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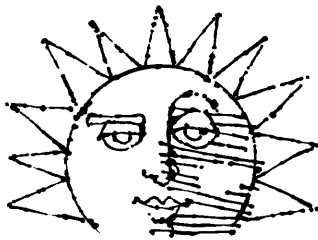


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2	<i>Our Readers</i>	READERS FORUM
8	<i>Wendell Berry</i>	FEATURES
		MEN AND WOMEN IN SEARCH OF COMMON GROUND Personal Growth Requires Strong Roots
13	<i>Anthony A. Hutchinson</i>	PROPHETIC FOREKNOWLEDGE: HOPE AND FULFILLMENT IN AN INSPIRED COMMUNITY
21	<i>Linda Sillitoe</i>	THE SPIRAL STAIR Honorable Mention, 1985 D.K. Brown Fiction Contest
45	<i>Charles E. Curran</i>	INTERVIEW: CREATIVE FIDELITY: KEEPING THE RELIGION A LIVING TRADITION
20	<i>R. A. Christmas</i>	POEM: Self-portrait as Brigham Young
12	<i>Julia E. Barrett</i>	POEM: Water Lily Child
		COLUMNS
48	<i>Carol Cornwall Madsen</i>	IN MEMORIAM Camilla Eyring Kimball
4	<i>Elbert Eugene Peck</i>	FROM THE EDITOR Finding God At Church
5	<i>Lowell Bennion</i>	TURNING THE TIME OVER TO What it Means to be a Christian
28	<i>David Knowlton</i>	STRANGERS AND FRIENDS Stolen Identity
30	<i>Marvin Rytting</i>	PARADOXES AND PERPLEXITIES The Kindest Cut
		REVIEWS
32	<i>Dian Saderup</i>	YOU CAN COME HOME AGAIN <i>Leaving Home</i> by Mary Bradford
33	<i>M. Guy Bishop</i>	THE KNIGHTS IN SHINING ARMOR <i>They Are My Friends</i> by William Hartley
34	<i>Levi S. Peterson</i>	FAMOUS WRITERS TELLS AMAZING STORIES <i>News of the World</i> by Ron Carlson
		NEWS
36	<i>Sunstone Correspondents</i>	HISTORY ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 150 YEARS IN GREAT BRITAIN INDEPENDENT BYU STUDENT NEWSPAPER BEGINS STRONG SECOND YEAR MORMON CRITIC AGREES TO ONE-TIME DEBATE CONFERENCE ASKS QUESTIONS WHILE HOFMANN RAISES NEW ONES

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READERS FORUM

AN IMPLIED MISREADING

DORICE ELLIOTT'S "The Implied Reader of Church Related Publications" (SUNSTONE, 11:2) was seriously flawed in two respects.

First, by omitting *BYU Studies* from consideration, Elliott skewed her conclusions about "the 'ideal' or 'implied' Church member envisioned by Church administrators and leaders." *BYU Studies* shows a sophistication of vocabulary, a level of literary competence, and an approach which indicates an implied reader with at least as high a level of liberal arts education as SUNSTONE, *Dialogue* and *Exponent II*. Yet, *BYU Studies* is published by the centerpiece of the Church's higher education system.

This seriously compromises Elliott's conclusions that "the institutional church prefers those members who are *not* as educated" as the reader of SUNSTONE *et al.* Perhaps the Church finds itself in an ambivalent position *vis-a-vis* its best-educated members—but *ambivalence* is far different from the opposed stance which Elliott implies is the case.

Second, Elliott poorly chose the sample issue of the *Ensign*. As Elliott noted, the May 1985 issue "was specifically geared to women and featured the Relief Society," yet she concluded that "the implied reader of the *Ensign* . . . is female," as if somehow her choice of a woman-oriented issue was irrelevant! The disclaimer that she "also closely examined several other issues" which purportedly substantiated her claim is lame at best, considering that all of her examples came from the woman-oriented issue.

Proper sampling is a key issue in research design, and a slight difference in the choice of a sample can result in vastly different conclusions. Analyzing the "Conference" issues, with their preponderance of doctrinal pieces, could lead one to conclude that the implied reader of the *Ensign* is *male*, if, as Elliott wrote, women are traditionally less interested in doctrinal pieces (which, in my experience, is quite mistaken anyway). Elliott should have analyzed a random sample of several issues for each publication; she could have picked a more representative issue of the *Ensign*. I make such an issue of this, not because it matters very much what the gender of the implied *Ensign* reader is, not because *BYU Studies* necessarily exemplifies the Church's attitude towards higher education, and not because I dislike

what Elliott has tried to do. Rather, I would like to see much *more* analysis of LDS character—but done *better*. To critique LDS culture in a skewed way provokes a bad reaction to all critique. The ease with which she educated us in the theory of the implied reader shows that Elliott is capable of superior analyses, and I hope that we can read them soon.

Mark Edward Koltko
Newark, New Jersey

Dorice Elliott replies:

My paper on the implied reader as published in SUNSTONE is an excerpted version of a much longer paper which had many more details to substantiate my conclusions about the magazines I discuss, and included analyses of other issues of those magazines; however, these conclusions are still not meant to be other than tentative. My purpose in the paper was not to do an exhaustive content analysis of the magazines, but rather to introduce and explain the concept of the implied reader using the magazines only as examples. My selection of magazines to use for examples had necessarily to be limited. I did want, for example, to look at *BYU Studies* and *BYU Today*, among others, and that would indeed have made for a fuller presentation (but then I'd probably have a book rather than a SUNSTONE article). I might also mention that although *BYU Studies* is also an intellectual organ directed at Church members, it is a publication of BYU, not of the Church, and I think to equate the two in this case is not valid.

CHARITY VS. CLARITY

IN ELBERT PECK'S recent editorial, "Dumas Malone: Scholarship With Charity" (SUNSTONE 11:2), Peck seemed to be subtly chastising the LDS historical department for not providing public access to the papers of prominent Mormons and to be encouraging Mormon publishers who are committed to scholarship. But at the same time the editorial seemed to approve of hermeneutical phenomenology—or to side with Messrs. Midgley, Bohn, et al. in the ongoing dialogue about the writing of Mormon history. Peck called for "gracious honesty," "charitable history," and "tolerance" in examining the past—all of which are admirable except as buzz words for validat-

ing indifference on the part of historians to data which may, in their minds, tarnish the image of cherished individuals and organizations.

Peck writes that as a boy he knew that "Jefferson was a great man," that Malone "believed in the greatness of individuals," as reflected in his biography of Jefferson, and that Malone judged Jefferson "against the background of the age in which he lived" to show his stature. Peck's comment to the contrary, Malone's reverence for Jefferson makes him myopic, expressing hostility toward opponents of Jefferson, for example—labeling them dishonest and slanderous. The chapter in Volume Four of *Jefferson and His Time*, which deals with the important miscegenation issue, is titled "Torrent of Slander." It is in this chapter especially that Malone's inability to see beyond his own preconception of the past, or what he may perceive to be in the best interests of the future (his own, perhaps) is most apparent, and his defense of Jefferson most unconvincing. Malone writes that "the fact that this story [of Jefferson's alleged sexual behavior] was not expressly and publicly denied proves nothing whatsoever," and that "without referring to it explicitly" Jefferson probably denied it "in private a few years later" (4:216). Jefferson's "striking" physical resemblance to his mulatto slaves is blamed on Jefferson's father-in-law and

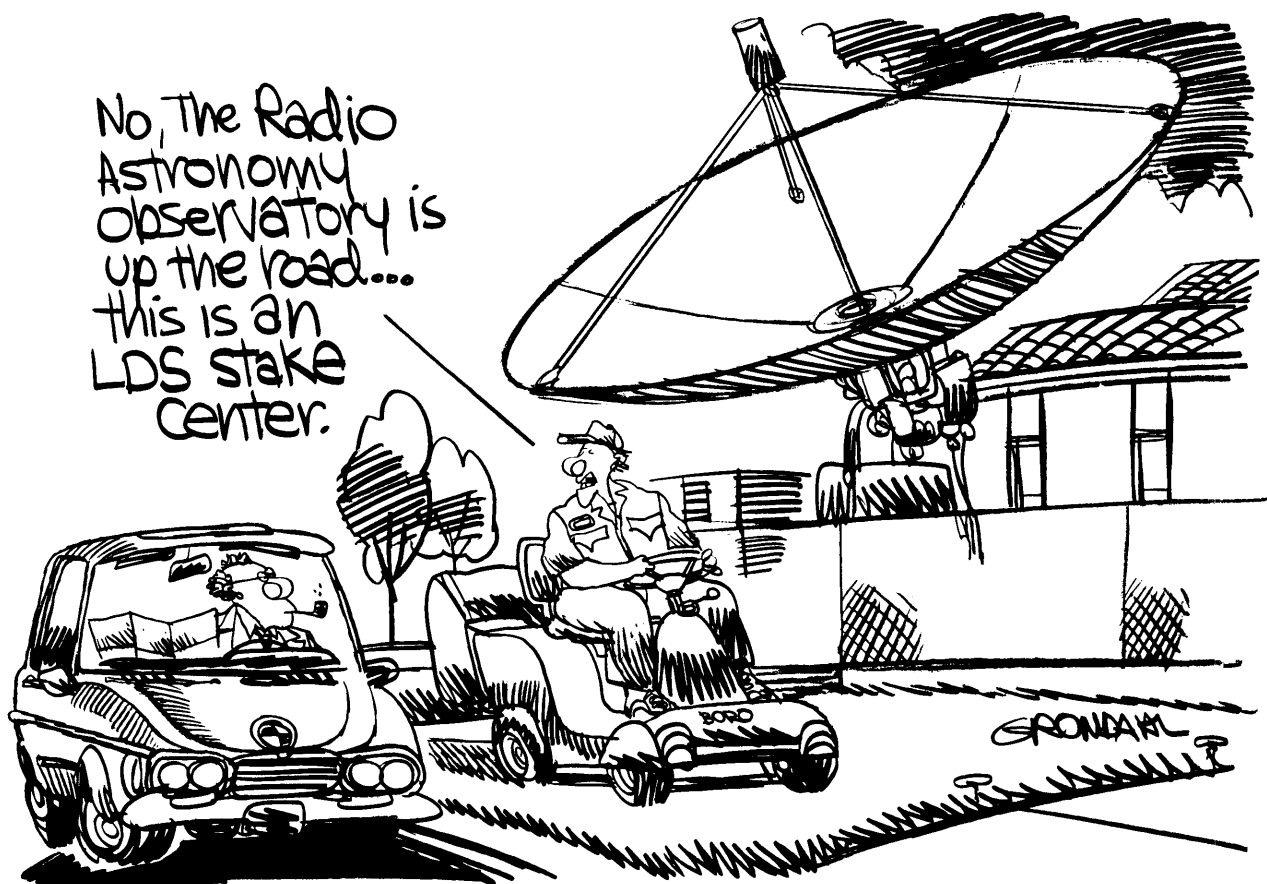
nephews (4:494-8). Malone grudgingly admits that Jefferson had an affair with the wife of a friend (4:217), but the idea of physical attraction to blacks is unthinkable to Malone.

The issue Peck seems to be discussing is, of course, not Jefferson at all, but Joseph Smith and his biographers, especially Fawn Brodie. He says that Malone "opened [his] eyes to the possibilities for Mormon history." Later in the editorial the "issues of writing history," "faithful vs. honest history," and "unflattering facts about individuals [he] held as models" are specifically mentioned. It seems that what is being justified is a reverence for leaders and history which glamorizes the accomplishments of the elite. Just as Heidegger supported Hitler and his interpretation of history, so this kind of approach can only encourage people to look the other way when, for example, the LDS historical department instigates the most restrictive policies ever and the *Church News* reports these changes under the headline, "Historical Records Now More Accessible" (25 April 1987). Historians in the Church need to overcome the temptation to write about history as they would like it to have been, or to court the favor of those in positions of authority to the detriment of candid disclosure—or to give support to a philosophical position which encourages authoritarianism and hero worship.

Ron Priddis
Salt Lake City, Utah

Elbert Peck replies:

Mr. Priddis misunderstood. By charitable history I do not mean glamorizing "the accomplishments of the elite," but providing a good *understanding* of the dynamics of a person's life and choices—the times in which they lived, a knowledge of their biases, values, vices, strengths, etc.—which permits charity. Obtaining that understanding *requires* the honest application of the tools of the historical profession without any cover up. It is the sentimental biographies and superhuman images that cause me to lose charity. A better understanding of past Church leaders gives me realistic expectations of Church administration and increases empathy for their incredible task. But, as Mr. Priddis' book on BYU occasionally illustrates, that *human* knowledge without being put in an understanding context can merely be the pursuit of the sensational. There *are* great people; I want to understand their greatness because I feel a call in me, as most people do, to realize a latent greatness in me. Finally, the quest for us to be of one heart includes not only loving those around us but also cultivating charity throughout time.



FINDING GOD AT CHURCH

By Elbert Eugene Peck

A RECENT ARTICLE IN *Modern Liturgy* entitled "What Is Your Worship Saying?" discussed how various forms of church worship teach people differently how to "sense God in the world." The possibilities of religious worship were impressed upon me one recent compulsive Sunday in London.

The day began with an early morning walk accompanied only by the unhurried sights and sounds of the city awakening on Sunday and my undisciplined thoughts covering the trivial to the cosmic. Then, sitting in the empty St. Paul's cathedral with only an occasional anonymous footstep echoing from the stone walls, I thought how men and women use and abuse religion and its structures. "Lord God of hosts, be with us yet," I prayed. Later in the day I returned with friends to St. Paul's for an evening prior to attending the Mormon History Association's closing devotional at a church nearby. In between, I attended three other churches that made me consider the role of worship in LDS services.

The first service was at St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Perhaps it was the morning meditations, or a deeper spiritual hunger, but I entered the chapel as a true seeker of God with the reverence of Moses on Sinai. In any event, the church's architecture, ushers and congregational quiet would have at least ensured that I acted reverent when I entered. As I contemplated the centuries-old prayers and devotions included in the liturgy *Service Book*, I felt an increased yearning for a oneness with God.

Since St. Martin's is Anglican, I was familiar with its Catholic liturgy and was able to lose myself in the service. The words to the hymns expressed the longings of my soul and I sang them with conviction. The same was true with the congregational recitations; when I joined in speaking the words, "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you through our own fault, in thought and word and deed . . . forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may serve you in the newness of life . . ." I was genuinely contrite and yearned

for reconciliation with God. Even speaking the Nicene Creed which concisely recounts the life, death and glory of Christ, with a Catholic perspective, moved me to a deeper love of the Savior. Together, all this uncovered my need to renew my commitment to him at the time of communion.



In all, the sermon, the well-crafted words, the hymns and the world-famous choir—the high structure—helped focus my soul on God. When it was ended and everyone shook hands with those around them I felt a genuine love and spiritual community with these people. I left reluctantly, feeling cleaner, holier and stronger.

I walked a block north to the Society of Friends meeting which had just begun and entered and began silently meditating. Quaker meetings also were not new to me. In fact, when I really want revelation I attend one. In stark contrast to St. Martin's, Quakers reject ceremony and doctrines in their search for truth. Their Meeting for Worship has little formal structure—no opening prayer or hymns or prepared sermons. Simply an hour of silent individual meditation, occasionally punctuated by brief thoughts shared by members wearing common, everyday clothing.

As I understand it, the Quaker meditation model has three parts. Cumulatively, I find they cultivate a communion with God and others and produce personal and group revela-

tion: 1) clearing the mind of clamor and worldly distractions; 2) delving deep, centering in, or surrendering to commune with the inner light, the Light of Christ or the voice within; 3) joining with others in community. As I arrive and sit down I am invariably anxious and fidgety. While sitting in the silence, multitudes of thoughts enter and leave my mind, urgent forgotten "to do" items surface and resurface. I get frustrated and think I'll never connect and want to leave, but that is socially unacceptable. I am here for the hour. Eventually, the quiet in the room seeps into my soul. I am calmer, the day-to-day concerns diminish and a few thoughts, really impressions, begin to manifest, yes, like the dews distilling. I began to ponder on them and see connections and feel a growing sureness—a confidence in God's working in my life. I have always left a Quaker meeting excited about new sublime revelations to me, and also with a calmness that continues throughout the day and sometimes longer which affects things from relationships to freeway driving. The Friends call this meditation "waiting on the Lord" and the patient confidence in divine Providence "way will out."

I am now an advocate of the proverb "Be still and know that I am God." I return to Quaker services because I lack the internal discipline to be still long enough to clear the clutter. A T.S. Eliot poem describes the still, never moving summer landscape of a Virginia river where "ever moving iron thoughts come with me and go with me." That happened to me again with the Friends in London.

I then took the Underground and caught the last part of the LDS single's ward services at the Hyde Park chapel. As the truism says, you can go anywhere and the Church is the same—people talking in the foyer and halls, and a general sense of beehive commotion with auxiliary and priesthood errands being attended to. This is definitely a twentieth-century church and I embrace it for that. However, while the Saints undeniably find themselves—and God—in the community, in LDS services I rarely meet God like I did that day in London.

There are things in the other churches Mormons don't want to adopt, but I think we need to place more value on private meditations in general, and collectively learn how to use ceremony to better prepare our hearts for the Sacrament and how to encourage us to read the law written in our hearts. There are, of course, underrealized contemplative forms in Mormon worship; if we are going to increase in holiness as a people we must as a people (at church) increase our direct communion with God in addition to attending to the other tasks of building his Kingdom.

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

Lowell L. Bennion

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

LATTER-DAY SAINTS are accused by some critics of being unchristian. This does not concern me. What is of real concern to me is whether we Latter-day Saints believe and act like disciples of Jesus. Hence, I welcome this opportunity to meditate on what it means to be a Christian.

GRACE

A Christian acknowledges and is profoundly grateful for the grace of Deity. By grace, I mean unmerited gifts freely given to mankind. Not enough is said in the Church about grace, but the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is full of grace. We do not earn all of our blessings by faith and works. All of our blessings don't come by obedience to law.

Three great acts of creation are wrought by Deity on our behalf—the spiritual creation in the pre-earth life, the mortal creation, and the resurrection. Christ is playing a leading role in the latter two. Life in all three of its stages is a gift. You and I were incapable of creating ourselves either on earth or in the resurrection.

The gift of the Holy Ghost, the light of Christ, and the Spirit of God come to us freely. We have to open our minds and hearts to receive them, but they are gifts of love nonetheless. The priesthood, the very power of God, is also a precious gift. It is Deity's to give.

One of the greatest gifts of grace is forgiveness of sins. True, we must repent to be in a frame of mind to receive and be healed by

forgiveness. But as the word itself illustrates, giving is always involved in forgiveness whether between persons or between Deity and humans.

The whole gospel teaching has come to us as a gift of Deity through Jesus and the prophets. I didn't create or originate faith, repentance, meekness, humility, integrity, or love, nor did you.

Grace plays a large role in both Catholic and Protestant faiths. In Catholicism, it comes to the Christian through the sacraments of the church, which have been called vehicles of divine grace. In some Protestant faiths, salvation is entirely a matter of grace. When salvation is conceived in terms of redemption from death and sin, it is natural and logical to give Christ full credit for it, following the lead of the Apostle Paul:

For By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8, 9).

Salvation for Latter-day Saints includes redemption from sin and death, but it also has a very positive meaning—it is a process of self realization of one's full potential as a human being and a child of God. It is to increase in knowledge and wisdom, in integrity and love, in the divine attributes of Deity.

Life is a gift of grace. What we do with that gift is our responsibility and opportunity. Grace precedes, accompanies, and follows the faith and works of the individual; but human growth is unthinkable without human effort.

ATONEMENT

A Christian recognizes and accepts Christ's central role in the atonement. I like the literal meaning of the word "atonement"; namely "at/one/ment." Man's goal is to become one with the Father and the Son; to bring his life in

agreement with Deity's. It begins with knowledge:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:2).

To become one with the Father and Son, we must overcome three things: mortality, sin, and ignorance because they are immortal, sinless, and intelligent. Christ is the great mediator lifting us towards the Father. He died to bring to pass the resurrection. How I don't know, nor am I in a hurry to find out. Christ lived and died to inspire us with the faith to overcome sin. He makes us aware of our sins and can give us the faith unto repentance that Amulek taught (see Alma 34:14-16). And, finally, Jesus taught and exemplified the real values of life as no other person has done. He revealed the character and will of God. He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

We as Christians should be grateful for Christ and his atonement, but I think we ought to concentrate on overcoming ignorance and living as Jesus would have us live. The remainder of this article is on how to live the Christian life.

CONCERN FOR PEOPLE

Jesus had two supreme loyalties in life: to his Father in Heaven and to human beings. He turned to his Heavenly Father for direction and to renew his strength so that he could continue his teaching and healing and eventually dying for his fellow human beings.

He was particularly interested in the alienated of society—the poor, the blind, the deaf and dumb, the lame, and the sinner. He comforted the poor, fed the hungry, healed the leper, liberated the possessed, even raised the dead to comfort the bereaved.

Much to the consternation of scribes and Pharisees, he dined with publicans and sinners. In so doing, he placed the well-being of persons even above the sacred law of Moses. To the woman caught in adultery who according to the law should be stoned, Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:3-11.) Jesus came not to destroy the law but to make it serve life. In the Prodigal Son parable, Jesus has the father run out to meet the wayward son, fall on his neck and kiss him and celebrate his homecoming because

It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found (Luke 15:32).

For Jesus, the sacred sabbath was not an end in itself. Man was not made for the sabbath, but

the sabbath was made for man. It is a day to do good, to heal, to save life. I think it safe to say that man was not made for the gospel, but the gospel was made for man. Faith, repentance, humility, and love derive their meaning and values because they build life—the lives of individuals and society.

A person, to be a Christian, must place the highest value on persons and his or her relationship to them. Nothing matters ultimately in any setting—in marriage, the family, school, the Church, the community, the world—except what happens to persons. Even the Church is an instrument to bless people. It is not an end in itself. Man was not made for the Church, but the Church was made for people. We should not serve the Church, but rather people through the Church. We don't teach lessons; we teach people. The statement "to give a lesson" has the wrong emphasis. The purpose of Sunday School is not to teach the gospel but to teach *people* the gospel.

The loyalty of a Christian is to persons—to Deity and to human beings. His loyalty goes beyond his own family and church community. Like Jesus, she is concerned with Jew and Gentile, with people in the larger community and in the Third World. He is willing to share his time and means with people anywhere who need his interest and help. She is interested in the retarded, the mentally ill, the elderly, the poor, the lonely, the "sinner." He does not judge others. She will serve some of these people as her strength permits.

Alma understood the human emphasis in the Christian gospel when he stated one's readiness to follow Christ:

... and now as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called His people and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort ... what have you against being baptised. ... (See Mosiah 18:8-10).

A SENSE OF VALUES

Human life has an economic base. Food, clothing, and shelter are essential to survival. Humans are creatures of desire and wants, who crave comfort, health care, and the amenities of life. We must come to terms with the economic aspects of our existence. This is a problem of all people in all cultures. It was obviously a thing of interest to Jesus, who had things to say about it:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon

earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.

For where your treasure is your heart will be also. . . .

No man can serve two masters. . . .

Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. (Matt. 6:9-14)

Be not anxious about your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. . . . But seek ye *first* the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you (Matt. 6:25, 33).

Take heed, he said, beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth (Luke 12:15).

Jesus also commented on how hard it was for a rich man to enter heaven and the folly of building bigger and bigger barns to accommodate one's possessions (See Luke 12:16-21).

A Christian's highest ambition and first love will not be the amassing of a fortune or even the making of money. She will know that the Kingdom of God lies within a person's feelings and thoughts and in her relations to Deity and to human beings. He will place human and spiritual values above material ones.

A Christian will not, for example, live in luxury while a third of mankind go to bed hungry. He will not be wasteful nor extravagant when he could be helping people with work or otherwise. She will not buy luxury cars or a home for show or to feed her vanity. Plain living and high thinking are becoming to a Christian.

A Christian will not make money by injuring others. He will not deceive people about investments, promote tobacco, liquor, and drug sales, encourage gambling, misrepresent a car, house or a sale. A Christian will heed Jesus' words:

For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Mark 8:36)

There are four virtues that Jesus stressed repeatedly and which I think are the essence of Christian living: Humility, faith in God, integrity, and love. A Christian will cultivate them all the days of his or her life.

The first Beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in Spirit," means humility. How appropriate that this should be the first because it signifies teachability, a sense of a person's spiritual need, a dependence on God, a hunger and thirst

after truth and righteousness. Humility leads to recognition of sin and error and a desire to repent which is the second Beatitude. "Blessed are they that mourn" doesn't mean "Blessed are they that mourn for the dead," it means "Blessed are they who mourn for their sins and mistakes and are penitent," and that follows naturally from humility.

We don't learn gospel principles like we do the times tables: $2 \times 2 = 4$. Our understanding of each principle can and should grow with experience. Honesty, for example, for a child may mean not to lie or steal; for an adult it also means integrity, being true to one's values and convictions. It means to act with singleness of purpose; not to be seen of men. Humility remains the foundation of a vital, growing religious-ethical life. These gospel terms are just words and their meaning has to grow with us and with experience.

FAITH

Jesus had implicit faith in his heavenly Father and taught us to exercise the same kind of faith.

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? (Matt. 6:30)

Or what man is there of you, if his son ask bread, will give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matt. 6:9-11)

Anticipating the cross, Jesus said,

Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done (Luke 22:42).

Faith in God doesn't mean that we always have implicit trust that he will grant us our every desire. It means, rather, that we trust his judgment, that we believe God is on the side of truth, justice, and mercy. A disciple of Jesus can also say: "Father, thy will, not mine, be done." With the ancient prophet, Habakkuk, he or she can say,

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength. . . . (Habakkuk 3:17-19; see also

Psalm 73.)

A Christian does not walk through life alone.

INTEGRITY

There are two virtues, two ethical principles, that embrace all the virtues of life. They are integrity and love. Integrity embraces the more personal virtues of humility, repentance, sincerity, honesty, and moral courage. Love encompasses the more social virtues of tolerance, kindness, mercy, forgiveness, helpfulness. Love presupposes integrity, and integrity needs the direction love can give it. If you want to simplify your ethical life, work hard on the virtues of integrity and love and you'll have eternal life.

Integrity means oneness, wholeness, unity in the inner life. A person of integrity is free of guile, pretense, deceit, and hypocrisy. His life is an open book. She has conviction and values clearly defined, and she is true to them in every walk of life.

Integrity creates meekness or self-control, gives peace of mind, and a sense of strength. A person of integrity knows no fear, no shame, no guilt. A Christian is true to herself, to fellow humans, and to Deity. His conscience is clear. She can—other things being equal—sleep at night.

LOVE

Love is the central principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is clear from many statements of the Savior. You will recall Christ's reply to the lawyer who asked:

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. 22:36, 40).

Jesus didn't originate these two commandments. They are found separately in the Mosaic Law, in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. But he brought them together and made them the central focus of the religious life. Shortly before his death, he said to the Twelve:

By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:35).

Following his resurrection, he found Peter and others who had returned to their fishing. Jesus asked Peter:

Lovest me more than these [the fish they had caught]? Yea, Lord, said Peter, thou

knowest that I love thee. Jesus said *Feed my lambs.*

Three times, Jesus asked Peter, "lovest thou me?" and then said, "Feed my sheep."

We could cite other sayings of Jesus which illustrate the central role of love in his life and teaching, but let us turn to the role of love in the life of a Christian.

It is interesting to me that a human being's greatest need after food, clothing, and shelter is to be accepted, needed, wanted, and loved by other human beings. To give and receive love is the deepest of all human needs. Isn't it interesting that it is central and basic to the gospel? Verily the gospel of Jesus Christ is congenial to human nature. It fulfills human nature.

What do we mean by love? There are at least three kinds of love between people—romance, friendship, and love of neighbor or Christian love. Romantic love tends to be possessive, demanding, self-concerned. Friendship at its best is reciprocal. Christian love is outgoing, selfless, centered in the other person.

A Christian's love is unconditional, not earned, graciously given. It is universal: If you don't love all people you may not love any of them, in a Christian sense. A Christian loves all people and every or any individual—an authoritarian husband, a nagging wife, a disobedient son, a thief in the night. The real test of Christian love is if you can forgive an enemy who has despitely used you and hurt you with or without cause. A Christian can and will love people he or she doesn't like, disagrees with, finds troublesome. To love someone in a Christian spirit, one need only wish him well and to seek well-being.

PERFECTION

I find that a lot of Latter-day Saints are trying to be perfect. I hear a lot of preaching about perfection and sometimes a stake conference is built around the theme "Be ye perfect even as your father in heaven is perfect." My high priests quorum sometimes talks as if they were near perfection. Even if you'd like to be perfect, I suggest seeking perfection is not a wise way to go about it. It is not the good way to live a Christian life.

I have five reasons why I think it's foolish, unwise, unchristian, almost, to seek perfection as a goal in this life. The first reason is that I don't think we know what perfection is. I associate perfection with God and Christ but I don't understand them fully and so I don't really know what overall perfection is or what perfection in anything is.

Secondly, I think you are bound to fail if you try to be perfect as a human being. You will have a sense of guilt and a sense of shame. You will be burdened with failure.

Thirdly, you might mistakenly think you are succeeding. Jesus tells the parable of the two men who went out to pray, the publican and the Pharisee. The Pharisee said, I thank thee God that I am not as other men are. I fast twice in the week and give alms to the poor. I'm not even as this publican here. But the publican would not so much look unto heaven. He beat upon his chest and said, Lord have mercy upon me, a sinner. Jesus said the latter was justified and he that exalteth himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted (Luke 18:10-14).

The fourth reason for not seeking perfection is that wonderful Mormon doctrine of eternal progression. Progression means the act of stepping forward, eternally. I think that is the vision of Mormons, that we may grow eternally under the tutelage of our Father in heaven and Christ and enlarge our lives forevermore. This is certainly true in this life and I hope in the next.

Finally, people who strive to be perfect put themselves at the center of things; they are too conscious of themselves. I had a fine student who spent half his time keeping track of himself. He had three big loose-leaf notebooks and jotted down every thought he had and every feeling. He reduced his life to his own parameters. I am very fond of Jesus' wisdom when he said,

He that shall save his life shall lose it:
and he that loseth his life for my sake
shall find it (Matt. 10:39)

I think the only time you experience life as a whole and all of its potentiality is when you give yourself to a cause that's greater than yourself, that's outside yourself.

CONCLUSION

May I summarize by saying a Christian believes in the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ on his or her behalf and gratefully acknowledges the abundant grace of the Savior. I think a Christian has to have real feeling for the Savior. Feelings of worship, loyalty, reverence and friendship. Like Jesus, his highest loyalty on earth is to persons. The Church and the gospel are here for her to build the lives of human beings; her own included, but not singled out for preference.

A Christian is not caught up in a quest for material possessions. He or she believes in plain and simple living and high thinking.

Above all, a disciple of Jesus cultivates humility, lives by faith, holds fast to her integrity and makes love the central core of her life. For him, love is a verb and must find expression in service to others.

Lord, help us learn to be true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Obsolescence of High-Tech Relationships

MEN AND WOMEN IN SEARCH OF COMMON GROUND

By Wendell Berry

The domestic joys, the daily housework or business, the building of houses—they are not phantasms . . . they have weight and form and location . . .

—WALT WHITMAN, *To Think of Time*

I AM NOT AN AUTHORITY ON MEN OR WOMEN or any of the possible connections between them. In sexual matters I am an amateur, in both the ordinary and the literal senses of that word. I speak about them only because I am concerned about them; I am concerned about them only because I am involved in them; I am involved in them, apparently, only because I am a human, a qualification for which I deserve no credit.

I do not believe, moreover, that any individual *can* be an authority on the present subject. The common ground between men and women can only be defined by community authority. Individually, we may desire it and think about it, but we are not going to occupy it if we do not arrive there together.

That we have not arrived there, that we apparently are not very near to doing so, is acknowledged by the title of the Jung Institute of San Francisco symposium where I first gave this paper, "Men and Women in Search of Common Ground." And that a symposium so entitled should be held acknowledges implicitly that we are not happy in our exile. The specific cause of our unhappiness, I assume, is that relationships between men and women are now too often extremely tentative and temporary, whereas we would like them to be sound and permanent.

Apparently, it is in the nature of all human relationships to aspire to be permanent. To propose temporariness as a goal in such relationships is to bring them under the rule of aims and standards that prevent them from beginning. Neither marriage,

nor kinship, nor friendship, nor neighborhood can exist with a life expectancy that is merely convenient.

To see that such connections aspire to permanence, we do not have to look farther than popular songs in which people sill speak of loving each other "forever." We now understand, of course, that in this circumstance the word "forever" is not to be trusted. It may mean only "for a few years" or "for a while" or even "until tomorrow morning." And we should not be surprised to realize that if the word "forever" cannot be trusted in this circumstance, then the word "love" cannot be trusted either.

This, as we know, was often true before our own time, though in our time it seems easier than before to say "I will love you forever" and to mean nothing by it. It is possible for such words to be used cynically—that is, they may be *intended* to mean nothing—but I doubt that they are often used with such simple hypocrisy. People continue to use them, I think, because they want those feelings to have a transferable value, like good words or good money. They cannot bear for sex to be "just sex," any more than they can bear for family life to be just reproduction or for friendship to be just a mutually convenient exchange of goods and services.

The questions that I want to address here, then, are: Why are sexual and other human relationships now so impermanent? And under what conditions might they become permanent?

It cannot be without significance that this division is occurring at a time when division has become our characteristic mode of thinking and acting. Everywhere we look now, the axework of division is going on. We see ourselves more and more as divided from each other, from nature, and from what our traditions define as human nature. The world is now full of nations, races, interests, groups, and movements of all sorts, most of them unable to define their relations to each other except in terms of division and opposition. The poor human body itself has been conceptually hacked to pieces and parceled out like a bureaucracy. Brain and brawn, left brain and right brain, stomach, hands, heart, and genitals have all been set up in competition against each other, each supported by its standing army of advocates,

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press agents, and merchants. In such a time, it is not surprising that the stresses that naturally, and perhaps desirably, occur between the sexes should result in the same sort of division with the same sort of doctrinal justification.

This condition of division is one that we suffer from and complain about, yet it is a condition that we promote by our ambitions and desires and justify by our jargon of “self-fulfillment.” Each of us, we say, is supposed to “realize his or her full potential as an individual.” It is as if the whole two hundred million of us were saying with Coriolanus:

I'll never

Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand

As if a man were author of himself

And knew no other kin. (V, iii, 34-37)

By “instinct” he means the love of family, community, and country. In Shakespeare’s time, this “instinct” was understood to be the human norm—the definition of humanity, or a large part of that definition. When Coriolanus speaks these lines, he identifies himself, not as “odd,” but as monstrous, a *danger* to family, community, and country. He identifies himself, that is, as an individual prepared to act alone and without the restraint of reverence, fidelity, or love. Shakespeare is at one with his tradition in understanding that such a person acted inevitably, not as the “author of himself,” but as the author of tragic consequences both for himself and for other people.

The problem, of course, is that we are *not* the authors of ourselves. That we are not is a religious perception, but it is also a biological and social one. Each of us has had many authors, and each of us is engaged, for better or worse, in that same authorship. We could say that the human race is a great coauthorship in which we are collaborating with God and nature in the making of ourselves and one another. From this there is no escape. We may collaborate either well or poorly, or we may refuse to collaborate, but even to refuse to collaborate is to exert an influence and to affect the quality of the product. This is only a way of saying that by ourselves we have no meaning and no dignity; by ourselves we are outside the human definition, outside our identity. “More and more,” Mary Catharine Bateson wrote in *With a Daughter’s Eye*, “it has seemed to me that the idea of an individual, the idea that there is someone to be known, separate from the relationships, is simply an error.”

Some time ago I was with Wes Jackson, wandering among the experimental plots at his home and workplace, the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas. We stopped by one plot that had been planted in various densities of population. Wes pointed to a Maximilian sunflower growing alone, apart from the others, and said, “There is a plant that has ‘realized its full potential as an individual.’” And clearly it had: It had grown very tall; it had put out many long branches heavily laden with blossoms—and the branches had broken off, or they had grown too long and too heavy. The plant had indeed realized its full potential as an individual, but it had failed as a Maximilian sunflower. We could say that its full potential as an individual *was* this failure. It failed

because it had lived outside an important part of its definition, which consists of *both* its individuality and its community. A part of its properly realizable potential lay in its community, not in itself.

In making a metaphor of this sunflower, I do not mean to deny the value or the virtue of a *proper* degree of independence in the character and economy of an individual, nor do I mean to deny the conflicts that occur between individuals and communities. Those conflicts belong to our definition, too, and are probably as necessary as they are troublesome. I do mean to say that the conflicts are not everything, and that to make conflict—the so-called “jungle law”—the basis of social or economic doctrine is extremely dangerous. A part of our definition is our common ground, and a part of it is sharing and mutually enjoying our common ground. Undoubtedly, also, since we are humans, a part of our definition is a recurring contest over the common ground: Who shall describe its boundaries, occupy it, use it, or own it? But such contests obviously can be carried too far, so that they become destructive both of the commonality of the common ground and of the ground itself.

The danger of the phrase “common ground” is that it is likely to be meant as no more than a metaphor. I am *not* using it as a metaphor; I mean by it the actual ground that is shared by whatever group we may be talking about—the human race, a nation, a community, or a household. If we use the term only as a metaphor, then our thinking will not be robustly circumstantial and historical, as it needs to be, but only a weak, clear broth of ideas and feelings.

Marriage, for example, is talked about most of the time as if it were only a “human relationship” between a wife and a husband. A good marriage is likely to be explained as the result of mutually satisfactory adjustments of thoughts and feelings—a “deep” and complicated mental condition. That is surely true for some couples some of the time, but, as a general understanding of marriage, it is inadequate and probably unworkable. It is far too much a thing of the mind and, for that reason, is not to be trusted. “God guard me,” Yeats wrote, “from those thoughts men think / In the mind alone . . .”

Yeats, who took seriously the principle of incarnation, elaborated this idea in his essay on the Japanese Noh plays, in which he says that “we only believe in those thoughts which have been conceived not in the brain but in the whole body.” But we need a broader concept yet, for a marriage involves more than just the bodies and minds of a man and a woman. It involves locality, human circumstance, and duration. There is a strong possibility that the basic human sexual unity is composed of a man and a woman (bodies and minds), plus their history together, plus their kin and descendants, plus their place in the world with its economy and history, plus their natural neighborhood, plus their human community with its memories, satisfactions, expectations, and hopes.

By describing it in such a way, we begin to understand marriage as the insistently practical union that it is. We begin to

understand it, that is, as it is represented in the traditional marriage ceremony, those vows being only a more circumstantial and practical way of saying what the popular songs say dreamily and easily: "I will love you forever"—a statement that, in this world, inescapably leads to practical requirements and consequences because it proposes survival as a goal. Indeed, marriage is a union much more than practical, for it looks both to our survival as a species and to the survival of our definition as human beings—that is, as creatures who make promises and keep them, who care devotedly and faithfully for one another, who care properly for the gifts in this world.

The business of humanity is undoubtedly survival in this complex sense—a necessary, difficult, and entirely fascinating job of work. We have in us deeply planted instructions—personal, cultural, and natural—to survive, and we do not need much experience to inform us that we cannot survive alone. The smallest possible "survival unit," indeed, appears to be the universe. At any rate, the ability of an organism to survive outside the universe has yet to be demonstrated. Inside it, everything happens *in concert*; not a breath is drawn but by the grace of an inconceivable series of vital connections joining an inconceivable multiplicity of created things in an inconceivable unity. But of course it is preposterous for a mere individual human to espouse the universe—a possibility that is purely mental, and productive of nothing but talk. On the other hand, it may be that our marriages, kinships, friendships, neighborhoods, and all our forms and acts of homemaking are the rites by which we solemnize and enact our union with the universe. These ways are practical, proper, available to everybody, and they can provide for the safekeeping of the small acreages of the universe that have been entrusted to us. Moreover, they give the word "love" its only chance to mean, for only they can give it a history, a community, and a place. Only in such ways can love become flesh and do its worldly work. For example, a marriage without a place, a household, has nothing to show for itself. Without a history of some length, it does not know what it means. Without a community to exert a shaping pressure around it. It may explode because of the pressure inside it.

These ways of marriage, kinship, friendship, and neighborhood surround us with forbiddings; they are forms of bondage and involved in our humanity is always the wish to escape. We may be obliged to look on this wish as necessary, for, as I have just implied, these unions are partly shaped by internal pressure. But involved in our humanity also is the warning that we can escape only into loneliness and meaninglessness. Our choice may be between a small, human-sized meaning and a vast meaninglessness, or between the freedom of our virtues and the freedom of our vices. It is only in these bonds that our individuality has a use and a worth; it is only to the people who know us, love us, and depend on us that we are indispensable as the persons we uniquely are. In our industrial society, in which people insist so fervently on their value and their freedom "as individuals," individuals are seen more and more as "units" by their govern-

ments, employers, and suppliers. They live, that is, under the rule of the interchangeability of parts: What one person can do, another person can do just as well or a newer person can do better. Separate from the relationships, there is nobody to be known; people become, as they say and feel, nobodies.

It is plain that, under the rule of the industrial economy, humans, at least as individuals, are well advanced in a kind of obsolescence. Among those who have achieved even a modest success according to the industrial formula, the human body has been almost entirely replaced by machines and by a shrinking population of manual laborers. For enormous numbers of people now, the only physical activity that they cannot delegate to machines or menials, who will presumably do it more to their satisfaction, is sexual activity. For many, the only necessary physical labor is that of childbirth.

According to the industrial formula, the ideal human residence (from the Latin *residere*, "to sit back" or "remain sitting") is one on which the residents do not work. The house is built, equipped, decorated, and provisioned by other people, by strangers. In it, the married couple practice as few as possible of the disciplines of household or homestead. Their domestic labor consists principally of buying things, putting things away, and throwing things away, but it is understood that it is "best" to have even those jobs done by an "inferior" person, and the ultimate industrial ideal is a "home" in which *everything* would be done by pushing buttons. In such a "home," a married couple are mates, sexually, legally, and socially, but they are not helpmates; they do nothing useful either together or for each other. According to the ideal, work should be done *away* from home. When such spouses say to each other, "I will love you forever," the meaning of their words is seriously impaired by their circumstances; they are speaking in the presence of so little that they have done and made. Their history together is essentially placeless; it has no visible or tangible incarnation. They have only themselves in view.

In such circumstance, the obsolescence of the body is inevitable, and this is implicitly acknowledged by the existence of the "physical fitness movement." Back in the era of the body, when women and men were physically useful as well as physically attractive to one another, physical fitness was simply a condition. Little conscious attention was given to it; it was a by-product of useful work. Now an obsessive attention has been fixed upon it. Physical fitness has become extremely mental; once free, it has become expensive, an industry—just as sexual attractiveness, once the result of physical vigor and useful work, has now become an industry. The history of "sexual liberation" has been a history of increasing bondage to corporations.

Now the human mind appears to be following the human body into obsolescence. Increasingly, jobs that once were done by the minds of individual humans are done by computers—and by governments and experts. Dr. William C. DeVries, the current superstar of industrial heart replacement, can blithely assure a reporter that "the general society is not very well informed to

make those decisions [as to the imposition of restraints on medical experiments on human patients], and that's why the medical society or the government who has a wider range of view comes in to make those decisions" (*Louisville Courier-Journal*, 3 February 1985). Thus we may benefit from the "miracles" of modern medical science on the condition that we delegate all moral and critical authority in such matters to the doctors and the government. We may save our bodies by losing our minds, just as, according to another set of experts, we may save our minds by forsaking our bodies. Computer thought is exactly the sort that Yeats warned us against; it is made possible by the assumption that thought occurs "in the mind alone" and that the mind, therefore, is an excerptable and isolatable human function, which can be set aside from all else that is human, reduced to pure process, and so imitated by a machine. But in fact we know that the *human* mind is not distinguishable from what it knows and that what it knows comes from or is radically conditioned by its embodied life in this world. A machine, therefore, cannot be a mind or be like a mind; it can only *replace* a mind.

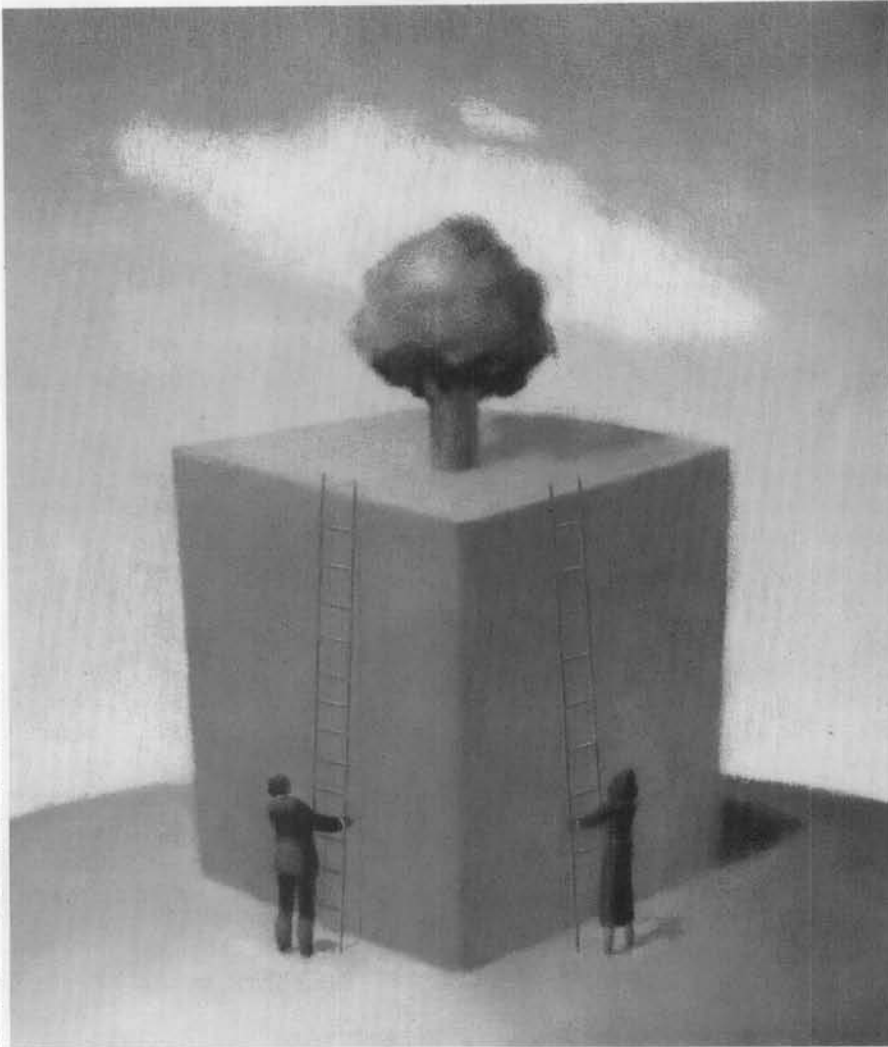
We know, too, that these mechanical substitutions are part of a long established process. The industrial economy has made its way among us by a process of division, degradation, and then replacement. It is only after we have been divided against each other that work and the products of work can be degraded; it is only after work and its products have been degraded that workers can be replaced by machines. Only when thought has been degraded can a mind be replaced by a machine, or a society or experts, or a government.

It is true, furthermore, that, in this process of industrialization, what is free is invariably replaced by a substitute that is costly. Bodily health as the result of useful work, for instance, is or was free, whereas industrial medicine, which has flourished upon the uselessness of the body, is damagingly and heartlessly expensive.

In the time of the usefulness of the body, when the body became useless it died, and death was understood as a kind of healing; industrial medicine looks upon death as a disease that calls for increasingly expensive cures.

Similarly, in preindustrial country towns and city neighborhoods, the people who needed each other lived close to each other. This proximity was free, and it provided many benefits that were either free or comparatively cheap. This simple proximity has been destroyed and replaced by communications and transportation industries that are, again, enormously expensive and destructive, as well as extremely vulnerable to disruption.

Insofar as we reside in the industrial economy, our obsolescence, both as individual and as humankind, is fast growing upon us. But we cannot regret, or, indeed, even know that this is true without knowing and naming those never-to-be-official institutions that alone have the power to reestablish us in our true estate and identity: marriage, family, household, friendship, neighborhood, community. For these to have an effective existence, they must be located in the world and in time. So located, they have the power to establish us in



our human identity because they are not merely institutions in a public, abstract sense, like the organized institutions but are also private conditions. They are the conditions in which a human is complete, body and mind, because completely necessary and needed.

When we live within these human enclosures, we escape the tyrannical doctrine of the interchangeability of parts; in these enclosures, we live as members, each in its own identity necessary to the others. When our spouse or child, friend or neighbor is in need or in trouble, we do not deal with them by means of a computer, for we know that, with them, we must not think without feeling. We do not help them by sending a machine, for we know that, with them, a machine cannot represent us. We

know that, when they need us, we must go and offer ourselves, body and mind, as we are. As members, moreover, we are useless and worse than useless to each other if we do not care properly for the ground that is common to us.

It is only in these trying circumstances that human love is given its chance to have meaning, for it is only in these circumstances that it can be born out in deeds through time—"even," to

quote Shakespeare again, "to the edge of doom"—and thus prove itself true by fulfilling its true term.

In these circumstances, in place and in time, the sexes will find their common ground and be somewhat harmoniously rejoined, not by some resolution of conflict and power, but by proving indispensable to one another, as in fact they are.

WATER LILY CHILD

You were June's rose-child
until spring ended
and our short summer began.
But now I see you are of July,
the water lily month,
for you are clearly
a water lily now,
no more to be kissed in petal folds
of your perfumed baby neck,
dark lashes flitting like butterflies
across the sky of your eyes.

That morning when you changed
from rose to lily,
so suddenly, in the night
while I slept smiling,
I tried to reach out
over the water,
to catch you, net you into shore,
but even my breath,
thin as porcelain,
made little waves
that widened and carried you further
in its anxious rippling.

"Please don't go," I whispered,
but you, lovely water lily,
lovely lotus of the pond,
my water lily child,
had already said goodbye.
So waxen-clear, unbruised,
you had to drift.

I remember rose days—
you asked me to walk
with you to school

up the hard hill
together hand in hand
then you saw your friends,
skipped ahead, waved goodbye,
and I walked home,
wondering at my tears;
I sat at your feet
on your narrow attic bed,
in cozy twilight or in storm,
we read, talked, I tucked you in,
kissed you, said, "I love you,"
turned out the light.

And then—I was at your feet again,
kneeling as you shimmered above,
blooming and unfolding,
your radiant face, the center blush,
stained arms like petals

and I, slowly rising to meet your eyes,
fingers stumbling on twenty-four pearls,
each loop closing over, finishing,
to clothe you in your wedding dress.

I felt alone and old,
wondered if my mother
felt the same when she saw me
transformed into the same bloom.
When she looks at me, sometimes,
I see myself reflected,
growing smaller, sailing fainter
in watery ponds of her aging eyes.

Perhaps I can remember you as rose
for I shall keep scented petals
in a painted ginger jar.

JULIA E. BARRETT

 Walking by Faith and Not by Sight

PROPHETIC FOREKNOWLEDGE: HOPE AND FULFILLMENT IN AN INSPIRED COMMUNITY

By Anthony A. Hutchinson

I
 “For who knows what is good for man while
 he lives the few days of his vain life,
 which he passes like a shadow? For who
 can tell man what will be after him
 under the sun?” –Ecclesiastes 6:12

I have always been impressed by the Book of Mormon story where the older sons of Lehi begin beating their younger brother Nephi. In frustration at an initial setback in obtaining sacred records they had been commanded to retrieve, and in anger at the failure of Nephi’s own unflinchingly optimistic plans, they proceed to “smite” him until an angel appears and scolds them. Understandably, the brothers stop the beating, upon which the angel departs. Immediately following the angel’s departure, Laman and Lemuel again begin to murmur, and question the angel’s optimism. At the end of the passage it seems clear that, whatever the outcome of Nephi’s trip to Jerusalem for the records, sooner or later the brothers will be pounding Nephi again (as it turns out, it is sooner). (See 1 Nephi 3:20-31.)

I am always struck by the speed with which the elder brothers return to their old ways after the angelophany—it makes you wonder whether it simply stems from their absolutely depraved characters, or from the fact that even a revelation given by a visible angel guarantees no certitude in religious matters. Perhaps such an experience is so out of the ordinary and removed from “real” life that it can easily be rationalized away, particularly if it entails moral or behavioral imperatives that are hard to bear. As a result, such experiences generally do not provide us with any day-to-day

certainty in spiritual matters that we do not already implicitly possess by means of our own faith and what Alma calls our “desire to believe” (Alma 32:27). Like Ebenezer Scrooge, we might all too easily try to rid our minds or memories of Marley’s ghost by declaring that it is merely the figment of our own fevered imagination, “a spot of mustard, a bit of undigested beef.”

The LDS missionary lesson plans teach that we came to this earth in order to grow through the exercise of moral free agency, a precondition of which is our learning to walk here on earth by faith and not by sight. If this is so (and I believe it is), then it seems natural that nearly everything we might have to deal with here will be, in some way or another, ambiguous. And whether this stems from the Plan of Salvation, or from the fact, as C.S. Lewis puts it, that the gods are unable to meet us mortals face to face until we have faces,¹ the fact remains that life as we know it is ambiguous.

Such a confession sits somewhat uncomfortably in our religious tradition, since we frequently assert that the gospel is the wellspring of absolute truth and certitude. These assertions help us express our faith, our personal experience of God, and our deepest feelings about the things that we believe matter most. But they sometimes limit our sympathy for the ambiguities that others have had to live with. By extension, we tend to ignore our own need to walk by faith rather by sight in this sometimes hard-to-understand world.

Ambiguity, however, is merely one of the epistemological prerequisites for moral free agency. Without some standards of judgment, no judgment can be made; as a result, there can be no real choice without standards. In the Latter-day Saint tradition, the theological concept of revelation counter-balances the moral and doctrinal agnosticism that might result from the ambiguity which we all see about us, and which is particularly evident in a pluralistic society such as our own. While this role of revelation

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as a source of certainty stems in part from the emotions experienced by those who believe they have received revelation (something Joseph Smith said we all *should* receive), the rhetoric we employ here sometimes raises false expectations about revelation and the people who receive it.

For example, many people sustain a view of prophecy that may be best described as a “prophetic television,” i.e., foresight where a prophet is supposedly graced with a panoramic and detailed view of “coming attractions” hundreds or even thousands of years in the future. Though this idea is usually held by its adherents to have its roots in certain scriptural passages, both biblical and LDS, I think it is an inadequate and misleading image of prophetic foreknowledge. This is not to deny that a possibility of such prophecy exists, but only to point out that not a single example in history of the exercise of such a power can be demonstrated. To deny with the Book of Mormon heresiarch Korihor the possibility of prophetic foreknowledge on the grounds that “no man can know anything which is to come” (Alma 30:13) denies God’s ability to grant people such knowledge; however, to point out the lack of any clear example of the prophetic television does not deny God’s power but simply demonstrates the ambiguity of mortality. While a Korihor-like denial robs the prophetic witness of its value and authority, the claims I make sustain this value and authority by attempting to better understand of what they consist.



II

“Behold, they say to me, ‘Where is Yahweh’s word? Let it come!’” —Jeremiah 17:15

The prophetic television model does not find support in a careful reading of the Bible. A remarkable consensus on this point exists among biblical scholars, both those who would deny the possibility of miraculous foreknowledge and those who confess the possibility of miraculously bestowed objective knowledge of the future. This consensus is phrased well by Raymond E. Brown:

... this conception of prophecy as prediction of the distant future has disappeared from most serious scholarship today, and it is widely recognized that the [New Testament] “fulfillment” of the [Old Testament] involved much that the [Old Testament] writers did not foresee at all. The [Old Testament] prophets were primarily concerned with addressing God’s challenge to their own times. If they spoke about the future, it was in broad terms of what would happen if this challenge was accepted or

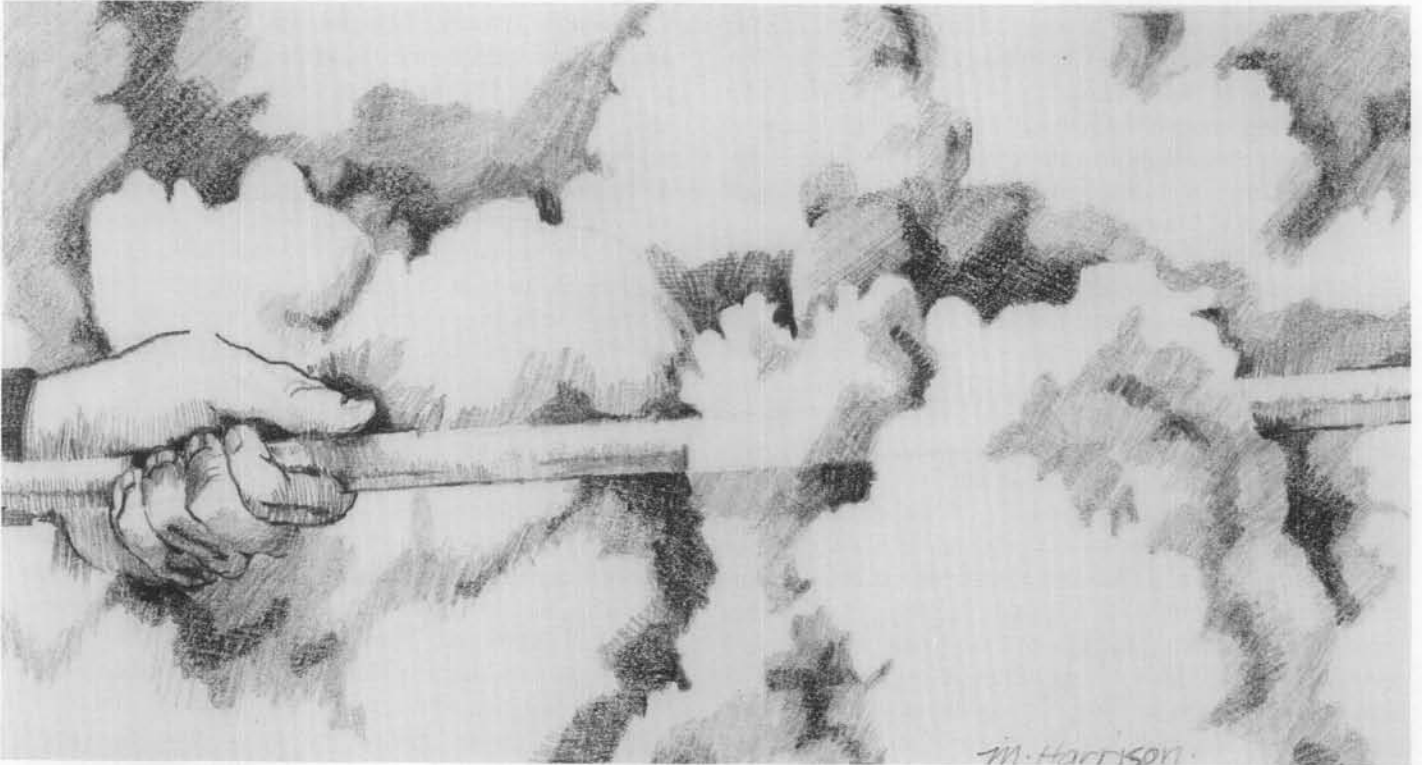
rejected. While they sometimes preached a “messianic” deliverance (i.e., deliverance through one *anointed* as God’s representative, thus a reigning king or even a priest), there is no evidence that they foresaw with precision even a single detail in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.²

To be sure, many New Testament and LDS sources regard their experiences as the fulfillment of the Old Testament. But such claims generally rely upon selective readings of the Old Testament. This filtering process partially succeeds in giving the various Old Testament passages a limping semblance of having “foreseen” a specific New Testament or Mormon event. Nonetheless, the passages at issue often have a clearer, more immediate literal sense related to their Old Testament setting than they have in their New Testament or LDS interpretations.

For example, Isaiah 7:14—the oracle concerning a salvific future figure named Immanuel—comes up in practically any discussion where Christians provide examples of supposed Old Testament predictions about details in the life of Jesus. However, a careful reading of the passage with full attention to the actual semantic range of the words used in the Hebrew text reveals that the passage has a more immediate sense in the context of the Book of Isaiah itself. The historical situation behind the oracle, as revealed in its narrative setting, indicates this. At the time the author was writing, the northern kingdom of Israel has joined with the kingdom of Aram (i.e., Syria) in rebelling against the new Assyrian monarch Tiglath-Pileser III. The two kingdoms jointly attacked Judah in an attempt to force it to join the Anti-Assyrian league in rebellion. In Isaiah 7, Ahaz is apparently seriously reconsidering his policy of neutrality regarding the league, since he is portrayed as being accosted by Isaiah as he inspects the waterworks of Jerusalem, a crucial factor in the city’s ability to withstand any Syro-Ephraimitic siege. Note in the passage the function the Immanuel oracle serves within this narrative setting:

1 In the days of Ahaz, king of Judah, son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, Rezin, king of Aram, and Pekah, king of Israel, went up to attack Jerusalem, but they were not able to conquer it. 2 When it was reported to the house of David that Aram was encamped in Ephraim, the heart of the king and the heart of his people trembled, as the trees of the forest tremble in the wind. 3 Then Yahweh said to Isaiah: Go out to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shearjashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway of the launderer’s field. 4 Then say to him, “Take care you remain tranquil and do not fear; let not your heart be faint before these two stumps of smoldering brands [the blazing anger of Rezin and the Arameans, and of the son of Ramaliah], because of the mischief that Aram [Ephraim and the son of Remaliah] plots against you, saying, “Let us go up to Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves, and establish the son of Tabeel as king there.” Thus says the Lord Yahweh:

This shall not stand; it shall not be.
For Damascus is the head of Aram,
and Rezin is the head of Damascus;
Samaria is the head of Ephraim,



and Remaliah's son the head of Samaria.

⁹ But within sixty-five years,
Ephraim will be crushed, no longer a nation.
Unless your faith is firm,
you shall not be firm!

¹⁰ Again, Yahweh spoke to Ahaz: ¹¹ Ask for a sign from Yahweh, your God; let it be as deep as Sheol, or as high as the sky. ¹² But Ahaz answered, "I will not tempt Yahweh!" ¹³ Then he said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary men, must you also weary my God? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman is pregnant, and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall be eating curds and honey so that he may know to reject evil and choose good. ¹⁶ For before the lad knows to reject evil and choose good, the land of those two kings whom you dread shall be deserted.³

As is well known, this passage is beset with numerous sticky points of interpretation.⁴ Yet from the flow of the narrative here we can tell that Isaiah intended the Immanuel oracle as a sign to Ahaz of the reliability of Isaiah's counsel concerning the Syro-Ephramitic war and the prior issue concerning Ahaz's policy toward Assyria. The "young woman" who is seen as carrying the ideal king of the future is not identified in the passage as a virgin, since the Hebrew word *almâ* does not mean "virgin," but merely a young woman of marriageable age. Given this situation, it seems probable that Isaiah was expecting the events envisioned in the oracle to occur in the near future, at least during his or Ahaz's lifetime. Perhaps with the birth and reign of good king Hezekiah, the hope for an anointed future David which the oracle expressed found at least partial fulfillment.

The Old Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures made a somewhat paraphrased rendition of Isaiah 7:14, and heightened the miraculous element in the oracle by translating the word *almâ* by the Greek word *parthenos*. In the Hebrew text, Isaiah looked at a pregnant young woman and awesomely knew the child's gender and future name; in contrast, the Greek translation has him looking at a young woman who is not even pregnant yet, indeed, who has not even had intercourse, and yet Isaiah foretells her pregnancy as well as the gender and name of the child to be born. This quirk of translation allows the Greek-speaking author of Matthew's Gospel look at this verse (in Greek) and see its "fulfillment" in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, whom Matthew and Luke regarded as the only son of God from his conception in his mother's womb, hence, being "of a virgin born."

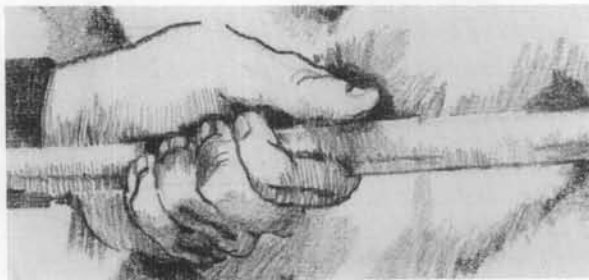
What we see here is a passage, divinely inspired and expressing deep hope, but perhaps not "panning out" quite as the human author of the words had perhaps expected, or at least in the way that he expressed it in the passage itself. Yet as these words underwent a historically conditioned evolution of text and language, they were reinterpreted and accommodated in light of these changes, as well as in light of subsequent events seen by later believers as acts of a loving God who fulfills his promises.

When one looks at the use of Old Testament prophetic scripture in the New Testament, there are dozens, if not hundreds, of examples of the same process at work. A simple example is found in Hosea 11:1, which is quoted in Matthew 2:15. Hosea makes a clear poetic reference to the Exodus in these terms: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt." Matthew, ever on the lookout for possible parallels between Jesus and the salvation saga of ancient Israel, appears to see in Hosea's words actual foreknowledge of the flight into Egypt

story that Matthew narrates: "This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son.'" This very ambiguity of Old Testament prophecy itself, coupled with the developing interpretive tradition which sees fulfillment by hindsight (*not* by foresight), accounts in large part for the Jewish reaction to Christian claims about Jesus, and subsequent Jewish skepticism toward Christian use of the Old Testament.

The frustration of some of the prophets at the failure of some of their prophecies to pan out as expected is demonstrated in at least one Old Testament text, Jeremiah 17:15, quoted at the beginning of this section. There, Jeremiah complains to the Lord because of the taunts he has suffered at the hands of his detractors who have heard his predictions, and have not yet seen them come to pass. Jeremiah challenges the Lord to bring to pass the word which he had given to Jeremiah.

The same sort of dynamic seems to be present in the New Testament, with the whole question of the delay of the Parousia, and the fading of early Christian apocalypticism in the mainstream traditions of the New Testament.⁵ If any of the material put onto Jesus's lips by the Synoptic Gospels in the so-called "Little Apocalypse" (Mark 13 and Matthew 24) actually reflects sayings of the historical Jesus, it seems likely that the general pattern of only uncertain knowledge about the future applies even to the mortal Jesus of Nazareth. In these passages, Jesus is portrayed as having an apocalyptic expectation of the immediate consummation of history, reflected also in the early writings of Paul (see 1 Thess. 4:15).



III

"Deny not the spirit of revelation,
nor the spirit of prophecy,
for wo unto him that denieth these things."

—Doctrine and Covenants 11:25

Many Latter-day Saints might believe that although the Bible's pattern of knowledge of the future is at best ambiguous, we have clear examples of certain prophetic foreknowledge in the Restoration. But careful examination here yields the same results, and in probably more definitive form, since many of the source documents have not been lost in the course of millennia of textual transmission. In fact, the classic example used in LDS and RLDS apologetics to demonstrate Joseph Smith's prophetic foresight, the 1832 Prophecy on War (D&C 87), if anything tends to invalidate the model.

When the revelation was given on 25 December 1832 at or near Kirtland, it clearly referred to the immediate political uncertainties provoked by the 1832 American Nullification Crisis. The 1832 Tariff Act, which favored Northern industrial interests at the expense of Southern agricultural concerns, because of the harm it wrought on foreign, primarily British, trade, had been declared null and void by the South Carolina legislature. President Andrew Jackson had responded by calling upon federal troops to suppress rebellion in the state. In the midst of this crisis, Joseph Smith received the Prophecy on War. In the preface to the revelation in the *History of the Church*, he explicitly established the Nullification Crisis as the background for the revelation (HC 1:301). In the revelation, he describes "wars that will *shortly come to pass*, beginning with the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls; And the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place" (vv. 1-2, emphasis added). Thus, he seems to state that the Nullification Crisis will result in world war. This becomes explicit in the next verse, which originally read thus: "For behold, the Southern States will call upon other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations, and *thus* war shall be poured out upon all nations (v. 3, emphasis added). Clearly a causal relationship, demonstrated by the word "thus," is seen here between the rebellion of South Carolina, the southern states' appeal to Britain, and a war between all nations which would engulf the whole world, destroying the fabric of society (slaves raise up in war against their masters in v. 4; American Indians—the "remnants" of v. 5—vex the gentiles in v. 5) and culminating in the apocalyptic "consumption decreed" which makes "a full end of all nations" (v. 6) before the second coming of the Lord. Note that there is no hint in the text that could conceivably suggest that slavery itself would be at issue in the rebellion of South Carolina. For Smith in 1832, the prophecy predicted the immediate onset of a series of cataclysmic events preparatory to the Parousia.

Shortly after the revelation was recorded, the Nullification Crisis was peacefully resolved, and ceased to threaten the "death and misery of many souls" or any such string of events. Although the revelation apparently circulated among the Prophet's intimates, it was shelved, never to be published in his lifetime. But the revelation had privately circulated, and Smith apparently felt that the Lord had spoken to him in the matter, though the prophecy itself had seemingly fallen on its face. (Indeed, he might have understood well Jeremiah's complaint with the Lord mentioned above!) Yet the revelation remained alive in Smith's imagination, although understandably he did not give out the text in public. Outside of the circle of his nearest intimates he only referred to the general idea of impending general war contained in the revelation, rather than to its failed timetable and scenario of coming events. In the *Elders' Journal* in 1837 (vol. 1, number 2, p. 28), for example, Smith wrote,

Now we would recommend to the Saints scattered abroad, that they make all possible exertions to gather themselves together unto those places; as peace, verily thus saith the

Lord, peace shall soon be taken from the earth, and it has already began [sic] to be taken; for a lying spirit has gone out upon all the face of the earth and shall perplex the nations, and shall stur [sic] them up to anger against one another: for behold saith the Lord, very fierce and terrible war is near at hand, even at your doors, therefore make haste saith the Lord O ye my people, and gather yourselves together and be at peace among yourselves, or there shall be no safty [sic] for you.

Here Joseph has clearly not given up on what his detractors might call a “failed” or “false” prophecy, although he does not cite the specific text of the prophecy, perhaps because he sees that its details indeed did not come to pass as expected.

Joseph’s further reflection upon the revelation, coupled with subsequent events, produced a change in his interpretation of the revelation near the end of his life. Since Joseph believed that the prophecy came to him from heaven, and that every word of the Lord would *eventually* be fulfilled, he was able, even encouraged, to reinterpret the words that he himself had earlier penned, and radically change their meaning.

On 2 April 1843, while giving some private items of instruction to close followers at Benjamin F. Johnson’s home in Ramus, Illinois, the Prophet recounted a dream he had had on the evening of 9 March 1843, in which an old man, fleeing from mobs, begged Smith for assistance from the Nauvoo Legion, received a somewhat guarded reply from Smith, and added, running from Smith’s sight, that he himself could place any desired number of men at arms at Smith’s disposal should the latter decide that his case was just. The interpretation of the dream, given by Orson Pratt apparently with Smith’s endorsement, followed: the government of the United States which had turned a deaf ear to the Saints’ pleas for protection, attacked by Great Britain, would beg for Smith’s aid in securing the Western territories by means of the Legion. After Pratt’s interpretation, Smith stated the following,

I prophesy, in the Name of the Lord God that the commencement of bloodshed as preparatory to the coming of the son of man. [sic] will commence in South Carolina, –(it probably may come through the slave trade.)– this the voice declared to me. [sic] while I was praying earnestly on the subject 25 December 1832.⁶

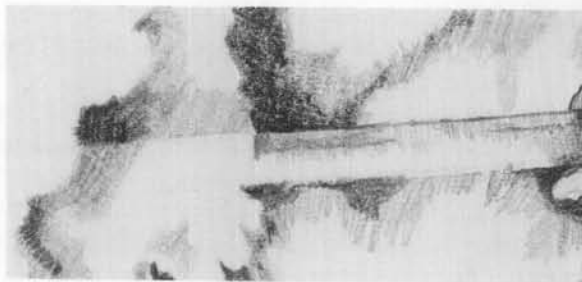
Of interest here is the fact that the original 1832 text has undergone some serious reinterpretation: it is now linked with the hopes of Smith to use the Legion in aid of the U.S.A., and the cause of the wars has been changed from the 1832 Nullification crisis to perhaps the slave question. In 1851, seven years after Smith’s death and a year after the compromise of 1850 had brought the slave/free question to the front pages of American newspapers, the reinterpreted but textually intact 1832 revelation was first published, by Franklin Richards in Liverpool in the *Millennial Star*, and in the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price. It received great play just before and during the Civil War, which in fact began with the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor on 2 April 1861. But even granting the remarkable insight (or coincidence) that war would begin in South

Carolina, the suite of events predicted in the revelation just did not occur. Although the South made overtures to Great Britain, the English never did enter directly into the war, all the nations of the earth were not dragged into an American domestic conflict, and, of course, Jesus did not return again in glory at the end of this unfulfilled string of events. But the fact that the revelation when carelessly read seemed to predict at least the Civil War insured that it would not be shelved again (after all, there we had South Carolina firing the first shot, war between North and South, slaves rising against masters—perhaps—and, after the war, the great Indian wars on the Western frontier). It was included in the Utah canon of the 1876 Doctrine and Covenants, as was an edited version of its 1843 reinterpretation, now found as D&C 130:12-13 (note—the story of the U.S.A. begging help from the Nauvoo Legion against British invaders *was* shelved!). Although dire predictions were given from the Tabernacle pulpit during the Civil War predicting the overthrow of the American government and citing the 1832 revelation (see *Journal of Discourses* 9:55, 142-43; 10:13, 15; 12:344), none survived in the LDS tradition after Appomattox as anything other than mere relics.

In the wake of World War I, seen by many of the Saints as part of the “consumption decreed” and wars involving all nations to precede the end, it seemed that perhaps the revelation was right on the mark in predicting future history. After all, world war had come after the Civil War and the Indian wars! But this, again, was an after-the-fact reinterpretation of the revelation. For such an interpretation, one had to filter one’s reading of the text much like Christian filtering of Old Testament prophecies. One had to ignore the causal relationship seen in the revelation between South Carolina’s revolt and world war, so clearly indicated in the revelation’s use of the word “thus” in verse 3. But this minor problem was resolved in 1921, when James Talmage and other members of an apostolic revision committee edited the text so that it fit more comfortably with this post-World War I interpretation. “Thus” was changed to “then.” This change weakened the causal tone of verse 3 and reduced it to a merely temporal sequence, allowing for the interpretive interposition of longer periods of time between Carolina’s rebellion, the call of the southern states to Great Britain, and subsequent world war. While the Kirtland Revelation Book clearly reads “thus” here, together with every manuscript copy and published form of the revelation until 1921,⁸ the revision committee ought not be accused of outright falsification in this matter. In the Kirtland Revelation Book, the word appears cramped at a margin, and with enough wishful thinking one might be able to wring a “then” out of it—but only if one really *wanted* to read “then” instead of “thus.” And this, apparently, is what the revision committee wanted to do in order to reinforce the Prophet’s gift of clearly foreseeing the future. Here is a case where the predictive element of the text was maintained only through textual reinterpretation and emendation.

This example of Joseph’s role as a prophetic predictor of the future follows the pattern noticed above among the biblical prophets. It does not support the prophetic television concept of prophetic foreknowledge. Other examples of this in Joseph’s

writings abound. These include some which survived by adaptation in ways similar to the prophecy on war; others, neither ambiguous nor interesting enough to generate interpretive development, failed and faded; still others ostensibly view events yet held to be in the future by the Saints, and therefore are seen as not failed and have not needed reinterpretation. Examples of these various types of prophetic utterances whether failed and abandoned, failed and reinterpreted, or apparently failed but whose fulfillment is still deferred, include such prophecies as the 1829 revelation concerning the Canadian copyright of the Book of Mormon, as well as the so-called "Grease-spot prophecy" predicting the utter annihilation of the institutions of the United States government, and various sayings regarding the Kirtland Safety Society and the establishment of the New Jerusalem in Jackson County, Missouri.



IV

"I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless
I do not know the meaning of all things."

—1 Nephi 11:17

Clear examples of a functional prophetic television are few in the Bible and the Restoration, if not totally absent. The only place, in fact, where they might seem to occur is in a specific class of documents brought forth by the Prophet Joseph Smith, including the Book of Mormon, the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (including the Book of Moses), the Book of Abraham, and one or two passages from the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants (especially in sections 7 and 93). These documents, which claim to have ancient and divine origins, present a special problem in this regard. Let us take the Book of Mormon as a paradigm of this class of documents. The book contains several apparent examples of clear, unambiguous recounting of world and Book of Mormon history, including details in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, hundreds of years prior to the actual event. The Book of Mormon is an anomaly in this regard, for its prophecies fit neither the biblical nor the restoration pattern. There are three ways to resolve this anomaly.

(1) The Book of Mormon can be said to give us the true pattern of prophetic foreknowledge; the biblical evidence can be viewed as deficient, owing to textual corruption that eliminated all clear evidence of the true foreknowledge the ancient biblical prophets actually had. This position draws upon certain passages in the Book of Mormon that seem to call into question the textual

reliability of the traditional texts of the Bible (see 1 Nephi 13-14). The difficulty with this position, of course, is that it does not account for the pattern of prophecy in the Restoration, which seems to fit the mold of biblical prophecy in the texts as they have come down to us without reference to some supposedly lost form of the Bible.

(2) One can admit the difficulty, and assert that historically the pattern of Nephite prophecy was substantially different from that found in the Bible. This position, too, relies on certain passages of the Book of Mormon—ones that contrast starkly the obscurity of the "manner of the things of the Jews" with Nephite "plainness" (see 2 Nephi 25:1-7). Again, the difficulty is that this position does not explain the divergence of Restoration prophetic patterns with those of the Book of Mormon.

(3) Finally, one can look more closely at the Book of Mormon itself to see whether its portrayal of prophetic practice ought to be accepted at face value as a historical record of what ancient Americans actually said and did.

The most noteworthy observation to be made here, of course, is that the Book of Mormon presents clear "prophetic television" type predictions only for world events up to *but not beyond* the point of history that the Book of Mormon itself was published by Joseph Smith: it seems to know of Jesus' life and works, the gross outlines of ancient and medieval Jewish history, the discovery and colonization of the Americas by Europeans, and the beginnings of American independence. But beyond that point the book couches its further predictions—of the restoration of ancient things and the ultimate return of Jesus—in vague, ambiguous images and language more congruent with biblical and Restoration prophecy, or simply in concrete eschatological imagery borrowed from the Bible.

This fact is made all the more striking by the apparent anachronistic character of many of the examples of prophecy which do seem to support the prophetic television. I am not arguing in a circle here—I am not saying that since the prophetic television doesn't exist clear examples of it must be anachronisms and therefore must not be trusted. The anachronisms I refer to are not the specific details of knowledge of the future at issue in any discussion of prophetic foreknowledge as such, but rather details of text and language that in and of themselves betray later authorship than that claimed by the document containing them.

For example, the first Book of Mormon textual example of apparent television-like prophetic foreknowledge, 1 Nephi 10:9, has the sixth century B.C. prophet Lehi foreseeing the ministry of John the Baptist in detail, right down to point of saying that he would "baptize in Bethabara, beyond Jordan." The verses in the English text of the Book of Mormon are laced with language from various verses of the King James gospels. When this is recognized, the reference to "Bethabara" is highly troubling to a literal, historical reading of the passage. The English wording here has been borrowed from John 1:28 in the King James Version. The difficulty is that the word "Bethabara" in this text is most likely a later emendation to the text, first suggested by third century patristic writer Origen. The original text of John most likely read "Bethany," which was changed because of the geo-

graphical difficulties it presented.⁹ With dozens of such examples abounding in the Book of Mormon (and, indeed, in all the documents of this class), it seems that this third view is probably the easiest way to account for the anomaly of predictive prophecy in the Book of Mormon, as well as that in the other documents of this type. The nineteenth century provenance of its English text—the earliest form of the book that is available—presents the possibility of modern interpolations and *vaticinia ex eventu* (back-dated “prophecies” written after the event they supposedly predict—an occurrence also known in certain biblical texts). This does not impeach the inspiration of the Book of Mormon, nor its scriptural status within Latter-day Saintism. But it does bracket out the Book of Mormon evidence from consideration in trying to exemplify the historical practice of the prophetic gift.

When the text of the Book of Mormon is viewed under such a modern rubric, explanations of its portrayal of prophetic practice present themselves easily. Perhaps the very ambiguity of biblical prophecy inspired the literary portrayal of prophecy/foretelling in the Book of Mormon. With such clear evidence of precisely accurate prophetic foreknowledge as exists in this American scripture, many of the eighteenth and nineteenth century criticisms made of biblical prophecy seemed solved for the early Latter-day Saints, and, indeed, the Bible’s comparative failure in this regard could be chalked up to lost “plain and precious parts.”¹⁰ This same principle applies to the other books brought forth by Joseph Smith that present themselves as having been written anciently—the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, the Book of Moses, and the Book of Abraham. All of these works show the same kind of anachronistic contamination manifested in the Book of Mormon, and make them poor evidence for the actual historical practice of prophecy.¹¹ Interestingly, their portrayal of prophecy seems to fit equally well into a nineteenth century theological discussion concerning prophecy and biblical authority.



V

“Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will not pass away.”

—Mark 13:31

A few short observations will help us put these data in theological perspective. The Book of Mormon, regardless of its reliability as historical evidence, teaches that God indeed does reveal himself, the objections of nineteenth century Deists not-

withstanding. What I have discussed here does not undermine that essential point; it merely places nuances into our understanding of what that revelatory process exactly is.

It is also important to understand that the process of prophecy, accommodation, and imputed fulfillment of prophecy is based on faith and hope from beginning to end. Had Joseph not felt a need to have faith that God had spoken to him on Christmas Day in 1832, he would have felt free to shelve the prophecy when it appeared to have failed, and leave it there. But he did not. His faith that somehow the text had come not only from himself, but also from God, led him to reinterpret and cherish rather than to reject it.

A good evidence of this is seen in cases where people rejected Joseph and his preaching on the basis of what was seen to be a failed prophecy. When Ezra Booth apostatized, he wrote in 1831 about his disillusionment with a “failed” prophecy. On a preaching tour to Missouri, he expected to find “that Oliver [Cowdery] had raised up a large church” there because Joseph had seen this in vision. Yet this was not the case, and Booth and Edward Partridge were troubled by this. In writing to Partridge about the incident, Booth states:

when you complained that he [Joseph] had abused you, and observed to him, “I wish you not to tell us any more, that you know these by the spirit when you do not; you told us, that Oliver had raised up a large church here, and there is no such thing;” he replied, “I see it, *and it will be so*,” This appeared to me [E. Booth] to be a shift, better suited to an imposter, than a true Prophet of the Lord.¹²

In this case, the issues raised by our discussion are clear: Smith and Partridge went on and exercised faith in the Lord and his word (despite the ambiguities and anomalies presented by a prophecy that has “failed” according to the expectations of the prophetic television model), and enjoyed the blessings of the restored gospel; Booth, however, was unwilling to change his mind or his expectations. To use a phrase of Brigham Young, he “lost his soul and went to Hell.”

This example also shows the true well-spring of the process that forces reinterpretation and accommodation—the recognition that the Lord has spoken, and the hope that sooner or later, all the Lord’s words will be fulfilled, in some way or another.

The view of prophecy I propose sees the prophets of all ages as very much like those of the current Church, in at least this respect: they are primarily concerned with addressing their own people, and their own time. As Brigham Young said in 1847, alluding to Joseph’s explanation of another of his “failed” prophecies,

The difference between a revelation of God, and a revelation of man an [sic] a revelation of the Devil is this: in one . . . of the Devil you will always see some great and dark thing which you cannot understand, and in a revelation of man you will allways [sic] see the man sticking out in it; but one that cometh from God is always plain and suited to the present condition of the people.¹³

Many Saints might find this perspective highly upsetting, because they would rightly see it as undermining ideas that have

comforted them in a troubled and uncertain age. I do not want to rob anyone of the comfort he or she finds in a principle of the gospel. Preaching the gospel should rightly give comfort to the comfortless—otherwise, it could not encourage us to have hope. But at the same time, the preaching of the gospel should make the comfortable and self-satisfied feel uncomfortable—otherwise it could not provoke us to repent. In the final analysis, we must try to speak the truth, and let others react to it as they will—under the guidance of God, one hopes. To those who feel that this perspective on prophecy pulls out the rug of faith from under them, I can only try to reassure them God reveals himself in the way he chooses. If the prophetic television does not exist in the real world, it is not the fault of the person who points this out, but rather the “fault” of God. He lets us go through life beset by mists of darkness thick enough to make us at times even wonder whether this thing that we feel in our hands and occasionally catch glimpses of through the mist is indeed a rod of iron leading to the tree of life. Faith strong enough to save can develop and grow only in the presence of such uncertainty. The reevaluation and reformulation required by the data and patterns discussed here ought rightly to be part of a healthy and growing religious life.

A comment from the New Testament will make the reason for this clear. There Jesus addresses a call of *metanoia* to all, to wine drinkers and sinners, and to the outwardly pious and righteous. *Metanoia*, a term coming from the Greek verb *metaneo* “to change one’s *noos*, or mind,” can be translated variously, depending upon the setting in which the call is set. For those not keeping the law, the call is appropriately understood as a call to “repentance.” For the outwardly righteous, to whom many of the parables reversing ordinary expectations are directed, the call is probably more rightly understood as an appeal for a change in perspectives, a change in one’s way of thinking.¹⁴ Thus Jesus’ call, “Change your minds, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” should encourage us in reformulating our understanding of our faith. If we are interested in more fully understanding the prophets and their message, we must in this sense “repent” of ways of thinking that misrepresent our heritage, and obscure our need to walk by faith and not by sight. Indeed, if we are not to “deny the spirit of prophecy” as it has been actually lived out in the community, and is now being lived out, we must reevaluate our understandings, and make them conform to what we actually know about the way he has spoken and still speaks to his people.

NOTES

1. C. S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1980.
2. Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (Garden City, N.Y.: Image/Doubleday, 1979) p. 146.
3. My translation here is based upon a conjecturally slightly emended Hebrew text, based upon mainstream positions in the text-critical discussion of the passage. Cf. any standard critical commentaries on the Hebrew text, as well as the *Textual Notes on the New American Bible* (Patson, N.J.: St. Anthony’s Guild, n.d.).
4. See Joseph Jensen, “The Age of Immanuel,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41:2 (April, 1979) pp. 220-39.
5. See Norman, Keith, “How Long, O Lord? The Delay of the Parousia in Mormonism,” *Sunstone* 8 (Jan./April 1983) 48-58.
6. See A. Ehat and L. Cook, eds. *The Words of Joseph Smith* (BYU Religious Studies Monograph Series 6; Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), pp. 169-72.

7. It is unclear whether the parenthetical aside about the slave trade being a possible cause of war is a scribal musing by Willard Richards or what Smith actually said. William Clayton’s account of the comment makes no reference to possible reasons for South Carolina’s rebellion.

8. See R. Woodford, “The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants” (Ph.D. diss., BYU 1974, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1982) pp. 1104-1126.

9. See B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London/ New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), p. 199; also Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (Anchor Bible 29-29A; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966) p. 44.

10. See Robert Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism: Why Joseph Smith Wrote the Book of Mormon* (St. Louis, Missouri: Clayton, 1980) pp. 140-49.

11. See J. H. Charlesworth, “Messianism in the Pseudepigrapha and the Book of Mormon,” pp. 99-138 in T. Madsen, ed., *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaeo-Christian Parallels* (BYU Religious Studies Center Monograph Series 4; Provo, Utah: BYU, 1978); K. Stendahl, “The Sermon on the Mount and Third Nephi,” pp. 139-54 in *Reflections on Mormonism*; W. Walters, “The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon” (M.T. Thesis, Covenant Theological Seminary, 1981) pp. 95-162; Blake Ostler, “Responsible Apologies,” a review of *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (BYU Religious Studies Center Monograph Series; Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1982) in *Dialogue* 16:4 (Winter, 1983) pp. 140-44; “The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion on an Ancient Source” *Dialogue* 20:1 (Spring 1987) 66-124; George D. Smith, “Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon,” *Free Inquiry* 4:1 (Winter, 1983-1984) pp. 20-31. For a fuller treatment of the books of Abraham and Moses, see A. Hutchinson, “A Mormon Midrash? LDS Creation Narratives in Retraction-critical Perspective,” paper delivered at the Mormon History Association annual Meeting, Omaha, Nebraska, 6 May 1983, forthcoming in *Dialogue*. For a discussion of the Joseph Smith revision of the King James Version of the Bible (now called the Joseph Smith Translation), see A. Hutchinson, “The JS Revision and the Synoptic Problem: An Alternative View,” *Journal of the John Whitmer Historical Association* 5 (1985) 47-53.

12. The letter is reprinted in E.D. Howe’s *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio: Author, 1834) pp. 202-03.

13. As quoted in the Heber C. Kimball Journal, LDS Church Archives, 19 January 1847.

14. This idea has been suggested by Raymond Brown, *The Critical Meaning of the Bible* (New York/ Ramsey: Paulist, 1981), p. 95.

SELF-PORTRAIT AS BRIGHAM YOUNG

He pioneered his name into the Church.
His parents said, “You’re nuts!”—
so he set off alone. He was eighteen.

On the first day out, he got lost;
and for the next twenty-seven years
he wandered the wicked West, left

two wives and two children on the trail,
and almost forgot his calling,
until he stumbled, at last, on the Valley.

Ill and exhausted, in a station-wagon
with five kids who wouldn’t settle,
he gazed at the Great City.

The Temple had been finished long ago,
and some of the old streets
looked as tired as he felt

after sixteen hours on the Interstate
without even one cigarette
(he was proud of that)

“This is still the right place,”
he announced to his squirming children.
And drove on, on.

R. A. CHRISTMAS

 Honorable Mention in the 1985 D. K. Brown Fiction Contest

THE SPIRAL STAIR

By *Linda Sillitoe*

DON'T TELL THAT STORY TONIGHT," GINA SAID, TALKING around the dull pink lipstick with bluish undertones. She snapped the lipstick into its case and slid it into its slot in her plastic makeup box.

"What story?" Ken asked. "Hey, don't zip up yet. Let me help you."

Gina gave him a look and pulled up the zipper on the back of her aqua dress. "I don't have time for your kind of help," she said, mock-sternly.

"Don't have time? If there isn't time for a man to get his hands inside his wife's dress, what is there time for?"

"Checking on dinner and running the kids over to the sitter's. Come on, Ken. It's *your* boss coming. So to speak."

"Oh, yeah? I thought you were my boss." He grabbed her, tipped her backwards over his arm and kissed her, so that she was breathless when he stood her upright again. She wiped a hand over his mouth, then reached for her lipstick again.

"It was your idea to invite them, wasn't it?" he said, watching her.

She drew the lipstick on carefully, then blotted it. "Well, we've talked about it off and on. They did have us over to their Christmas open house."

"I think you're just buttering up the next bishop," he said. "And, frankly, my dear, I don't think you stand a chance of being made counselor."

She stuck out her tongue at him. "Why not? Shauna Simpson's only been in the ward six months longer than I have!" She used her bratty voice, the one she never let the children hear.

Predictably, he laughed. "Maybe so! But her husband's been ward clerk and counselor. Yours only teaches the Blazer boys. Maybe YOU don't give him enough support to hold a leadership position." When she gasped, he threw both his arms over his head and shrieked, "No, no! Children, save me! Mommy's going to brain me with her hairbrush."

There was a silence from downstairs, then Richie piped,

"What's got your brain Daddy?"

"Get ready to go," Gina called down. "It's time to go, Richie." She turned to Ken. "But my husband's the best home teacher in the stake. It was Steve Simpson who recommended that you talk at stake conference, you know."

"No kidding?" Ken preened past her into the mirror. "Ah, he just likes my wavy hair, my big green eyes." He waggled his eyebrows at her suggestively. "Okay. You've convinced me I'm better leadership material than Steve Simpson. Now all you've got to do is convince the powers that be, because he's running and so are a lot of other guys. Or you can just get a major revelation on women in leadership positions and I'll learn how to bake those weasels in the oven down there"

"Weasels! That did it. Get out of here, you peasant. You're slowing me down."

"Merciful piranhas," Ken said, "we can't have that." He was gone, running down three stairs at a time.

"Nicki, Micky and Ricky, you're about to be kidnapped!" she heard him call, over the thunder of his shoes. Richie's shout, hollow as it blew up the stairs, was joined by the twin's squeals. In a minute the swish of the front door left the house amazingly quiet.

Nicki, Micky and Ricky. The names jangled in her head like one of Richie's riddles. Had Ken anticipated those rhymes all the time she pored over books until they decided on Nicole, Michael and Richard? Now they were starting to answer to Ricky and Micky and Nicki individually, not just when he ran them all together or called them the three little pigs or the three bears.

She walked downstairs, happy in her clean home full of delicious aromas. As usual, Ken arrived in time for the production. He helped her throw it all together, he thought. She wondered if he realized how many layers folded behind everything good in their lives. The half hour worrying about the menu, the indecisive moments at the meat counter, the regular upkeep of the house, plus company-coming cleaning. And behind that, the vitamins and doctor's visits and naps and nutritious food to produce those healthy children he'd buckle into the safest kind of carseats for the ride to the sitter.

At moments like this, when everything hovered at readiness,

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the layers of preparation were all worthwhile.

When her foot touched the bottom of the step, the doorbell rang. By the time she got there Lone already had poked her head around the back door. "All ready, sweetie?" she asked brightly.

"Just about, lone." She stifled a sigh as Lone bustled over to the oven and peeked inside. Company coming meant this was Lone's third trip from the brick bungalow across the driveway.

"Mmmmm. Those birds smell heavenly! You know, I've never even tried Cornish hens in all the company dinners I've cooked! You young girls are just amazing."

Gina smiled and took a peek herself. They were nicely browned, and she turned the oven to "warm."

"Now it's just Steve and Shauna Simpson coming," Lone muttered, as if she were rehearsing the dinner herself. "Mmm hnn." She nodded several times, her quick blue eyes darting over the pans on the top of the stove and taking in the end of the dining room table that showed through the door.

"Lovely, honey. Steve's the counselor over the Primary, isn't he?"

"Yes," Gina said, then added quickly, "we've been friendly with them for a long time. You know how it is, you just never get around to doing these things."

Lone nodded briskly. "Sure." She pinged the lid on the pan of wild rice, but didn't open it. "It's so funny to think of Ken teaching Primary. It always makes me do a doubletake, you know? Of course, when I was Primary president, we hardly ever had a man teach the Blazers. Once in a while for a really tough class."

"I know. Well, it's an important year for the boys, right before they get the priesthood." Gina turned on the heat under the vegetables. Maybe it was too soon? It was hard to think with Lone talking to her.

"Oh, I know, dear. And I'm sure Ken is wonderful with them. But such a talented, smart young man ought to be a leader in the ward."

"Got to get a drink," Gina said, turning to the sink. Her mouth felt like paper. She drank a juice glass of cold water and smiled, trying to edge Lone toward the door. She cleared her throat. "You know, lone, we wouldn't ever wish for a position like that. I'm sure Ken would be gone a lot."



Lone ignored that remark. "Everything's perfect. And you're twice the girl Shauna is, if you ask me. She's nice, but I never trust a woman who's that thin during her childbearing years. Something's wrong somewhere. You know she's cheating herself and the babies."

"Well, dieters like I am just envy her," Gina said.

"Oh, you shouldn't. Your figure's lovely, you've slimmed down beautifully since the twins. I don't care what the fashion is, a man likes a woman with some curves."

Lone threw out her chest, and Gina smiled. Lone was old enough to be Gina's mother and probably didn't weigh more than one hundred pounds, but she did have curves.

"Well, I'll go, sweetheart, if there's nothing I can do to help. Fred's going to be getting hungry."

"Thanks for everything, lone. See you tomorrow." She walked Lone to the door and returned her parting wink.

Their first week at church, the other young wives had giggled when she told them where they lived. "Oh, did someone tell you there's another member on Herald Drive?" one asked.

"Oh, I've met her already," Gina said, and they laughed again. "She's very friendly, isn't she?"

Well, Gina didn't care. Lone loved to gossip and she had too much free time, but she was Gina's prime candidate for the Celestial Kingdom. When Gina had come down with the Texas

flu four months after the twins were born, she had wakened with a high fever morning after morning. Ken would regretfully kiss her goodbye and be gone to work, and Gina would stagger out of bed to get Richard ready for pre-school. Before the carpool picked him up, she'd be bracing herself against crib and dressing table to change and wash the twins. By the time the carpool horn honked, Ione was there. Gina would lie both those babies in Ione's skinny arms, and stumble back to bed before the first drenching sweat of the day began.

Now Gina clicked out to the dining room to inspect the table. The blue violets in the center shone beautifully against the creamy yellow cloth. The blue enamel napkin rings matched. She returned to the kitchen to toss the salad.

Ken could kid all he wanted about her becoming bishop's counselor. She'd never hoped to hold that kind of position herself, and had no quarrel with the men and their priesthood. All her life she had watched her mother and other women run what she considered the real priorities in religious life. Her mother had fed the hungry at the family's dining room table whether they needed food, solace, stimulating talk or just the comfort of family living. She had run a complicated homelife so well it had looked effortless, especially to Gina's father. Gina had always wanted to be like her mother, and every time she and Ken visited Utah, she compared herself to her to see how much she'd grown.

It was Ken who didn't fit the pattern, especially in this ward. He cut his own hair, and he was hurt if people didn't find it attractive. He was as much fun as he had been in college, but now, as then, he sometimes didn't know when to drop the joke.

She covered the salad with plastic wrap and set it inside the refrigerator. Ken should be back by now, she thought. Ken had spoken in conference all right. He'd wandered from the subject of home teaching and told a story of how this was the second time he'd taught the Blazers in Primary. The first time was in Utah when Primary met on Wednesday. They were trying to get teachers to wear skirts or dresses to Primary, and after hearing repeated announcements, Ken had marched into prayer meeting in a skirt.

The congregation had loved the story. Even the high council woke up. Fred, Ione's husband, had roared, slapping both knees. But Gina had felt her cheeks burn as she smiled up at Ken. It *had* been funny when it happened. But to tell the story at that moment when the whole stake looked up to him. . . . She saw the stake president exchange glances with one counselor. Didn't Ken know how flippant that story made him seem?

She sighed and turned the vegetables to simmer. Ken—he would teach the Blazer boys or the elders quorum forever. “Just don't put me in the nursery,” he'd tell the bishopric, wrinkling his nose. “I get enough crap from Nicki, Micky and Ricky.”

The doorbell rang.

Steve and Shauna Simpson stood on the front porch, talking with Ken, whose arms were loaded with packages.

“Well, hello,” Gina said, “what. . . ?”

“I'd have let them in, honey,” Ken said, “except I have my hands full.”

“Well, come in,” Gina said, stepping aside for the Simpsons

and fighting a sudden urge to shut the door in Ken's face. What in the world was he holding?

“Here, please sit down,” she told the Simpsons. “This chair is the most comfortable, Steve.”

Ken marched past her and set his load on one end of the couch. The corrugated packages tipped precariously.

“Ken. . . .”

“One minute. I can explain.” He was gone again, leaving the front door ajar.

Gina looked wordlessly at the Simpsons. “You mean you don't know what he's doing?” Shauna asked, and laughed nervously.

Gina smiled and shrugged. Shauna's streaky hair was perfectly coiffed. Gina knew her own auburn curls looked fine, tumbling over the aqua fabric, but she wanted to run to the mirror to check. Now Ken was back with another load, panting a little. Carefully he stacked more parcels on the couch.

“One more might do it,” he said. “Sorry, but I forgot to bring them in earlier. The kids all crunched them.”

“Here. Let me give you a hand,” Steve said.

“No, no. This will do it. You sit and sniff Gina's cooking. Something elitist, I think.”

“It smells wonderful,” Shauna said sweetly, crossing her long, slender legs as Ken left again. “What is it?”

“Oh, Cornish hens with wild rice,” Gina said, trying not to feel rattled. “It's not all wild rice. It's mixed, you know. Some people don't like a lot of wild rice.”

“Well, it smells delicious,” Steve said, but his eyes were on the door as if on a closed stage curtain. They heard the car door slam, then Ken came in, kicking the door shut behind him.

“That's it,” he said, lowering himself to the floor next to the packages. His gray slacks edged up above his socks. “Funny, it didn't seem that hard loading them up.”

Gina stared at Ken. He looked back innocently. “Well,” said Steve, “are you going to tell us what you've got there?”

“Oh, this? Well, I got this great deal at First National Bank.”

“What deal?” Gina said ironically. She smiled at Steve and Shauna.

“Look.” He reached up, grabbed a large flat package and tore off the cardboard. “See, it's china. This is the dinner plate, I think. Pretty, no?”

They all looked at the plate, then at Ken.

“Well,” he said, “I could have gotten something with roses, but I didn't think you'd like it.”

“Ken,” Gina said, “how much of that did you get?”

“Twelve place settings.”

“Twelve place settings? Of china? We have china.”

“Oh, I know, but it was free, see. If you open an account for \$100, you get a free place setting. One heck of a deal. It's nice stuff, too.”

“The kids' money from your parents,” Gina said faintly.

“Right. Instead of putting it in their accounts, I opened twelve new ones. Next week I'll transfer it all over.”

“You mean,” Steve said, “you had some poor cashier open twelve accounts and give you twelve place settings of china?” He guffawed.

"Well, she gets paid for her time," Ken said a trifle huffily. "It was their deal, after all. I just went along. I hope you like it, Gina, because we've got a lot of it. How about you, Shauna? Could you use some china? It's free."

But Shauna was looking at Gina. "Gina," she said tentatively, "something smells a little hot. . . ."

Gina jumped up and ran for the kitchen. The asparagus was limp and drab, the brussels sprouts just beginning to scorch.

Everyone was so intrigued by the free china they hardly seemed to notice the overcooked state of the vegetables, and they loaded their plates. For that much Gina was grateful. As they ate, they made suggestions. "Sell the china at a flea market," Steve said around Cornish hen.

"Give it for a door prize at the next ward dinner," Shauna said.

"You know that couple who just got married?" Gina asked hesitantly. "The Taylors, I think their name is."

"Oh, yeah." Ken's eyes lit up. "You think they could use it?"

Gina shrugged. "Well, they're still in school and just renting. Maybe they could. If they can't, maybe they can return it to a department store for something else."

Ken licked chicken glaze from his lips. "This is terrific, Gina. I'll take the china over tonight and dump it on their doorstep."

The Simpsons laughed delightedly. "Wow, what a surprise," Shauna said. "That's very nice of you."

"Oh, no," Ken said. "No surprise. I'll leave a note that says, Anonymously, Ken and Gina Crandall."

They all laughed again. "Mmm, I'll have some more of that rice, Gina," Steve said. "This is a great meal."

Gina saw Ken beaming from the end of the table and smiled back. Okay, he was eccentric, but he was generous. Everyone was warming up. At least the china made an easy topic of conversation. Then, as soon as she relaxed, it happened.

"We're having a dinner after ward temple day," Shauna said. "Do you think it would be too expensive to have Cornish hens?"

"Oh, no," Gina said hurriedly, without thinking. "What else would you put on the menu? Something simple?"

But it was too late. Ken had caught the cue.

"Temple day. You know," he was saying to Steve confidentially, "my most jarring experience in the Church happened in the temple."

"Really?" Steve asked, and Shauna turned away from Gina to hear.

"Come on, Ken," Gina said hurriedly. "That's an old story. Tell them what Jeremy said during your lesson last week."

"Tell us both stories, my boy," Steve said with a sigh, wiping off his mouth and settling back in his chair. "Gina, that was a superb dinner."

"Well, it was in the Salt Lake Temple," Ken said. "It was one of my first times. Third time, maybe, right?"

They nodded. Gina laid down her fork. Only her plate still held food.

"I'm sitting in the Creation Room by this old guy, silver hair, the whole bit. I'm sitting there trying to get real spiritual."

Ken put on his most sincere face, and the Simpsons suppressed giggles and nodded.

"So the ceremony's going on, and I'm really concentrating, and this guy leans over and says, 'Look at the blond on row two.' "

"What?" Shauna said.

"Yeah. Really. so I look over and here's this really good-looking girl, maybe about nineteen years old. I nod, a little confused, and start concentrating again.

"Then we all stand up to move to the next room, you know, and the women are passing first and this old gentleman jabs me in the ribs and says, 'Did you see the redhead?' "

He waited for the laughter; it sounded a little nervous now. "Really. I couldn't believe it. But I try to be polite. I nod and think about what just happened in the ceremony. But this goes on all the way through. Then finally, we're almost to the end of the whole thing, and he leans over once more."

Ken paused dramatically and smiled. Gina sighed and shook her head.

"What?" Shauna said. Steve grinned.

"He leans over again and says, 'Nice sitting by you,' gets up and goes to the veil. He's a temple worker."

"Oh, no!" Shauna gasped.

"On the women's side of the veil," Ken finished. There was a silence.

"Why don't we move out to the living room and we'll have dessert later," Gina said.

She carried dishes into the kitchen and took ten deep breaths, then drank a glass of cold water. She rinsed her hands in cold water and pressed her fingertips to her eyelids, then found a smile to wear back. She didn't dare stay away, but as she walked to the living room she imagined—in just an hour or two—sinking into a tub of hot water, checking her slumbering cherubs, then going into the bedroom and smothering Ken.

I can't believe you're not going to help me load this china," he said. "You're the one who doesn't want it around."

"Well, I was going to get the dishes into the dishwasher and the dining room straightened before you bring the kids back. I'm tired, too."

He looked hurt, and took the first load out to the car. Gina sighed, picked up a stack of corrugated packages and followed.

"Look at those stars," Ken said, throwing her a smile over his shoulders. "Here, put it back and we'll drop it off before we get the three little pigs."

When she stepped back from the car, he caught her by the shoulders. "Kind of romantic out here, no?" he mumbled into the hair by her right ear.

"No," she said. "Come on, let's get the rest."

They were both nearly silent driving to the Taylors' place. Gina sat in the car, resting her aching head against the window as Ken made three stealthy trips to the porch and stacked the china in front of the door. The lights in the back of the apartment were on.

By the time he shot a finger onto the doorbell buzzer, then raced back to the idling car, knees pumping willy-nilly, she couldn't help laughing.

Ken made the tires squeal as they pulled away. "That ought to

bring them.”

“They’ll think it’s the Mafia,” Gina giggled.

“They’ll call in the CIA to check for a bomb. I can see it now. They unwrap a dinner plate, and KAZOOM! A living room full of porcelain powder.”

“How did you know china is made out of porcelain,” Gina murmured.

“Common knowledge,” he said, and squeezed her knee. “Still mad?”

“This is the turn,” Gina reminded him. “No. But I wish sometimes you’d been raised in the Church.”

“Oh, yeah? Why?”

“Because of your crummy sense of timing.”

He stopped the car in front of the sitter’s and turned off the lights. “You’re not supposed to aspire, babe.”

She looked at him in the darkness for a full minute. “Don’t give me that,” she said.

He looked away, and she saw his jaw square, then harden. “I try to be a good person,” he said then, sounding younger than she had ever known him.

“You are!” Her throat hurt like it had when she was a child, misunderstood and unable to explain. Ken swung out of the car. In silence, she walked with him up to the front door to collect their children.

I thought I was pretty darn good tonight,” Ken said later, running a finger down her spine until it reached her nightgown. A pause, then the finger slipped underneath.

“Oh, sure,” she said. “Don’t ever be awful.” Now she could say it.

He moved closer. “Oh, yeah? What do you mean, huh?” He buried his face in the soft fabric between her breasts. She grabbed his curly hair with both hands.

“Oh, it’s just . . .” she pounded a fist on his back. “Why do you have to tell that story? I asked you not to tell it.”

“Oh, you meant *that* story.” He slid his hands down her body and pulled her against him.

“Well, what did you think?” You’re always telling that story.”

“I thought you meant the one where Eldon had a gas attack during the sacrament.”

“Oh, gosh. Well, yes, I’m glad you didn’t. . . Ken, aren’t you tired?”

“Nope.”

She held him close. “You know what?”

“What?”

“You’re the one who’s aspiring. I can tell.”

“Not to be bishop, though,” he said, and turned out the lamp.

That night Gina dreamed of a long, spiral staircase, ivory-colored with gold trim. It was the kind of staircase she’d imagined walking down when she met dates for school proms, or, eventually, as a bride. But their family home had been all on one floor, and she and Ken had married in the temple, her satin dress half-hidden under the temple clothing. There had been a veil to pass through, an altar to kneel beside, but no ivory staircase.

She hadn’t even thought of such a staircase for years. Their

narrow stairs that led from bedrooms to kitchen were the open kind she’d never really liked. As a child, she’d feared falling through steps like those, and she noticed that Richie negotiated them carefully. They were blocked from the twins, top and bottom, with folding gates.

In her dream, Ken was waiting at the bottom of the staircase, arm extended. Smiling, she took his arm, and they began to ascend the stairs. She was happy, so happy. But then the dream’s pastels became muddy. Although they kept climbing, they seemed to go no higher. They ran, then ran faster, but it was like running up a down escalator and she woke frustrated and breathing hard.

Sunday morning Ken and Richard looked like carbon copies in their blazers, ties and polished shoes before Gina had Michael and Nicole dressed and pacified. She put them in separate playpens for safekeeping. “Don’t give them one thing to eat!” she warned Richie, making sure Ken could hear. Nothing was more discouraging than being ready to swoop them up and head for the car, only to find melted cracker from their noses to their bellies.

She raced upstairs to take off the duster and put on her dress. Then she slipped into her heels and looked in the mirror. She was substitute chorister that morning in Relief Society, as well as sacrament meeting. Absentmindedly, she lifted both arms and sang, “Welcome, welcome, Sabbath. . . .” She stopped. She raised her arms again, bring her right hand down on the beat.

She flushed, staring. She’d never realized she looked so . . . well, sensuous! Her figure was fuller since the twins. And her hair and cheeks and lips were all so bright, just naturally. Oh merciful piranhas! she swore, borrowing Ken’s favorite curse.

She ran to the closet and hunted through it frantically.

“Honey?” she heard Ken call.

“Just a minute!”

She pulled on a loose, white, cardigan vest and checked the mirror again. Better. But still she was so vivid. The flush in her face might fade, except with all this hurrying it might not. But her hair. Did those tumbling curls look like they belonged on the mother of the ward?

Quickly, with trembling hands, she braided her hair and coiled it at the nape of her neck, adding a narrow, gray ribbon. Then she all but ran down the stairs, heedless of her high heels.

She looked properly demure walking to the front of the Relief Society room. The organist, who’d already begun the prelude, breathed an obvious sigh of relief as she approached. Not until the lesson began did she feel that she’d really caught her breath.

Gina, seated on the stand facing the congregation, knew her thoughts weren’t attuned to the sacrament, but this was the third meeting and she was tired. Ken was sending her signals with his eyebrows. The twins were fussy. She lifted her hands, open, an inch from her lap, indicating he could send one to her on the stand, but he shook his head. Richie smiled at her. He would come, but he wasn’t the problem. Now Ken was pointing a thumb over one shoulder. He wanted to take the twins out, maybe home. She frowned, shook her head slightly. They were all right, just

fussy. But just then Nicole deliberately dropped her pacifier on the floor and wailed. Ken was on his feet, a twin looking back placidly over each tweed shoulder. Richie snatched up the pacifier and trailed them, piping distinctly, "Here it is, Daddy."

Gina sighed. She could take care of the children better than Ken. If he had just lasted until after the sacrament song, she could have come down to sit with them until the closing hymn. Maybe, she thought suspiciously, he'd just seen his chance and taken it. Now she might as well stay on the stand.

The meeting ended with a reminder to vote in Tuesday's election and the announcement that next week's sacrament meeting would be under the direction of the stake president. A rustle swept through the pews. Gina saw Shauna smile at Steve, several seats from Gina, then look steadfastly into her lap. After the closing prayer, she passed Shauna and her children coming forward to meet Steve.

"Next week should be interesting," Shauna said brightly.

"Really. Any rumors or ideas?"

"No, not really."

Gina though she looked a little smug. Was she so sure, then, that Steve would be included in the new bishopric? "Will Steve be glad to be released as counselor?" she asked.

"In some ways," Shauna shrugged. "But he's enjoyed it. Say," she said, turning back and talking over her shoulder, "what if it's Ken?"

Her tone said that she had never entertained such an idea before, that it was clearly a joke.

Gina rolled her eyes as any wife would. "It's a big commitment."

"Oh, I know! See you later, Gina."

Gina walked out of the chapel tired and angry. Why was it so funny to think that Ken might be asked to serve in a bishopric? What did they think he'd do? Tell jokes at a funeral? Bless babies upside down? Conduct sacrament meeting backwards? He wasn't a fool, after all. Just because he wasn't a straight-arrow like Steve and some of the others who prayed in voices four times deeper than they said hello!

Ken made it a habit to call Gina every noon before he went to lunch. "Gina," he said when he called Wednesday, "I thought maybe I should tell you I might be interviewed on the radio this afternoon."

"You are? About the steel audit?"

"No, no. It's something else. Nothing important. Just tune to WSSI if you happen to think about it around three o'clock."

"Okay. I have to drive Richard's carpool then. I'll try to remember."

"Good. How's everything else going?"

"Fine. The twins just went down for a nap. I'm going to put away the patio furniture."

"If you'll wait until the weekend I'll help you. I don't think we'll get bad weather before then. It looks like August out there now."

"I know. It's hard to believe it's November, but you might be busy this weekend. Who knows? Ken, why are you being interviewed?"

"It's something about the election yesterday. Talk to you later."

"Are you nervous?" Gina asked the humming receiver in her hand. "No, not at all," she replied for it. "I'll just set down my pen, do the interview, and go back to work. What's to be nervous?"

"Grrr!" she exclaimed, hanging up the phone. If she were going to be interviewed on the radio this afternoon she'd be making notes, preparing little speeches in her head, pacing up and down the living room in front of the picture window. But Ken? No problem.

She went outside to put the rattan chairs and tables in the garage, but got sidetracked by Richard's toys and rubble. For such a neat little boy, he certainly could mess up a yard. Most of the sandpile's sand spread in a trail toward the swings, dotted by trucks. "RICHard," Ken would shout if he saw it. "What is the explanation for this?"

Ken was hard on Richard, even though Richard was almost too good, Gina thought. Nicole had a wicked chuckle, and Gina thought she might have Ken's wacky sense of humor when she got older. Michael would follow her into trouble without a second thought. But Richie was serious, intent. Gina was glad to see him make a mess sometimes. But Ken seemed to expect in his son whatever he let lapse in himself.

She took off her jacket. It really was warm. She lay back in a chaise, dimly aware that her thoughts were mixed with sleep. She was thinking, then dreaming again of the spiral staircase, but this time Richard was playing on it. She would boost him to the bottom of the bannister and with a whoosh he would ride up it backwards, landing at the very top. Groggy, she shook the dream away, as the twins' cries through their open bedroom window woke her. What time is it? she wondered, hurrying in to change and feed the twins, then strap them into carseats in the van.

She had dropped off the three other children in the carpool before she remembered to turn on the radio. "Daddy might be on the radio," she told Richie, turning the dial to WSSI. The news had begun.

"Why? Why might Daddy be on the radio?"

"I don't know, Richie. Let's listen."

"Why don't you know?"

"Daddy didn't tell me. Hand Nicole her book, please. Now, ssh. Let's listen."

Ken was not on the news though. He came sandwiched between a popular ballad and the traffic report.

"And now," the announcer said, "we're taking you to Ken Crandall, a local CPA who called to concede the race for lieutenant governor in the election yesterday."

"What?" Richard said.

"SSH." Gina listened so hard she almost crowded a Volkswagen out of the right lane. She let it pass, then pulled into a parking lot, leaving the motor running. "Listen," she breathed.

"Ken? Ken, are you there?"

"I'm here, Joe. How are you?"

It was Ken, all right, bright and jovial. She held her breath go out in a long sigh.

"Now you called us to concede the election for lieutenant governor, is that right, Ken?"

"That's right. I watched the election returns last night, and I obviously lost, so I thought I should concede."

"Funny, Ken, but I didn't hear your name mentioned."

"Neither did I."

"I see. Do you know how many votes you got?"

"Yes. I checked today, and, just as I thought, I got one vote. Mine."

"One vote." The announcer was chuckling now. "Don't you have a wife, Ken?"

"Well, my campaign ran into some serious problems," Ken said.

"I see. Such as?"

"I was late in announcing my candidacy."

"How late?" An obvious snigger.

"Well, I didn't decide to run until I was actually in the voting booth."

"And what made you decide then?"

"Oh, I just looked at the names of the candidates and realized I was as well qualified to kiss babies and eat creamed chicken as any candidate running. So I voted for myself."

"I suppose you realize, Ken, that this station is the most popular commuter station in the area."

"Of course. Why do you think I called you?"

"Yes. So while few people knew you were running, many will know you have conceded."

"Just my public responsibility, Joe. I felt I should let everybody know that I concede graciously, and I offer my best wishes to the winner. . . uh, what's-his-name."

"Right." Now the announcer was laughing outright. "Thanks for calling, Ken Crandall. And now, this."

It took a moment for Gina to realize the twins were fussing. Richard tugged at her sleeve, then her collar. She put the van in gear and pulled into the traffic. She drove fast, her face burning as she imagined other drivers recognizing her as Ken's wife and laughing.

"Mommy. Mommy! What was Daddy saying?"

"It was a joke, Richie. Daddy was telling a joke."

"Oh." He settled back. "A joker," he said. "Daddy's a big joker." He put his thumb in his mouth, something he hadn't done for months. If Ken saw him, he'd scold.

The word stayed in Gina's mind. He was a joker. Why had she married him? Why hadn't he told her she was in for this kind of humiliation? It was all right for him; but he knew she wasn't up for this, he knew it made her uncomfortable. Why did he do this to her? How did she ever get into this situation, anyway?

When she pulled into the driveway, Ione came running from her front porch.

"Did you hear Ken, dear? Fred called me from a phone booth. He said his whole carpool was in stitches."

Gina's face felt stiff. "Did you like it?"

Ione laughed. "I'm glad I didn't miss it. But then everyone listens to that station. Listen, your phone's ringing! Mine has been, too. I'll get the twins. You run."

Gina took call after call, and soon her answers and chuckles grew automatic. Yes, Ken was very witty. Yes, a little wacky. A great guy. Thanks for calling. I'll tell Ken. With the telephone under her chin, she fed the twins and unloaded the dishwasher.

Once when she hung up the phone, Richie said, "Mommy, you look sad."

"Do I?"

"Why are you sad, Mommy?"

Gina took a deep breath and searched for some simple answer. "Oh, I—think I lost something today, Richie," she fibbed. "I'm not sure I can find it now."

"What, Mommy? What did you lose?" His hazel eyes, so like Ken's, were enormous but serious. She patted his little folded arms.

"I'll tell you when you're older."

"I'll find it for you the, Mom. Wait and see."

"Yes," she said, "I bet you will."

The telephone rang again. It was Shauna. "I just died when I realized it was Ken," she said, laughing. "Isn't he a character?"

Gina's chin went up. "Yeah, he's great." She took a long breath. "Listen, Shauna, we're having a party. . . I mean a wake to celebrate his defeat. You and Steve just have to come."

"Tonight?"

"Sure. He can walk right into it when he comes home from work. Can you call some people?"

"Oh, sure. What can I bring?"

"It's potluck. Tell everyone to bring what's handy. I've got lots of lemonade and limeade in the freezer." Quickly, Gina gave Shauna the names of those who had called her about Ken's concession. Already she was pulling cans from the freezer and checking the supplies in the cupboard.

"Do you have paper plates and cups?" Shauna asked.

"Yes, I have plenty. Thanks for making the calls."

"That's okay. See you later—sounds fun."

Gina was mixing barbecue sauce when she felt Ione's quick pats on her shoulder. If it had been anyone else, she would have slapped the hand away.

"You've got to help me, Ione! We're having a wake for Ken in the back yard. Can we borrow you lawn chairs?"

"Oh, yes, sweetheart, and what else? How about silverware?"

"I have plenty of plastic. Watch this a minute, okay? I'll check on the twins."

When Ken came home, the back yard was full of ward members and a few other friends, their plates and mouths full. He stopped at the corner of the house and stared, looking truly dumfounded. Gina laughed.

"For he's a jolly good fellow," she sang in her best chorister voice, and the others joined in. Within moments, Ken was flashing the victory sign above his head, shaking hands and kissing babies. Everyone was laughing, laughing with them.

When he came to Gina, he stopped. "You!" he said. "How could you disgrace me like this?"

He made a grab for her, but Gina wheeled away, and took off around the perimeter of their guests. She heard people cheering, and ran faster when she realized Ken was chasing her.

She dodged a picnic table, circled the apple tree, then doubled back, Ken close behind her. "Hooray for Mommy!" she heard Richie squeal above the laughter and wisecracks.

"Traitor," Ken yelled, scooping his son up under one arm and continuing the chase.

Laughing, breathing harder, Gina threw herself flat on the grass. Head in her hands, she saw their chase on the backs of her eyelids, how their feet flickered like fish through the puddles of improbable November sun.

STOLEN IDENTITY

By David Knowlton

MONDAY AFTERNOON I lost my identity. Every document I had was stolen. I know who I am but without documents, without tangible and concrete evidence, authorities would not believe me. Suddenly I could prove to no one that I was an American, much less a Mormon.

Identity is a curious and delicate thing. You feel so firm in your knowledge of who you are. After all, you have spent a lifetime developing it. Until it disappears for one reason or another it seems basic and unquestionable, as if it were as firm as the earth under our feet. Despite the years of labor we spend in its creation, identity remains extremely tenuous. It is more like a warm breeze against your face; we feel it as long as it gently blows. Yet if you try to grab a handful of the breeze it suddenly evanesces.

Alma preached that conversion implies an essential change of heart (Alma 5:21). It requires inscribing an identity on the soul of a person to such a degree that the person becomes transformed. No longer will he or she desire to sin. An identity, in this case a testimony, has the power to effect dramatic changes like this. For eternal purposes this may be enough. But if I want to get into the temple, the hoary white robes at the door require a more tangible manifestation of my heart than I can show alone.

Identity requires social validation. The Lord may see the purity of my soul; unfortunately he also sees the impurities. Without a properly signed temple recommend, regardless of my spiritual prowess I cannot enter the temple. With a recommend I can still go in because a document says so, even though I may not necessarily be spiritually worthy.

Supposedly documents like these take what is hidden inside us and make it external and concrete for others to know and see. Of course

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they may do it falsely but without a formal validation of some sort one simply has no meaningful identity.

Monday afternoon I was afraid. I had arrived at Arequipa, Peru, after a long, roundabout trip from Bolivia via Lima. Arequipa is a charming city. A natural and economic oasis in Peru's immense coastal desert, Arequipa is a volcanic city for more reasons than the mighty volcano Misti that towers over it. Arequipa's markets and streets belong to organized groups of thieves. Two weeks previously when I was passing through the city, several well-dressed women blocked my path while someone sliced my bag from behind. Luckily I felt the slight tug on my shoulder and grabbed my belongings to me while forcefully shoving the women out of my way. I lost nothing and was proud of the now stitched battle-scar on my bag. It was a Purple Heart from my fights with thieves. I was lucky and winning.

While waiting for my night train to leave, I entered an elegant restaurant on Arequipa's plaza because it had a guard. I could now relax without fear of the thieves. Just after my tempting food was served, someone tapped my shoulder and asked the time. I turned to answer and my bag with my passport, traveler's checks, and, most importantly, all my address books was pulled from between my legs. I ran out but in the teeming crowds of dusk I saw nothing. I had fallen victim to the oldest trick in the thief's repertoire.

Without money, passport and friends I was lost. I could prove to no one who I was. In a poor country like Peru with a bloody guerilla war and abundant foreign tourists, the police do not take ambiguous identity kindly. You must constantly show your papers to get a hotel room, a bus ticket, or to pass from city to city. I no longer had documents, and I had too little money in my pockets to survive while attempting to prove my identity. I was now a nobody,

and to the authorities an inherently suspicious and probably dangerous nobody.

All I could think of was my train ticket to Puno, a city near the border with Bolivia. In Bolivia I was registered at the consulate and had many friends. Without legitimate papers I needed friends who could testify as to my identity. I was scared. The police wanted me to wait several days before they would give me a document witnessing the theft of my identity. But then I would have absolutely no money and would still have to return to Lima to try to convince the people at the U.S. embassy that I am an American. So I decided to use my ticket to Puno, since on the train they seldom ask to see more than your ticket. My best hope was to cross illegally into Bolivia.

That night on the train I could not sleep. My mind spun in a nervous and fearful confusion. How would I cross to Bolivia? What if I were caught? What could I do when the authorities asked to see my documents? But in the midst of my fear I was exhilarated. No one knew I was Mormon and all the repressed possibilities of alternative identities flooded my mind. I was well aware of the cost I had paid for my beloved identity.

With luck and very careful planning I crossed the border. Immediately I threw myself on the mercy of friends, who spoke with authorities so that I could obtain some sort of document legitimizing my presence in Bolivia. With that official piece of paper I got another passport and the return of my traveler's checks. But I still cannot regain the simple confidence I used to have in my identity. It is no longer enough to merely know who I am without formal credentials. Suddenly I understand why Latin Americans so carefully guard all sorts of diplomas and transcripts. More importantly, I realized that friends were probably the most important component of my identity. They, along with documents, composed much of who I am. I grieved for the lost addresses of friends I would never again see.

Being Mormon means belonging to a community made up of all kinds of social relationships. Just as it was not enough to carry all those memories of growing up in the United States to make me an American, it was insufficient to merely have a testimony. That always seemed the most important. As long as I knew in my heart who I was and that I was trying my hardest to be good, I thought the rest should not matter. Mormonism seemed something inscribed in my soul and not something I had to wear on my sleeve.

Suddenly I was forced to realize the importance of the intangibles that produce credibility and identity. To talk about identity as an

essence removed from social relationships, to talk about identity as simply composed of testimony or formal credentials without cognizance of the crucial role of friends is worse than debating how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. It is the epitome of empty sophistry.

Like my Americanism, my Mormonism existed only in my ability to speak Mormonese with a native's accent. It thrived in my exchanges and arguments with those who knew me, the sole fact that allowed me to regain my lost identity. It was enshrined in the documents that were stolen.

In this case, how can I possibly understand what it means to be Mormon through close attention to testimony alone? How can endless discussions and litmus tests of theology alone describe who we are? Understanding requires that these be joined with careful consideration of the actual social reality of being Mormon.

There are many ways of belonging to our community. Some people would like to limit them. For entry to the temple limitations are probably necessary. But to really grasp Mormonism we must comprehend all ways of

being Mormon, even the way of opposition inherent in disbelief and dissent. These labels do not inhere in the inner reaches of the mind where creativity rules. They arise, like all identities through social processes where they are rigidified and formalized.

Our community is diverse. It has many accents, all of which are Mormon. Unfortunately, many of us try to limit the diversity, as if we alone knew what it means to be Mormon. The Church, like all human institutions, requires limits and boundaries. But do these have to be coterminous with Mormonism? Do they have to be the only criteria for defining our community?

During my long night, while the train wheels rhythmically sounded and my thoughts turbulently swirled, my formal membership in the Mormon community and in the United States was tenuous at best. At any moment belonging could be denied me, perhaps with serious consequences. Friends saved me. My social relationships fortunately recreated my formal identity.

Similarly, how can I now deny membership in the larger community of Mormonism to

those who lack formal membership in the smaller community, the Church? How can I impose definitions on what is written on others' souls? I cannot see their hearts and can only rely on indexes, on things that I define as reliable indicators of others' souls. This is simply a social fiction. How can I as a limited participant in the diversity of our community judge the quality of other's belonging?

To do so would make me a thief of other people's identity. In Arequipa I had my identity stolen. I got it back after a lot of struggle and a good portion of luck. Inside I am angry with the thieves. It is hard, after all, to turn the other cheek to those who take from you. But thieves abound in the world beyond Arequipa. Even among us there are many who set themselves up as the arbiters of Mormonism, stealing identity from some and giving it to others. Perhaps someday the thieves will leave our community so that we can appreciate Mormonism in its many manifestations, especially those beyond the narrow confines of a rapacious orthodoxy. Perhaps someday we will appreciate the fullness of Mormonism.



"Everybody stay quiet, okay? No one needs to know it was Troop 263 that had the barbeque near the stake center!"

LANDMARK HISTORY NEEDS BENEFACTORS

The Charles Redd Center at BYU is soliciting donations to complete a landmark oral history interview of black Latter-day Saints.

Publication deadline: 10th Anniversary of Priesthood for blacks, 8 June 1988.

Work to be completed: final interviews, a survey, and a book by Alan Cherry, black LDS author.

Contact: Jessie Embry, Redd Center, 4069 HB66, BYU, Provo, UT 84602 (801) 378-4048.

PARADOXES AND PERPLEXITIES

THE KINDEST CUT OF ALL

By Marvin Rytting

It was like a scene from a surrealist play. The night before the operation, my doctor had participated in the birth of his first child and he was still filled with the wonder of it all. So we talked about the miracle of birth and how wonderful it is to have children, and we drifted from a sharing of our joy in the experience of becoming fathers to more mundane issues like the quality of the local school system and whether this community is a good place to raise children. While we talked, he severed my vas deferens and eliminated my ability to participate in those experiences again. In a way, it seemed strangely appropriate to have the opportunity to affirm how much I value fathering at the moment that I was abdicating my procreative powers.

I was surprised at the lack of symmetry in my body. The right vas was easy to cut but the one on the left side had become intertwined with other tissue and took much more prodding and pulling and paining. And then some of my sperm turned out to be stubborn little things that refused to give up gracefully, and it seemed like forever before the nurse told me, "You may consider yourself to be sterile." I did not much care for the tone of the voice nor the choice of words, but such moments of minor psychological distress were even milder than the physical pain which actually ended up being quite tolerable.

All in all, it was a positive experience. Even paying the bill was not overly distressing. I am not, however, interested in writing a testimonial for vasectomies. Although freeing sexual expression from the constraints of birth control methods and eliminating the worry of unwanted pregnancy are well worth the monetary, physical, and psychological costs, the joy

of post-sterilization sexual pleasure is better left for another forum. What I find most intriguing is that it took me so long to make what now seems to be such a reasonable decision.

I suspect that I would not have been so slow to choose sterilization if I had recognized it as a viable alternative for me. The vasectomy option is one which Mormon men learn not even to consider. It still amazes me, however, that I could discuss the advantages of vasectomies so openly in my human sexuality courses without ever applying that knowledge to my own situation. I spent almost eight years with a variety of less than satisfactory birth control methods without ever asking whether I should apply the obvious solution for someone who knows—as I knew—that the time for begetting was over. Why was sterilization so unthinkable?

The other fascinating thing is how quickly and easily the answer came. Once I asked the question, the answer was so obvious that it seemed silly not to have considered it years earlier. I am struck by how many people I know have similar experiences of going for years without asking a question and then knowing almost immediately that the answer is yes. It is almost as if we are afraid to ask the question until we know the answer—until the answer, in fact, is unequivocal. Whether the question is to marry or to divorce, to have children or to stop having children, we often have unexamined assumptions in our mind about what we like or dislike, what we want or do not want, and what we should or should not do, which keep us from even asking the questions.

I am reminded of a commentary on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" by a woman who decided a few years ago that she could no longer jog because she had injured her knee and was told that at her age it would never fully recover. She found herself signed

up—quite unwillingly—for a five kilometer race which she intended to walk. She tried running a little just for fun, and it felt good, and she ended up jogging the entire distance without hurting her knee at all and has returned to jogging regularly. Her conclusion was that we should reexamine our assumptions at least every two years because they may no longer fit. I suspect that some of them may never have fit if they had been subject to scrutiny.

Before we can get the answers, however, we need to ask the questions. The contraception question usually comes in stages. The first is when to stop having children. Lester Bush has pointed out that many Mormons apply a variant of the Peter Principle in procreating to the level of their incompetence. Indeed, the official Church position may encourage this by allowing for birth control to preserve the physical or mental health of the mother, but strongly discouraging the invocation of this escape clause unless the straits are dire. Under such a mandate, the decision to stop having children is a tacit admission of incompetence which some parents are unwilling to make before becoming quite disabled. For most of us, it is a significant feat to acknowledge that we cannot handle more children and to go on to the second stage of doing something about it.

It is particularly difficult for Mormons to act on this awareness with the courage to make a binding move such as sterilization. Even those of us who find *Saturday's Warrior* singularly unconvincing can occasionally be willing to play the odds and gamble on a long shot probability, just in case. What if the myth were true and there were other spirits waiting who were "supposed" to be born into this particular family? A birth control method which is effective 80-95 percent of the time gives God a sporting chance to let that spirit come if it is meant to be. This is a great strategy for easing queasy consciences.

To choose a 100 percent effective method, however, requires a conviction strong enough to take the decision out of God's hands and thus give us the total responsibility for analyzing the situation and choosing for ourselves. What if the action removes forever the possibility of achieving godhood? If eternal procreation is the essence of being gods, why risk cutting off that procreative potential if, in retribution, one might never get it back? It is difficult enough to make a decision that is not reversible in this life, but the prospect of eternal irreversibility is intimidating.

Those willing to face this cosmic uncertainty must also deal with the dilemma of determining whose body gets cut. There are so many conflicting emotional pulls besides the

fear of blood that it might seem easiest to simply cast lots. One problem is that Mormon men lack a good excuse to be fixed. Women may be able to justify a tubal ligation on health reasons—surely God (and/or the bishop) would understand that. But pregnancy is not dangerous to a man's health and so a vasectomy may be seen as a stronger statement of volition. On the other hand, the additional risk and cost of a tubal ligation make it a less reasonable choice from a medical perspective.

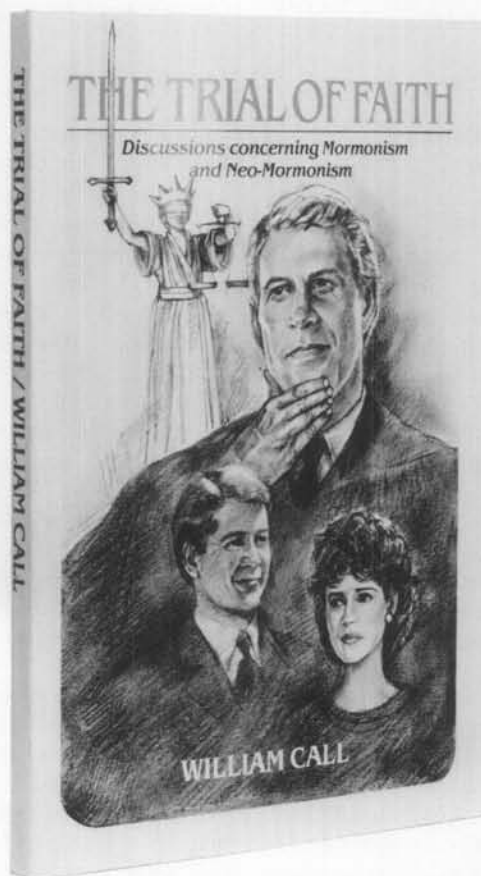
A couple contemplating sterilization may also have to deal with some subtle relationship questions, such as whether either or both are concerned with saving their procreative powers just in case something should happen to the current marriage. The fear of disappointing a potential future spouse becomes a background issue that is difficult to discuss because the reluctant partner's desire to be saving sperm or eggs for someone else may seem to reflect a diminished commitment to the marriage. On the other hand, if one partner seems too eager to be the one fixed, it could generate a subtle fear that the one-sided freedom from the procreative consequences of sexual intercourse might make it easier for the sterile spouse to stray. To the extent that the couple has justified the norm of sexual exclusivity by the need to keep the procreative powers sacred or to follow the dictates of the Church, it may seem risky to take a step which has the potential to undermine such external constraints.

Religious pressures also complicate the decision. In Mormon circles there may be a sense that it would be a more serious violation of Church norms for priesthood holders because sanctions seem to be more severe for them. At the same time, the notion that motherhood is the central role for Mormon women can make it seem more serious for them to negate a core aspect of the self.

With all of these complex issues making the sterilization question particularly problematic for Mormons, perhaps it should not surprise me that it took so long to have a vasectomy. We live with such uncertainty that even crucial decisions must be made without knowing the ultimate consequences. And because there is such a strong taboo against even discussing our struggles with this dilemma, we do not benefit from the experience of others. Thus, I do not know if I am unique nor if I am an eternal eunuch. But I do know that the decision still feels good (and the side effects feel great). It has made a *vas deferens* in my life.

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what it would be like to tell
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BOOKS

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN

LEAVING HOME

by Mary Bradford
Signature Books, 1987
318 pp., \$7.95



Reviewed by Dian Saderup

MARY BRADFORD HAS titled her book of essays *Leaving Home*. But, as she says in the epilogue to the collection “. . . in a way, I have never left home” (p. 7). She carries her home within herself, whether she is visiting LDS converts in the Philippines with her missionary daughter, touring Spain with her eldest son, or relocating as a young Utah bride to Washington, D.C. What she carries are memories of the specific place where she grew from childhood to womanhood: memories of family, friends, and fellow Church members who taught her “security and confidence” (p. 162)—who formed for her a solid foundation of love, reinforced with religious faith, that has traveled with her throughout the years. In *Leaving Home* Bradford’s readers are allowed a privileged glimpse into a life that defies, with a kind of knowing innocence, the great plagues of twentieth century American culture: fragmentation, alienation, and the general loss of continuity in human society. If you go looking for Isolated Modern Man (in this case Woman) within Bradford’s essays, you will not find her. Instead, you find a single person who succeeds in capturing through an unending supply of vivid, oftentimes humorous detail the richly hopeful texture of a life grounded securely in community.

We learn that Bradford’s father, to wake her

DIAN SADERUP has published personal essays in *Mormon Women Speak*, *Exponent II*, *The New Era*, and *Dialogue*.

popular among her friends. There was *The Neighborhood Chronicle*, the summertime newspaper she “published” out of her kitchen. She also kept a diary that became her constant companion, and she tried her hand at writing mysteries. Her imagination carried her as far away as England and New York City. As a child, it is clear she was busy not only encountering diverse visions of the world provided her by the authors whose books she devoured, but energetically creating her own versions of that world, her own visions.

Here we make a fundamental link. Perhaps it is best expressed in her report of a discussion between James Arrington and Gene England in “This Precious Stone.” Upon visiting Sherwood Forest in Nottingham, James pronounces it better to be outdoors, in the actual place, than to be indoors reading about it. Gene insists that if they hadn’t all read about Robin Hood none of them would really know what they were seeing. It is the written word that clarifies sight, giving one not only a *perspective* of what is but in some fundamental way becoming *part* of what is. In *Leaving Home* the sublime specificity of Bradford’s world leaves the reader without doubt that this writer’s particular version of reality is reliable—justly framed. When she judges *both* James and Gene correct she embraces the very paradox that makes her own art significant in its contribution to Mormon letters and to the larger literary tradition within which she writes: Bradford has not merely recounted an assortment of concrete personal experiences, she has in a real way *created* a unique culture by her very identifying, arranging and assessing those experiences on the page. As surely as E.B. White has rendered life in rural Maine, or Carol Bly distilled Middle American Minnesota, Bradford gives us not just Utah, but more profoundly a central vein of Mormonism that can (and does in her essays) cross geographical boundaries as easily as people cross state lines. The strangely palpable, and not infrequently comic, religious and social tradition she weaves reveals a whole—and unabashedly wholesome—way of life.

It may be argued that *Leaving Home* fails to show us the darker side of experience, to delve the depths of human suffering, and that therefore the essays form a lop-sided picture of our predicament upon the planet. This criticism, however, can be countered by a careful reading of the text and by an appreciation of Bradford’s remarkably matter-of-fact style. In her work we confront the poverty of the Philippine people; we see her father’s declining health, and feel her irrational guilt at his death; we learn of her mother’s fifteen-year ordeal with skin cancer for which, inexplicably, she adamantly refused

medical treatment that could have easily cured her. Bradford writes with a clear eye, without a drop of teary sentimentality. She relies upon what E.B. White once called "the eloquence of fact" to convey her mood and message. Her voice is direct, uncommonly funny at times, and wholly unassuming. With her we look death itself, quite plainly, in the face as she veils her mother's face—once beautiful, now cosmetically restored by the funeral directors—in preparation for burial. The veiling becomes yet another of the many tender rituals that mark her life.

In today's literary arena, where texts (to say nothing of entire social orders) now "deconstruct" with alarming speed—all signs and symbols within them recognized as arbitrary and hence, quite possibly, meaningless—Bradford has not hesitated to step up and present a world view laden with signs, tokens, symbols, folk beliefs and custom. For the world-weary modern reader, *Leaving Home* can actually be a kind of coming home, coming home to the recognition that to be firmly planted within a tradition may be far less limiting to human potential than it is liberating

THE KNIGHTS IN SHINING ARMOR

THEY ARE MY FRIENDS: A HISTORY OF THE JOSEPH KNIGHT FAMILY 1825-1850

by William G. Hartley

Grandin Book Company, Provo, Utah, 1986, 200 pp.



Reviewed by M. Guy Bishop

IN THE INTRODUCTION to *They Are My Friends*, Darrell Vernon Knight, a great-great grandson of Joseph Knight, Sr., stated that for years the family has wanted to guarantee that the promise of Joseph Smith that, within the Church, the name of Joseph Knight and his family "shall never be forgotten," would become a reality. Thus William G. Hartley, a professional historian with BYU's Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History was engaged to write this family biography. While it is not clear whether or not Mr. Hartley was financially compensated for his efforts, the imprint of not only faith-promoting, but faithfulness-verifying history is clearly stamped on this book. Hartley's research and writing are commendable, but this reviewer could not help but wonder if the Knight family as depicted in *They Are My*

Friends had not, in some instances, been made bigger and better than life. Clearly the Knights did play a leading role in the early Church, but some readers may be unwilling to grant them the importance which they have received herein.

For example, in the first chapter the author points up the striking coincidence that Joseph Smith, Sr. and Joseph Knight, Sr. were both born within a year of one another in Massachusetts, that both moved to Vermont as adults where they lived just seventy miles apart, both produced large families, and both moved their families to central New York between 1810 and 1820. And, oddly enough, both men chose their third sons to be their namesakes. "Did some heavenly script decree that the Knight and Smith families should follow each other to Cumorah's vicinity?" asks Hartley (p. 4). Possibly so, but then is it the place of the historian to try to pin down divine planning?

The narrative of the Knight family as it

traveled the paths of early Mormonism does add to the knowledge of the role played by family groups in the early years of the Restoration. As inhabitants of Colesville, New York, the Knights really formed the nucleus of that first branch of the Church. And through the pen and insight of Mr. Hartley, one can see the family grow spiritually and emerge as an important part of Joseph Smith's small fold in the 1830s. Since the author had unlimited use of family records and, one must assume, fairly open access to the LDS Archives at Salt Lake City, he has been able to provide some interesting information about the early Church. For example, one must conclude from Father Knight's account that Joseph Smith, the novice prophet, was puzzled about how to translate the golden plates once he had obtained them. For this reason Martin Harris was sent to New York City in February 1828 to consult with Drs. Anthon and Mitchell—the purpose apparently being to "hire" a translator (p. 31). This, of course, seems to go against the standard interpretation of this incident wherein Harris seems to want to verify Joseph Smith's ability to translate, but even recent accounts differ in their conclusions of the purpose of the visit to New York (see James B. Allen and Glen Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* [1976], pp. 40-41 or Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* [1984], pp. 86-87).

For this reviewer, it was the glimpses of the possibilities of what might have been accomplished through the use of the Knight records and, perhaps, a more interpretive and less faithfulness-verifying approach which caused disappointment. *They Are My Friends* should not be dismissed by students of early Mormonism; however, it must be read with a cautious eye toward its intended purpose. And William Hartley has handled the very delicate task of writing an authorized biography and "paying the piper" in a professional manner for the most part.

Join Hands



With People Who Care

M. GUY BISHOP is the assistant curator of the Social History section for the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.

FAMOUS WRITER TELLS AMAZING STORIES!

THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

Stories by Ron Carlson
W.W. Norton, New York
1987, \$15.95



Reviewed by Levi S. Peterson

As a person, Ron Carlson belongs to the West; as a writer, he doesn't. He grew up in Utah. He presently lives in Arizona and teaches writing at Arizona State University. He still owns a couple of houses in Salt Lake, which he rents. A few of the sixteen stories of this collection are set in Salt Lake. The names of neighborhoods, streets, and markets give them a comfortable touch of local color for Utah readers. Fundamentally, however, this collection is of neither Utah nor the West, but of America at large. Its settings range from Santa Monica to New Haven, and its themes and preoccupations pertain to the broad American personality.

This collection is divided into three sections. The first and third sections are composed of stories about intelligent, cultivated, professional people—artists, teachers, and lawyers. Counterpointing the first and third, the second section is about unsophisticated, blue-collar, downhome people—persons of what may be called a tabloid mentality. The stories of this middle section allude to a fictional scandal sheet called *Realms of Twilight Tabloid News of the World*. They appear to have been inspired by headlines from this tabloid. The first, "Bigfoot Stole My Wife," is a satire on credulity. The narrator's wife warns him that one day when he comes home she will be gone. When that day arrives, he can't believe she has left of her own will. A "hairy" odor in the empty house convinces him she has been abducted by Bigfoot.

LEVI S. PETERSON is a professor of English at Weber State College and author of *The Back Slider*.

ceed. He recognizes in the vague images of his new paintings the faces of three babies whom he is convinced his wife will someday bear.

Oddly, a reader is not likely to reflect on how improbable and crazy this story is. Despite its unlikely particulars, it comes across as entirely authentic. This is because the context readily leads the reader to interpret the narrator's incantations as symbols. The reader may doubt whether chicken entails will produce a pregnancy, but he can't doubt the intensity with which the narrator desires a pregnancy. The point of this story is the human desire to procreate. The news of the world which this collection of stories wishes to disseminate is not, after all, the sensational, the incredible, and the occult. Even the tabloid stories of the middle section ultimately deal with credible emotions. In "I am Bigfoot," the story which follows "Bigfoot Stole My Wife," a supposedly real-life Bigfoot ponders the misinformation which human beings give out about him. "I go from village to town to city to village. At present, I am watching your wife. That's why I am here tonight. To tell you, fairly, man to man, I suppose, I am watching your wife and I know for a fact, that when I call, she'll come" (p. 93). By now the reader knows who Bigfoot is: not a hairy beast which lives mythically in tabloid pages, but the haunting desire of women for something better than a dull and unfulfilling marriage.

Carlson is good at both conventional and unconventional structures. Some of his stories are simply plotted, developing a conflict through a series of incidents terminating in a climax. Others roam around in apparent aimlessness, springing at the end into an astonishing coherence.

"The H Street Sledding Record" is a good example of unconventional structure. Every year at Christmas the narrator throws horse manure onto the snowy roof of his house in order to make his daughter believe that Santa's reindeer have been there. This startling procedure is a ritual, he explains, "that keeps my family together" (p. 26). He and his wife and daughter engage in other rituals at Christmas. They make much of a Christmas tree, and during a pre-Christmas snowstorm, they ride a sled down H Street, attempting to better the distance which they achieved in a sled ride before their daughter was born. All of this is presented to the reader with abrupt transitions and no apparent conflict. Furthermore, there are incidents that seem irrelevant. As he and his family hunt for their tree, the narrator is reminded of a time when he worked at a tree lot. After he had delivered a Christmas tree to the apartment of a lonely young woman, she

kissed him and invited him to stay. He politely declined. Returning to the present, the narrator recounts another seemingly irrelevant incident. Besides buying a tree for his family, he gives money to a young couple who lust on a tree beyond their means. "Jimmy pays for the tree, and his girl—and this is the truth—jumps on him, wrestles him to the ground in gratitude and smothers him for nearly a minute. There have never been people happier about a Christmas tree" (p. 33).

On the day before Christmas, snow falls and the family makes its annual attempt on the H Street record. As they seat themselves on the sled, the narrator points out that there is room for another person. Their daughter asks who that might be. A little brother, his wife informs her. The narrator has hoped his wife wanted another baby; he himself has wanted one so intensely that he hasn't dared speak of the matter. Now they have spontaneously agreed to enlarge their family. So the story ends: "And that's about all that was said, sitting up there on Eleventh Avenue on Christmas Eve on a sled which is as old as my marriage with a brake that is as old as my daughter. Later tonight I will stand in my yard and throw this year's reindeer droppings on my very own home. I love Christmas" (pp. 34-35).

At this conclusion everything coheres. The

story is unified by an affirmation rather than a conflict. It affirms the joy of fidelity between a man and a woman. It affirms, like "Life Before Science," the joy of procreation. It affirms the joy of Christmas. Comprehending all of the above, it affirms the joy of the rituals by which disparate individuals are welded into a family. It is a hymn of praise to the domestic bond.

The domestic bond is Carlson's most prominent topic. From one angle or another, his stories examine the human impulse to be intimately linked—man with woman, parent with child. Sometimes they treat the topic in the negative. In "The Governor's Ball" Carlson creates comedy from the alienation felt by a husband whose wife, a successful lawyer, is climbing the social ladder without him. In "Santa Monica," he depicts the sad dissolution of a once happy love affair. In "Madame Zelena Finally Comes Clean"—one of the tabloid stories—he reveals the pathos of a clairvoyant woman who, having foreseen her own future, voluntarily separates from a husband and daughter whom she loves. Such unhappiness gives point to his overriding theme. If the stories of this collection are trustworthy evidence, Carlson wants the entire world combined into happy families.

His gift for creating striking, efficacious symbols should be noted. An excellent illustration

is "Blood," a brief story about a couple who have recently adopted an infant. The wife is so anxious that the tiny boy will not love her that she has a knotted back. One night the husband, stark naked, gets out of bed, changes the baby, and feeds him from a bottle. With an accidental toss of the head, the infant gives the man a bloody nose. Fatigued and a little stunned, the man simply lies down on a couch with the baby on top of him, pulls up a TV quilt, and goes to sleep. His wife wakes him, wailing with consternation. The man assures her that the blood, now dried, is his, not the child's. He climbs into the bathtub where she gently washes away the blood that glues him to his son. Then the infant reaches for his mother. "There was no question about it this time: he put his arms around her laughing neck and, in a happy, bucking hug, he grabbed her hair" (p. 173). The story has come to its happy conclusion. Mother and son have bonded. But so have father and son. The blood is a splendid symbol, an umbilical proving that men can bond with children as profoundly as women can.

These stories are exceptional in both technique and meaning. They are absorbing, articulate, and, above all, compassionate. The news of the world which they propound is that, if human beings are not happily enmeshed within a loving family, at least they should be.

B. H. ROBERTS' SOCIETY INVITATION TO SUBMIT STATEMENTS

The members of the Church define their faith in many ways. For some the emphasis is a core of essential **BELIEFS**. Others may identify with the LDS community in other ways. For example:

PRACTICE: obedience to certain practices and principles (the traditional emphasis of the temple recommend interview)

ACTIVITY in the Church: going to meetings and accepting responsibilities

CULTURE: a cultural heritage, like being Jewish or Polynesian

COMMUNITY: a close-knit group who support each other and work together for effective service to mankind

LEGAL: baptized, confirmed and never excommunicated

SALVATION: the Body of Christ endowed with the Priesthood to administer the saving ordinances . . . together with

MIXTURES AND VARIATIONS of the above categories and many more

We would like you to share with us your experience of what being a Mormon means to you. Expressions should be limited to 5 minutes' reading time. The B. H. Roberts Society will select from manuscripts submitted what we hope will be a stimulating cross-section of the variety of the Mormon experience for presentations by the writers in our Winter 1988 event. If you are interested in participating, we would like to hear from you no later than November 15, 1987. The B. H. Roberts Society will not be responsible for acknowledging or returning manuscripts submitted. Please mail to:

B. H. ROBERTS SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 9052, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84109

HISTORY ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 150 YEARS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Commemorating the arrival of the first Mormon missionaries to England 150 years ago, the Mormon History Association held its annual meeting at a historical site outside the United States for the first time.

The conference was held in Oxford, Liverpool and London. On Sunday night, July 5, the participants gathered in Oxford's examination school for the opening orientation session, where conference planner Paul Anderson gave his first of many humorous logistical instructions and Oxford professor Alan Webster explained how the decentralized Oxford college system works.

During the next four days the conference consisted of a blend of papers and excursions to Mormon and English historical sites. Many of the papers focused on the LDS and RLDS churches in England, although some discussed Saints in other European countries or European settlement in the United States. BYU historian Leonard Arrington discussed the experience of Mormon women in Great Britain: W.B. (Pat) Spillman of the RLDS Temple School reviewed the RLDS presence in Scandinavia; BYU historian Richard L. Jensen discussed the role of church councils in nineteenth century Europe; Kirk Henriksen and Richard Oman, both with the LDS Museum of Church History and Art, discussed the transplanting of European art traditions to Zion; Mary Brown Firmage read the love letters exchanged by Hugh B. Brown and Zina Card. The Obert C. Tanner Lecture was given by J.F.C. Harrison, professor emeritus of the University of Sussex, on "LDS Working Class Biographies:

The Nineteenth Century Context." In the past the Tanner lecture had been funded by an annual gift, however, this year Mr. Tanner made a \$50,000 contribution to endow the lecture in perpetuity.

The conference also included the premier performance of a new



one-man play written by James Arrington and Tim Slover, "Wilford Woodruff, God's Fisherman," which presents the young Woodruff as a missionary. Slover, a descendant of Woodruff, played the young apostle.

Guided excursions were one of the high points of the conference. Jill Mulvay Derr and Charlotte England explained the LDS sites in Ledbury, the center of Wilford Woodruff's proselyting efforts, and Eugene England conducted a tour of the Benbow Hill Farm, where many early converts were baptized. A visit to Herfordshire Beacon, a hill where several apostles gathered to pray about their mission to the British Isles, was led by BYU historian Malcolm Thorp.

In addition, the conference included trips to Bath, Longleat House, Stonehenge, Stratford-Upon-Avon (and a performance of *Twelfth Night* by the Royal Shake-

speare Company), Blenheim Palace and Warwick Castle, as well as many informal trips around Oxford and other cities.

On Friday the Conference convened in Liverpool where Conway Sonne presented a paper on "Liverpool and the Mormon Emigration," there was an evening tour and reception of the Merseyside Maritime Museum at the Albert Dock Warehouses where the hardships of ocean emigration were authentically reconstructed.

On Saturday, the conference visited Mormon sites in Preston, including the River Ribble where the first English baptisms were performed, the Town Square and Obelisk where the first missionaries

Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930, University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Best documentary book, John Phillip Walker, editor, *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History*, Signature Books, 1986.

Special citations, went to Dean L. May for "editing the *Journal of Mormon History* with unusual dedication and exemplary standards."

Paul L. Anderson, "whose careful on-sight planning made possible the association's successful Oxford convention."

John Horner, "in recognition for outstanding historical drama, *The Kirtland Rehearsal*."

Jessie L. Embry, "for tireless diligence in serving the association as its executive secretary."

Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, "in recognition on its twentieth anniversary for its many contributions to Mormon history."

J. LeRoy Kimball, "pioneer, visionary, entrepreneur: Mr. Nauvoo Restoration."

In addition, Leonard J. Arrington announced the recipients of three awards.

The Grace Fort Arrington Award For Excellence in Mormon History went to David Whittaker for his years of work as an editor, author of scholarly historical articles, as a BYU archivist with the Mormon collection and work in assisting other scholars with their research.

The William and Winnifred Foster Reese Award for the best Ph.D. dissertation went to Bruce Van Orden for his work on the life of George D. Reynolds. An additional Reese award went to Marjorie Newton for her excellent masters thesis on the history of the Church in Australia.

The traditional devotional was held in London Sunday evening at St. Mary's Hill Church, designed by Christopher Wren. M. Richard Troeh and Carol Cornwall Madsen spoke and Peter Lea-Cox conducted the premier performance of "Now Behold A Marvelous Work," a cantata by Harriet Petherick Bushman.

Although many BYU historians conducted oral histories with Euro-

where coincidentally greeted with a banner reading "Truth will Prevail," and the house on St. Wilfred's Street where Heber C. Kimball and others wrestled with evil spirits. Guides and lectures included BYU historians James B. Allen and David Whittaker and Roger Kendle of Preston. Paul Anderson acted as a guide through picturesque Downham, England, an outlying town where missionaries preached.

At the closing presidential banquet, Richard Sadler, outgoing MHA president, spoke on "Franklin D. Richards and the British Mission," and incoming president Valeen Tippitts Avery presided over the announcement of the annual awards, which included:

Best article, Grant Underwood for "Saved or Damned: Tracing a Persistent Protestantism in Early Mormon Thought," *BYU Studies* 25 (Summer 1985) 1: 85-103.

Best book, Thomas G. Alexander,

pean Saints in the weeks after the conference, the conference itself had little impact on Mormons in Europe. It was largely a meeting of American scholars in England talking and associating with themselves. The few British Saints who attended occasionally reminded conference goers that since the early British converts all emigrated to Utah, they felt less connected to the sesquicentennial events than did the early converts' American descendants. To many British Mormons, their history begins in earnest after World War II.

Nevertheless, because the conference was spread out over a longer period of time than usual and involved close-quartered living in Oxford's Wadham college dorms, other hotels and on the bus trips, the social and intellectual bonds between members were strengthened dramatically.

The 1988 MHA meeting will be in Logan, Utah, on May 5-8, and the 1989 meeting will be in Nauvoo, Illinois. The leadership is still discussing whether to meet in Hawaii in 1990 or 1992.

INDEPENDENT BYU STUDENT PAPER BEGINS STRONG SECOND YEAR

Optimistic, intelligent, and faithful. *The Student Review* is beginning its second year as Brigham Young University's alternative student publication.

The paper began last summer when its founders wanted a student voice at BYU and distributed a flyer inviting all who were "tired" of BYU's *Daily Universe* to attend a mass meeting. "Fifty to five people" were seriously interested and the idea became "dangerously possible."

Review founders William James Kelly and Roger Leishman flirted with university administrators about the possibility of having the paper sponsored by a college or department, but eventually decided to go it alone and overcome the legacy and reputation of the late controversial *Seventh East Press*, which was banned from campus in 1983 because of its discussions of Mormon theology and history.

Taking advantage of technological innovations in desktop publishing and laser printing, with late night sessions the *Review* easily achieved what the *Press* strove to do and never accomplished—a

weekly production schedule.

Since the banning of the *Press* BYU officially discourages independent publications by prohibiting the sale or distribution of publications that might compete with the *Daily Universe* for local advertising. Not being able to benefit from BYU Bookstore sales, the *Review* opted for free distribution at student hot spots. Their revenue comes entirely from advertising, which is sold by students at a 15 percent commission. The number of distribution locations is continually increasing, and now that major supermarkets carry the paper the press run has been increased from 5,000 to 7,500. Paid mail subscriptions are available for \$10 a year.

Stating that their success is "not following a format" but just "trying to mirror what we feel at the university," the paper's editors have combined the best of college life—passionate intellectual inquiry, the bohemian collegiate lifestyle, and satirical fun—into a newsprint tabloid that they call a magazine.

In an interview at the publisher's

Provo residence at 789 North 100 East (which is also the magazine's office), Bill Kelly stated that the magazine is put out by "a faithful staff for a faithful audience" who want to "print things that challenge thinking" and to "discuss Church standards and doctrines from a 'let's think about this' perspective." So far the articles and opinion pieces, which are usually unsolicited student submissions, have covered Sixties idealism, President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, the Cambodian holocaust, drug testing, and a new Provo, Utah chapter of Amnesty International.

Religious topics have included articles on evolution, gaining a testimony, Mother Teresa and applied Christianity, obesity and the Word of Wisdom, patriotism, and an article on the writing of Mormon history by BYU political science professor Louis Midgely which prompted a discussion that lasted for many issues.

Wanting to have students "discuss critical issues pertaining to the school," the magazine has featured articles on the BYU Jerusalem Center, "Angel Dust and Ethics at BYU," the accreditation review of the university, "Prayer at the Y," the new requirement that all students obtain

reviews, in part because that is what student authors submit—plays, concerts, restaurants, albums, movies, and books. The slightly off-beat Campus Life section has covered the varying quality of pizza deliveries, dry cleaners and grocery produce.

A lampooning humor is an important part of its successful formula. People go out of their way to find the magazine because it includes an entire week of "Doonesbury" and "The Far Side" cartoon strips. When there was controversy about a former BYU president's beard being removed from a painting for the student telephone directory, the magazine included a "cut-out Karl G. Maeser beard" and ran a front-page photograph of the staff with false beards posing in front of his dress code-breaking bearded statue. Once it featured cut-out paper dolls of the current BYU president and his wife. Following issues included different wardrobes for the "Jeff and Pat" dolls, including Arabian wear when they went to Jordan and a cane and cast when Jeff Holland broke his foot.

One enthusiastic supporter commented that thoughtful LDS students in the sixties established *Diologue: A Journal of Mormon*

Thought, which was based in Stanford; in the seventies Berkeley students helped found SUNSTONE, and now in the eighties it is BYU's turn. More than one BYU professor sees the recurring attempt to create an independent student voice (this is at least the third attempt this decade) as an indicator that BYU is growing up and that its students are taking

learning seriously.

In any event, *The Student Review* is definitely a student paper. Partly because of the ban from campus distribution (although once several news boxes containing the magazine were placed on campus anonymously), many faculty members who at times seemed to be the core support for the *Seventh East Press* never see the *Review*. A communications class did a survey of faculty opinions about the paper.

an annual endorsement by their ecclesiastical leader, scholarships, student depression, and "Berkeley vs. BYU." The *Review* challenged the school's plan to place a resident assistant in each off-campus housing complex and was a major agent in arousing student resistance which helped cause the university to table the proposal.

The magazine also covers day-to-day student life. Living up to its name, it has a generous supply of

Among the academic departments, support varied widely. While 40 to 50 percent of English faculty had read it and 70 to 80 percent approved, in the College of Religion 0 to 1 percent of the faculty had read the *Review* and 98 percent had a negative impression of it, with some using adjectives like "liberal," "anti-Mormon," and "communist" to describe the paper.

Nevertheless, with "tons of volunteers" to "write, play, draw, edit, talk, cut, glue, listen, wax, meet fun people, sell, plan, think, party,

learn, paste, watch, become aware, etc., etc.," and an improving financial base from increasing advertising, the *Review* seems to be in good shape. It just successfully changed editors, and since publisher Bill Kelly is a senior and plans to get his masters degree in organizational behavior at BYU, the *Review* may have the continuity and stability it needs to succeed. "If we can make it through this year, I think we will be a permanent institution at BYU," asserts Kelly.

MORMON CRITIC AGREES TO ONE-TIME DEBATE

By Bill Forest

Well known anti-Mormon author and lecturer Walter Martin has consistently refused offers to debate his views. However, ex-Mormon Ed Decker persuaded Martin to participate in an almost unprecedented debate at the final session of the annual Capstone Conference in Park City, Utah, sponsored by Decker's anti-Mormon organization Saints Alive in Jesus.

Martin's opponent was Van Hale, an aggressive defender of the Church, host of Salt Lake radio station's KZZI Daily Religious Forum, and author of the Mormon Miscellaneous series.

The debate addressed the premise "Mormonism is not Christian." Speaking first, Dr. Martin introduced a "key ultimate test" of whether a belief system is Christian: "If you are corrupt in your doctrine of God and the nature and work of Jesus Christ, it doesn't make any difference where else you are right—you are not Christian." Martin then explained that because Mormonism denies the Trinity, the

virgin birth of Jesus and justification by faith and also advocates the deification of man and the plurality of gods it is excluded from the Christian fold.

In response, Hale said, "I would have to concede without any reservation that, yes, indeed by certain definitions Mormonism is not Christian." He then stated that Mormons are not under any obligation to accept Martin's view of Christianity as definitive, and pointed out that many Bible scholars define Christianity in terms that include Mormonism.

"The other problem with Dr. Martin's point of view is how he presents Mormonism," continued Hale. "He has gone to great length and great effort to use certain kinds of terminology and language, which is obviously very obnoxious, to attempt to portray Mormonism as being something it is not."

Martin responded by stating that "it is to this liberal school which dominates many Protestant seminaries and commentaries today that the Mormon church goes."

CONFERENCE ASKS QUESTIONS WHILE HOFMANN RAISES NEW ONES

Although Mark Hofmann's case ended in January when he pleaded guilty to two counts of second degree murder and two counts of fraud, his story was back in the news seven months later. In August the County Attorney released a 600-page transcript of the interviews Hofmann gave as part of the plea bargain and Brigham Young University sponsored a symposium on his forgeries.

On 6 August 1987, BYU President Jeffery R. Holland opened the BYU sponsored symposium "Church History and Recent forgeries" in the Marriott Center by stating that BYU hosted the conference to "minimize as much as possible the sensationalism" of the topic. Counseling scholars to be as "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" he criticized Hofmann for being neither, for damaging both "the head and the heart, both history and faith, both reason and revelation."

Holland said the purpose of the conference was to "set the record straight again, and to anticipate some of the burden under which historians will have to work in the future as they research and write of both secular and spiritual events which have temporal and eternal consequences." Saying that the conference could make a start at unravelling Hofmann's string of deceptions by sorting and sifting, learning and growing, aided by reason and revelation, he counseled historians to "publicly pull back from some positions too quickly taken" about Joseph Smith and folk magic. Left unaltered, he said, these positions can be a form of "deceit unlike Mark Hofmann's in degree but not in kind."

Speaking on the first session's

theme of "Faith and History," William G. Hartley, a historian with the Smith Institute, said that "the historian must be an interpreter who explains the meaning and content of the records for the reader, and that his interpretation must be factual, true to the sources, and make sense." Admitting that he is a believer writing about a believing family, Hartley related how his historical research on the Joseph Knight family led him to write their history as a "witness that Joseph Smith was a prophet." Hartley contrasted his Knight story, "even including strange doings at the Hill Cumorah with rods-men," with Hofmann's deceitful use of Knight's account to create a salamander in the Martin Harris letter.

"LDS members with testimonies born of the Spirit can handle Church history, can struggle with Church history problems, can keep their faith, and . . . can find in Church history much to strengthen and enhance their beliefs," he said.

Speaking in the same session, BYU Professor of History James B. Allen said that when historians write on issues that are "related to some of their deepest, most fundamental personal commitments, historians certainly should not be expected to write in a tone or mode that contradicts or undermines those beliefs."

"What we write as scholars may not, and usually should not, be directed toward trying to 'prove' them on the basis of secular methodology," said Allen, "but neither should we be expected to come up with an interpretation that denies our fundamental values and beliefs—unless, of course, we change those beliefs in the process."

The second session, "Unraveling the Hofmann Case" nearly unraveled the "unemotional consideration" Holland pleaded for at the start and initiated a series of recriminations and responses that dominated the rest of the conference.

George Throckmorton, the forensic expert who worked with the prosecution and determined that the documents were forgeries, related how during his 15 months of examination he studied over 8,000 documents, 450 from the hands of Mark Hofmann. About 200 of those were forged, including "all of the documents of significance."

He then reviewed the diverse nature of the documents. Hofmann manufactured entire hand-written documents; created early Mormon money with identifying seals and some in denominations that never previously existed; altered genuine documents to make them more valuable by changing dates and adding signatures (Sidney Rigdon, Solomon Spaulding, Betsy Ross); added pages to books to make them more valuable; divided documents and lied about their origin (cutting up genuine papyrus); and manufactured his own postmarks.

After Throckmorton discussed the marks of forgery in the Martin Harris Salamander letter, he suggested that several factors combined to fool the experts, including the emotional controversy over the content of the letter; ignorance about scientific document examination and who can do them; too much readiness to trust Hofmann; and reluctance to spend money to authenticate his finds.

"About three years ago my profession association wanted to hold its semi-annual meeting here because they had heard so much about BYU and the LDS church and they thought for sure they would have an entire department that would do nothing but authenticate old documents. We wanted to learn some of their techniques."

"Perhaps it's time that some of these people become aware of our techniques." Throckmorton

concluded.

Robert L. Stott, the prosecutor for the Salt Lake County Attorney's Office, recounted the investigation and prosecution of the case against Mark Hofmann.

Shortly after the bombings three clues pointed the investigation to Mark Hofmann. First, Hofmann's hospital-bed story that the bomb went off when he was outside the car differed from the conclusions of the explosives expert. Second, by tracing of Radio Shack components used in making the bomb police found they were purchased by a "Mike Hansen," a name which reappeared among the confiscated papers in Hofmann's house. Third, an hour before the bomb went off in the Judge building a witness saw a man whom he later identified as Hofmann, carrying a package with "Steve Christensen" written on it.

Because Hofmann passed a polygraph test and had an alibi corroborated by his wife, Stott said there was not sufficient evidence to go to trial. Thus began the search for Hofmann's motive, which eventually led to the discovery of the fraudulent documents.

Initial searches connected "Mike Hansen" with engraving plates made to produce Deseret Currency, Spanish Fork Bank notes and other forgeries which Mark Hofmann sold. The search eventually led to the discovery Hofmann overextending himself and murdering Steven Christensen to cover up his duplicity.

According to Stott, Hofmann was involved in a intricate con scheme involving multiple purchases of the nonexistent McLellan collection. His clients included Al Rust, Steven Christensen, and Elder Hugh Pinnock, who had arranged a short-term loan for Hofmann. On 15 October 1985 Hofmann either had to produce the collection or \$335,000 to meet his obligations.

Apparently Hofmann never intended to produce the collection, since his clients were interested primarily for investment purposes and not historical.

In the meantime Hofmann was negotiating with the Library of

Congress to purchase his forged Oath of a Free Man, the long-sought-for earliest known American printed document, for 1.5 million dollars. The sale took longer than he expected, and in desperation Hofmann he sold an improbable second Oath to investors for \$100,000. Steven Christensen knew about the first Oath and knew the owners of the second, and Hofmann felt he had to keep him from learning about the sale of the second.

"Like all con artists, he felt that if he could just put off having to come up with the money for a week or two weeks or a month he would be able somehow to get that money when the oath was sold," said Stott. "He killed Steve Christensen to postpone that meeting. He also killed Christensen to make sure he would never find out about the second oath in Salt Lake City, and I believe he also killed Steve Christensen because he realized that if any of his so-called finds. . . were ever questioned. . . then his reputation would be bruised, and in his business a bruised reputation is like no reputation and people would have to take a look at his earlier finds."

Stott also said Hofmann killed Kathleen Sheets to divert the investigation from the documents.

Although Stott acknowledged that Hofmann was a good liar and skilled in forgery he strongly criticized the historians, telling them that they should have known better.

"My perception is that the necessary skepticism and objectivity was not shown to Mark Hofmann or to his documents," he said. "I've read all your articles, and basically what I've found is that when authenticity was addressed it was in defense of the documents. Some historians became Mark Hofmann apologists."

Stott said he thought there was a feeling of superiority over other historians by those in the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute and that made them vulnerable to Hofmann, relying too much on his stories, not checking provenance, and trusting handwriting analysis instead of

other scientific methods. He said the case demonstrated the flaw in the historical method of determining context and that scholars should avoid making definite conclusions.

At lunch Allen Roberts, who is coauthoring a book on Hofmann, answered the most often asked questions about the case and said that the forgeries were so numerous they may never all be identified, especially since investors are reluctant to have documents they purchased examined.

After lunch historians responded to Stott and Throckmorton in a session entitled "Why Were Scholars Misled? What Can We Learn from This?" Smith Institute senior historian Dean C. Jessee recounted his involvement with the Salamander letter after Steven Christensen employed him to study it. Jessee explained that he and others closely studied the letter's historical context, and contracted Hitler diaries forgery expert Kenneth Rendell who concluded from ink and paper tests that the document came from the purported time period. Jessee detailed his extensive research in searching the document's provenance to a dealer who was "90 percent" certain he had sold the letter to Hofmann. "I don't know what I would have done different, under the circumstances," Jessee said, who concluded that archivists and historians need to have a familiarity with the science of document investigation to know what tests are important.

Richard Turley, assistant managing director of the LDS Church Historical Department, explained that when archivists declare a document authentic it means "they haven't discovered persuasive evidence to the contrary" by using one or more of five methods: textual and content analysis, provenance, chemical analysis (ink and paper tests), physical analysis (unnatural ink flow, tracing of handwriting), and handwriting analysis. Using his definition, Turley explained that all documents received are authenticated but because of large volume

of documents and the costs of authentication only select documents can be fully examined.

Max J. Evans, director of the Utah State Historical Society, said that one reason scholars were misled is because the study of early Mormon history is a new field that captures the imagination but which has a relative lack of documentation that attracts scholars who hope to make their academic reputations based on new, provocative interpretations. He criticized scholars for not being vigilant in watching provenance and said that a bull market for documents hurts scholarship because owners don't want to donate them to archives. He said he was distressed about claims of some good coming from the forged documents and said he "will be especially skeptical of any work based, even if only indirectly, on the ideas found in the Hofmann forgeries."

Answering the question "What can we learn from this," RLDS Church Historian Richard P. Howard referred to the private Mark Hofmann and concluded that

"a person's religious story can never be fully compartmentalized from the rest of their life, . . . that holding one's faith separate and distinct from one's historical conceptions is most safely done in exploratory exercises in the seminar, classroom, and in theoretical discussions among friends who are committed to mutual growth through understanding."

David Whittaker, curator of BYU's Archives of the Mormon Experience, discussed how as the Church Archives opened up in the 1970s inherent tensions between "ecclesiastical statesmen" who have a responsibility to protect the institution and "scholar/historians" who are committed to a quest for truth increased. "Hofmann managed to take advantage of this tension and suspicion by playing on the worst fears and needs of both groups," he said. "For this situation, I think we must all take some responsibility."

In the next session, "What Was the Impact of the Fraudulent Documents?" Smith Institute director Ronald K. Esplin and other panelists gave a strong defense of the

historians. Esplin defended the historians but agreed that there was a need to "reevaluate how our thinking and analysis has been influenced by the forgeries."

Acknowledging that everyone had learned to be more cautious, former Smith Institute director Leonard J. Arrington said, LDS historians "did not sensationalize, did not jump into new interpretations, and did not alter their balanced honest and faithful approaches to LDS history."

"The evaluation and writing of our history has always been and must always be an ongoing process," he explained. "The Hofmann forgeries have forced us to look again at the documents we already had." He added that before the bombings several historians had concluded that some of the documents were forgeries, including currency and a Thomas Bullock letter.

At the evening banquet, Elder Dallin Oaks, who attended the entire conference, spoke on the Church's role in the Hofmann forgeries. His comments were

regarded as the Church's official statement on the affair. Recounting Hofmann's General Authority contacts, Elder Oaks disputed that Hofmann had ready access to Church officials and said they were only occasional visits incidental to the leaders' larger responsibilities. As to why Hofmann was able to deceive Church leaders, Oaks said, "In order to perform their personal ministries, Church leaders cannot be suspicious and questioning" because "they function best in an atmosphere of trust and love."

Although Oaks briefly chided historians and investors for not being sufficiently cautious, the brunt of his criticism fell on the media. Calling the media coverage "some of the most sustained and intense LDS Church bashing since the turn of the century," Elder Oaks criticized the media for sensationalizing documents that supposedly "shook the Church" and for the "character assassination" of quoting unnamed sources that unfairly blackened the reputation of Church leaders with untrue statements fed to them by Mark Hofmann.

EXERPTS FROM THE MARK HOFMANN INTERVIEWS

ON DECEIVING

I think I have that ability [to go with the flow] in my personality. I obviously do for the number of frauds that have been committed . . . I don't think I give myself away very easily as far as I can look someone in the eye and lie, for example. (pp.98-99)

ON FRIENDS' LOYALTY

It's hard for a lot of people to accept, I'm sure, that my closest friends and even my wife did not know the extent of my fraudulent dealings. . . . I have always been fairly introverted. I have never had really close friends that I've shared information with. Even in my earlier dealings with coins and other

antiques. . . . I may have slipped once. I obviously did concerning my fraudulent coin activities but generally I didn't brag about such things and didn't talk about such things. . . .

Because they're my friends and genuinely believed that the documents were genuine and were trying to protect me. . . . I didn't take them aside and say you have to stick up for me guys or I'll blow you up or whatever. Such a thing never happened. I think they believed in the genuineness of the documents and also my innocence in the bombings. (pp. 421-422)

ON COPYING HANDWRITING

Although I really don't consider

myself an artistic person, I think I have the ability to look at handwriting and copy it. . . . Probably to some extent it is a talent only insofar as I have developed it through practice, but I wouldn't say that I was born or had a natural talent for copying handwriting. (p. 73)

ON THE CHURCH

[P]revious to this I had lost faith in the Mormon Church. . . . Right around the age of 14. Therefore, I . . . wasn't fearful of the Church inspiration detecting forgery. (p. 112)

ON CHANGING HISTORY

I won't go so far as to say I wanted to change Mormon history. Let me take that back. Maybe I did. I believed that the documents that I created could have been a part of Mormon history. I'm speaking specifically, for example, of the magic-

related items. The 1825 Stool letter, the so-called Salamander Letter. In effect, I guess, the questions I asked myself in deciding on a forgery one of the questions was, what could have been? I had a concept of Church history and I followed that concept. . . . [A]t the time [of the Anthon transcript] I had no other thoughts of forging any other Mormon documents. (p. 113)

ON FORGERIES' IMPACT

A lot of the media that the documents received was unplanned, meaning that I knew that they would receive some attention, that they were historically significant documents or at least purported to be, but I was always surprised by the amount of media that they actually received.

. . . changing the history of the Church or rewriting the history of the Church, how I thought it should be or whatever. . . . wasn't

ann. The *Los Angeles Times* received his stinging criticism for not revealing their Hofmann source after the bombings and for continuing to include his fabrications in later stories.

"We should all pursue our search for truth with the tools of honest and objective scholarship and sincere and respectful religious faith, in the mixture dictated by the personal choice each of us is privileged to make," Elder Oaks concluded.

In the concluding session, Mormon historians Jan Shippo and Richard Bushman addressed the impact of magic on Mormon history. Each of them downplayed the importance of the Hofmann documents. Bushman acknowledged the role of magic in Joseph Smith's life and discussed how over time it receded but never disappeared. "The Lord does not attempt to strip us of all of our human culture before he permits us to serve him in his kingdom," he concluded. "Rather he tells us to use [it] for good purposes."

Jan Shippo discussed how

Joseph Smith was "caught in the turn-over" in Western culture that divided magic from religion and later pulled back from magic. She said that the role of folk magic in early Mormon history should not be ignored but that the focus should be on Joseph Smith, and should always be embedded in the context of the emerging institutional Church because "I have not found one statement of a person who says I am going to become Mormon because" of magic.

The week before the BYU conference, the public finally got a look at the interviews Hofmann had been holding with prosecutors from the County Attorney's office. The transcripts from Hofmann's interviews ran to nearly 600 pages, which were released to the public 31 July at a crowded and contentious news conference. The interviews raised at least as many questions as they answered. Although Hofmann was reasonably cooperative in describing his forgery techniques and the extent of his financial dealings, less than 14 pages of the transcripts touched on the murders of Steven

Christensen and Kathy Sheets. As for the third bomb that exploded in Hofmann's car on 16 October 1985, even the prosecutors who conducted the interviews seemed dubious about Hofmann's claim that he deliberately blew himself up in a suicide attempt.

Part of the dissatisfaction with the interview stemmed from an apparent misunderstanding about the terms under which they would be conducted. Although Hofmann agreed to meet only with county prosecutors David Biggs and Robert Stott, Salt Lake City police Chief Bud Willoughby said that he was assured that his detectives would be present at the interviews that dealt with the bombings. When those interviews were scheduled, Hofmann refused to go through with them if the detectives were present. Despite the repeated urgings of Salt Lake County Attorney David Yocom and Ron Yengich, Hofmann's attorney, negotiations broke down and the interviews never took place.

Most officials in the case still feel that the plea bargain was a good

idea. If the government had been forced to try the case in the courts, the scope and complexity of the case would probably have guaranteed that it would run into the next century, costing taxpayers millions of dollars in the process. However, Hofmann's evasive answers in the interviews have created a widespread impression that he has managed to commit two brutal, premeditated murders and escaped the penalties. The outcome of the plea bargain may become somewhat clearer in January 1989, when the parole board makes a recommendation on the length of Hofmann's sentence. That recommendation will depend heavily on the board's assessment of how fully Hofmann complied with the terms of the plea bargain agreement. However, it seems likely that Hofmann's remarkable career has raised questions that will remain unanswered for many years to come.

ever the primary consideration. It is true that I wrote the documents according to how I felt the actual events took place. In other words, I believe that Joseph Smith was involved with folk magic, but the idea there was more to keep it in harmony with what I thought potentially genuine, discoverable type documents may say. In other words, to make it fit the history as accurately as possible so that I wouldn't be found out or whatever. (pp. 426-427)

ON TEENAGE FORGERIES

... the idea was to electroplate a mint mark on a coin to make it more valuable to a collector. The mint mark being an initial for where the coin was struck. What I did was I masked the coin photographically to leave only the part of the metal on the coin where the mint mark was going to be. For example, the letter D. Then I elec-

troplated on that coin the bare spot on the metal, a D, and built it up to a certain height of a mint mark and I had a coin dealer that ... couldn't believe that I could own such a valuable coin in my youth. I think I was only 15 years old. The coin being worth thousands of dollars even back in those days. Anyway a coin dealer sent it to have it examined and it ended up going to the Treasury Department where it was pronounced genuine. And my ... rationalization was that if the Treasury Department pronounces it genuine that it is genuine by definition. ... And that's also when I lost respect for forensic examination. (pp. 426-427)

ON AUTHENTICITY

[I]t's not so much what is genuine and what isn't as what people believe is genuine.

My example would be the Mormon Church, ... I don't believe

in the religion as far as that Joseph Smith had the first vision or received the plates from the Angel Moroni or whatever. It doesn't detract from the social good that the Mormon Church can do. To me it is unimportant if Joseph Smith had that vision or not as long as people believe it. The important thing is that people believe it. (p. 426)

... when I forged a document and sold it, ... I was not cheating that person that I was selling it to because the document would never be detected as being a fraud. Obviously if I would have known they would some day be detected, I wouldn't have done it. ... I didn't feel like I was cheating them. I'm tell[ing] you how I rationalized it. Also, when I took money such as from [Al] Rust or [Elder Hugh] Pinnock, it wasn't with the intention to never pay it back. It was always my intention that I would make good

on it. My idea, at this time, was that I would be able to make good on it through the Oath of a Freeman.

... a conman perpetually procrastinates. Or in other words, his intention, or at least my intention, wasn't to defraud them of their money. It was more to use their money when I needed it and then pay them back with interest to make it worth their while, which is something that for years has taken place in my transactions. ... There were dozens of times when I used Rust's money for a bogus transaction and paid him back with interest. So he was happy and I had the money when I needed it.

[Question: If the expert says they're a real document then the people who bought them really aren't hurt?] Yes, that's right. (pp. 407-408, 409)

When Zions Securities Corporation, the Church's property management company, finally won the battle to raze the old Eagle Gate Apartments, no one expected that the new replacements they built in their place would become an enclave for aging Church leaders. However, the not totally occupied high-security complex, which contains a permanent suite for the Church president, already includes President Gordon B. Hinckley, apostles Marvin J. Ashton and James E. Faust, and seventy Bernard P. Brockbank. Several other General Authorities are also considering buying units, which range in price from \$123,000 to \$291,000. The space available in the complex will double when the neighboring new Eagle Gate Apartments are completed.

The Eagle Gate complex is undeniably a convenient home for Church workers. It gives residents a fine view of the Temple and Brigham Young's Lion House. Other

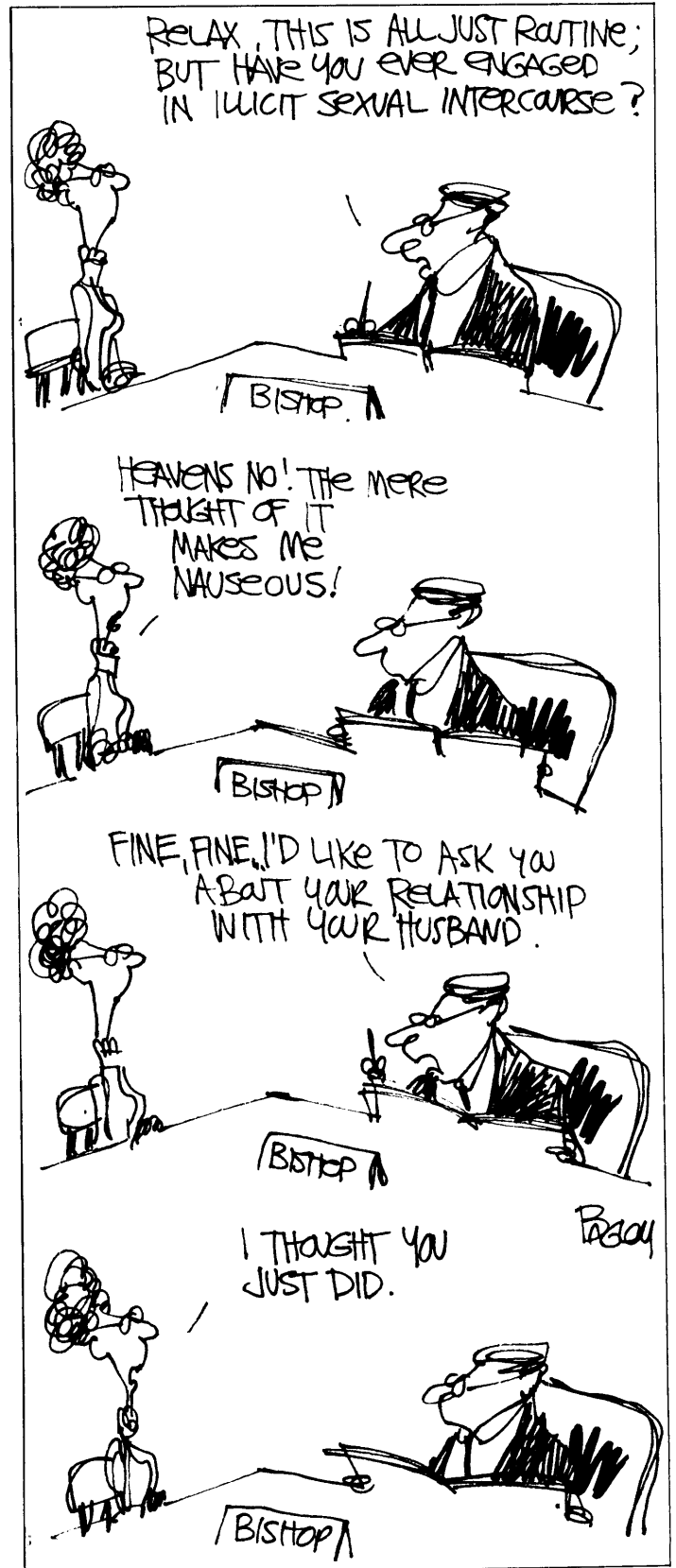
amenities include underground tunnels that link the condominiums to the Church office buildings, the Hotel Utah and Temple Square. Once the hotel is converted into a warehouse and additional Church office space, it will be possible for Church leaders to travel between home, work, and church without ever seeing the sun. The ZCMI shopping mall is not yet connected to the tunnel network.

Reports of the demise of *This People* seem to have been premature. The magazine's assets were purchased by D. Keith Whisenant, whose studies suggest that a revamped *This People* may yet be financially self-supporting. The magazine will rise from its unquiet grave in a new quarterly schedule, and the first new issue stuffed with super Saints from all the right walks of life will be out in time for Thanksgiving.



Ever since Arizona's arch-conservative Mormon governor Evan Mecham squeaked into office last November, his career has been dogged by controversy. At present petitions are circulating in an effort to force a recall election. Now, as if he didn't have woes enough, Gov. Mecham has to deal with *Doonesbury* cartoonist Garry Trudeau. Recently Trudeau devoted a week's worth of strips to lampooning Mecham's appointments and racial attitudes. The strips only briefly mentioned his religious background and made no reference to the large number of Mormons Mecham has appointed to state positions, nor to his close ties with Church President Ezra Taft Benson.

When the strips appeared, Mecham said Trudeau's caricature was "brutish and grotesque" but added that he didn't plan to take any action against the cartoonist, saying, "I'll leave the issue in the comics where it belongs."



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INTERVIEW

CREATIVE FIDELITY: KEEPING THE RELIGION A LIVING TRADITION

A Conversation with Father Charles E. Curran

Charles E. Curran is a Roman Catholic priest of the Diocese of Rochester New York. He is currently a visiting professor of Catholic Studies at Cornell University. Curran has authored and edited more than twenty-five books in the area of moral theology. In August of 1986 he was informed of a decision made by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that he was no longer suitable nor eligible to be a professor of Catholic theology. On the basis of that decision Archbishop James A. Hickey, the chancellor of Catholic University where Curran taught, initiated the process, which is going on now, to withdraw Curran's canonical mission or authorization to teach in the name of the church.

This interview was conducted by Anthony Hutchinson and Stephen Seiberling on 18 May 1987.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A THEOLOGIAN WITHIN THE CHURCH?

There are long traditions in Roman Catholicism that not only allow but require the theologian. Because of the emphasis on tradition we recognize the need to keep the religion a living tradition. Roman Catholicism has always eschewed the axiom of scripture alone. We have insisted that the scripture must be understood, appropriated and lived in the light of the historical and cultural circumstances of the day. The older Catholic understanding used to talk about the scripture *and* the tradition. Now I think there can be poor ways of understanding that, but if you see tradition as accounts of the followers of the Holy Spirit to understand and appropriate the Gospel in the light of the changing culture and historical circumstances, then I think you have a very accurate description of the role of tradition in the church. Therefore the whole church really has the function of creative fidelity to the word and work of God as we would understand it revealed through the spirit

in Christ Jesus. The trick is the "creative fidelity"—to merely repeat the words of the scripture is not sufficient.

For example, we went through the problem of appropriating the word in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries with the great trinitarian and Christological councils where we finally came to the conclusion of three persons in God and two natures in Jesus. Many people at the time said, "Well, you can't say that because those words aren't in the scriptures." That's right, they aren't in the scriptures, they are borrowed from Greek philosophy, but they are the on-going account of the believing community to understand, appropriate and live the word of God in its own circumstances.

The greatest theologian in the Catholic tradition is Thomas Aquinas, and the genius of Aquinas in the thirteenth century was precisely his unwillingness to merely repeat what the past had said. Aquinas tried to creatively blend Augustinian and Aristotelian traditions to try to understand and better explain the Christian faith. Therefore, the role of the theologian must be seen within that context of creative fidelity. Now, many times I think you'd expect the theologian to be on the creative cutting edge, probing, pushing, questioning—in a certain sense the scouting party that goes in advance. But, on the other hand, at times the theologian might stress the fidelity aspect over the creative aspect of things.

Another relevant tradition is the Roman Catholic's understanding on the emphasis of grace being mediated through the human realities of sacrament meal, etc. A very strong part of Roman Catholic tradition has always taken the human very seriously—that age-old problem of how you relate the divine and the human, or grace and human nature. At its best, the Catholic tradition was always willing to repeat the word of the early patristic period that

the Glory of God is the human person come alive. That means there's no opposition between God and humans. Sometimes theology, and probably more Protestant theology, has tended to get caught in the dilemma that if you give more to the divine then you take away from the human, and if you give more to the human then you lose God in the process. But traditional Catholic theology has held onto the concept of mediation, where God is mediated in and through the human and therefore it's not an either/or proposition where you either stress God or the human. If the glory of God is the human person come alive, then you can hold on to both God and the human without creating any false tension between them.

In my area of moral theology, the Roman Catholic tradition admits that our moral teaching for the most part is based on the natural law—and human reason—and not, interesting enough, on the scripture. Because Catholic tradition accepts the human and human reason, for us human reason reflecting on human nature and human reality can arrive at true ethical wisdom and knowledge. So I see that as part and parcel of the role of the theologian within the church.

WHAT ABOUT DISSENT?

I can quote from the early church, Paul publicly standing up to Peter and that kind of thing, and argue the need to publicly dissent even in the face of all the gathered members of the church. But, from my faith and theological perspective, I think you have to distinguish those things that are core and central to faith from those things that are less core and more peripheral and remote from faith.

I probably couldn't be a loyal Roman Catholic if I disagreed with the central core of the faith. I think it helps to talk about things in terms of core and less central because the traditional infallible/non-infallible distinction can at times be a little bit juridical.

Therefore, I now have to situate my own dissent. I think it is in the peripheral area, especially since the Catholic tradition has recognized that its own moral teaching in these areas is based on moral reason. In the church it's traditionally said that human reason can prove that contraception is wrong, that divorce is wrong, etc. Therefore, one has to recognize that if that's the case then the doctrine can't be that distinctive and central to the faith.

Now then, as to dissent. There is always a presumption in favor of the teaching of the church in these "non-infallible matters," although this teaching might be wrong. The United States bishops in 1968 recognized the

legitimacy of public theological dissent if the following three factors were present: 1) the reasons were serious; 2) you didn't impugn the teaching authority of the church; and 3) no scandal was given.

CAN DISSENT HARM THE FAITHFUL?

In the Roman Catholic tradition the technical definition of scandal is a deed, action, or omission which leads another to sin. Now usually it's taken in a broader sense of something that causes confusion among the members of the church, the faithful. Undoubtedly, there are those who don't always understand the role of the theologian. I am sure there are many schooled in a pre-Vatican II mentality who are at times confused by what I have done and said. I try to minimize that as much as I can. Whenever I dissent, I always try to do it with the greatest respect for the hierarchal teaching office. Not to deny it, not to minimize it, but to be very careful in explaining its teaching and to show a basic openness to it. My dissent is always within a broader context of assent.

However, it seems to me that in the contemporary Catholic world you would create more scandal if people knew that theologians were not discussing these issues. Let's face it, every Roman Catholic family today has faced some of the problems I have talked about—the problems of contraception, of divorce, of homosexuality. I think that's why my positions aren't all that radical.

One in my position is always sort of playing with two roles, there's a pastoral role and there's a theological role. I like to put them together as much as one possibly can. In the last twenty-five years Catholicism has highlighted the traditional theological methodology that says that one of the sources of ethical wisdom and knowledge is the experience of Christian people of good will.

For example, in our teaching on religious liberty, the Second Vatican Council started out by saying that "this Council recognizes the desire for religious freedom existing in the minds and hearts of people of good will and declares it to be greatly in accord with revealed truth." Now, when did the teaching on religious liberty become truth? Did it become truth the moment a document was signed in Rome, although the document itself says it was true beforehand in the minds, hearts and experiences of people of good will? I think you do learn from the experience of Christian people; yet at the same time one must recognize that there's always the danger of failing to see the needs of the total community. That's why

there's always tension there.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CHURCH SUPPORTED UNIVERSITIES?

Part of the answer is the Catholic understanding of the role of the theologian: it's faith seeking understanding and it's understanding seeking faith. Therefore the church has always given a great role to reason and, in the process, the theologian is called upon to use critical reason in the context of faith.

Over the centuries this theological position has led the church to accept the institutions of the "secular society," although obviously sometimes it has accepted them for much more base motives. "Secular" hasn't even been a bad word. The Roman Catholic tradition says that the state is a natural society. In other words, it's not the product of human sinfulness; God wants us to form states to help one another to achieve what we couldn't achieve on our own. It is an openness to the human in all its forms, and also to human institutions such as universities. In the Second Vatican Council we talked about the "autonomy of the secular," which implies at least a generic willingness to accept the social institutions. However, the great temptation has always been to control them.

The rub comes precisely in the area of theology and academic freedom. In secular society we've always justified academic freedom by saying it's for the common good of society to allow scholars to pursue the truth with no constraint upon them except the truth itself. Unfortunately in Catholic higher education in the last few years we haven't talked enough about the foundations of academic freedom. Everybody's worried that if we don't have academic freedom we might lose government money and we won't be able to keep our institutions. Now I can understand bureaucrats making that kind of argument, but if we can't come up with a better argument we're in trouble.

WHAT ABOUT THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE UNIVERSITY?

To its credit, even the Catholic moral tradition in the Middle Ages faced this problem, which was phrased this way: "Is something commanded because it is good or is it good because it is commanded?" Aquinas said something was commanded because it was good. In other words, the bottom reality was the truth itself and authority must always conform itself to the truth. The Second Vatican Council pointed out in its document on divine revelation that the magisterium (church teaching

office) is always subject to the word of God. That's an important thing to see about authority.

All of this background suggests to me that the church is best served by academic freedom, which I define as the freedom of the scholar (including the Roman Catholic theologian) to write, to teach and to publish without constraints from any authority external to the university community itself. My reasons for this is that we have seen all along how the church has changed and developed. There never would have been a Second Vatican Council if it weren't for the theologians who went before it, many of whom were condemned or under suspicion even at the time of the council itself.

However, if I'm arguing this for the good of the church then I've got to look at the other side and ask how we protect the church from theological error. There are three ways to do it. The first is through the regular debate among theologians themselves. In the American academy, the primary way that things get discussed and resolved is through free, open debate.

The second safeguard is that the hierarchical magisterium must always be free to say, "we disagree with this position or with this theologian." Their decree cannot have direct juridical effects within the academy, but they can protect the faith of believers by coming out and saying, "this position is wrong for this and that reason."

The third limit on the error of the theologian is that academic freedom recognizes that one has to be competent in one's field. If I'm a Roman Catholic theologian and deny the Trinity—depending on how you understand it, of course—or deny the role of Jesus, or even the role of the Petrine office in the church, then it seems to me that I have ceased to be a competent Roman Catholic theologian. In a case like that, somebody can be dismissed, but it's a judgment made by peers because no external authority can have immediate juridical effects within the university.

Granted, as long as the fullness of the *eschaton* isn't here we're never going to have perfect solutions to anything, and I don't say this is the perfect solution. But I think it's one that is the best solution in the circumstances in which we find ourselves because you can hold on to being both Catholic and a university at one and the same time.

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN FAITH ONCE YOUR MYTHS HAVE BEEN BROKEN?

There's an old scholastic axiom that says the abuse doesn't take away the use. Within that context, it's interesting that we can go through

this differentiation of consciousness in all other human areas of our life—sooner or later we know that Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny don't exist. I think you can have this same realism with regard to faith. In the more sophisticated recent history of Roman Catholicism it probably hit hardest with regard to the infancy narratives of Jesus, when people found out that maybe there weren't three Magi and that the scriptures were not written as a historical account of the birth of Jesus. We have to be careful about how we explain that to people.

For example, I have said that I have problems with belief in angels, but that I can totally accept the thought behind the myth and symbol—angels are the signs of God's providential care for God's creation and the people whom God has created. It is important how we portray and propose it to people. Nonetheless, we do have to try as best we can to educate the vast numbers of the Christian faithful to accept a more sophisticated understanding of the scriptures. Again, by always saying the scriptures were not enough, the Catholic tradition theoretically gives me more openness to do that kind of thing.

In a certain sense, Roman Catholics have been very willing to accept the need for hermeneutics in regard to the scriptures; our problem has been to accept the hermeneutic in regard to official church teaching. It seems to me that the same basic principles should apply. There's no doubt that we are coming out of a terribly authoritarian period in the understanding of the church and its role. As an organization it is important to realize how historical our reality is, with accretions naturally being added every year to this overly authoritarian understanding of the church. However once the Protestant Reformation began and then the Enlightenment, the church's problem was compounded by a total, ghetto mentality, opposition to these movements. Then this authoritarianism was strengthened by things like improved transportation and communication. For example, two hundred years ago the first Catholic bishop in America thought that bishops should be elected by the priests, Catholics were using English in the liturgy in Maryland in 1780, adaptations were made here on the scene—you didn't wait for Rome to give some response. All of a sudden we have come into this terrible over-authoritarian period and I think now we're sort of living with the consequences of that and trying to get through it the best we can.

RECENT RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS INFLUENCED BY VARIOUS HORMONES IN THE BRAIN. THIS RAISES THE QUESTION OF FREE WILL.

Again, the whole Catholic tradition has said

that the glory of God is the human person come alive. The second part of Aquinas' *Summa* basically says, "we've considered God; now we're going to consider the human being who is in the image of God precisely because, like God, one has intellect free will and the power of self determination." So Roman Catholicism has given great importance to the whole tradition of theistic humanism and human freedom. On the other hand, we also have to admit that human freedom is much more defined by social, biological and psychological factors than we ever thought it was in the past. But even there, anybody who tries to keep the tradition alive, will compare modern discoveries with the tradition, bringing the scripture, tradition, human reason and experience together in some way of trying to discern. That's how you make a tradition living.

I think we're much more conscious of the limitations on human freedom today, but still I don't want to take away what seems to me the ultimate glory of the human person, which is our freedom. Obviously, it's a responsible freedom and a freedom in relationship to God's freedom. And there again if you lack mediation people are going to say, "if you stress God's freedom, then you've got to stress the human obedience." But in its own way, human freedom is a participation in God's freedom. And therefore the two should not be seen as ultimately opposed to one another.

WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF SIN?

In Christian and philosophical ethics there are three basic ethical models that have been used. One is called the deontological model, from the Greek word meaning "law" or "duty." It sees the whole moral life primarily in terms of law and obedience to law. There's no doubt that many Christian people describe morality this way. It's a clear model because God's law is this and we obey God's law. One of the limits, obviously, is that it doesn't touch so much of our lives such as decisions about vocation in lives, etc.

The second model is called the teleological model, from the Greek meaning "goal" or "end." Basically, with this model of morality you determine your ultimate end, and something is good if it brings you toward it and bad if it prevents you from reaching it. Now, obviously life is much more complex; there are subordinate ends, coordinate ends, etc.

Most Catholics in catechism operate on the deontological level, but Aquinas was a teleologist. His first question in morality was, "What is your ultimate end?" Not a kill-joy, he said the ultimate end of human beings is happiness. And happiness is when I achieve my fulfillment, which he understood was found in the

intellect and will—when my intellect knows the perfect truth and my will loves the perfect good, and that's God. That's the perfect happiness: when one sees, knows, and loves God face to face.

The third model is what I call a relationality-responsibility model, which sees the human being primarily in terms of multiple relationships with God, neighbor, world and self. One has to respond in terms of those relationships. It seems to me that your understanding of sin and sins will primarily be determined by which of these three ethical models you use. They're not totally exclusive—for instance, there's always got to be a place for law no matter what ethical model you choose—but the question is what is primary. I argue on the basis of scripture and contemporary human self understanding and experience that we're much better off using the relationality-responsibility model. In the Catholic tradition we made a distinction between what we call mortal sin and venial sin. I see mortal sin as the *breaking* of my relationship with God, neighbor, world and self; venial sin is the *lessening*, the dampening, of those relationships. I use this model as the basis in trying to look at what I am I called to do as a Christian and a member of the various communities I am in. It seems to me to be more compatible with a scriptural understanding.

DO YOU EVER WORRY THAT YOU MIGHT BE TOTALLY WRONG?

In the last analysis, the dilemma of every Christian is that I have to act in accord with my conscience, but my conscience might be wrong. Why might my conscience be wrong—my finitude and my sinfulness. Therefore we need to make sure we're not rationalizing, not ultimately trying to find the easy way out. In that context it seems to me that you have to live with that tension of conscience. Within the church community I have to remain open to hear the spirit speaking through the leaders and the members of the church. In my present situation I have been helped by the overwhelming support of my Catholic theological colleagues.

However, in the end I think that the criterion of a good conscience is in accord with the old mystical tradition, a conscience which is at peace, a peace which only the spirit can give. Even in the midst of all the complexities and the tensions, if one is honestly trying to respond to the word of God and the call of God and the needs of one's neighbor, I think that the ultimate criterion is the peace and joy that comes and that can coexist with the fact that one is never totally sure, one's always a pilgrim.

IN MEMORIAM

CAMILLA EYRING KIMBALL

By Carol Cornwall Madsen

Sister Camilla Kimball's arrival at the opening session of the BYU Women's Conference in 1986 invoked a "collective intake of breath as the audience saw who it was." She had delivered the keynote address the year before at the age of ninety, but her uncertain health made her participation the following year doubtful. "I don't believe I will ever forget the electricity that surged between her and the women whose eyes were riveted on her or the tears that came immediately to all of us," recalls conference chair Mary Stovall. "The love of those women for Sister Kimball was palpable and genuine as hers was for them."

In a church that has provided many models of LDS womanhood, Camilla Eyring Kimball is among the most revered and emulated. She successfully fused in her own life what to others seems disparate and difficult: service to family and community and the pursuit of individual attainment. This was the theme of many of her public addresses, but her own life spoke more eloquently than any of them of how to achieve a balanced and abundant life. "I am grateful for your example of faith and courage, for your willingness to question and to seek for knowledge and meaning in life," wrote one young woman, whose life was touched by Sister Kimball's. "I admire your determination to 'grow older gracefully and endure to the end,'" she continued, "and your candor and willingness to share your experiences." That willingness made Sister Kimball accessible to the women of the Church.

Like the virtuous woman in Proverbs, Sister Kimball merited her husband's praise—most graphically and publicly expressed in his Women's Fireside addresses in 1978 and 1979. As he carefully sketched the desirable qualities of LDS women, one could see the image of Camilla gradually taking shape. She admirably fit his model of "symmetry," a woman who is not only "affectionate but articulate," as capable of "communicating as of sewing," as "wise with her time as with her storehouse." Few people have better demonstrated the value of his admonition to "develop a program for personal



improvement" to reach for "new levels of achievement," and to seek the "education that would fit them for eternity as well as for full service in mortality."

The responsibility of marriage and family did not diminish Sister Kimball's intellectual curiosity. Rather, she wove these two life-long commitments into a cohesive, complementary whole. Although she never received a full academic degree, her one educational regret, she attended institute classes and took courses throughout her life on every subject that interested her. "We are on earth to learn," she said. "The process of education, aside from its pleasure, disciplines the mind and makes it our useful servant." Using her own experience as an example, she urged women to develop their talents and gifts and to follow their own personal inclinations for self improvement. "It is our responsibility," she said, "to gather truth of all sorts, not just truths of theology, but of everything." After describing her efforts to learn to paint at age ninety-two, she noted, "We need to be always learning. A person keeps from getting stale by having some objective, by reading, writing and talking in pursuit of a plan."

Her remarkable synthesis of personal development and family service inspired yet another

of President Kimball's goals for LDS women: to make homes that would "provide a climate for constant growth and learning." A dictionary permanently located by the kitchen table symbolized the stimulating learning environment that characterized the Kimball home. All of her children loved to learn, not only as an end in itself but as a vehicle for service as teachers and contributing church and community members. Their mother gave them a powerful example of this attitude.

For fourteen years, Sister Kimball taught the Spiritual Living lessons in her ward Relief Society, a service she joyously performed. Not content to indulge her own love and knowledge of the scriptures, she encouraged the women of her ward to study them also, serving a luncheon for those who had read a book of scripture.

She often had fifty women to lunch. Perhaps Camilla was in his mind when President Kimball told the sisters of the Church, "We want our homes blessed with sister scriptorians."

Nor could she have been far from his thoughts when he reminded the sisters that "Mormon women are basically strong, independent, and faithful." With Camilla at his side for sixty years, he had observed her strength in meeting a full share of physical trials, her independent spirit that persisted even as his responsibilities became more engulfing, her faith that justified and accepted personal sacrifices his church callings required of them.

President Kimball urged the sisters to become "full contributing partners" in their marriage. These three words say more about Camilla Kimball than any lengthy eulogy. She and Spencer Kimball were a team, effective because they were so evenly yoked. Never in the shadow of the great man whose life she shared, Camilla Kimball will be remembered, in the words of one admirer, as "working in strong, sacred, and equal connection with him." Both left deep and indelible traces; they are separate and distinct though closely parallel, leading toward the same destination and inviting us to follow.

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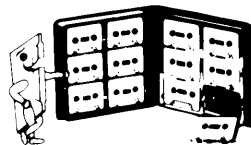
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