicators of the implied reader's linguistic abilities. Figure 1 gives some examples of the types of vocabulary used in these six publications, ranging from the clichés used in the *Church News* to the specialized or scholarly terms, including some probably not readily understood by most college-educated readers, used in *Dialogue*.

A text always encodes numerous cultural phenomena which the implied reader is expected to know. At the most basic level, as Jonathan Culler points out in *Structuralist Poetics*, is the “socially given text, that which is taken as the ‘real world.’”³ The *Exponent II* story “One Woe Is Past” depends for effect on two such “real worlds” assumptions concerning cockroaches: one that cockroaches are repellent; but also, that anyone who sees them multiplying beyond reason, and imagines them with “faces cunning and communicative” is somehow unbalanced, not “normal,” because such experiences with cockroaches are not “real.”

The implied readers of the six Church-related publications share a familiarity with twentieth-century American culture as well as the Mormon subculture. There are, however, subtle differences in the level of cultural understanding in the readers of these works. The *Ensign*, for instance, carries a news story on the success of the BYU football team in which the following

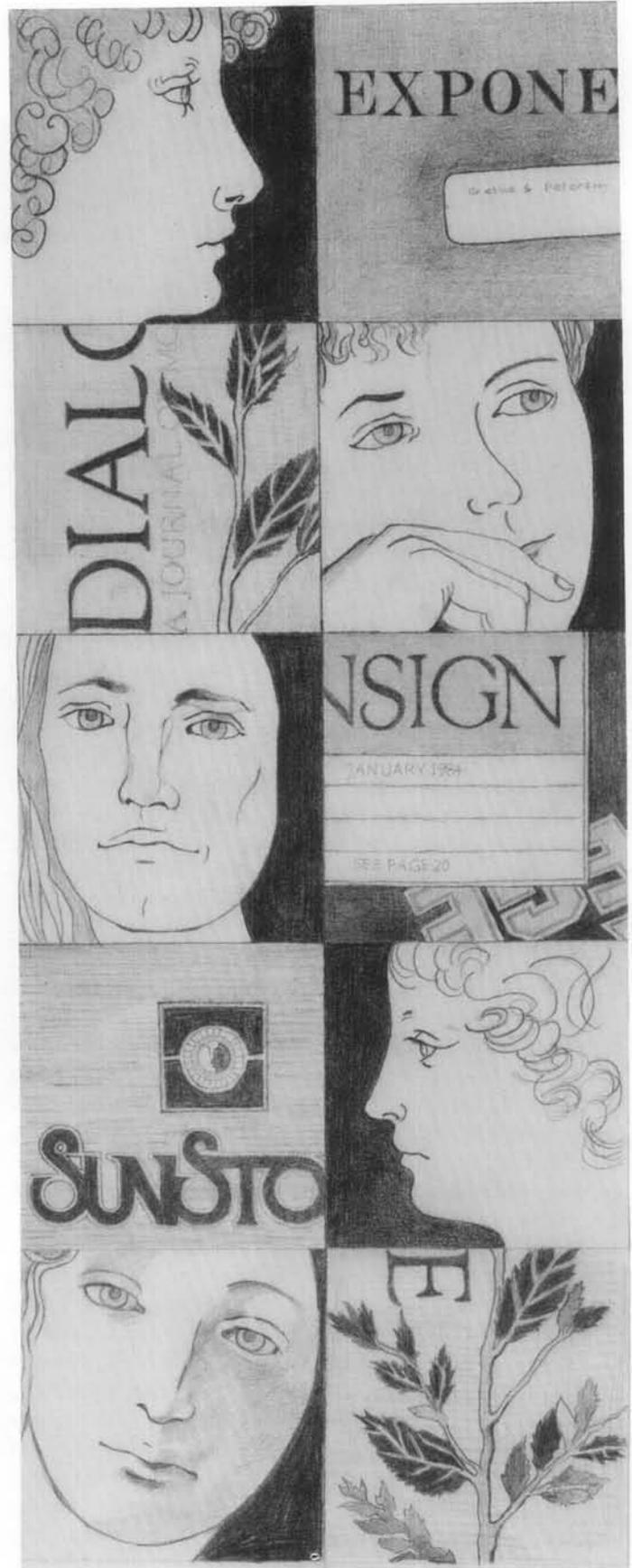
appears: "... for those who simply have allegiance to BYU but have difficulty following the intricacies of North American football. ..." This implies a reader not totally familiar with what we call twentieth-century American culture. Another article in the *Ensign*, however, refers to "Mormon Standard Time," which presumes a fairly intimate knowledge of a subculture—which is not entirely delineated by national boundaries.

Some texts also require an educated reader who has acquired knowledge in a number of disciplines unrelated to the subculture—science, geography, literature, history, etc. One signal that such an educated reader is needed is the presence of unexplained allusions. Note the list of unexplained allusions in Figure 2, taken from the six Church-related publications, and what they require in terms of education and experience in their implied readers.

Besides determining the level of an implied reader's linguistic competence and his understanding of cultural codes, we must also look at his general reading abilities, which I call "literary competence." By this I mean the ability to make inferences, to recognize symbols and metaphors, to sift the important from unimportant details, to anticipate and recollect, in short to perform a number of mental operations necessary to the process of reading. Although these operations are necessary in reading non-fiction magazine articles, the level of competence of the implied reader is more readily identifiable in the fiction or poetry sections, because fiction and poetry generally involve some effort on the part of the reader to fit together images, characters, metaphors, plot details, and/or emotions to form some pattern of meaning (in a non-fiction piece, the meaning is usually displayed more systematically). The more complicated the intellectual maneuvers necessary to unravelling the text, the higher is the level of competence expected of the implied reader. The implied reader who can go beyond the kinds of skills required of the reader of popular fiction (which is about the level of the *Ensign* reader) to perform the mental operations required in more open-ended pieces (such as some printed in *Exponent*, *SUNSTONE*, and *Dialogue*) has a higher level of literary competence than one who must have the meanings spelled out.

Although a number of critics have faulted Wayne Booth for his insistence that the implied reader has a definite set of moral and/or religious beliefs which the actual reader must share—at least temporarily—in order for a reading to succeed, his discussion of the implied reader's beliefs is very relevant in comparing readers of Church and quasi-Church publications. Although these implied readers share beliefs related to the Mormon religion at some basic level, the differences in belief among them are significant in separating them from each other.

Religious beliefs and attendant values are discernable in almost every statement made in the six Church-related magazines. Obviously, a statement like "As parents, we want our children to grow up to be humble and obedient to the laws of God" is a clear statement of a belief the implied reader holds. But even a negative statement can be a statement of belief. Another *Ensign* article says, "For weeks, I had felt increasingly unable to cope with the numerous personal commitments and still give my family the



quality time they need," which implies that the reader believes righteous women *should* be able to cope with numerous personal commitments and still be superior mothers. *Exponent II*, however, assumes that its reader may *not* share this belief. One article describes a family in which the mother is able to follow her career goals because her husband fulfills many of the "mothering" responsibilities.

Incidentally, each of the implied readers of the six Church-related publications tends to have favorite or "pet" doctrines which they like to have discussed frequently—and all occasionally challenge the pets of the others. One of the *Exponent II*'s "pet" subjects, for instance, is the existence and character of Heavenly Mother, a topic that is not often discussed in the other publications.

Obviously although readers of these publications share some basic beliefs, they also differ rather widely. It is crucial to an understanding of the implied readers here discussed to recognize the beliefs and values assumed by each text, whether those beliefs are stated blatantly, stated in the negative, or only suggested obliquely through figures held up as models, articles selected or not selected for publication, and types of authorities cited.

Not only beliefs, however, but attitudes toward belief go into the construction of the implied reader. Does this reader see his belief system as stable and solid or is belief rather something that must be continually examined in light of new learning? We commonly assume that the *Ensign* takes a conservative approach to belief, while *SUNSTONE* and *Dialogue* readers are more open and questioning. A careful reader should be cautious about oversimplifying, though. The *Ensign*, despite its generally literal-minded attitude toward belief, does some tentative exploration. An article on a New Testament passage discusses three alternative interpretations by non-Mormon biblical commentators, cites examples of Church authorities who have favored each interpretation (putting them in conflict with each other), and leaves the "correct" choice to the reader—with the final reminder, of course, that the passage's moral meaning is clear in any case. But such slight challenges to accepted beliefs and values are certainly few and tentative. The implied reader of the *Ensign* would presumably be quite shaken if any blatant challenging or exploring were expected of him. In general, *Ensign* articles feature doing rather than knowing or thinking. Orthodox belief is assumed in the implied reader; what he wants from his reading is motivation and instructions to help him apply those beliefs.

More basic even than a reader's belief system is his "mind set." Does the reader approach a text straightforwardly, taking things at face value, or is he suspicious or sharply inquisitive? Is she optimistic, pessimistic, or cynical? Does he have a sense of playfulness and a sense of humor? If so, on what level? Does she laugh mostly at broad humor or does she appreciate dry wit and veiled ironies? Is he tolerant of ambiguity, or must he have solutions to all problems and paradoxes? Is she dutiful and inclined to follow rules, or rebellious and likely to be contrary or play devil's advocate? Is he tolerant of difference? Locally focussed, or interested in other cultures and value systems? Is he sentimental? Does he have a past and value it? Is she a loner, or

does she prefer a feeling of community? Is he family-centered or individually focussed? Is she economically well-off or not? And, is he—or she—male or female?

What I have given so far is a sampling of some of the traits and abilities of an implied reader which are built into the text. The list of traits I have described is by no means exhaustive, but should give you an idea of how we go about consciously constructing this implied reader when we approach a text. Using the taxonomy I have outlined, it is possible to construct an implied reader profile for each of the six Church and quasi-Church publications.

The implied reader of the *Ensign*, as I read it, is female. The shortage of actual doctrinal pieces (which by tradition women would be less interested in), the number of personal confession-type articles (usually written by women), and the frequency of how-to articles on raising children and homemaking hints would seem to imply a female reader. Articles of this type are typical of the female discourse of traditional women's magazines. Even the words and imagery used in the titles are traditionally female: of nine titles in the March issue, three used the word "love," two used the word "child," three related to gardening, and three used needlework images. (Although the March 1985 issue of the *Ensign* focussed on in this article was specifically geared to women and featured the Relief Society, I also closely examined several other issues, which also bore out my claim that the *Ensign*'s implied reader is female.)

This implied reader tends to approach the text straightforwardly, accepting what she reads at face value without applying a great deal of thought to her reading (hence the questions at the end of some articles, reminiscent of high school textbooks). Even though the *Ensign* is primarily a subscriber publication with a captive audience, the format and design imply that the reader's attention needs to be caught. The *Ensign* uses glossy photos, well-designed illustrations, and "kickers" or "callouts" to get the reader into the articles—implying a reader who needs to be pulled and "encouraged" to read clear through the magazine. Since the magazine's purpose is instructional more than simply informational, the implied reader must be guided in her reading. The *Ensign* reader, in fact, is essentially a non-reader—too busy or not interested in reading that is not immediately useful or perhaps inspirational.

The *Ensign* reader has a sense of humor—she likes obvious puns, clever turns of phrase, and humorous situations, especially those involving children and missionaries. Her economic level is middle or upper middle class (note the dress and home pictured on the cover, for instance), although she tries to economize and conserve because she values thriftiness. She is, of course, family-centered, and the Church is her major outside interest. Service is rendered to family and neighbors—she has little relationship to the outside, larger world, which is seen as "the enemy."

The *Church News* reader is similar to the *Ensign*'s. He—or she—is on a slightly lower economic level, has less experience with the Church, has a shorter attention span, is a little less

educated, and is perhaps even more conventional. The *Church News* reader is locally-focussed, so the *Church News* frequently runs features complete with expensive color photographs on Mormons in other cultures—foreigners who are usually shown to be both “Mormonized” and “Americanized.” The Mexican couple with a baby on the cover of this *Church News*, for example, is obviously upper middle class—the man is, in fact (as *Church News* also frequently prints missionary experiences. The implied reader is encouraged to view all contacts with non-members as potential conversion experiences (which may account partially for his reluctance to step outside the sub-culture).

This People, modeled as it is on *People* and other celebrity magazines that traditionally sell in grocery store check-out stands, is essentially “female” discourse also. The regular columns, as in the *Ensign* and *Church News*, have to do with homemaking and family, and even the book reviewed is primarily a woman’s book.

The practical, utilitarian bent of both the *Ensign* and *This People* is reinforced graphically in these publications, where illustrations, however sophisticated in design and technique, are almost exclusively representational. They illustrate content, “picturing” it for the reader. Ordinarily the art and photographs do not invite speculation or stimulate the imagination.

This People’s reader is an upwardly mobile, success-oriented, but loyal Church member—or is married to such a person. Although individual real readers (as evidenced in the letters to the editor) sometimes complain about lack of focus on “ordinary people,” the idealized implied reader is more interested in Mormon celebrities. She wants to know how these people have achieved success while balancing family and Church commitments. *This People’s* implied reader, because she is success-oriented and educated, is more tolerant of non-traditional lifestyles—the women featured are not exclusively homemakers; an artist lives and works in a converted ward chapel. This reader, like the *Church News* reader, is proud of the accomplishments of Church members and derives some sense of self-worth from her vicarious associations with successful Mormons. She is more aware of and involved in the outside world than her *Ensign* counterpart, and she is educated and interested in the arts, although she could not be called a scholar or an intellectual. Although the Church per se is not much discussed in *This People*, the reader is assumed to be strongly family-centered and to enjoy the communal Church setting. Any criticism of or deviation from Church norms is guarded and cautious (see, for example, Ed Fraughton’s comments on the Church’s relationship with artists).

Exponent II’s implied reader is well-educated, well-read, and (obviously) female. She is a faithful and participating Church member, but is tolerant of those who are not—and of those who lead non-traditional lives. *Exponent II’s* implied reader believes women can combine family and career or education, that men should share household responsibilities, and that women may (and ought to) receive the priesthood. The *Exponent II* reader has a sense of humor, but is perhaps a bit sardonic. Most humorous pieces published in *Exponent II* are satiric descriptions of “traditional” Mormon women—“Patty Perfect” or the “Sunday Mara-

thon.” The *Exponent II* reader is a bit defensive and feels threatened or attacked by Church leaders, Church congregations, and more “traditional” women—even though she herself is at least a part-time housewife with children. She is a talented woman frustrated at female lack of power and input in the Church setting, and at her own lack of complete fulfillment in the home. She is willing to discuss sexual matters openly. But she is not, in fact, an especially radical feminist. The graphics, for instance, vary between a fairly sophisticated impressionist style and a traditionally feminine hearts-and-flowers style (which could occasionally be called “cutesie”).

Judging particularly from its advertisements, SUNSTONE’s implied reader appears to be a Mormon “yuppie.” His age is between 25 and 35, he lives in the Salt Lake area (or in another American city or university town), he is at least college educated, middle or upper middle class, and likely a professional. While he is a Church member, he feels slightly uncomfortable in the communal Church setting, even though he may achieve success in that setting. He is especially sensitive to the impact of Church teachings on gender identity (this issue runs two articles on sex stereotyping in Church lesson manuals). I am using “he,” in fact, as a grammatical convenience. The implied reader of SUNSTONE could be either male or female—the magazine has features of both male and female discourse. The key thing, however, is that the SUNSTONE reader prides him- or herself on being non-sexist.

SUNSTONE’s implied reader’s relationship to the outside world is more friendly than the official Church publications; he is not threatened by media criticism of the Church (in fact he rejoices in it if he agrees with it) and he is open to input from people from other faiths—and recognizes the RLDS Church as a brother organization. While more outwardly-oriented than the readers of some Church-related publications, the SUNSTONE reader still focusses a great deal of energy on the Church—and his troubled relationship to it.

A look at the graphics and the attention-getting titles and kickers also leads to the conclusion that SUNSTONE’s implied reader is somewhat combative and relishes the controversial. The cover design for this particular issue especially contributes to that impression. Also, listen to this list of words and phrases from the titles and sub-titles listed in the table of contents: “conscientious objector,” “militarism,” “familyolatry,” “priesthood prescription for women,” “insane,” “gay,” “defamation suit,” “provoke,” “mystery, violence, and sex.” Of course, this playing up of the sensational and controversial is characteristic of a magazine that sells on the newsstand and is aimed at catching a reader’s attention. But it offers a definite contrast to the more sedate format of *Dialogue*, even though the two magazines often overlap in the issues discussed and in approach.

The implied reader of *Dialogue* is in some ways very much like the SUNSTONE reader—possibly a slightly older and more mellow version of the combative Mormon “yuppie” implied in SUNSTONE. *Dialogue’s* cover art, for instance, is also non-representational and “modern,” but it draws less attention to itself than SUNSTONE’s flashier design. The titles in the table of contents are milder and more matter-of-fact—implying that the

reader has an inherent interest in the magazine's contents and does not need to be "grabbed" or flattered into reading. *Dialogue's* academic journal format and style is a typically male discourse. However, perhaps because of competition with SUNSTONE for readership, *Dialogue* does not hold strictly to this heavily male discourse but also includes feature-like pieces, sometimes adds a personal touch to scholarly essays (as in Michael Quinn's polygamy article), and frequently runs articles on women's issues.

Even though the format and titles of *Dialogue* are relatively bland, however, the issues addressed in the interior of the magazine are not. *Dialogue's* implied reader, the most highly educated of the readers I am discussing, is, of course, tolerant of divergence from conventional Church beliefs—is renowned for this attitude, in fact (hence its naughty reputation among many Mormons who have never even seen a copy of the magazine). The *Dialogue* reader is willing to consider with an open mind evidence that may potentially be damaging to the Church. Like the SUNSTONE reader, he is rather scornful of those who cling to what Michael Quinn calls "historical fantasy."⁴ He may also feel some condescension toward the less intelligent and advantaged—a feeling Robert Egbert explores in "A Reading Group"—but he is also tinged with guilt for that feeling. *Dialogue's* reader is a serious reader interested in scholarship—he is not a casual reader picking up the magazine for entertainment or a little stimulation. Although the lengthiness of Michael Quinn's article, for instance, is not typical, it is still assumed by the text that the reader is one who will stick with 100 pages of detailed history—a more casual reader would give up after twenty pages. *Dialogue's* reader, even more than SUNSTONE's, is interested in history and the early Church, preferring it, to the modern Church.

The one major difference between these publications which kept popping up was in educational level. The SUNSTONE, *Dialogue* and *Exponent II* readers had a more sophisticated vocabulary, understood more unexplained allusions, had a higher level of literary competence, and had a more trained and logical way of approaching their belief system. All of these abilities are related primarily to educational experience—a liberal arts educational experience, I might add—but not to economic level, radical ideas, or strength of testimony. If we can extend the concept of the implied reader to view the *Ensign* implied reader as the "ideal" or "implied" Church member envisioned by Church administrators and leaders, we could conclude that the institutional church prefers those members who are *not* as educated—or at least it prefers those who are educated in technical or practical fields rather than the liberal arts (which is somewhat ironic for a church which boasts of its emphasis on education). This preference further reinforces the celebrated pragmatic, utilitarian bent of the contemporary Mormon Church. What this implies for the intelligent, thinking member who has followed Church encouragement to gain further education is rather disheartening.

It is important to note in discussing the implied readers of these publications that my readings and conclusions are my own interpretations. Every reader makes his or her own construction instinctively as he or she reads, and each construction will be different, as each reader is. In outlining these conclusions, I have

set myself up as an "informed reader," but even informed readers often disagree radically on interpretations—otherwise most critics would be out of work. Any actual reader has a perfect right to disagree with any or all of my specific readings, and I welcome additional insights. Some of the details of my readings may also seem obvious or trite—that is because of the intuitive constructions each of us has already made as we have read these publications in the past. The real purpose of this article though, is rather to introduce a process, a way of reading that considers not only the content of a text and the intent of the author/editor, but also the expectations and assumptions of the text regarding its reader.

In the example I gave earlier of Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*, I as a female reader was unable to successfully enter the world of the book whose implied reader was male. This, I think, often happens to actual readers confronting Church and quasi-Church publications. An actual reader who considers himself or herself to be an intellectual, enjoys critical discussion, sees a wide separation between the institutional Church and the principles of the gospel, and prefers the early Church to the contemporary one, may experience difficulties approaching the *Ensign*, whose implied reader profile is quite different. If he can temporarily suspend his own beliefs and become the implied reader for the duration of his reading, he may feel the inspiration intended by the editors and writers, and enjoy his reading. By temporarily becoming that reader, he may even gain increased understanding of the *Ensign's* actual readers (as the male reader of a feminist text does).

If, however, he is so different from the implied reader that he is unable to assume that identity even temporarily, he will experience some sense of isolation or detachment from the text. If he feels the same detachment in the institutional church setting of meetings and activities, the experience of attempting to read the *Ensign* may underscore that feeling and contribute to his sense of himself a *Ensign* or the *Church News* may experience similar difficulty when approaching SUNSTONE or *Dialogue*. He or she may either temporarily suspend belief and gain increased understanding of those who subscribe to such views (and publications), or he or she may be unable to suspend belief, and will feel alien, outside, and detached. These feelings could in turn lead to shock and hostility, just as the SUNSTONE or *Dialogue* reader's feelings of alienation may turn to scorn and condescension. Actually readers could avoid such negative reactions if they understand the process at work in their own minds and hearts as they work at the communication process through the medium of published writings about the Church, its doctrines, practices, and members.

NOTES:

1. Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 137-139.
2. W. Daniel Wilson, "Readers in Texts," *PMLA* 96 (1981), 848.
3. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 140.
4. D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904," *Dialogue* 18 (1985), 105.

QUERIES AND COMMENTS

CHOICE AND DISCLOSURE

By Mark Gustavson

A KEY ELEMENT IN Mormon theology is the belief that the general conditions of mortal existence were presented to the assembled souls in the councils of heaven. The common litany declares that each individual, after considering the various options, which apparently were clearly described, selected a future course of action; most chose to risk mortality. To the orthodox Mormon, these common beliefs often neatly explain the varying conditions of mortality—the successes, the pain, the tragedies, the moments of joy.

But a careful consideration of the fundamental facts and their implications suggests that matters are a good deal more complex. There is an inherent tension between the idea of previewing the conditions of mortality prior to making one's choice and the near-universality of tragedy and horror that mortality offers to so many of the children of heaven. That is, it may not be possible to come to a moral peace with the pain and sorrow that so many of our fellows experience by referring to some variation of the idea that all people *knowingly* engaged in the conditions of mortality.

The Mormon metaphysical belief that we knew about mortality before choosing to enter it echoes the historical, quasi-equitable principle, common in English jurisprudence until several decades ago. That view declared that in order to avoid the consequences of a foolish choice, a prudent person would embark upon a reasonable investigation in order to make an intelligent, wise choice. The doctrine of *caveat emptor* declined as a new principle arose, namely, that one might be reasonably held to a course of action—especially one involving considerable risk—only if one's consent was *informed*. That is, the essential terms and conditions of the proposed course of action, *if known*, must be fully disclosed, with no essential matter withheld if one is to intelligently and sensi-

bly embark on a course of action. This principle of disclosure does not guarantee safety or success; it merely requires the disclosure of all known and reasonably anticipated risks of a course of action.

These principles make the condition of mortality both poignant and difficult to understand. It is not clear that we can easily reconcile the Mormon insistence on free will with the notion that premortal spirits had a sufficiently detailed view of the mortal future they were soon to endure. Either the premortal spirits were given—or *could* have been given—a description of mortality that was sufficiently detailed to make their decisions to become mortal meaningful, in which case a significant element of freedom of the will was compromised; or, because the future could not be known with sufficient precision before individual elements fell into place, we were not given enough details to render our choice to engage mortality a sensible one.

Either of these alternatives presents some critical—if unrecognized—problems for Mormon theology. The idea of a free, undetermined future and the notion that we were given enough details of mortality to render our decision to be born mortal intelligent are both central to the religion. Yet they clash. And they clash on several levels: were the disclosures issued on a meta-level, where only the broad strokes of events were described, or were more specific descriptions offered? Moreover, there is no discussion of which level of disclosures *could* have been made. Additionally, the Mormon litany asserts that there were only two choices: Satan's or God's. But does the choice of the Lord's plan entail that this world had to be, in a broad or specific stroke, the way it is?

It will not do to slip out of the problem by arguing that the premortal soul was not presented with a choice, at least in the way the idea is commonly employed in the Mormon liturgy. This move obscures the crucial issue:

At what level of disclosure are enough (known) facts communicated to render a responsive act intelligent without engaging in a metaphysical compromise of that person's freedom? By arguing that no choice was really made, one renders mortality, within the Mormon context, largely devoid of any a priori meaning, and this is surely denied by the Mormon belief-structure. The dilemma boils down to a choice between an informed consent to mortality (with the implication that *mortal* freedom would then be largely chimeric), or believing that the future cannot be predicted with sufficient precision to make a decision to enter mortality intelligent.

One could argue that the problem might be resolved by examining just what *sort* of disclosure would have to be made to render mortality a wise and sensible choice, in light of the horrors that beset so many. An illuminating subset of this inquiry asks whether we, individually or as a group, were afforded a detailed description of mortality, or whether only a general description of mortality was given to the premortal souls. If we choose the former, this would imply that a very high degree of everyday events and human activities are predictable in sufficient detail to provide a data base from which a fairly comprehensive disclosure could have been made. If we choose the latter, then we are even further removed from giving the inviolate, individual soul enough information to render the decision to follow Christ's plan an intelligent one. And if a meta-level disclosure was the only one that *could* have been made, is such a level of disclosure sufficient to render the choice for mortality wise? Moreover, there seems to be some point in the recognition that a choice is meaningful if and only if human freedom of choice and action is preserved both at the moment of choice and as the effects of that choice are played out. One can only be said to have acted meaningfully if one could have chosen otherwise, both in the first instance and thereafter, which in itself presupposed viable alternatives and some understanding of the *nature* of those choices. By this inquiry, we have dug a theological hole from which there may be no escape.

Mormon theology and doctrine provide no useful guidance for resolving this dilemma. Therefore, the inquirer must weigh free will against meaningful choice. It would seem that the necessary mixture of a certain future with full, initial disclosure would yield a world where everyone's premortal choice was their last meaningful one. While no one, no matter

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the degree of their anguish, could argue that they were cast into an uncertain future of which no meaningful details were known, they also could not assert that their world contained any significant choices. For purposes of this discussion, we shall defer the question of whether an unrecollected consent is meaningful or obligatory upon a mortal soul.

On balance, a series of free, mortal choices and an undetermined future mixed with a lack of disclosure (because it could not be given for the reasons briefly outlined above) might present fewer problems. This recipe would describe a world into which everyone is cast almost blindly and mechanically—no room here for the allocation of “valiant” souls to any particular locale—but where no one could deflect the complaints of the sufferers by claiming that everyone chose, meaningfully, to enter mortality. On moral grounds, this alternative may well be preferable: there is something particularly odious about the argument that starvation or disease, or other suffering, was *freely* chosen. This moral point is even clearer when there is no recollection of having ever been presented with sufficient facts to make an intelligent choice. Moreover, there is an additional moral dilemma: ought a person to be held to a contract that is impossible to bear, particularly when the performance of that agreement entails experiencing unspeakable agony or watching others horribly brutalized?

I see no easy way to resolve this latent ambiguity and paradox in Mormon theology. While one of the alternatives seems, on balance, less obnoxious than the other, there is no satisfactory resolution to the problem. We seem to be faced with two choices: on the one hand, a God who is so powerful he can predict the future with enough precision to disclose it to interested parties, or a God who is so powerless that summoning up rain clouds in Ethiopia is out of the range of possible actions. Mormonism might need to choose between informed consent and freedom, but at our present level of knowledge neither alternative seems palatable.

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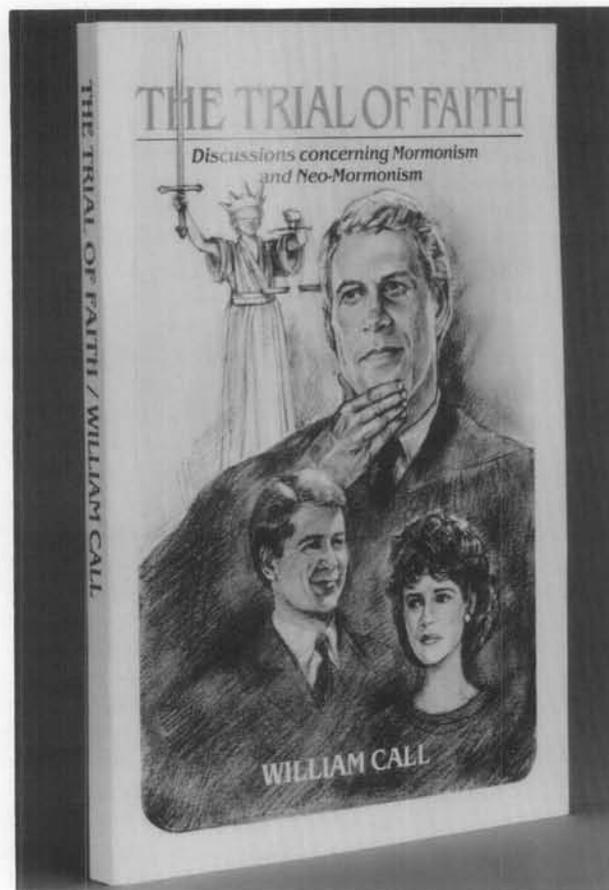


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BOOKS

ZEAL IN QUEST
OF KNOWLEDGE

OLD TESTAMENT AND RELATED STUDIES

by Hugh Nibley

edited by John W. Welch, Gary P. Gilliam and Don E. Norton

Deseret Book Company, 1986, \$15.95, 290 pp.

Reviewed by Keith E. Norman

THIS BOOK IS the first of a projected eight-volume series of the collected works of Mormonism's scholar extraordinaire and defender of the faith emeritus, under the sponsorship of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies. Volume One consists of eleven essays and articles written between the years 1956 and 1982. The subjects of these articles range from speculation about pre-Adamite pseudo-human inhabitants of the planet to Christian doctrinal developments in the fourth century. Although only a few of the entries relate substantively to the Old Testament, and most of them have been published previously, I doubt that Nibley's devoted fans will quibble over titles or duplications.

Certainly the hallmarks of Nibley's work are here in abundance—the iconoclastic criticism of the scholarly establishment, the brilliant and creative insights into ancient texts, the seemingly limitless acquaintance with source material, both primary and secondary, and the assured vindication of the Mormon position. It is these features which guarantee that Nibley will be entertaining and engrossing, no matter how far over your head he is. For some forty years he has been doing combat with the most knowledgeable detractors of the faith, and this retrospective series fittingly honors his heroic stance and contributions to Mormon scholarship.

It is somewhat unfortunate, however, that

the intellectual salvos in Nibley's writings tend to overshadow the ethical and moral content, since it is the latter which is, I suspect, his more important contribution. In fact, Nibley is pre-eminently qualified to write on the Old Testament not so much because of his scholarly achievements, but because he has appropriated the Old Testament prophetic spirit. The Hebrew prophet was usually something of an eccentric, someone who stood outside the political and ecclesiastical power structure and called society to task for its moral and spiritual failings. They often turned their sharpest invective on just those achievements of which the culture boasted, the values it had institutionalized. Nibley uncannily fits this mold. He has never sought or acquired any personal power base in Mormon society, but the enormous respect he commands has allowed him to become one of its sharpest critics, and one whose barbs appear to be exempt from the usual self- or Church-imposed PR constraints. In recent years he has targeted such icons of respectability as litigation, real estate development and even the business management style appropriated by the Church.

Characteristic of the scope of entries in this volume is a talk delivered at the 1980 BYU Women's Conference entitled "Patriarchy and Matriarchy." Here Nibley takes some irreverent shots at the sacred bull of patriarchal rule. Both patriarchy and matriarchy are prone to corruption and must always be at odds, he points out, because the basis of either system is the struggle for power, to be Number One. Nibley's comments on the Adam and Eve situation,

attempting to show that in the beginning it was not so, are perhaps more entertaining than edifying, but he has more incisive things to say. After a discourse on Macbeth as a prime example of "the perennial feud between matriarchy and patriarchy," Nibley cites our prime-time soaps as the epitome of our culture's ideals: glamorous careers, cut-throat competition, easy money and exploitive sex. Success and even survival in one's career seem inseparable from a paralyzing fear and anxiety at the expense of idealism, compassion and courage. Nibley defines careerism as "the determination to reign in hell rather than serve in heaven." Was anyone ever so persuasive in getting Mormon women to stay at home with the kids?

At his best, Nibley, assuming the mantle of an Old Testament prophet, decries our ambition, cruelty, indifference and self-righteous materialism. His acerbic moral insight convicts us and calls us to remembrance of an eternal perspective and the need for repentance. Nibley measures our modern, progressive and scientific values against Biblical standards and finds us and them wanting. Paraphrasing Isaiah 1:11 in "Great Are The Words of Isaiah," he says, "You are not going to appease God by trying to buy him off, by going through the pious motions of religious observances, your meetings and temple sessions." Neither will Nibley let us off with restricting the application of the prophet's words to animal sacrifices, as the context would indicate. With similar prophetic license, Nibley equates Isaiah's denunciation of oppression by the successful class in his day with the drive to maximize profit in our own competitive and predatory society. Nibley's Isaiah takes on the beautiful people, the party set, the fashion conscious, the law courts, business high rollers, national patriots who put their faith in military might, and the exploiters and polluters of nature. Such a prophet, we suspect, would be less than enthusiastic about the material successes of the Church today. "God is not impressed by the magnificent temples people build for him," Nibley reminds us, but by a contrite yet generous spirit towards those around us who are suffering.

Unfortunately, the number of us who read Nibley for his preaching is roughly similar to the proportion of *Playboy* fans who read it mainly for the articles. Nibley's intellectual point-making is what really catches our attention. And ironically, it is this very brilliance, which so dazzles his avid readers, that is the source of his weakness as a scholar. This flip side of Nibley's output is also evident in *Old Testament and Related Studies*, typified by his

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notorious selective proof-texting and tendentious disregard of the evidence, or his sarcastic dismissal of arguments which do not support his position. Missionaries and seminary students are trained to proof-text, gathering only those scriptural verses that appear to support a particular doctrine, without regard to the context of the quotes. But although he possesses more than enough sophistication and analytical ability to rise above such techniques, it seems that Nibley's standard methodology with virtually all his sources, scriptural or not, is proof-texting. His glib freedom in wrenching hitherto unimagined insights and novel connections from ancient documents makes more methodical scholars cringe, including many who are equally devoted to Mormonism. But the show is so much fun, and makes us feel so good about our own convictions, that we don't bother to notice or analyze the sometimes faulty apparatus. When Nibley slays a dragon, never mind that it's made of papier-maché or straw, that beast is dead!

Much of Nibley's work in this collection is also marred by recurring lapses into scriptural literalism. In "Historicity of the Bible," his claim that "the LDS people have always stood between [the] two extremes" of Biblical fundamentalists on the one hand and liberalism on the other seems promising. However, a later statement that "all Latter-day Saints" have been familiar with the fact of "individuality, contradiction and differentness" in the Biblical literature leads us to wonder if he has been attending the same priesthood and Sunday School classes we have, the ones filled with masses of stubborn LDS harmonizers. But Nibley then proceeds to cite a number of minority-view scholars, often unidentified, to the effect that studies of recently discovered documents have supported the Book of Mormon in vindicating Biblical accounts, including the Tower of Babel as the origin of linguistic diversity, the single authorship of Genesis, and the Biblical time-scale since Adam. But Nibley asks too much of these documents: they may be capable of refining or even revising our understanding of the historical setting of the Bible, but they can hardly validate the details of the narratives, especially when they involve metaphysical assertions. That Jesus existed is no longer in doubt (it never was, seriously), but the nature of his being is still a matter of faith, and no unearthing or analysis of ancient documents can alter that limitation on mortal knowledge.

Nibley also betrays his literalist bias in "Before Adam," perhaps his most intriguing essay. Despite his assurance that "Latter-day Saints are the only Bible-oriented people who have always been taught that things were happening

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"Monologs and Dialogues"	Robert Rees	3
"LDS Conceptions & Dead Sea" Scrolls	Sheldon Greaves	4
"Truth and Integrity"	Robert F. Bohn	5
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"What Happened in the New LDS Edition"	Edward H. Ashment	7
"Fawn McKay Brodie"	Newell Bringhurst	8
"Women's Changing Roles"	Carrie A. Miles Laurence R. Iannaccone	9
"Salvation for the Dead"	L.R. Jacobs	10
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"The LDS Church & Homosexuality"	Panelists	13,14
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long, long before Adam appeared on the scene," he dismisses biological evolution as well as *ex nihilo* creationism by a technique of overstatement and caricature of these positions. The implications that all scientists and anthropologists are atheists is unworthy of such an eminent representative of Mormon scholarship. However, after rehashing the creationist argument that evolutionists are still disputing the mechanisms of evolution and the place of pre-historic hominids (if they can't agree among themselves, why should we take them seriously?), Nibley takes a surprisingly liberal position with respect to Biblical mythology. He recognizes that stories such as the Garden of Eden and the Flood are visualized in nursery tale fashion, and decries the presumption that the scriptures are somehow written directly by God and therefore the last word. From Noah's perspective, "the whole earth" was inundated by the Deluge, but Noah's viewpoint was very limited. Nibley prefers Abraham's account of creation (as revealed by Joseph Smith) that the Gods prepared the earth; they created the potential, but it developed (yes, even evolved) to its current state over millions of years.

But although Nibley makes allowance for geologic time and the fossil record, he also insists on the historicity of the scriptural Adam as the first man on earth, who had participated in planning his future home in an earlier state. Nibley knows from this scenario that the earth was a very different sort of planet prior to the Fall, and concludes that its inhabitants before Adam were basically irrelevant to him. The idea that pre-Adamic hominids are not ancestral to us at all is hardly new, but it leaves those creatures, not to mention those aeons of time, in something of a state of limbo. What is their point? Where do they fit into the plan of salvation? If evolution doesn't culminate in human beings, is it meaningless? As a means of preparing the earth for humanity, it is certainly inefficient. Later in the article (p. 82), Nibley hints that some of the human race may in fact not be descendants of Adam. Perhaps recognizing the extreme racist implications of such speculation, Nibley wisely decides to "keep [his] opinions in a low profile" on this point.

A number of articles deal with the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi manuscripts, which Nibley invariably manages to read as proto-Mormon documents. It is here that his scholarly gifts are most in evidence, but it is also here that the selective distortions and creative paraphrases run rampant. Unfortunately, even sophisticated Mormon readers seldom go beyond Nibley for enlightenment on these texts and what they mean to the study of early Christianity. When the *Gospel of Truth*

speaks of the Pleroma, the Gnostic ultra-being out of which the hierarchy of lesser entities emanate, Nibley interprets this as referring to the plurality of gods in the oneness of the godhead. Similarly, he relates the "return to the heavenly home" motif common in Gnostic sources to Mormon doctrine, but fails to mention its association with the anti-material bias prevalent in Gnosticism, a feature quite antithetical to Mormon theology.

A certain amount of the blame for the misuse of source material in *The Old Testament and Related Studies* must rest with the laxity of the editors. This may be understandable in those articles, usually transcripts of speeches, which lack footnotes altogether. For instance, in "Unrolling the Scrolls," Nibley's liberal expansion of a passage from Ignatius mentions only his letter to the Trallians. The actual text, (*Trallians*, V. 1-2) refers to the early second century Bishop of Antioch's knowledge of "the places of the angels and the gatherings of principalities," a phrase which is probably based on Jewish mystical cosmology. Nibley's "quote" of this text grows to something that sounds remarkably like the Mormon concept of heavenly degrees of glory. Since his expansion is within the quotation marks attributed to Ignatius, it cannot be excused even as a paraphrase. "Treasures in the Heavens," by way of contrast, is heavily footnoted, but not much better documented. Note 19, for example, includes a reference to Colossians 2:26-27, but the chapter ends with verse 23. This is a common enough slip, but where were his editors? To cite a more representative instance from the same article, Nibley supports his argument that the Dead Sea Scrolls teach the Mormon doctrine of pre-existence by a reference to the *Zadokite Document* 2:7. This passage, however, quite clearly refers not to creaturely pre-existence but to

God's foreknowledge, and in a manner which smacks of pre-destination: "He knew their deeds before ever they were created." And even were he more circumspect in citing his sources, Nibley's eclectic proof-texting would not be countenanced in any self-respecting graduate seminar. But with 26 pages of footnotes following an 18-page text, perhaps the quantity of documentation is meant to compensate for deficiencies in quality.

I do not mean to belabor the faults of this volume or my objections to Nibley's methodology. There are indeed many intriguing affinities between Mormon teachings and isolated portions of the ancient documents Nibley studies. It is fun to read this book for those tidbits, and the spice of his comments adds an undeniable zest. But the compulsion to demonstrate thereby the antiquity and legitimacy of our doctrines leads to abuse and, in light of our professed belief in progressive revelation, such a chip-on-the-shoulder attitude is quite unnecessary. However, as the Church's unofficial apologist, Nibley operates on his own agenda and is apparently quite indifferent to any pretense of conventional scholarly objectivity. Certainly he has been a beacon of inspiration and a powerful stimulus to several generations of would-be scholars among the Saints, myself included. Hopefully some of his protégés will be able to carry on his quest for knowledge without compromising either their commitment to Gospel truth or to scholarly integrity. In spite of my cavils, I cannot resist the intellectual and spiritual romp provided by almost anything Hugh Nibley writes. Still, we need to listen more attentively to his call to renounce the comfortable values of the world, rather than turning to him just to stroke our religious prejudices.



BOOKS

PATRIARCHY AND THE CONTROL
OF WOMANHOOD

THE CREATION OF PATRIARCHY

by Gerda Lerner

New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986

Hardback, 318 pp. \$21.95

Reviewed by Ian Barber

SINCE THE PUBLICATION of Bachofen's *Das Mutterrecht*, a small but growing cadre of writers have explored the possibilities of dominant female imagery and autonomy in human prehistory, albeit for different reasons. With the rise of modern feminist scholarship over the last three decades this possibility has been re-explored, and the image of ancient matriarchal cultures worshipping a supreme Mother Goddess has gained new currency. Merlin Stone's *When God Was A Woman* (Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1976) is perhaps the classic expression of this view.

Historian Gerda Lerner has certainly been influenced by this tradition, but *The Creation of Patriarchy* is in no way a mere restatement of earlier positions. Instead, Lerner brings her training and analytical skills to the question of "the development of the leading ideas, symbols, and metaphors by which patriarchal gender relations were incorporated into western civilization" (p. 10).

For Lerner, patriarchy as the "institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and . . . women in society" (p. 239) has its roots in the quest for male control of the female reproductive processes. In this analysis, Lerner takes issue with Frederick Engels' interpretation that the development of private property as a concept preceded and caused the subordination of women. Following the lead of anthropologist Claude

Lévi-Strauss, she argues that in the transition from hunting and gathering to horticulture and finally to an agricultural phase of human subsistence, the desire for control over reproduction and labor resources led men to treat women and their procreative potential as a resource, or a commodity. With the development of the archaic state in the Near East and the increasing stratification and authoritarianism of its social structures, this control was further heightened and codified. A woman's economic rights eventually became contingent upon "her sexual and reproductive services to her husband," (p. 109) and in effect did not exist outside of the patriarchal family structure.

Lerner draws the evidence for her thesis from official law codes, such as that of the Babylonian king Hammurabi, other formal documents of state and temple, and material more directly relevant to theogony and religion. Lerner also takes commendable care to stress that the shift from the Mother Goddess figure to the all-powerful male thunder-god "may tell us more about what the upper class wanted the population to believe than what the population actually did believe" (p. 158). As an example of this, she cites the proliferation of the cult of the Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah in the early (and rigidly patriarchal) Hebrew state. In studying laws, gods and formal proscriptions, however, Lerner assumes that one is dealing with issues of concern to societal elites at least, and over the long term with changing parameters of social relations and ideology

Lerner's analysis of the way religious systems and especially relationships among the gods changed over time supports her thesis and agrees in substance with classical feminist thought: "first, the demotion of the Mother-Goddess figure and the ascendance and later dominance of her male consort/son; then his merging with a storm-god into a male Creator-God, who heads the pantheon of gods and goddesses" (p. 144). The final stage in this development is monotheism with a supreme male God, and patriarchal society firmly in power. Here again, Lerner's emphasis is on male control of female sexuality. In fact, she indicates that in religious imagery reproduction becomes totally appropriated by the male deity; thus Athene is born fully developed from the head of Zeus after he has consumed his wife and assimilated her procreative powers, while the male Hebrew deity Yahweh creates man by the power of word alone, then begets Eve from the body of the first man. In this last instance, Lerner notes significantly, the woman is alienated from the tree of life and the serpent, both primeval images of the powerful female goddesses.

The pervasiveness of this tradition is also apparent in the Hebraic imagery of the chosen seed and the covenant people; this concept is also based exclusively on the symbolism of male generation, with the first-born son inheriting the father's rights. Women act merely to facilitate the male-centered covenant and are kept out of the Hebrew priesthood which mediates between God and society. In Greek thought, Lerner cites Aristotle's assertion that the male is the active and complete principle in generation, while the woman is only a mutilated male.

In the presentation of her argument, Lerner is generally careful and often provocative (more so, in fact, for being so careful). Lerner is not afraid to take issue with certain presumptions at the folk-level and beyond in the feminist tradition. She also disputes the claim of some feminist scholars that early Sumerian society was polyandrous (p. 63; cf. Stone, *When God Was A Woman*, p. 39). In addition, Lerner also agrees with the general consensus of anthropological thought that matriarchy proper, a situation where "women hold power over men. . . [including] the power to define the values and explanatory systems of society," (p.31) has not existed in human history or prehistory according to any available evidence. This does not mean, in Lerner's analysis, that patriarchy can be taken as a universal, for she also documents societies with structures of matrilineal and matrilineal descent as well as more egalitarian alternatives.

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The book does have some minor flaws; for example, in discussing hunting and gathering societies (the most egalitarian of any known), she suggests that "women are always subordinate to men in some respects" (p. 31). Yet just five pages later she asserts that "female subordination is not universal" (p. 35). Since the evidence she has gathered argues consistently that all human societies have universally subordinated women to some degree, this last statement should be qualified. She is careful not to characterize all of Freudian theory as misogynist or sexist, but she is less careful about sociobiology (with which she may not be as familiar). Certainly there are sociobiologists who would disagree strongly with her characterization of their interpretation as "disregarding the fact that modern men and women live in a state of nature" (p. 20).

As suggested, Lerner's careful and analytical feminist approach constitutes an important advance over male-centered treatments of the origins of patriarchy and less critical feminist analysis. In limiting her study to the rise of western civilization, she is not attempting to offer a general theory of the rise of patriarchy, although she suggests that her hypotheses may have wide applicability. Furthermore, her work is based on scholarly secondary sources and modern translations of the original texts only. What she has done is to generate an eloquent and convincing model, which must now be tested in its many facets by Assyriologists, Egyptologists, biblical scholars, anthropologists, archeologists, and other specialists. Even at this early stage, however, I believe her work can be said to have demonstrated more pointedly than ever before that patriarchal

society and gender assumptions are neither biological givens nor universal absolutes.

The creation of patriarchal society, fortified by the sexual double standard, the legal system, and social and religious structures, has acted to skew reality, Lerner eloquently concludes. The expression of the subordinate female as unfinished, mutilated and lacking in autonomy has led men to explain the world in their own terms and thus become "the center of discourse" (p. 220). The most poignant aspect of that neglected reality for contemporary society, as Lerner suggests, is that it has "given men a skewed and essentially erroneous view of their place in human society," (p. 222) while excluding women from "the human enterprise of constructing abstract thought" (p. 225) at a cost that has never been reckoned.

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BOOKS

THE LIMITS OF
FINITISM

THE TRIAL OF FAITH: DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING MORMONISM AND NEO-MORMONISM

by William Call

Salt Lake City, Utah: Publishers Press, 1986.

Reviewed by Blake T. Ostler

SOME OF THE greatest figures in the history of philosophy such as Plato, Berkeley, and Hume have utilized dialogue to present their ideas. William Call uses dialogue to present his ideas through the fictional John Johnson, a wealthy Mormon who, if one can guess from the bolstering of the dialogue itself, is to be taken seriously because he has thought a lot about Mormonism. Although the book never says so, the position presented through John Johnson is supposedly a new, improved form of Mormonism, called in the title of the book "Neo-Mormonism." Unlike the classic dialogues of philosophy, however, the dialogue of *The Trial of Faith* is contrived, constantly employs false dichotomies to force false dilemmas, jumps to conclusions without support and makes a mess of Mormon finitism generally.

The purpose of *The Trial of Faith* is supposedly to rationally explore the implications of Joseph Smith's incipient finitism. I was prepared to really like the book because I felt that Mormonism's finitist theology provides the best foundation for a coherent and experientially adequate theology. Unfortunately, I was disappointed. The dialogue sets up the foundational axiom that Mormonism is pluralistic while traditional Christianity is monistic. Though the fictional Johnson confuses monism with pantheism and pluralism with essentialism, he correctly deduces that if God did not create the world from nothing, then God is limited. Unfortunately, Call seems to believe

that if God is finite or limited in some respects, God must be limited in *all* respects. This sort of rash conclusion is unjustified and as Charles Hartshorne demonstrated in a rigorously logical discussion of the absolute-finite dichotomy, it fails to hold up.

John Johnson believes that the ultimate question about the nature of God is "whether existence is dependent upon God or whether God is dependent upon existence" (p. 13). I never was sure what this sentence meant, but apparently it asserts that if God is finite, God does not necessarily exist; that is, he could *not* exist. The remainder of the dialogue is premised on this error in reasoning. That assertion misunderstands Mormonism, for Mormons believe that God exists of necessity—on "self-existing principles," if I recall Joseph Smith's phraseology. Call apparently wants to establish that "nature" is necessary, while God is contingent or dependent on what just happens to exist for his existence as God.

Call also rejects the possibility of pansychism (the notion that matter is characterized by aspects of mind), which permeated the thought of Orson Pratt, by assuming that matter is inanimate. He therefore concludes that the body is a machine. Johnson runs squarely into the mind-body problem and a naive determinism in making this move, and then tries unsuccessfully to extricate himself from the dilemma by denying that God has controlling power (pp. 22-23).

In discussing issues of authority, John Johnson asserts that "moral law is either based upon the work of an omnipotent God or else

upon the integrity of the individual" (p. 25). The possibility that God might be perfectly good and not omnipotent and yet the basis of morality apparently doesn't occur to him in this discussion. Such a false dichotomy ignores the concept that legitimate authority in Mormonism arises not from omnipotence, but from love and what leads to individual growth within a human-divine relationship. The fictional Johnson also hastily concludes that if God is not omnipotent, then any mortal is the equal to God or Church leaders in determining what constitutes "personal morality" (p. 36).

Ultimately, what Johnson proposes is Mormonism stripped of the idea of God and hierarchy. The discussions of faith, ordinances, the Fall and the atonement, and agency are all contrived to show that since mortals and gods are ontological equals, mortals simply don't need the gods (p. 103). Johnson believes that Mormonism is committed to the view that salvation is "earned" and orthodox Christians to the belief that salvation comes by grace alone. This historical limiting of options does justice neither to Mormonism nor to orthodox Christianity. I see no reason, however, why God cannot work with and through free creatures to accomplish their joint purposes, i.e., one another's happiness.

In the end, John Johnson is brought to trial for excommunication for his "Neo-Mormon" beliefs, which he promoted in a sacrament meeting talk. The fate of John Johnson is not disclosed in *The Trial of Faith*. I suggest not excommunication, but education is what the fictional John Johnson needs. Perhaps a closer study of logic and logical entailments and a little more time at the drawing board would suffice. I recommend this book as an example of what Mormon finitism does not and ought not entail. The reduction of Christian theism to a limited humanism is not necessary to give genuine meaning to human endeavors and experience, and the rejection of religious authority is not necessary to make sense of Mormon finitism.

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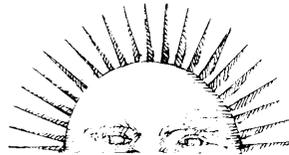
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PROPHET'S TALK PROMPTS EXAMINATION OF ROLE OF WOMEN

"Contrary to conventional wisdom, a mother's calling is in the home, not in the marketplace," said President Ezra Taft Benson at the 22 February Church-wide parents' fireside. His unequivocal address, "To the Mothers in Zion," which praised mothers as "the very heart and soul of the family," prompted intense discussions of the "God-ordained" role of mothers.

The prophet counseled healthy mothers to "have your children and have them early," and not to limit their family's size for personal or selfish reasons, including material possessions, social convenience and professional advantages.

"The Lord clearly defined the roles of mothers and fathers in providing and rearing a righteous posterity," he stated, and then quoted the late President Spencer W. Kimball: "It was never intended by the Lord that married women should compete with men in employment." In fact, some of the more controversial passages of the address were quotes from a 1977 fireside President Kimball gave in San Antonio, Texas, including: "Too many mothers work away from home to furnish sweaters and music lessons and trips and fun for their children. . . . Wives, come home from the typewriter, the laundry, the nursing, come home from the factory, the cafe."

The satellite-broadcast speech immediately prompted widespread discussion throughout the Church, especially in the intermountain area where members who missed the fireside could watch or listen to recordings friends made from the local broadcast on BYU's radio and television stations.

The Church received numerous

telephone calls about the speech and along Utah's Wasatch Front some mothers quit their jobs, prompting exaggerated rumors about large numbers of working mothers quitting work at the Church Office Building.

The following Sunday's church services became forums for discussion in Relief Society and priesthood meetings, and many monthly testimony meetings witnessed comments on the talk. At one stake conference, the stake president mentioned the prophet's points; then, with an ambiguous smile, he counseled his members to "adjust them into our lives until we feel comfortable with them."

Other members also emphasized the role of personal revelation or viewed the prophet's comments as a goal. "He's talking about what would be a wonderful ideal, but it's an ideal few people are able to realize," said Mary Stovall, director of the Womens Research Center at BYU. "What his talk hopefully will do is help people re-evaluate the situation. Are they giving enough time to their family?"

People who wanted to know what the fuss was about found little cause for controversy in the *Church News* account of Benson's talk, which left out the debated quotes and emphasized that his counsel applied to both parents, not just mothers.

"It is going to be an extremely wrenching experience for Mormon families to implement that teaching in their lives," said Carlfred Broderick, director of the Marriage and Family Therapy Center at the University of Southern California. Broderick, who was quoted in an Associated Press news story, added

"It's easier to deal with guilt than to do without the income."

However, others welcomed the president's address. "A firm statement was needed to get the people's attention," said Bryce Christensen, editor of *Family Newsletter*. "If he had used too many qualifiers and concessions to the spirit of the times, his message would have been dismissed. Instead of looking for a million excuses to evade what the prophet is saying, LDS intellectuals ought to be looking for ways to deal with the unprecedented economic and cultural pressures causing women to enter the work force."

A 1981 Church-sponsored study indicates that 40 percent of all LDS women work and an additional 6 percent are looking for work. Of mothers with school-age children, 57 percent work either full- or part-time.

Not surprisingly, some of the most intense discussions took place at Brigham Young University, where childbearing-age women pursue career-oriented studies. Some counselors in the Office of Student Life told the flood of women students who asked whether the Church wanted them to leave the university that they should seek personal revelation to guide them in applying the prophet's instructions.

The debate was particularly intense in the BYU law school, where women students are obviously preparing for a vocation and not just obtaining emergency backup skills. Moreover, the men are often supported by working wives, who may have consciously delayed having children until after graduation. Before the intense feelings subsided and regular study habits resumed, an open meeting of professors and students was held to discuss how to put the prophet's counsel in the context of all other Church teachings and expectations.

"This kind of experience illustrates the value of having a law school at BYU," said Law School Dean Bruce Hafen. "Here the professors share their commitment to the church and explain how they

try to apply its counsel." Hafen said that the Church's goal is to "solidify the family;" he feels his students understand the Church's concerns and work not to neglect their children.

Although many people felt that President Benson had simply reiterated the Church's long-standing position that, ideally, women who are raising children should remain in the home, the ensuing heated discussion was markedly different from the apparent equanimity with which members had received President Kimball's similar statements on the issue.

The divisive feelings aroused by the talk were amply evident at the BYU Women's Conference, held March 12-13 and attended by 5,000 LDS women from around the United States.

Probably aware of the distance between President Benson's comments and the "Diversity in Works, Unity in Faith" conference theme, BYU President Jeffrey R. Holland attempted to bridge the gap in his welcoming comments. He affirmed that BYU was a "place for and a symbol of growth and development and learning, including and especially for women." Using a U.S. Constitution bicentennial theme he described the extension of rights to all and said there is still important work to do, in a tone that implied he was referring to the rights of women.

Holland reminded the audience of President Benson's commitment to defending constitutional principles and then said, "Recently he has also counseled us to protect the freedoms—and futures—of our children."

Holland then discussed the problems confronting children and adults today as they exercise their freedom of choice and quoted President Benson's 1965 General Conference counsel on the use of personal revelation in decision making: "Usually the Lord gives us the overall objectives to be accomplished and some guidelines to follow, but he expects us to work out most of the details and methods ourselves. The methods and pro-

cedures are usually developed through study and prayer and by living so that we can obtain and follow the promptings of the Spirit. . . those spiritually alert look at the objectives, check the guidelines laid down by the Lord and his prophets, and then prayerfully act—without having to be commanded 'in all things.'

The two-day conference featured a wide variety of topics, including a panel on "Accepting Diversity, Achieving Unity" panel included some wives of General Authorities. Other sessions focussed on financial management, marital relations, Christian living, human sexuality, and parenting.

BYU Organizational Behavior Associate Professor Kate Kirkham discussed the value of non-contentious disagreement and differences in the Church, and stressed the need to have discernment in understanding others.

Ida Smith, founding director of BYU's Women's Research Institute, vigorously exhorted women to be active in the world, saying "The boundaries of the home must exceed the boundaries of the house. . . . perhaps in trying to

maintain homes as a haven from the bad of the world, sometimes we exclude instead of include. The best home brings the world to people. . . home is any place you extend yourself and make connections."

The panel discussion on "The Price of Excellence," which included mothers who are pursuing academic and cultural interests, was the most confrontational session. The discussion elicited angry comments from the audience, including accusations that the panelists were not following the prophet's counsel to stay home.

The majority of women attending seemed to enjoy the conference; yet, despite of the intended celebration of diversity while building a united faith, long-time attendees say this was the most divisive women's conference ever held. Many women attending were critical of the preponderance of career women with degrees who were held up as role models, and occasionally questioned their faith. President Benson's talk was often used not just to guide one's own life but also to judge other's.

Some women leaders have expressed concern that the discord

among women at the conference is an intimation of a serious schism forming among LDS women and they are saddened at the polarization in a society where charity and sisterhood are stated ideals.

Since President Benson's address is now being distributed in pamphlet form, it will continue to be discussed throughout the Church.

Some insightful comments on the issues concerning the role of women and how to constructively approach them were given in Pat Holland's Women's Conference keynote address where she shared her own spiritual struggles with conflicting priorities can help make the dialogue more constructive. "I am very appreciative of the added awareness that the women's movement has given to a gospel principle we have had since Mother Eve and before—that of free agency, the right to choose," she stated.

"But one of the most unfortunate side effects we have faced in this matter of agency is, because of the increasing diversity of life styles for women today, we seem even more uncertain and less secure with each other. We are getting not closer, but further away from that sense of

community and sisterhood that has sustained and given us unique strength for generations. There seems to be an increase in our competitiveness and a decrease in our generosity with one another.

"We simply cannot call ourselves Christian and continue to judge one another—or ourselves—so harshly. No Mason jar of bing cherries is worth a confrontation that robs us of our compassion and sisterhood.

"Obviously the Lord has created us with different personalities, as well as differing degrees of energy, interest, health, talent, and opportunity. So long as we are committed to righteousness and living a life of faithful devotion, we should celebrate these divine differences, knowing they are a gift from God. We must not feel so frightened; we must not be so threatened and insecure; we must not need to find exact replicas of ourselves in order to feel validated as a woman of worth. There are many things over which we can be divided, but *one* thing is needful for our unity—the empathy and compassion of the living Son of God."

A NEW WITNESS FOR GOD

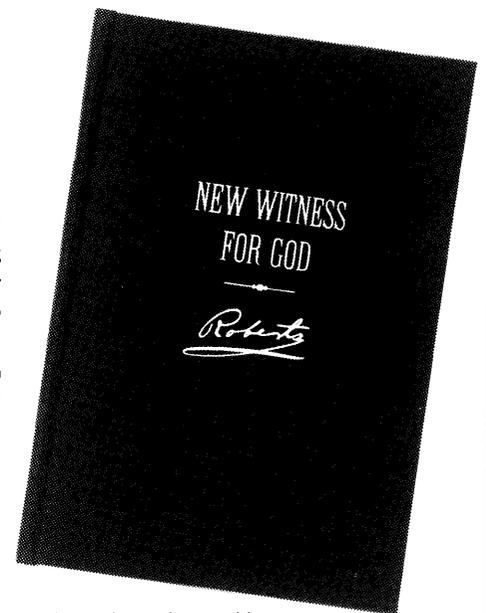
By

B.H. ROBERTS

This is the Editorial Series that Elder Roberts wrote in 1888 for the *Millennial Star* while he was its assistant editor. It was re-printed in the *Contributor* as soon as the *Star* arrived in Utah, along with a few changes that were made by the editor, Junius F. Wells, and/or by President Woodruff, who was also the YMMIA superintendent.

This is an excellent overview of what President Roberts later developed into the three-volume set. He says, in his biographical notes, that "there was laid during that two years missionary experiences in editorial work, the foundation of the three-volumed *New Witnesses for God*, much of the matter of which appeared in the *Star* editorials." (p. 161)

112 pages. This compilation uses the same format as the three-volume set. Just \$9.95 at most LDS bookstores. Or contact Lynn Pulsipher, P.O. Box 1607, Provo, Utah 84603-1607 for copies or more information. Shipping costs will be additional. Please specify First Class or Fourth Class Book Rate.



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MORMON CANON DISCUSSED AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

In an effort to help establish a "permanent forum in which the many scholars who have more than a historical perspective on the study of religions can specifically address questions relating to Mormonism," several Brigham Young University professors participated in a consultation session at the most recent annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, which was held in conjunction with the Society for Biblical Literature on 22-25 November in Atlanta, Georgia.

The session, "Reflections on the Mormon 'Canon' and the Study of 'Other' Religious Traditions," was anchored by a W. D. Davies article "Reflections on the Mormon Canon." Davies, who is the George Washington Ivey Professor of Advanced Studies and Research in Christian Origins at Duke University, discussed the way Mormons wrestle with their canonized sacred texts, and their view of revelation. "Progressive and continuous revelation is certainly an attractive notion," he concluded, "but equally certainly it is not without the grave danger of so altering or enlarging upon the original revelation as to distort, annul, and even falsify it." Davies' paper is included in his recent book, *Christians Among Jews and Gentiles*, by Fortress Press.

Building upon and responding to Davies' paper, John W. Welch, BYU professor of law, and David J. Whittaker, BYU archivist, presented the paper "Mormonism's Open Canon: Historical Perspectives on its Religious Limits and Potentials." Using Davies' analysis, they discussed how "open" the Mormon canon is and explored the historical, theological and institutional reasons why "the open canon of Mormon Christianity has not

become a Pandora's box."

They emphasized four points which check the belief of an open canon: 1. The LDS refusal to adopt a doctrine of scriptural inerrancy has permitted textual corrections and emendations of existing scriptures; 2. The belief that Joseph Smith gave the core Standard Works to the Church has kept other LDS non-canonical writings peripheral and secondary; 3. The institutional practices of common consent, unanimity of the Quorum of the Twelve, the unique role of the Church president as the Lord's spokesman, and the effect of precedent and scripture have provided norms that keep the canon from being widely open; and, 4. the belief that oral messages when moved upon by the Holy Ghost are also "scripture" with a complementing burden on the hearer to also have the Spirit creates a dynamic balance and lessens the need for all scripture to be written as canon.

M. Gerald Bradford's paper, "Approaches to the Study of 'Other' Religions: Thomas F. O'Dea and the Mormons," presented previously unknown notes of a 1958 address in which the author of *The Mormons* summarized parts of his groundbreaking sociological study of Mormonism and discussed issues of methodology in approaching the study of a religion. Some points included: the insider/outsider perspectives; the importance of treating it as a religion instead of some other category; seeing the religion as a whole, with no one dominant theme; setting Mormonism in its own time and place; avoiding overly strong comparisons with other religions which can give a distorted view; and keeping an open mind. "Before there was a broad understanding of what reli-

gious studies is, O'Dea was doing it," concluded Bradford, who is a professor of sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Other participants included Kent P. Jackson, BYU associate professor of ancient scripture, who gave a response to Davies' paper, and Truman G. Madsen, who spoke on "Approaches to the Study of 'Other' Religions," based on his experience holding BYU's Richard L. Evans Chair for Christian Understanding and organizer of several BYU Religious Studies Center symposiums.

Because of the success of the session, the consultation status was renewed for another year. Gordon Thomasson, the session's chair and organizer, is organizing the session for the 1987 annual meeting on "Mormonism, Biblical, Common, and Constitutional Law and the State." Although previous AAR meetings, have had papers and sessions devoted to Mormonism, the obtaining of consultation status, which requires annual renewal, is a major step towards having a permanent session on Mormonism at each conference.

LDS BLACKS HOLD FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE

"Love One Another" was both the impromptu opening song and the outcome at the first LDS Black History Cultural Conference. Blacks from Charlottesville, Virginia, to Oakland, California, gathered in Salt Lake City on February 21-22 to create a support community and to discuss the place of blacks in Mormon history and contemporary LDS culture.

The conference was sponsored by *Ebony Rose*, a two-year old Salt Lake-based magazine/newsletter edited by Marva Collins and intended to link black Mormons throughout the world in a supporting network. Most of those who attended had joined the LDS church since President Kimball received his 1978 revelation that allowed blacks to be ordained to the priesthood.

At several of the Saturday workshops conference attendees discussed Church history and grappled with the past and present struggles of being a black Mormon.

Mary L. Bankhead, a gracious 85 year old woman from the Salt Lake Valley, related her family's experiences in the Church. Her grandfather, Green Flake, a slave, was the first black to enter the Salt Lake

Valley, driving Brigham Young's carriage. Mrs. Bankhead said that many of his descendants remained active in the Church but that the men had more troubles than the women. However, she said she had always felt a part of the Church and even served as the Relief Society president in Union Fork, Utah.

Jerry Carter, the creator of a local Utah PBS television documentary on Utah's Black History, told how Utah paralleled the segregationist attitudes and practices of the greater American society, including requiring separate restaurants and hotels for blacks. "The Lord called on me to make this documentary," said Carter, who is not LDS. Provided he gets the funding, he plans to produce a documentary on blacks in the Church to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the priesthood revelation.

Carter's comments saddened his audience who were disappointed to learn that the Utah saints did not rise above the discriminatory practices of the nation. However, when Chester Hawkins, a black historian at BYU, shared statements on blacks from early Church leaders many in the audience became visibly disturbed.

Stating that the history of Mormon blacks "needs to be told," Hawkins described how Joseph Smith's views on slavery and abolition fluctuated over time but that, although they were not unequivocal, they were progressive for his day. Among other early Mormon statements, he quoted Brigham Young's assertion that the "negro is damned."

Hawkins, who is editing a forthcoming comprehensive collection of Mormon statements on blacks, then outlined the lives of several prominent black Mormons, including: Green Flake; Elijah Abel, a black in Nauvoo who was given the priesthood and went through the temple; Jane Manning Jones, a black woman adopted into Joseph Smith's family; Samuel Chambers, a slave who was illegally baptized and moved to Utah after the Emancipation Proclamation; and Walker Lewis, a "forgotten black man" who also held the priesthood.

For most at the conference, this information was new. They challenged his more disturbing sources, and, when satisfied with their accuracy, engaged in an obviously painful discussion on the fallibility of Church leaders, while still affirming their belief in the Church. Most said they didn't believe the denial of the priesthood to blacks to have ever been a true doctrine and the change in policy only awaited a prophet to petition the Lord.

On Sunday the conference met with Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Elder Kikuchi said he thought there was a need for gatherings like this and also for the

Ebony Rose magazine and regional ethnic support groups. He was not, however, in favor of so-called "specialty wards" for ethnic groups, except perhaps where there is a language problem.

He used his own family's move from Japan to Utah as an illustration. "Since I'm going to live in the United States, I want my children to learn English," he said. Although invited to attend the Japanese ward in Salt Lake City, his family goes to their local residential ward; however, they do attend cultural and social functions with the Japanese saints.

Elder Kikuchi then encouraged the blacks not to feel left out because of their experiences as a minority but to work for and look to the day when "there will be one to two million black Saints and one or two black General Authorities." After sharing some personal experiences he counseled them that the answer is love and then sang a cappella "As I Have Loved You." Those attending the conference felt that it was a good beginning to building a supportive black community in the Church.

The 1988 annual conference will be held during the first week in February in Washington, D.C., and will be hosted by the Washington Genesis Group, which is sponsored by the Church's Washington Area Public Communications Council. At present there are two other regional LDS black groups, a Genesis group in Oakland, California, and a Unison Group in Atlanta, Georgia. The original Genesis group in Salt Lake City recently disbanded.

PERSONAL ESSAY EXPLORED AT AML CONFERENCE

Stating that in his personal essays he felt the need to "push vulnerability to the brink and yet retain the literary aspect," Eugene England, author of the collection of essays, *Dialogues With Myself*, addressed the topic of "Literature and Personal Experience" at the opening session of the recent Association of Mormon Letters meeting.

In contrast, BYU English Professor Edward Geary expressed the need for distance in his essays; a distance of time, since present experience so often "seems of no significance." He read an excerpt from a semi-autobiographical work dealing with a boy's teenage experience in a small Utah town.

Session commentator Levi Peterson described England's essays as a "philosophical, theological discourse," while Geary's were more like the "restructuring of fiction in a carefully wrought essay." He then led the audience in an open discussion of the freedom afforded by the personal essay for philosophical impulses and speculation.

The annual conference, held on 24 January 1987 at the University of Utah LDS Institute, expanded the usual format of a presentation of papers by including generous time for discussion and audience participation.

The late morning session, "Literature and Scripture," explored the various approaches to reading the Bible as literature. Steven Sondrup, a founder of AML, opened the session by stating that the very term "scripture and literature" is problematic: The reader should keep in mind the scriptures as scripture, yet see within it the differing generic conventions. He gave the example of the book of Isaiah which contains narrative and poetic genres as well as oral formulaic patterns.

Steven Walker's less formal approach looked at the Bible as a narrative of human experience and

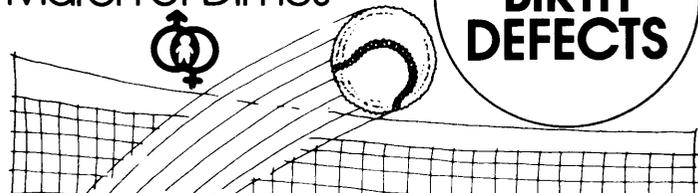
warned against reading it with cultural expectations. However, moderator John Tanner noted, that in bringing one's own generic expectations to the Bible, the reader receives a generic interpretation and gave as example the interpretation of Hosea in the Gospel of Matthew.

An interesting discussion ensued with members of the audience presenting their own approaches to the Bible, ranging from interpreting the Bible as a dynamic text to seeing it as an invitation to moral interpretation, to viewing it as the word of men responding to the divine, or reading it as theology, an aesthetic experience, or as a catalyst to experiencing the Holy Ghost. Levi Peterson suggested reading the Bible not as scripture, but rather as the story of human nature, of people responding to people.

The afternoon session presented an even less formal approach to Mormon literature with an Editors' Roundtable consisting of representatives from the various publishers of Mormon literature. Linda Newell represented both *Dialogue* and the University of Utah Press; Daniel Rector, Signature Books (on the behalf of Lavina Fielding Anderson) and SUNSTONE; Cory Maxwell, Bookcraft; and Jack Lyon, Deseret Book. The panel gave accounts of what type of literature they published, how they solicited their manuscripts, the audience they hoped to reach, and what plans their companies had for future publications.

The attention was focused on Deseret Book and Bookcraft with concerns about the lack of quality fiction produced by these major publishers. Jack Lyon replied, "we can't publish what we don't receive," although he said that Levi Peterson's book, *The Backslider* probably would not have been accepted by Deseret Book. Never-

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theless, he stated that of late Deseret Book has published more quality fiction dealing with controversial matters and "sensitive themes well handled."

Linda Newell, new Mormon Studies editor at the University of Utah Press, said the press is committed to publishing four books a year with the first book (a survey by Jessie Embry on the children of polygamists) soon to be released.

The late afternoon session, "Emerging Voices," included poetry and short story readings by Patty Gunter, Lance Larsen, Pauline Mortensen, and Zina Peterson.

The 1980 awards for outstanding Mormon literature were given out at the luncheon: children's literature, to author Steve

Wunderlie and illustrator Brent Watts for *Marty's World* (Bookcraft); personal and family history book, Myrtle McDonald for *No Regrets* (privately published); personal and family history essay, Paul M. Edwards for "When Will the Little Woman Come Out of the House?" (*John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*); short story, Michael Fillerup for "Hozohoogoo Nanina Doo" (*Dialogue*); poetry, Dennis Marden Clark for "Sunwatch" (*Literature and Belief*); personal essay, Susan Taber for "In Jeopardy Every Hour" (*Dialogue*); religious literature, Dennis Rasmussen for *The Lord's Question* (The Keter Foundation); and novel, Levi Peterson for *The Backslider* (Signature Books).

SUNSPOTS

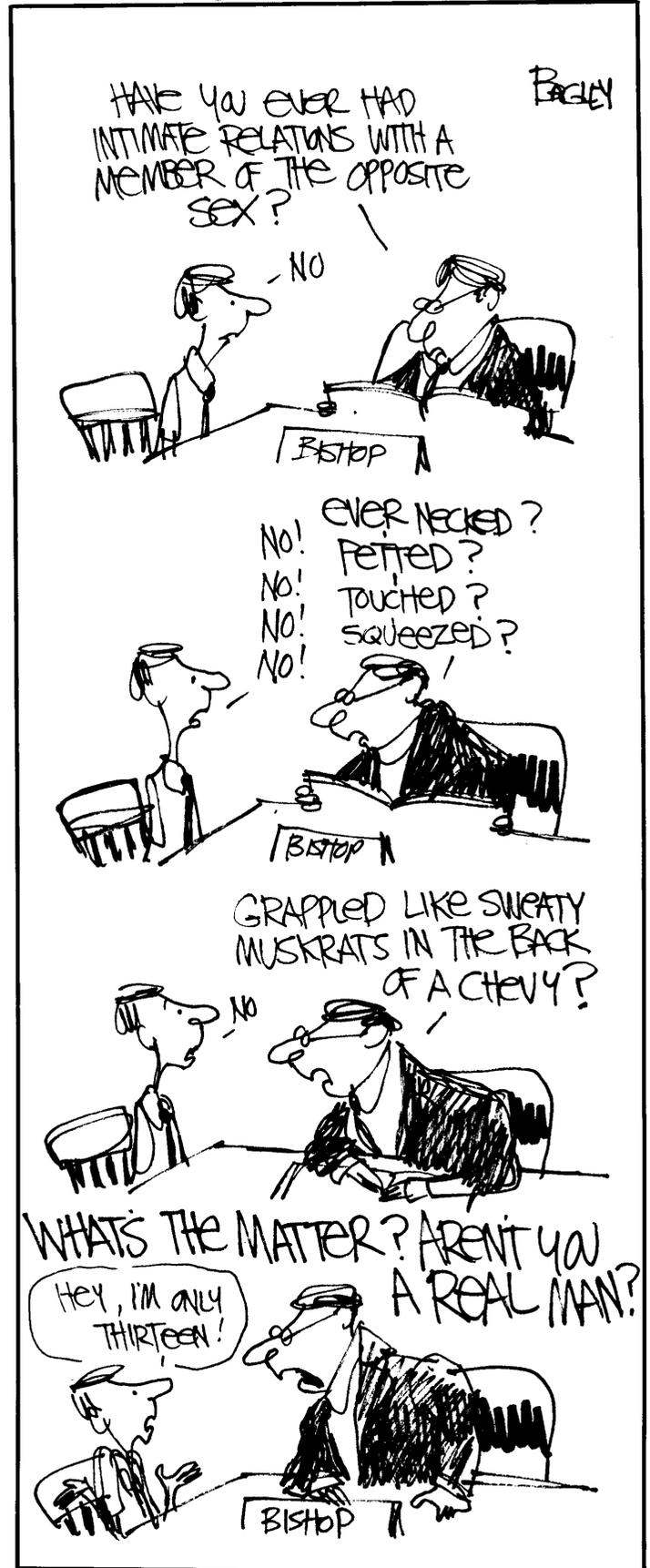
In an effort to reverse declining morality and Church activity at Brigham Young University, each spring students who want to come back the next fall must now turn in a BYU bishop-signed Continuing Ecclesiastical Endorsement form. Because of the late notice school administrators had of the new Board of Trustees policy, they simply revised the form students and bishops sign as part of the university's admissions application. Many students must not have read the Honor Code since they applied, for when the form was released there was a lot of grumbling about the code's language ("I will live and continue to live" . . .) and about the requirement to write a short essay explaining the code. The release statement requiring students' signatures caused the most dissent: "I agree that the university may obtain confidential recommendations from Church leaders or clergy. I hereby waive any right I may have under university policies or federal or state law to examine confidential recommendations received by the university." Many law students turned in unsigned forms, or modified the statement before signing. Some

student ward bishops treated the forms with a casualness that almost defeated the form's intent. One bishop announced that anyone wanting a signed form could pick one up from his counselor after sacrament meeting. School administrators feel frustrated that their efforts to provide a timely form prior to semester end was not appreciated, but they promise a new form next year.



For those who watch the Tabernacle podium with the same diligence as those who watch the Kremlin reviewing stands, there were two changes of note at the April General Conference. First a new row of General Authority red chairs was added, replacing three rows of hardwood benches, to provide seating for eight new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the presidencies of the women's organizations. Second, the pulpit was air conditioned to combat the heat from the television lights.

OXYMORMONS



INTERVIEW

IT FINALLY ALL DEPENDS ON GOD

A Conversation with Martin Marty

Why do nearly all articles dealing with American religion include a quote from Martin E. Marty? Why is the section on American religion in Time's bicentennial edition authored by Marty? Why is his name associated with every major anthology of readings in American religion? Because Marty is perceived as the current dean of American religious history. As Jan Shipps quipped, "When it comes to American religion, Martin Marty is the 'horse's mouth.'"

As the Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Modern Christianity at the University of Chicago, co-editor of Church History, senior editor of Christian Century, author of dozens of books including, Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America, and currently working on a four-volume history of modern American religion, Martin Marty has had many opportunities to study both Mormon people and Mormon scholarship. His 1983 Mormon History Association Tanner Lecture, "Two Integrities: An Address to the Crisis in Mormon Historiography," was published in volume 10 of the Journal of Mormon History.

This interview was conducted by Peggy Fletcher Stack.

What is your general impression of the LDS Church?

Although it's called "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" and may very well be in theological definition a church, I perceive it more as a people. Ethnicity can be real or imaginary. A people is not shaped only because its members are all the same color or whatever, but also by its attachment to certain symbols. First of all, a people have a common story. Let me use an example. I can insult Methodism to an ex-Methodist, or the Christian Reformed tradition to an "ex" like Peter DeVries, the novelist. In these two cases, making fun of the tradition is normal and if I participated it would make no difference. But when a Jewish comic is making fun of Jews, I better not enter in, and

when Mormons are making fun of Mormonism, I better not join in, because people who hardly know what's in their bones find it coming back and defending it. That's what I mean by saying it's a "peoplehood." You never really leave it unless you make strenuous attempts to become something else. A Jew can convert to Christianity, change his or her name and work hard at it every day and in a funny way stop being Jewish. But it is so much of an effort that it almost takes heroism. What's interesting about the Mormons is that they are from a mixed ethnic stock not much different from the rest of the majority and yet they are a distinct people. A story makes a people.

In what ways does a story make a people?

Most of what you pass on, you aren't even conscious of passing on. It's done with gesture and arrangements and behavior. One is socialized into a predisposition to take a revelation seriously. Of course there's very little of a potentially creative character to that. Each generation becomes more and more ossified and fossilized and stereotyped and predictable. So you have to have a cardinal dimension to it. By that I mean, telling a story. For example, of all the places in the Middle East for a people to succeed, Israel would be the least likely. It was constantly beaten down by larger states and yet the Jewish people survived all the others. The only explanation is that they have a story which nobody else did and they live by the story. They taught their children to say "Our father was a wandering Aramaean and he did this and he did this and he did this."

By contrast, the behavioral line by itself is traditional in a deadening sense: "We always did it that way." But the story does just the opposite because the story will always be a misfit in any generation. It's the angularity, the misfit, the rough-cutness of a story against the rest of the world that gives vitality to the people in the story, because they have to make the world come out to match their story. That, for me, is the strength-building aspect of

peoplehood, the potentially creative aspect.

What are your general observations about the Mormon people?

I see a consistent wrestling by all people on all levels of the Mormon community with the total shape of the early events of the Mormon community. There are many different levels of association with it but nobody just dismisses it. Either you consider Joseph's First Vision and the Book of Mormon or you go somewhere else.

Now there are three ways to approach the texts. One is historical. You want to know everything that lies behind the text. The second is literary. What is the character behind the text? What is the vision, the myth, the story? Third, there is the hermeneutical question. What is the world that lies in front of the text? What is the horizon opened by the story? Does this story disclose possible modes of being in the world, relating to the ultimate, the eternal, the divine that you find so convincing that you risk all that you are on it? If it does that, you can't keep somebody from Mormonism and if it doesn't, you can't drive him or her into it.

For me, Jesus is the word and an event. He comes and says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." I don't know whether he said that in Aramaic or Hebrew. I don't know if that is locked into a parable or saga. That knowledge might color the reading a little bit, but finally the questions is: "Does it dislodge me from my conventional modes of thinking, help me confront the divine and rearrange my life? When the Bible says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him," the religious meaning is certainly more powerful than the secular reality.

What do you think of the Book of Mormon?

I think Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon. I think he was a religious genius who had a vision and worked out the vision in that book. I don't doubt that there were sources in back of it, just as there were sources in the Bible. I can't prove this and I'm not really curious about it. I would be if I were a Mormon. Obviously, I'm extremely curious about the New Testament because it relates to my eternal destiny. You have to spend your whole life inside a revelation in order for it to be tried on. For me as a historian, the vital question is: What is the nature of the community that issues from belief in the Book of Mormon? What has been the impact of the community on its environment? Of the environment on this community? These are of a second order

of questions compared to those asked by the believer.

What do you think when people say Mormons aren't Christian?

They can't mean it generically; they have to mean it theologically. Anybody who uses the name *Christ* in the title of their church is somehow a Christian. Here's the remarkable thing about Mormonism: I once heard that Christianity is the only religion that took over the canon of another tradition intact—the Old Testament. But I agree with Jan Shipps that in a way Mormonism has done that with two religions—Judaism and Christianity—by taking the Old and New Testaments into its canon. And just as the thoughtful Christian says, "I didn't stop being a Jew by absorption," so I think the Mormon can't shrug off the Christian story once he absorbs that canon. He may do different things with it, but there are a lot of internal definitions among the Christians, too. So in the generic sense Mormonism is Christian.

However, theologically it deviates so much that it's not hard to understand why all kinds of Christians say no. A

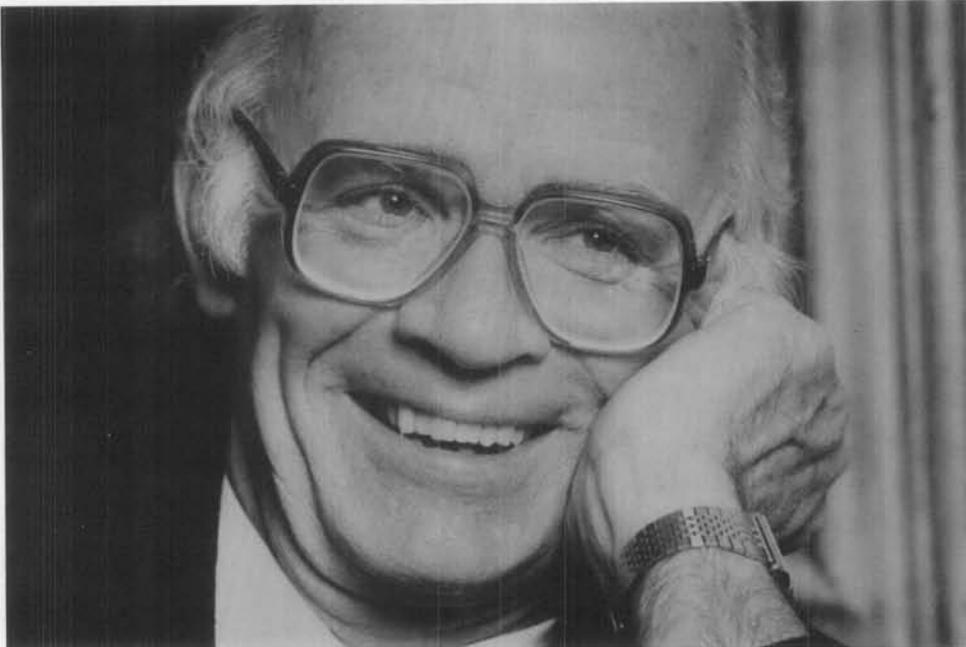
theological system is not like a pearl on a string—if you cut the string, take out a pearl and tie it back together, you have almost the same thing. Instead, most religious systems grow out of a glowing core or center. Everything radiates from it. In my tradition, Lutheranism, the gospel of forgiveness of sin is that glowing core and everything else is corollary to it. In Reformed Protestantism you start with the sovereignty of God, the majesty of God. You revisit every teaching, of course, but they are colored by that root experience. In Mormonism you're very far from the nuance between those two. Therefore, every teaching you touch will have a somewhat different color to it.

In a theological sense, there are ways in which Mormons don't want to be traditional Christians. Some would say the Book of Mormon is the beginning of the problem because

you add to the canon, but an evangelical would say, "No, theoretically the canon is open, too." The major parting line is the idea that one can grow into godhood. There are a lot of Christians now who are ready for progressive views of God—either a finite god or a god that changes—but I don't know of any Christian group that teaches the possibility of becoming gods. To other Christians, that would technically be a kind of personalized pantheism.

Who are your favorite authors?

Naturally someone in my tradition would be heavily influenced by St. Augustine and Martin Luther. I chose to be and I like it, though I have disagreements with both. Eugene Rosenstock-



Huessy, whose life motto was "I respond although I will be changed," is a model I put before myself. I think the Western culture is too shaped by individualistic skepticism, too marked by the male productive aggressive competitive mentality, and not enough by the communal approach to truth. Rosenstock-Huessy teaches that you must listen and change in light of what you hear. I also like José Ortega y Gasset, chiefly for his concept that "I am I and my circumstances," because it has the dialectic of self-involvement—I am I—without egotism, and of circumstantiality without determinism. I am my circumstances, but I am also I.

How about favorite scriptures?

Colossians 1:17: "All things are created in and through and for Christ and in him all

things hold together." I like the idea of a coherence in the midst of what can't be seen. Whenever a Jesus-person says "I just want a simple Jesus," I say, "Well with this vision of the world, you'd better be ready for the whole curriculum and the whole library and the whole phone book and the whole catalogue, if all things hold together." It's a marvelous vision of the world. I also like 2 Corinthians 5:17; in the King James it reads, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature." I like another translation, it is a little more accurate: "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new world." The old order is already gone, the new order already here. These are not merely existential deep passages; these are public order passages. We not only look at the order in the world; we also look at where we fit in.

Can one be a partial believer?

Not really. Real religion's claim on people is a total claim. When I hear a minister say, "Now can we sing it once more with feeling?" I know I am sitting with marginal religion. The real problem with religion is that you can't keep people from it. Most of religion in history has had people killing people, and that is still going on.

What role do dissidents play in a church?

First, no people, agency, institution, nation, or cultural entity can resist idolatry, self-idolization, unless there is pressure and motive to engage in constant self-examination. I can't point to an institution in world history that renews itself unless there is a built-in mechanism for calling things into question. Second, I don't think that usually occurs because of the pressures from without. In fact, outside pressure tends to create an inbred defensiveness and, if anything, one is less free to break ranks while the group is under attack. So any mechanism for preventing self-idolization has to be from within, from those who share the presuppositions of the larger group. For example, the Hebrew prophets sometimes look like dissident agitators for the minority party out of power. At their best they take the covenant that

munity is not living in the light of the covenant.

My hunch is that the kind of dissidents who might serve for revitalization of Mormonism would be those who know the tradition, selectively take it seriously, and then throw it up in the face of the present. The one who can say, "Look, you have denied the intentions of the founders," will have a point. That's probably the role of a dissident in Mormonism; working to keep alive some sense of the inchoateness and ferment and experiment that was present in the early years of the Mormon movement.

Mormons think of themselves as the one true church. How can one cope with that belief in a pluralistic society?

I would begin with the very modest view that none of us can ever settle it. We don't know, inside history, whether the final picture is monistic or pluralistic, but whatever, the answer is outside history. Inside of history the only experience we're going to have is pluralism even if we try to overcome pluralism through coercion. The intellectual awareness that there are a lot of religions in the world and that they are capable of generating good people and good ideas is not at the heart of the problems that issue from relativism.

The problems from relativism come when you sentimentalize the case or are apathetic and say each and every truth is as good as every other truth. These are lazy relativisms. The least satisfying way to approach religion is to make the relativistic point the first point in one's theology, mission, or morality. That takes out all the moral steps. Near the end of Goethe's *Faust* is the line, "I now do know that we can nothing know." That is a marvelous conclusion for the end of life and an awful thing to put under your desk glass as a college freshman.

While there's no superior standpoint by which one can prove that your religion is the only one, the great classic question has always been, "How do I take with utter acts of seriousness the call that's been placed upon me?" And, if I come up with a satisfying response to that, then how do I prevent myself from misrepresenting and mistreating the people who don't hear that call or respond to it? The danger of relativism is a dilettante hold on the search: "There are so many truths out there that there can't be any truth and therefore I won't even look," or, "I'm so tired of pluralism that I will vigorously enforce my own opinion and knock all the others." The human race has shown over the last couple of centuries that one can both cling to a truth and a community and also be open.

Why should anybody study history, other than historians?

Every object of our experience has a past. From five seconds old to five million years old, it doesn't make a difference—it has a past. And while there are ways of understanding objects of experience without reference to the flow of time, yet one of the dimensions of experience that colors our life is the passage through time. We are shaped by our own personal memories, by our own impulses to entertain futures other than those we now have. We have no models for the future that are not shaped in the past. By studying history we may not learn how to predict, maybe not even how to project, but we can learn to identify critical forks in the road, choices not to make. We can greatly enlarge the number of options that we have when we face new problems.

For example, when the Catholic church could no longer act on the definitions it had of the church, because it had historians it could reach back for the "pilgrim church" and for the "people of God" and for the "servant church." These historians could liberate them from the concept of the "fortress church." You can't do that unless somebody is tending the historians' front.

Moreover, the study of history for the non-historian adds greatly to the sense of color and texture of life. People are abstractions but lives aren't abstractions. The study of history is liberating in that if you don't know history you are a victim of recent bad history. History enlarges my human potential; it lets me imagine what it was like to have been someone else and somewhere else.

What about studying religion?

The first purpose of any kind of study is to understand what things are really like. We have a lot of compensatory work to do because the modern world has overlooked what things are really like, so far as the dimension of religion in life is concerned. In the West we have assumed the world is only secular and ruled out the religious option. Therefore we have some very narrow and sterile definitions of what it is to be human. For too many, to be human is to be a kind of computer with legs, a predictable robot image, somebody to be manipulated. The study of religion brings us to terms with a dimension of human life that is not reducible that way. Really religious people step into the zone of the sacred, and are never content with the ordinary again. I get a much richer anthropological model when I study religion: Humans become much more interesting.

The second reason is to enlarge the options

of my own world. The Bantu have a saying: "He who never visits thinks mother is the only cook." By studying religion we learn an awful lot about how to enlarge our own faith. When Thomas Merton talked to Buddhist and Hindu monks and Marxists he didn't become Hindu or Buddhist or Marxist, but he brought to his Catholicism understandings of the contemplative life and the active life that he hadn't had earlier. If we study religion, we will likely have sympathy for other ways of thinking about things than we did before.

Third, religion is a very interesting subject. A certain number of people should do things just because they are interesting. When I turned to the study of religion what engaged my imagination was something in whose name there had been jihads and crusades and cold wars and childbirth and death and ritual and ceremony and meanness and goodness and all that.

Finally, religion is something that touches the most traumatic and promising things of life—the 3 A.M. things, and the what-do-you-pass-on-to-your-children things, and the what-do-you-die-for things, and the what-are-you-corrupting-the-name-of things. It requires far more of people to study these things than Persian rugs or paintings by Courbet.

The typical American says something like, "We're all in different boats heading for the same shore," or, "It doesn't make any difference what you believe, so long as you believe." Well, it certainly does matter. For me, the most satisfying approach to understanding the implications of your beliefs is to confront the revelation that confronts you. The really strong people of the twentieth century are always connected to a particular faith: Gandhi, Martin Buber, Pope John, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa. The Pope is not marginal to Catholicism; Martin Luther King was to preach a black Baptist sermon the night he was killed. They're in it all their lives. They all also have an empathy for at least one other faith: Gandhi knew something about Jesus, King knew something about Hinduism. How do you know what you've got is any good if you don't know something about another religion? "Whoever knows only one religion knows no religion." And so people wrestle with these issues; they become profoundly ecumenical human beings. And because of the depths of their faith they touch other faiths.

As far as the ultimate, salvation, it seems to me you do all you can do and then just turn it back to God. I've always admired those Christians who act as if it all depended on them and then live with the serenity that it finally all depends on God.

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