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THE SMITHS
THEIR DREAMS & VISIONS

C. JESS GROESBECK

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READERS FORUM

CORRECTION

IN THE PREVIOUS issue (SUNSTONE, 12:1), the Readers Forum letter entitled "Priesthood and the Perfecti" was written by Abraham Van Luik of Richland, Washington. We apologize for omitting his name.

THE HIDDEN AGENDA?



IN YOUR LAST issue (SUNSTONE, 12:1), I noted with interest and regret that Michael Quinn is leaving his teaching position at BYU and pursuing other interests elsewhere. As no mention was made of what those pursuits might be, I thought I would share my discovery with you [see above magazine cover].

As one of his students, I know we all wish Mike the greatest of success in all his endeavors.

Janie Fleet
Provo, UT

THE CANON VS. KING FOLLETT

GERRY ENSLEY'S REACTION to my article on prophecy (SUNSTONE 11:6), though obviously supporting my basic contentions, argues several religious positions to which I

have strong objections. He blames the failure of traditional Christian and Mormon expectations about prophecy's fulfillment upon what he sees as an unduly limited and "distorted" Christian canon of the New Testament that teaches a "false gospel" of belief in God's omniscience and omnipotence. He believes that such documents as the Gnostic writings found at Nag Hamadi and Joseph Smith's King Follett discourse can serve to correct such "distortion." I share neither Ensley's enthusiasm for these documents nor his contempt for the growth and consolidation of the early Christian tradition that resulted in the definition of the canon of the New Testament.

The issue addressed in my article was not God's supposed inability to know all things, including what we perceive as the future, but rather the limitations human beings have in sharing such knowledge. I was at pains to take care in the article to avoid committing the error attributed to Korihor in the Book of Mormon, that of denying the power of God. Ensley, together with the early heretical books he praises, is not so careful.

There are abundant reasons for accepting the canon of the New Testament as it has come down to us. As more evidence becomes available, the basic integrity of the New Testament text is affirmed, contrary to expectations raised by the normal "bad transmission or translation" argument common in LDS apologetics. The canon of the New Testament reflects the efforts of the first three centuries of Christianity to define itself. To be sure, in the process elements were defined out of Christianity, but even here, the process is reflected in the books selected (e.g., the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John—see Raymond Brown's *Community of the Beloved Disciple*). Ecumenical concerns alone require us, if we want to call ourselves Christians, to accept the Christian canon of the New Testament. Doing so, of course, does not preclude accepting a broader canon of scripture in general. But it does require that we recognize that the definitive revelation of God to humanity was found in the person of the historical Jesus, and that the most basic source for approaching him is in the documents left in his wake and accepted as inspired by the Christian tradition. The Christ of faith described in this canon somehow mediates and in turn reveals God made man. For the present, Mormons are at least implicitly committed to such a stance, since they accept the Bible—the one defined and put together by the fourth century Catholic Church—as "the word of God" if translated

correctly. The fact that they have other books stemming from their own historical origins as a people and a distinct part of the Christian tradition should not obscure the fact that as Christians they accept the Bible as the word of God—especially when one recognizes the fact that most of the distinctly “Mormon” scriptures are largely derivative from Biblical themes and passages. Some, to be sure, build upon such passages in ways similar to the peripheral elements of early Christianity defined out of the canon. But this in itself is no reason to abandon a firm commitment to the inspiration of the biblical canon. Rather, it ought to encourage us to sort out what is central and significant in our tradition from that which is itself peripheral, regardless of common apologetic claims about how the supposed “unique insights” of Mormonism make it better than the faith of other Christians.

Ensley appeals to the problems of theodicy and free will in order to defend his disbelief in the traditional concept of God and argue rather for belief in a god (one among many) or some kind of Gnostic Demiurge. I believe in the traditional Christian God. The painful human condition, the root problem of theodicy, is not resolved by believing in a god impotent to

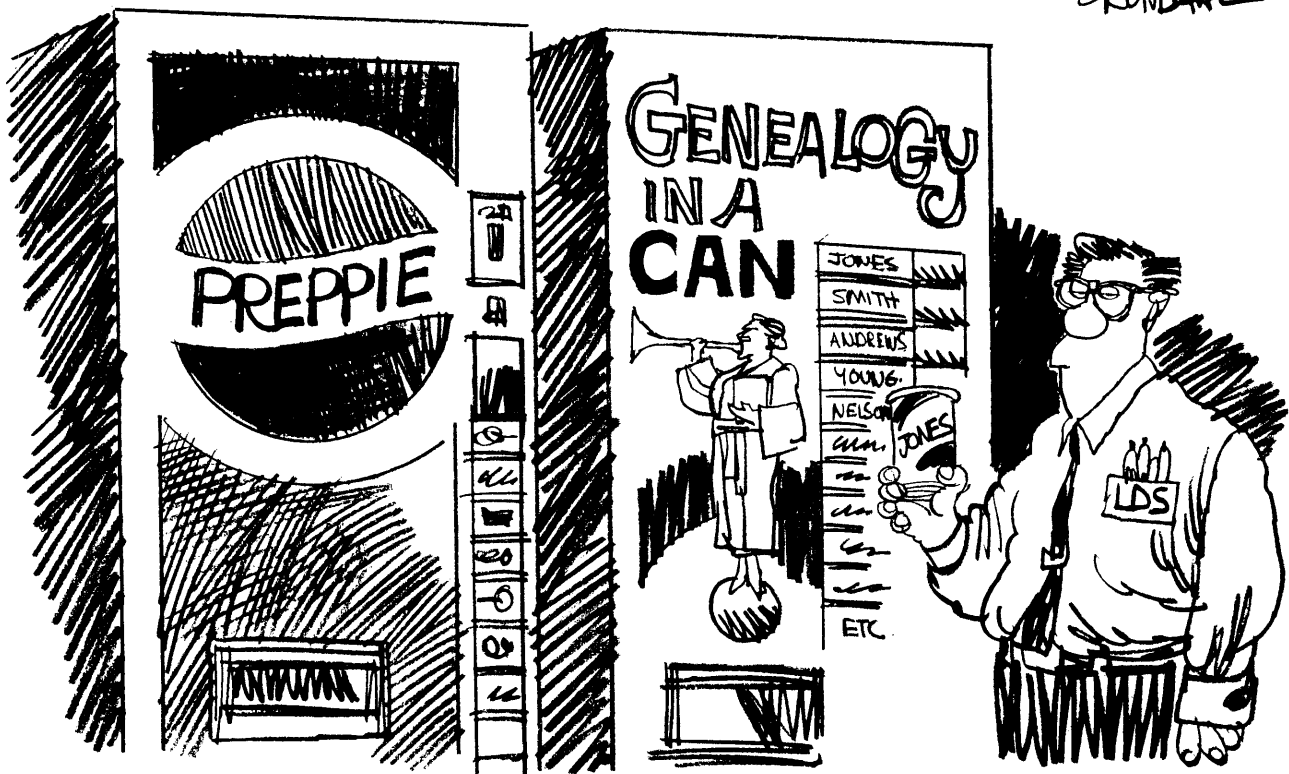
help us out of our pain. Such belief merely provides the emotionally soothing image of a god struggling, perhaps against hope, on our side. But mainstream Christianity, in its doctrine of the Incarnation, provides similar solace without sacrificing belief in a God worthy of worship and trust. The image of a brutally executed Galilean, prophet or not, pales beside the vast panorama of human suffering writ large, bitter and overwhelming. But the panorama dims and shrinks in the stark light of the haunting image of God—not a Gnostic Demiurge or member of a sci-fi LDS Corporation of the Presidency of the Galaxy—of God upon the Cross.

I think Boethius was right in arguing that human free will is not infringed by belief in an omniscient God: as creator of space and time, God’s knowledge of all things is perceived as *fore* knowledge only by creatures bound within time and space. God’s knowledge could as easily and as accurately be described as an all-encompassing knowledge of what we, for want of a better term, could call an ever-present now—ultimately a mystery to creatures bound by time and space.

To be sure, in saying this, I realize I am at odds with Joseph’s King Follett sermon.

Aspects of that sermon’s teachings, when considered in light of larger Christian and Mormon traditions, help accentuate the closeness of human beings to god, who after all, was called “Father” by the earthly Jesus, but as Ensley notes, the sermon has never been canonized even within our own tradition, while the canon of the New Testament, never mind its origins, has been. I personally wonder why anyone would choose to believe in Whitehead’s impotent God, or Joseph Smith’s later metaphysical speculations, instead of the God of the Bible or Joseph’s earlier writing, the Book of Mormon. To be sure, both of these scriptures on occasion create unrealistic expectations if read without context and care, as I pointed out in my article. But in my opinion, reading Nag Hamadi and King Follett out of *their* context and treating them as if they were canon, while perhaps discarding some of the dirty bath water of such unrealistic expectations, ultimately throws out as well any faith that can honestly call itself Christian.

Anthony A. Hutchinson
Hong Kong



THE CHOICE OF A NEW GENERATION.

REMEMBERING HUGH BROWN

THE EXCELLENT ARTICLE by Edwin B. Firmage on his grandfather, President Hugh B. Brown (SUNSTONE, 11:6) deserves wide reading.

Professor Firmage referred to the extreme pressure that was placed on President Brown to sign the statement on the doctrinal basis for denial of the priesthood to blacks (p. 8). I can attest to the reliability of Firmage's account. A few days after this statement was issued, President Brown called me by telephone to tell me that at this point the document did not express his personal conviction and that he had signed it under extreme pressure. He referred to this again in some detail in a later conversation.

*Sterling M. McMurrin
Salt Lake City*

A MYSTICAL JOSEPH SMITH

I WAS TOUCHED and impressed by Richard L. Bushman's article "Treasure-seeking Then and Now" (SUNSTONE 11:5). He presents Joseph as a prophet and yet admits that there is sound evidence that Joseph, in his earlier years, involved himself in treasure seeking. We are faced with the question of how to reconcile our belief that Joseph was a prophet of God if he allowed his spirit to wander after lower desires. I believe that Mr. Bushman's treatment of the subject was sensitive and balanced.

Joseph Smith's spiritual development appears to be shrouded in a great deal of mystery. The three years of teaching by Moroni before he began translating the plates are not recorded in detail nor are many other experiences that helped shaped Joseph's spiritual development. In our desire to discover more about the developing prophet Joseph Smith, may I suggest that future scholars look seriously at Eastern mystical literature. For example, one quote from *Four Chapters on Freedom* by Satyananda Paramahansa:

In yogic practices, the crystal plays a very important part. In South India there is a particular science called anajanam, meaning not known. It consists of different methods of projecting the illuminating superphysical faculty through a crystal. And again on the same page:

When the illuminating faculty is

directed towards a person or an object which is missing, it can be immediately known where that person or thing is. Thus, treasures which are buried underground, or objects which are very distant can be directly observed.

This is not a practice which can be performed by beginning students. Some high degree of aptitude is required. Thus, an Oliver Cowdery would not be capable of using the Urim and Thummin for the same purpose as Joseph Smith. A friend of mine, a local yoga teacher, explained that when the mystic no longer need props like crystals, he or she abandons them. This also seems to be what happened with Joseph.

In his commentary on the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* Vyasa explains that mystics undergo four basic stages of development. First-stage mystics are those who have just begun to experience the light. The second-stage mystic develops powers or siddhis and is tempted by powerful beings of the subtle works to enjoy those recently gained powers. The third-stage mystic has conquered those temptations (pp. 77-78). Many developing mystics are trapped in the second stage by their use of their psychic powers in a magical sort of way. Luckily, Joseph Smith appears to have conquered those desires in his later life.

Joseph Smith's mystical development in later years also appears to have paralleled the Eastern model. For example, in the Kirtland years, Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner heard Joseph state,

John the Revelator was caught up to the third heaven, but I know one who was caught up to the seventh heaven and saw and heard things not lawful for me to utter (Hyrum Andrus, *They Knew the Prophet*, pp. 24-25).

In the East, "seventh heaven" would correspond to the seventh level of the astral (testral?) region where lower desires, appetites and other limitations have been conquered. In eastern literature it is stated that developing mystics are given respectful invitations to visit the higher planes of the astral world.

One characteristic of Joseph Smith that indicates that in an Eastern sense he was a very advanced mystic is that he could also open the inner vision of those with whom he associated. There are a number of referenced which indicate that Joseph Smith enabled friends and Church leaders to "see" the divine from time to time. This is a practice that is not easy for even a very highly developed mystic. Swami Rama, a contemporary mystic, told a friend that to open the inner vision of another takes great energy and can heavily drain the resources of yogi. In the experience that Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon both had experiencing Section

76, Joseph didn't even appear drained (*They Knew the Prophet*, p. 68).

While exploration of Eastern literature might appear dangerous to some, I feel that acquaintance with Eastern scriptures and practices would enrich our understanding of the developing Joseph Smith and perhaps give us interesting insights.

*Craig W. Miller
Salt Lake City*

MISSIONS AND CAREER CHOICES

I WOULD LIKE TO make the following observations about the documentary on the missionary program and on the resultant interview with producer Bobbie Birleffi (SUNSTONE 11:3). Both the documentary and the discussants seemed to have missed a significant result of service in a foreign mission. Quite often that service will influence career choices. Any returned missionaries having learned a foreign language and become familiar with a foreign culture and society will select a career based upon their knowledge of that language, culture, and society. They may major in international affairs, international business or law, in academia, or in government service where a knowledge of a foreign language and of the culture and society of another nation is important.

Furthermore, many native missionaries in countries outside the United States may rise to important positions in the economic, social, or cultural world of their society and be in a position to influence national policies relating to the Church. These missionaries also provide an important pool of trained men from which local Church leaders may be selected. The growth of the Church in foreign countries is related to the quality and training of the local leadership. Furthermore, the rise of local brethren into such positions nativizes the Church removing its stigma of being a "foreign church."

*Clark S. Knowlton
Professor of Sociology
University of Utah*

SUNSTONE welcomes correspondence from our readers. Letters for publication should be addressed to "Readers Forum." SUNSTONE edits letters for space, clarity, and tone.

THE CHURCH OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

By *Elbert Eugene Peck*

WHEN ELDER HINCKLEY opened a session of a recent general conference by saying, "We have gathered from around the world to confer together," I reflected how we had a lot of talking but very little conferring in this conference. It's hard to imagine how it could be otherwise on the all-church level, but locally a lot more participation in decision-making would add vitality to our religious life.

For at least the last 40 years, the management sciences have been promoting a leadership style called "participative management," which means decisions in organizations are collaborative, operating on principles of consensus and democratic processes. One way to illustrate various leadership styles is with a continuum:

LEADERSHIP STYLES

AUTHORITARIAN ————— PARTICIPATIVE
Tell - Sell - Check - Consult - Collaborate

Each style has its advantages and disadvantages. Authoritarian styles can be very efficient in placing responsibility and in the amount of time it takes to make and implement a decision. They are effective in disseminating some kinds of information. However, the leader may lack important data and grassroots information and feedback flow very slowly up the channels.

On the other hand, in participative styles the flow of information can be much more free. They assume that by drawing on the resources of more people a better decision can be made. Also, experience shows that when people are involved in policy deliberations they gain a

better understanding of the issues—the vision—and are more committed to implementing the agreed upon policy, even when their views have been rejected. However, participative styles require much more time in order to meaningfully involve everyone in the process, and without effective group skills it is possible that

the democratic process will produce weaker decisions and demoralize the membership. Then, too, a totally democratic process can leave little or no role for the leader and his or her inspiration. (The Society of Friends—Quakers—are a good example of the power and weakness of consensus decision-making. It took over a century of deliberations for the American

groups to completely agree on the abolition of slavery, but when they did they acted powerfully. Nevertheless, he or she is powerless without unanimous consent after long open discussion.)

Different styles work for different situations, and a leader not committed to a participative approach can cause severe problems if he or she is rightly perceived as only "going through" democratic motions. Authoritarian styles are definitely required in crisis situations where fast decisions need to be made and followed, such as in a war or fighting a fire. Likewise, participative styles work well where information needs to be digested and acted on by many people.

If the leaders use a military metaphor (such as the battle against evil or the army of the Lord) to define how the Church is run, then authoritarian styles and an obsession with secrecy naturally follow. If, however, the ruling organizational metaphor is something like "the

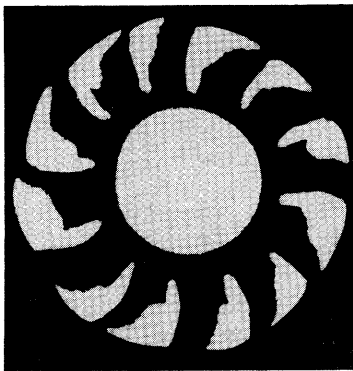
people of God," "the body of Christ," or "the community of believers" it is easier to adopt a collaborative leadership style.

I think it is desirable for us to be more participative on the local levels of the Church. I have attended countless ward conferences and quorum business meetings where the leaders announce a list of goals for the following year, which occasionally are put to the automatic affirmative vote. Even with periodic reminders throughout the year, most ward members respond like I have—sincere wishes of support but little or no change in behavior.

Imagine what would happen if a bishopric chose to have the ward's goals and plans decided through participative processes. Instead of happening over a weekend, the annual ward conference would be a process of meetings over a month, during which individuals involved in various quorums and auxiliaries met to take stock of the state of affairs, discuss what should be done, and arrive at a consensus on a plan of action. I can see teachers and parents of Primary-age children discussing the education of the youth.

Increased member participation, however, does not mean abdication by the leaders. A major responsibility of theirs would be to shepherd the process along and ensure that the flock is truly fed by it; they would set general goals (such as the three missions of the Church do), outline areas of concern that need to be addressed, gather and disseminate the necessary information needed for informed discussions (such as statistics and manuals), and lead the discussions so that the process has constructive results instead of chaos. The leader would then manage the follow-up affairs to implement the conference's conclusions. This style requires more of the leader, because it requires more of the member, but in ways that are more humble and less prominent; exalting others, taking less credit, not assuming you have to have all the answers, but possessing the keys to direct the process and correct when needed.

If this was done effectively, the results of the month-long deliberation process would include a membership with an enhanced view of the dynamics and role of the Church, a sense that their experience and perspective are valued by the organization, a better understanding of how what they do affects the community's purposes, and probably an increased commitment to help achieve the agreed-upon goals. Much of the social bonding that was unintentionally diminished by the consolidated meeting schedule would be strengthened by intense policy discussions through which members would become acquainted with each other in



substantive settings. In addition, since the process draws upon the resources and information of the entire congregation rather than the combined yet limited resources of the leadership, the Church programs may work better because of local customizing which encourages the upward flow of information.

Enoch's classic description of the people of Zion as "one heart and one mind" (Moses 7:18) cannot mean that everyone thinks the same thoughts. It must mean that after deliberation we are agreed on how we will act as a people, similar to how the Quorum of the Twelve are one in implementing their decisions after discussions with strong differences which are never totally resolved. After we have the opportunity to genuinely have our views aired and valued, we then support and work to make successful ("sustain") the decision eventually arrived at; remembering that since we are human policies will change. This approach maximizes the strength that comes from unity of action and cultivates the vitality that comes from celebrating differences.

Some individuals may have reservations about this process because this Church is a "theocracy, not a democracy," by which they mean an authoritarian style is appropriate because God speaks to our leaders and his word is disseminated downward through an inevitable hierarchal organization. That is definitely true concerning doctrine—that is the calling of a prophet—although for doctrine to be binding upon the Church it must be accepted by vote of the membership. But most of our day-to-day ecclesiastical deliberations are about the policies and programs necessary to realize the doctrinal truths in the community of Saints. In those decisions, I think, the participative process can be appropriately applied. The guiding question is, "How can we organize ourselves to best effect the work of God?" And, like Jethro to Moses, the better answers can come from outside the hierarchal channels and involve the entire membership.

We need to look more closely at what the Lord, Joseph and the early brethren meant when they said that we should do "all things by common consent" (D&C 26:2; 28:13) and "Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesman at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have equal privilege" (D&C 88:122, italics added).

Rooted in the scriptures is a more democratic theocracy than we currently practice. Originally, like a theocracy the Church was named The Church of Christ. Later it was

democratically titled The Church of Latter-day Saints, and lastly The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (D&C 115:4). The final name is a wonderful combination of what constitutes a Church: the marriage of God *and* man. While the Church is a kingdom, that metaphor can be misapplied by solely alluding to the medieval notion of an absolute king with lesser nobles and obedient serfs. Ironically, ours is a king-

dom whose citizens are empowered kings and queens and priests and priestesses; one where we wish that "all of the Lord's people were prophets" (Numbers 11:29). And those theological concepts necessitate other concepts such as stewardship and agency with genuine discretion, where the anointed followers of Christ willingly cooperate in the community as equals.

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

D. Michael Quinn

A MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS, A HOUSE OF FAITH, AND A PRISON OF CONFORMITY

I FIRST LEFT Brigham Young University as a graduating senior, and now leave BYU's history faculty to pursue career goals outside the university. As a student and teacher, I've developed certain ideas about intellect, faith, and freedom.

A true university should be a Marketplace of Ideas. As in any free marketplace, the goods have various uses, shapes, sizes, colors, and qualities. One size doesn't fit all, certain things may not appeal to some people, and merchandise varies from the price-worthy to the shoddy. As in a free marketplace, the vendors of ideas promote their wares vigorously, and challenge competing products. They do this without asking permission, or feeling that they are taking risks beyond the fact that not everyone will want their goods. This freedom means that you can look at, try on, or obtain anything that interests you. In this marketplace of ideas you can outgrow or otherwise discard once-valued things, but you may also find ideas that will expand with you throughout life. The vendors

of these ideas typically don't monitor what you do with them—dispensing the ideas is their primary objective.

You don't feel that you are being bold, or daring, or courageous, or offensive for exploring and promoting the ideas that are freely part of the marketplace of a university. Like any marketplace, an open university is often boisterous, unruly, energetic, exciting, multidimensional, fluid, and structured only enough to maintain the integrity of that orderly chaos of the mind.

On the other hand, a House of Faith is calmer, more secure, and heavily structured. In it, you move through corridors through which countless others have passed in orderly procession. Rooms have certain uses, and you soon learn the expected behavior as you move from room to room. Yet even within the House of Faith, there is diversity—some rooms are more fully occupied and used than others, and people don't always act the same way in the same room.

The House of Faith doesn't lack adventure, either, because you may chance upon a room so long in disuse that even the custodians of the House of Faith have forgotten it. Equal to your excitement in exploring such a place is the fear on the part of the custodians that you will take a misstep in the dimly lit room. Even if you are

D. MICHAEL QUINN recently announced his resignation as professor of history at Brigham Young University. A version of this thesis originally appeared in The Student Review, BYU's unofficial student magazine.

in the company of a few others, the custodians still worry because they feel responsible for your safety in a house they didn't build, whose floor plans they don't know precisely. How you act, talk, and think are far more important to custodians of the House of Faith than these things are to vendors in the Marketplace of Ideas.

It's difficult to live in a marketplace, or to find constant shelter and comfort there. A house provides shelter, comfort, and the association of those who should be there to love you, rather than to accost you as vendors often do. Ideally, the Marketplace of Ideas surrounds the House of Faith, so that you can pass freely from one to the other, back and forth, without feeling you have lost your place in either. This should be true because the Master of the free-flowing Marketplace of Ideas is also the Architect of the comforting House of Faith.

Yet some vendors in the Marketplace of Ideas may ridicule those who live in the House of Faith, and a few residents may choose to abandon that great house. Others within the House of Faith may complain to the custodians about the quality of goods they found in the Marketplace of Ideas.

In response, some custodians and residents of that House of Faith may seek to discourage visits to the Marketplace of Ideas unless you have an approved shopping list. If sufficiently worried about the freedoms and vulnerabilities of the Marketplace of Ideas, custodians of the House of Faith may seek to shutter the windows, to discourage visits to the open marketplace, and instead offer a limited selection of "safe" goods, and to persuade residents of the House of Faith that a controlled choice is a free choice.

At the extreme, resistance to the openness of ideas and the vulnerabilities of freedom may develop into a culture which is not the creation of him who established both the Marketplace of Ideas and the House of Faith. All of us may be familiar with such a culture which I have learned about with much interest and some sadness. It is a Prison of Conformity.

In this specific case, its leaders distrust the outside world, and are convinced that this culture is destined to spread throughout the world. In the zeal of that faith, these authorities also distrust members of this culture who are different in any respect from the authorized norms.

Convinced that regular members of the culture would only be confused by unrestricted inquiry the authorities of this Prison of Conformity have adopted several methods of

inhibiting freedom. First, they publicize only positive features of the culture, unless some negative information is necessary to chastise those who don't live up to expectations.

Second, they deny access to crucial information, and allow "free" and "professional" access only to sanitized documents or information.

Third, they use intimidation to discourage those who have forbidden knowledge from circulating or publishing it, unless it is the authorized version of the culture's history, beliefs, and practices.

Fourth, they portray independent thinkers as renegades who are seeking to disturb the happiness and loyalty of the rest of the culture.

Fifth, they persuade the rest of the culture that such information is irrelevant or dangerous, and that they should avoid any contaminating association with such ideas or with persons whose independence of thought and action are by definition disloyal.

Sixth, the leaders persuade themselves and the rest of the people that the culture is actually better off without the presence or influence of these independent people.

Seventh, they use the instruments of power within the culture to harass, isolate, silence, expel, or force into exile those who do not conform sufficiently.

Even though the conforming majority of people feel indifferent or even hostile toward the independent writers and activists, some rank and file members of the society quietly read, circulate, and discuss the independent ideas, and give quiet encouragement to the activists. One of these independent types, who loves the culture but rejects its oppressive conformity, has complained about the attitude of the authorities toward "that 'past' which 'ought not to be stirred up,'" and he continued, "What we remember is not what actually happened, not history, but merely that hackneyed dotted line they have chosen to drive into our memories by incessant hammering. . . . We have to condemn publicly the very *idea* that some people have the right to repress others." Still, in my own study and experience, this culture has good qualities, and its people generally are kind and friendly, even to outsiders.

This Prison of Conformity is, of course, the Soviet Union, about which I just quoted Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. I had personal experience with this culture five years ago as part of BYU's Study Abroad program, and am still impressed by that visit and my reading about this culture of repression.

The Soviet Union is merely an extreme example of lofty goals subverted into a repres-

sive conformity. The French Revolution's ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity disintegrated into the Guillotine Terror in which thousands of men, women, and children died because they did not fit the commoners' ideal. God's revelations and commandments to Moses on Sinai became a repressive burden upon believing Jews who struggled to conform to Pharaisaical requirements. Roman Catholicism emerged from a heritage of persecution and thereafter embarked on centuries of repression against any believing Catholics who did not meet certain standards of orthodoxy and practice. The persecuted Puritans fled to America to establish their "City on a Hill" to God's glory, and then banished from their colony nonconformists such as Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams.

Some years ago, BYU professor of religion Hugh W. Nibley warned students and administrators alike about the dangers of intellectual stagnation and stultifying conformity at BYU. In his "Educating the Saints," he commented that "the authorities have tended to delegate the business of learning to others, and those others have been only too glad to settle for the outward show, the easy and flattering forms, trappings and ceremonies of education." In his "Zeal Without Knowledge," Professor Nibley criticized an administrative and student sense of superiority that stifles spiritual development, and observed that it was common to hear the attitude, "We are not seeking for truth at the BYU; we have the truth!"

There is a danger that BYU's slogans may be more accurate in their inverted form. Instead of "The World Is Our Campus," the reality may be that "The Campus is Our World." Rather than "Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve," BYU's overwhelming emphasis on deference, compliance, and conformity, creates the danger that students enter BYU to serve, and must go forth into a freer world to learn. Twenty years ago, a joke making the rounds was that the autocratic president of BYU had written a book titled "Free Agency and How to Enforce It." To the degree that this attitude exists, the institution and its people are sliding away from the Marketplace of Ideas and House of Faith into the individual and cultural repressiveness of the Prison of Conformity. That development bothers me, and I hope those who remain at BYU will reflect upon the consequences of subordinating thought and faith to conformity.

I'll miss my personal associations at BYU, especially with students. I've learned from them, admire them, and hope that I've shared something of worth in exchange. I wish them God's blessings in their own efforts to live with both vigorous intellect and comforting faith.

A Review of the Church's Latest Guidelines on Sex

A PARENT'S GUIDE: SEX EDUCATION OR EROTOPHOBIA?

By Terence L. Day

INTRODUCTION

QUESTIONS OF SEXUAL ETHICS HAVE ALWAYS seemed perplexing, especially for religious people and for religious institutions. Each generation believes that it discovered sex and, in a manner of speaking, each does. Today The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its people are struggling with sexual questions, perhaps as never before. Church leaders have long emphasized the primary importance of sexual purity, and they continue to feel a grave responsibility to teach the law of chastity. For this clear, unfaltering voice the body of the Church can be grateful. Yet, too often, injunctions encouraging chastity are burdened by negative connotations and forebodings about the dark side of sex. Therefore, the warnings often instill in Latter-day Saints an inordinate fear of sex, or erotophobia, as psychiatrists know it.¹ Many LDS couples, therefore, approach the nuptial bed not only with a divinely sanctioned physical desire for each other, but with profound misgivings about the expressions of physical love.

Few of us in Western societies escape the influence of erotophobia, which can impose needless guilt, undermine self-esteem and even impair spiritual development.² Unwarranted guilt also jeopardizes wholesome sexual adjustment in marriage. Sexual maladjustment deprives both spouses of a measure of a loving and nurtured sexual fulfillment.³ This may be particularly true for women.⁴ In both sexes, diminished sexual desire is the most commonly reported sexual maladjustment; negative sex feelings are major contributors to this type of maladjustment.⁵ Consequently, these unresolved family stresses undoubtedly contribute to spouse and child abuse, and to divorce. For these reasons, it is important to recognize erotophobia so its impact may be reduced in the lives of its victims.

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My study on the origins and evolution of Christian sexual ethics reveals compelling evidence that many of the sexual attitudes that influence Latter-day Saints do not arise, as we have supposed, from the gospel, but from pagan philosophies that predate Christianity. They come neither from the scriptures nor from revelation, but have been traced by scholars at least to Pythagorean moral dualism. Pythagoras, who lived in the sixth century B.C., taught that the male is good and the female is bad. He also taught that the body is evil and that sexual activities pander to demeaning passions. This philosophy comes to us in an unbroken chain through the great philosophers Plato and Aristotle. Philo played a major role in melding moral dualism and Christianity. St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Augustine, and also St. Thomas Aquinas played vital roles in defining Christian sexual attitudes. St. Clement, who produced Christianity's first known text on sexual practice in married life, borrowed heavily from pagan philosophy. St. Clement associates sexual activity with evil and glorifies self-restraint for its own sake.⁶ Nearly eighteen centuries later, the LDS church's first sex education guide perpetuates some of the same pagan erotophobia.

Tracing the evolution of Christian sexual ethics from Aquinas in the thirteenth century to the present day has been both fascinating and deeply saddening. As recently as one hundred years ago, our ancestors lived through a veritable siege of sexual horror, an era of rampant erotophobia during which circumcision was introduced to prevent masturbation⁷ and when masturbators were even sent to insane asylums. In extreme cases, castration and clitoridectomy were inflicted on masturbators. Early in this century when many of our parents or grandparents were in their formative years, one could not speak publicly about sex, nor could one write about it. Doing so was not only impolite; it was illegal. Margaret Sanger was arrested eight times between 1914 and 1917 on obscenity charges. Her crime was that of speaking publicly on contraception.⁸

Although we may not personally remember these times, society is profoundly influenced by them, perhaps especially so in the patriarchal Mormon culture. Whatever level of erotophobia



Latter-day Saints may have experienced in the past, it was likely elevated in recent years when the Church formally interjected itself into the bedroom in an unprecedented degree.

A PARENT'S GUIDE

Amid growing and alarming reports of child, spousal, and sexual abuse, a series of important but little-known events began in 1981 when the Church Social Services Department sent a book on human sexuality to local Church leaders for use in counseling members. This book, *Human Intimacy: Illusion & Reality*, was written by Victor L. Brown, Jr., former director of LDS Church Social Services.⁹ Brown, or at least his book, evidently had great influence on *A Parent's Guide*.

Next, the First Presidency issued the first of two communications on temple recommend interviews that I have dubbed the "bedroom letters." On 5 January 1982, stake presidents and bishops were advised to ensure that candidates for temple recommends refrained from oral sex, which these communications interpreted as an "unnatural, impure, or unholy practice." Less

than a year later, the First Presidency sent a second letter cautioning local authorities not to pry into marital relations. However, new temple recommend interview instructions contained a new question on refraining from "unnatural, impure, or unholy practices." For the benefit of anyone who might ask for definitions of what constituted these practices, the First Presidency provided a one paragraph interpretation that was to be read verbatim to the inquiring person. It stated that the brethren had determined that both oral and anal sex were "unnatural, impure, or unholy practices." Normal rules and procedures for repentance were to be applied.

The latest development in this bedroom saga was removal of the "unnatural, impure, or unholy practices" question from the temple recommend interview book in early 1986. This would appear to cancel the Church's official concern with marital sexual practices.

It was in this environment that in 1985 the Church published *A Parent's Guide* in conjunction with admonitions to local priesthood leaders regarding child and spousal abuse. The Church announced education programs in these various areas.

The context of the guide's appearance is one permeated by negativism. It is important that *A Parent's Guide* be examined not only for the facts it presents, but for the attitudes revealed by its rhetoric. Erotophobic tendencies have been correlated with conservative values such as religious orientation, regular church attendance, and avoidance of sex as a topic of conversation—all descriptors that seem to define Latter-day Saints, among other peoples.¹⁰

METHODOLOGY

My definition, any evaluation is subjective and therefore risks being controversial and being criticized. Because of that danger, and in the spirit of fairness, I will briefly state the background and values that I bring to this task. I am a husband, father of six children, professional journalist, and an active high priest in the LDS church, to which I hold a profound allegiance. I wholeheartedly and joyously embrace the law of chastity as God's divine law.

My evaluation of *A Parent's Guide* relies primarily on analysis of the value burdens of the authors' words; I also have examined other rhetorical tactics. This has been done within the perspective of my studies concerning the origins and evolution of Christian sexual ethics. I make no claim of unerring objectivity in assigning positive or negative values to words and phrases. There may be some disagreement on interpretations. In instances of uncertainty, I've tried to err on the side of grace to the authors of *A Parent's Guide*.

Words and phrases are divided into three lists—positive, negative, and neutral—depending on definition or connotation. Positive words and phrases are those likely to give the reader a favorable impression of sex, conveying the idea that sex is good, that it is proper, and that it is healthy to enjoy it. Negative words and phrases are those likely to give the reader an unfavorable impression of sex, conveying the attitude that sex is dangerous, wrong, and evil. Neutral words and phrases are those likely to convey neither positive nor negative connotations. Tables 1, 2, and 3 list examples of sexual words and phrases that were included in the analysis.

SPECIAL PROBLEMS

In undertaking any study of this nature, there is one overbearing problem: that words have different meanings to different people. Connotation, which can be even more important than definition, is even more highly subjective and greatly influenced by context. For example, narrowly defined, the word "sex" is neutral. But it may bear a positive or a negative connotation,

depending largely upon the values of the listener or reader. It also may receive good or bad connotations depending on the company it keeps. In the company of such modifiers as "abuse," "carnal," "defile," "devilish," "gratification," "indecent," and "lust," it takes on a bad connotation. However, modify it with adjectives such as "clean," "enjoyable," "good," "pleasurable," and "virtuous," and the word "sex" takes on a good connotation. Phrases such as "questions about sex" and "sex characteristics," I have classified as neutral, unless a value burden is implied. In this study, there

is no way to deal with connotations that the reader will apply to the words. For the true erotophobe, the word "sex" always has a negative connotation, and so does any word associated with the subject, no matter how clinical, or how positive a connotation others may place on it. At the other extreme, the erotophile may see good in almost every sexual association.

FINDINGS

The language of *A Parent's Guide* is overwhelmingly negative, displaying a profound distrust of sexuality. The *Guide* contains 456 words and phrases referring to sex and sexuality. This does not include the word "gender," which is used many times, nor does it include many uses of the word "intimacy" where the authors' intention was not clear. In some cases "intimacy" is clearly used in a nonsexual connotation and therefore was not counted. Even the authors caution that their use of the phrase "physical intimacy" doesn't necessarily imply a sexual relationship. In other cases the context is clearly a sexual one, and the use was counted.

Only 64 (14 percent) of 456 references convey a clearly positive image of sex. Clearly negative references accounted for 170 (37 percent) of the total, and 222 (49 percent) of the references were neutral (see Table 4). A large number of neutral references (98) appear in the sections on how to teach children up to the age of puberty. They deal fundamentally with biology and psychology. Whether one weighs positive statements against the sum of positive, negative, and neutral, or only against the sum of positive and negative, the *Guide* falls short of the sex-positive instruction needed by Latter-day Saints.

Sex-Positive References

Whatever the shortcomings of *A Parent's Guide*, there is much to applaud. It contains some of the most positive affirmations of the holiness of human sexuality that have ever been publicly made by the Church. Indeed, the very best thing about the *Guide* is that the Church has published it. Although the tone of *A Parent's Guide* is sex-negative, the manual puts the Church

Table 1

EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE EXPRESSIONS

- do not speak of awakening sexual interest as sinful or unclean
- enjoy
- expression of love
- joy in bodies virtuously used
- openly affectionate
- ordained of God
- remarkably heightened pleasures of touch and arousal
- rewarding

squarely on record for the first time as officially endorsing non-procreational aspects of human sexuality. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this pronouncement for the development of healthy attitudes about marital sex.

The *Guide* speaks of the sexual relationship in marriage as one that is "uplifting"; it mentions "the feeling of joy of the physical senses"; it speaks of "righteous intimacy." The *Guide* counsels that the physical changes of puberty are "clean, good, and divinely mandated." We are counseled to teach our children that "our bodies are good," that in creating them God declared that his creation was good and that "they will find joy in their bodies when they use them virtuously. . . ." (p. 9).

There is throughout the manual a positive tone about frank discussions of sex in the home, including the use of scientific terminology such as "penis" and "vagina." There is wise counsel that parents shouldn't overreact to their children's use of vulgar sexual terms. The use of reliable reference books as sources for sexual information is recommended.

The *Guide* quotes President Spencer W. Kimball as saying that "the intimacy of sexual relations is right and divinely approved" (p. 46) in the context of lawful marriage and that God ordained sexual relations not just as a means of procreation but as "an expression of love" established to bring joy (p. 46).

In urging parents to teach their children proper sexual attitudes, the manual cautions, "Do not speak of their awakening sexual interest as sinful or unclean." We are told to teach our children about the "deeply pleasing intimacies" that will be built in marriage. Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:5-6 are cited as evidence that "sexual expression is ordained of God." Sexual congress is called "this sacred act." In this section is the manual's only use of the word "passion" in a positive sense.

The most sex-positive chapter is on courtship and marriage. Half of the 60 references to sex are positive, 47 percent are negative, and 5 percent are neutral (see table 5). For all of this, the authors should be applauded.

Neutral References

Of total sexual references in the *Guide*, 49 percent are used in a neutral connotation. Most of these references were used in a biological sense, describing human physiology without the burden of value judgments. To some degree, sex-positive values

can be found in such candid acceptance of human biology; however, the positive connotations are in part the result of comparing biological, bias-free terms to the sex-negativism of the Mormon culture. Since the context did not pertain to sexual activities, I determined that these references are fundamentally neutral.

Negative References

Negative connotations were found in 37 percent of total sexual references, and in 73 percent of the value-burdened usages in the *Guide*. Notwithstanding many positive statements, the authors begin the book with a strong note of negative imagery. Of the value-burdened references to sex in the introduction 80 percent are sex-negative. There are 12 negative words or phrases and only three positive ones. The negative words include "lust," "unrighteous dominion," and "adulterous acts." The positive references are "righteous meaning and use of intimate physical relations," "lawful relationships," and "true intimacy." Perhaps these positive examples illustrate the need for largess in assigning positive value, for all three may connote negative values at the same time they convey positive associations. For example, "lawful relationships" suggests

unlawful relationships and therefore a negative connotation. Similarly, "proper" actions suggest improper actions. However, the authors' intent in such usages obviously is positive, and I so credited them. In doing so, I have eliminated an entire stratification of self-qualified "positive" statements. This was done to ensure a fair-minded and conservative.

In Chapter 1, which sets the stage for discussion of the proper role that human sexuality plays in our lives, references to undesirable aspects of sexuality outnumber positive ones 3 to 1. Here the words "abuse," "defile," "degrade," "lust," "misuse," "immorality," "appetites," and "physical gratification" overpower the words "righteous intimacy," "joy," and "uplift." In the chapter concerning principles for teaching children, negative words and phrases outnumber positive ones 16 to 1.

Negative connotations outnumber positive references 4 to 1 in the chapter on adolescence; 46 percent of the references in this chapter are neutral (see Table 6). The authors' intention is to foster chastity. It is Latter-day Saint doctrine that adultery and fornication are second only to murder in seriousness of offenses

Table 2

EXAMPLES OF NEGATIVE EXPRESSIONS

-abuse	-passion
-carnal	-pornography
-defile	-Satanic substitute for happiness
-degrade	-selfish pleasure
-degradation	-sensual
-devilish	-sexual excess
-distress	-sexual
-ensnares	-sin
-entices	-sinful
-evil	-solely for pleasure
-gratification	-strictly physical
-immoral relationships	-unchaste
-incest	-unclean
-indecent	-wickedness
-lust	
-misuse	

against God. Unfortunately, this great caution against sexual sin exacts a heavy toll on the image of sex. Our young people develop in their formative years a negative image that comes back to haunt them in their marriages. The ghosts arise in the form of unhealthy inhibitions and of unwarranted guilt feelings because of their sex drives.¹¹

“Female breasts” is used in a negative context and the words “sex drive,” “masturbation,” “mate,” “arousal,” “sexual feelings in sinful ways,” “purveyors of evil,” “carnal,” “perversion,” “selfish,” “abuse,” “shame,” “wicked,” and “lustful boys” convey negative images. (I found no lustful girls in the *Guide*. This could be either an innocent happenstance or a residual Victorian misconception about female sexuality.)

The chapter on courtship and marriage is the only chapter in which positive connotations approach half of the valued words and phrases, yet even here more than half the images (27, or 53 percent) references are negative; 24 (47 percent) are positive and 3 are neutral. The section begins with two warnings; then, after some unqualified positive statements, it returns to negative values. Engaged couples must avoid talking about their coming sexual relationship and must not give undue attention to sexual information in their individual preparation, for it may “actually create problems.” They must avoid “morbid desire” and practice “self control.” Honeymooners must avoid “sexual excesses” and any “unnatural” conduct. We are reminded from earlier instruction in the manual that there is no such thing as a “sex drive.” We are admonished not to use our partners “merely for the gratification of . . . passion.” Self-control is the crowning glory of true manhood and we are warned that “sexual indulgence whets the passion and creates morbid desire.” At times, “complete abstinence” is in order for married couples. Almost every positive statement about human sexuality is offset by warnings. At times, the authors extol pagan notions of self control and abstinence while curiously ignoring Paul’s admonition (1 Corinthians 7:4-5) that both husbands and wives have a right to sexual fulfillment and an obligation to sexually satisfy their spouses.

Misinformation

For the most part, the biological information offered by *A Parent’s Guide* is sound, but in a few places the authors fail.

BREASTS. In Chapter 5, we are misinformed about the human body and its functions in Chapter 5 in which we are told that “the world” makes divinely created bodies the object of carnal lust by making “the female breasts primarily into sexual enticements, while the truth is that they were intended to nourish and comfort children” (p. 37). However, Proverbs 5:19 and The Song of

Solomon (which Joseph Smith said was uninspired) speak approvingly of breasts as sexual attractions for men, and of women yearning for this form of attention from men.

SEX DRIVE. The worst misinformation in the *Guide* comes as the authors attempt to refute the existence of the sex drive. The authors closely follow Brown’s book, which dismisses the sex drive as “another dogma of a carnal world.” Rather, Brown reasons, the “alleged sex drive is actually an appetite learned from culture and reinforced by biology, its satisfaction institutionalized by culture.” Brown notes that we can control when, where, how, and with whom we gratify our sexual urges; as if the ability to control the sex drive somehow blots out its biological imperative. Never mind that we also control when, where, how, and with whom we gratify our thirst and hunger, or that both society and the Church direct many conventions to control these appetites. There is no significant argument in the scientific world over the existence of a sex drive, although there are arguments aplenty over its nature and the mechanisms involved.¹²

MASTURBATION. The *Guide* also reiterates the Church’s long-standing injunction against masturbation. Treatment of this important subject is uneven. In one section parents are admonished not to overreact to genital self-exploration in young children. This, of course, is enlightened counsel. Parents who do so may cause great mischief for their children’s later enjoyment of sex. Unfortunately, the advice is based on the misinformation that small children do not masturbate. Scientific literature documents that systematic masturbation is common in children at 6-8 years of age, and masturbation, resulting in orgasm, has been reported in children less than one year old. Yet, elsewhere in the manual, masturbation is condemned for youth and adults. (It probably also would be condemned for children were it recognized as masturbation.) However, nowhere do the authors define masturbation, leaving open the possibility of confusion in discussing the topic. Without a definition of masturbation there is a possibility that some couples might understand the Church to condemn much foreplay and afterplay between husbands and wives—for this is, technically, masturbation.

OTHER RHETORICAL DEVICES

Other rhetorical devices are the literary mechanisms whereby the authors have woven the language of the *Guide*. The authors have repeatedly employed the device of qualifying, balancing, and countering sex-positive statements with sex-negative statements. Rarely is a positive statement turned loose without the fetters of caution. A good example is the treatment of sex in

Table 3

EXAMPLES OF NEUTRAL EXPRESSIONS

-breasts	-sex
-ejaculated	-sexual
-fidelity	-sex education
-genitals	-sexual union
-intimacy	-sexual virtue
-intimate relations	-sperm
-menstruate	-testes
-multiply and replenish	-this union
-nocturnal emission	-uterus
-ovary	-vagina
-pubic area	-wet dream

Table 4
TOTAL SEX-POSITIVE, -NEGATIVE, -NEUTRAL
REFERENCES

	Number	% Total	% Value Burdened
Positive	64	14	27
Negative	170	37	73
Neutral	222	49	n/a

Table 5
VALUE BURDENS OF MATERIAL OR
COURTSHIP & MARRIAGE

	Number	% Total	% Value Burdened
Positive	30	50	53
Negative	27	45	47
Neutral	3	5	n/a

Table 6
VALUE BURDENS OF MATERIAL FOR
ADOLESCENT EDUCATION

	Number	% Total	% Value Burdened
Positive	11	12	22
Negative	40	43	78
Neutral	43	46	n/a

marriage. Beginning on page 47, the authors give honeymooners license to learn about one another's bodies, but follow, in the next sentence, with the warning: "It is not a time for sexual excess." License for "private discovery" of physical bodies is given, then caution against "unnatural" sex follows. The *Guide* says that while sex is a sacred act, marriage is not ordained "merely to satisfy . . . passion." This whip-saw treatment of marital sex is followed by one completely positive paragraph advising that one of the purposes of sexual intercourse is "to bring joy" to the participants. But on the next page there is the assertion that the "sex drive" doesn't really exist and that there are "times within the marriage when complete abstinence is appropriate for extended periods of time" (p. 49).

Time and again, the authors employ this rhetorical device: approval followed by warning, if not preceded by caution. In some instances, approvals are sandwiched between warnings. On page 36, parents are counseled in teaching teenagers about sex. The section begins with a disparaging remark about our "so-called sex drive," promises "remarkably heightened pleasures of touch and arousal," and then cautions that we must control these urgings. The following 14 paragraphs are an almost unbroken litany of warnings and cautions abundantly laced with the most vivid sex-negative words imaginable: "selfishness," "perversion," "immorality," "carnality," "masturbation," "abuse," "wickedness," and "lustfulness."

CONCLUSIONS

The evidence from both my analysis of word and phrase connotation, and of rhetorical devices, argues strongly that the message of *A Parent's Guide* is erotophobic. Notwithstanding many positive statements about human sexuality, the reader is likely to come away from the manual suspicious of the propriety of sexual enjoyment, even in marriage.

The *Guide* clothes erotophobic Latter-day Saint attitudes and policies in the garments of sociology and psychology. This invites suspicion of pagan erotophobic influence, which may lead some to an ultimate rejection of the Church's position on morality. No scripture or revelation is cited for authority, except for 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and Alma 41:10, neither of which is used in a sexual context in holy writ. If the reasons for eschewing masturbation, or any other sexual practice, are medical or are founded in psychology or sociology, surely Latter-day Saints are at liberty to judge for themselves the merits of these arguments. The Church seems not to realize that its position on masturbation may contribute to the incidence of fornication and adultery. This subject is overripe for investigation and critical analysis. Are the Church's teachings on masturbation gospel, or an autoerotophobic vestige of nineteenth-century Victorianism?¹³

In summary, *A Parent's Guide* should be welcomed for the many positive statements that it makes in support of human sexuality. So far, it is the most positive presentation of the Church's stand concerning sexuality. The challenge for both local leaders and parents is to glean many of the virtues it offers in support of the "enjoyment" of sex in marriage while winnowing

out the chaff of pagan sex-negativism. The challenge for the Church is to purge erotophobia from its educational materials and policies. I am optimistic that it eventually will. Marybeth Raynes, a licensed marriage and family therapist and a clinical social worker in Salt Lake City, has pointed the way in her call for a positive approach to sex education. "You cannot teach a positive concept using only 'don't' and 'never' and expect a person to have a positive understanding of that idea." She continues, "In my view, translating all of our injunctions about sexuality and the moral code into positive phrasing and meaning will result in more willing obedience with fewer negative effects."¹⁴ Perhaps the Church hasn't sufficiently taken into account the emotional and spiritual costs of teaching chastity by sex-negative denunciations. The burdens of a sex-negative approach warrant exploration of a more sex-positive approach.

NOTES

1. I first became interested in this topic while serving as an elders quorum president in a ward that encompassed many student families—particularly graduate student families—who were under severe stresses. During this time, I became aware of the sexual quotient in this family stress as many couples had urgent questions about their sexuality. Some went to priesthood leaders for counsel; but most sought illumination by visiting with friends and received a babble of answers. Questions ranged from the appropriateness of specific sexual practices to the propriety of LDS couples using birth control even when their emotional resources were near exhaustion. It became obvious that in many cases individuals were suffering from hyperactive guilt complexes. Others had questions such as we all probably have had at one time or another, which fall in the gray area between clearly good and clearly bad—a zone in which presumably personal goals, standards, and circumstances may dictate different answers for different Latter-day Saints. Ultimately, this experience led me to an exhaustive and continuing study of Christian sexual ethics.

2. Singer, Barry. "A Comparison of Evolutionary and Environmental Theories of Erotic Response. Part I: Structural Features." *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1985, p. 245. LoPresto, C. T., Sherman, M. F., & Sherman, N. C. "Effects of a Masturbation Seminar on High School Males' Attitudes, False Beliefs, Guilt, and Behavior." *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 143.

3. For an expanded discussion of this topic, I recommend three companion articles by Harold T. Christensen ("The Persistence of Chastity: A Built-In Resistance Within Mormon Culture to Secular Trends"), Marvin and Ann Rytting ("Exhortations for Chastity: A Content Analysis of Church Literature"), and Marybeth Raynes ("A Wish List: Comments on Christensen and the Ryttings") all in SUNSTONE, Vol. 7, No. 2, March/April 1982. Together, they are an excellent examination of and commentary on the cultural forces that may be influencing the rhetoric of Church leaders on sexuality. Raynes provides a particularly valuable commentary on the need for a more positive teaching of sexual morality.

It is important to note that it is not religiosity, but sex-negativism such as was commonly associated with Victorian values that produces needless and pleasure-denying guilt. Some data indicate that regular church attenders receive more pleasure from sex than non-religious people. It is how chastity and fidelity are taught that influences how individuals feel about their sexuality.

4. Sack, A. R., Keller, J. F., and Hinkle, D. E. "Premarital Sexual Intercourse: A Test of the Effects of Peer Group, Religiosity, and Sexual Guilt." *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 20, No. 2, p. 173, citing Gunderson and McCary (1979); and Green, D. E., & Mosher, D. L. "A Causal Model of Sexual Arousal to Erotic Fantasies." *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 2-3, 5.

5. Hyde, Janet Shibley. *Understanding Human Sexuality*. 3rd Ed. (McGraw Hill Book Co. New York, 1986), p. 538.

6. Foucault, Michel. *The Use of Pleasure: Vol. 2 of The History of Sexuality*. Trans. Robert Hurley (Pantheon Books, New York, 1985), p. 15.

7. Meney, John. *The Destroying Angel: Sex, Fitness, and Food in the Legacy of Degeneracy Theory, Graham Crackers, Kellogg's Corn Flakes, & American Health History*, (Prometheus Books, Buffalo, New York, 1985), pp. 101-102.

8. Douglas, Emily Taft. *Margaret Sanger: Pioneer of the Future* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1970), pp. 98-99. Money and Foucault are excellent books on the history of sexual attitudes.

9. Brown, Victor L., Jr. *Human Intimacy: Illusion & Reality* (Parliament Publishers, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1981).

10. Baron, Robert A., & Byrne, Donn. *Social Psychology: Understanding Human Interaction*, 5th Edition (Allyn & Bacon, Inc., Boston, 1987), p. 556.

11. Green & Mosher, 1985; Singer, 1985.

12. I sense that some authorities are beginning to shift the focus of their discussions from "sex drive" to "sexual desire." Apparently this is because of the difficulty of defining and measuring drive, which Freud called Libido. Desire, on the other hand, lends itself to quantification, which serves a primary function in research. This shift of focus of scholarly

inquiry, however, in no way negates the existence of the sex drive.

13. Autoerotophobia lingers yet today in the United States, and perhaps particularly in the LDS church. Circumcision of male babies is an almost universal practice in the United States, although most parents no longer understand why this operation was introduced. According to Money, it was advanced in American medicine as a prophylactic against masturbation. Boy Scout manuals perpetuated masturbation myths as late as the 1950s. Some authorities feel the main motivation for still submitting baby boys to this useless surgery, which is barbarically performed on the most sensitive tissue on the human body without anesthetic, is the discomfort that parents have in cleansing the infant penis—which frequently responds with an erection.

14. Raynes, *op. cit.*

THE NEXT WEIRD SISTER ATTEMPTS REPENTANCE

Thinking it had been a while
since she had felt god's grace
(one should feel sorry,
loving one's own end)—
she thought she felt sorry,
bowed her head, opened locks
for the air, made a hell-broth
(can done be undone?).
She thought she felt sorry,
for the seeds of all
things yet uncreated
(he knows thy thoughts),
for a child with a tree in his hands
(who can impress the forest),
for where she had never been
about, about—wayward
(show the grief his heart).
Thinking heaven is murky—
she thought she felt god's grace:
give me...give me...
then thought of killing swine.

—LAURA HAMBLIN

An Arizona Saint Reviews the Mormon Response to Evan Mecham

RAZING ARIZONA: THE CLASH IN THE CHURCH OVER EVAN MECHAM

By Eduardo Pagán

CLEARLY, EVAN MECHAM'S ABRASIVE MANNER GENERATED many of the political problems which characterized his administration, and ultimately resulted in his removal from office. Yet members of the Church repeatedly battled over the first Mormon governor in Arizona, dividing families and friends. Mecham's critics argued that his controversial behavior cast a damaging reflection upon the Church, and questioned the appropriateness of assigning a spiritual significance to his administration. The Mecham supporters, on the other hand, defended his "unpopular, no compromise defense of constitutional law and moral principles," questioned the patriotism and spirituality of his Mormon critics, and accused the media and Phoenix businessmen of conspiring to oust the governor from office. The wake of that clash, which subsided after the impeached governor left office, found many in the Church withdrawn to their ideological corners to dress their wounds and assess the damage.¹

The Mecham campaign laid the groundwork for the controversy in the Church by utilizing a religious motif, however tangentially, in Evan Mecham's bid for the governorship. Reports circulated in reverent tones among Mecham supporters that, for example, the gubernatorial candidate received a personal witness that he would one day ascend to the governorship. "I'm sure if you were to visit with [the governor] personally," reflected Crismon Lewis, editor of the *Latter-day Sentinel*, after the election, "he would share with you his story of why he decided to run. To the world, it looked like vain ambition. To the many who try to follow [spiritual] promptings in their lives, they knew there was another dimension to the decision."² Likewise, W. Cleon Skousen solemnly affirmed to a largely Mormon audience during a fundraising dinner for the Mecham campaign that God foretold the

gubernatorial candidate that he would attain the governorship to help save America from going to hell in the handbasket of socialism.³

Mecham draws much of his ideological inspiration from Skousen, whom many revere as the political guru of right-wing Mormonism. "I owe him a debt of gratitude for enhancing my knowledge," wrote Mecham in his book, *Come Back America*, "and [for] his generous permission to borrow freely from his work."⁴ One of the basic tenets of Skousen's philosophy is that America has strayed from the Constitution, which, Mecham told a television reporter, was given to mankind because "God in heaven wanted his children to be free."⁵ Skousen also holds that only a repudiation of American socialism will save this nation from certain destruction, a position which apparently is based upon the "hanging by a thread" prophecy attributed to Joseph Smith⁶ Clearly Mecham also believes in the prophesied fate of the nation, which is the motive behind his relentless insistence upon "constitutionalism," a call to repent and return to the original intent of the Constitution.⁷ The former governor's plan of national salvation, outlined in *Come Back America*, also mirrors the faith and philosophy of his mentor.

The religious foundation of the political philosophy which both Mecham and Skousen share, however, is not unique to them. It stems from the very roots of Mormonism. By staunchly asserting the divinity of the Constitution since the days of Joseph Smith and by fusing "super-patriotism" since the days of Joseph Smith with Mormonism, the Church has projected its religious theme of apostasy and restoration onto the political past and future of the United States.⁸ Consequently, this message teaches that the founding fathers descended from the Constitutional Convention like secular patriarchs with an inspired document in hand. Evil and designing men, however, fell away from the "plain and precious truth" of the Constitution and led the nation into

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political apostasy. Yet in the last days, the Elders of Israel will rise up to save the nation and bring about a political restitution "of all things as at first."⁹

Mormonism's union of religion and politics is perpetuated in numerous works by Church leaders and scholars. Because of the status ascribed to the authors of these books, such as current LDS church President Ezra Taft Benson, former First Presidency member J. Reuben Clark, and conservative activist/author W. Cleon Skousen, many Mormons therefore view these authors' political conclusions as a tangential theology of Mormonism. Many in the Church also rely on such books as unofficial yet authoritative sources on the correct political perspective for active Mormons.

Mecham's campaign artfully instilled the same sense of destiny in his Mormon constituents by reiterating Mormonism's "crisis theology."¹⁰ Like a voice crying in the political wilderness, Mecham's message harkened to the theme of apostasy and restoration. He vowed in his campaign to wrest control of state government from the "big business and special interest group" conspiracy and to restore Jacksonian democracy to Arizona. He denounced the encroachment of "national socialism," and promised to support the "New Federalism" of President Reagan. He called the state to repentance and promised to usher in an era of moral leadership and "good government."

By also allowing news of his personal revelation to be used on the campaign trail, Mecham further appealed to the spirituality of Mormon voters. Do not the scriptures admonish the Saints to elect "good men and wise men?"¹¹ Who better, then, than a former bishop and devout constitutionalist to help bring about the prophesied restoration of "good government?" By incorporating the "tangential theology" of Mormonism, the Mecham campaign also seemed, to many Mormons, to have the tacit approval of the Church.

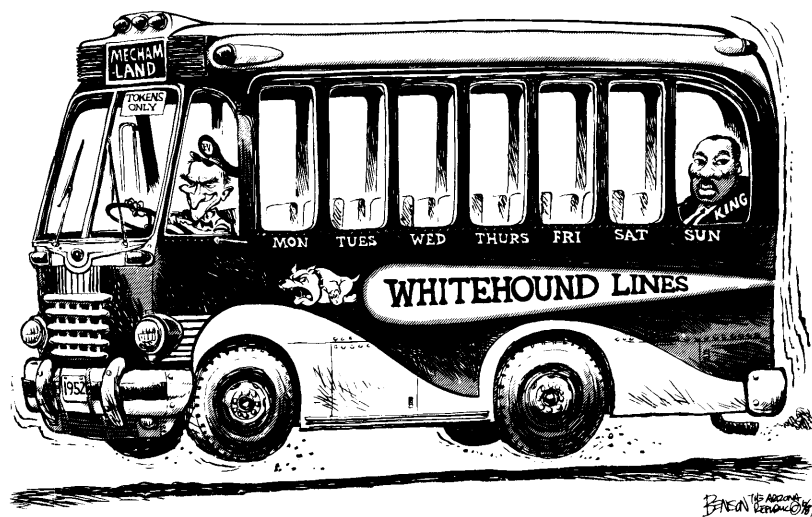
The Mecham campaign appeared to be providentially directed, as Mecham wrought miracle after miracle on the way to the state capitol. After first defeating the heavily-favored Speaker of the House in the Republican primary, the political outsider Evan Mecham then won the support of Senator Barry Goldwater, father of the Republican party in Arizona and former presidential candidate. In November of 1986, Mecham defeated two other rivals for the governorship in a closely contested race.¹² "When he was elected the world called it luck," wrote editor Crismon Lewis, "but thousands knelt in thanks that finally there was someone leading the government who wanted to cut taxes, stop

the spread of pornography and abortion, and, in general, take a stand for the family."¹³

The thanksgiving within the Church was short-lived, however, as Governor Mecham increasingly alienated his constituency. Mecham first offended the black community by rescinding the holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., stating that King did not deserve one, and by defending the historical use of the term "pickaninny" in Cleon Skousen's *The Making of America*. He then hired a liaison to the hispanic community not because of her qualifications, but because he "was dazzled by her beauty."¹⁴ Mecham offended women's groups by endorsing an aide's remark that "working women caused divorce," and the homosexual community by making homophobic remarks on a radio talk show. He joked about the shape of Japanese eyes while speaking at a Rotary Club, and bore his testimony to a Jewish congregation that Jesus Christ is the lord of this nation.¹⁵

In August 1987, the *Latter-day Sentinel* published a letter to the editor by the present author which warned that Mecham's behavior could potentially harm the missionary effort in Arizona, and argued that members of the Church, should, in fact, be "actively working to sequester him." "Regardless of his good character, or his good intentions," the letter continued, "many detractors of the Church have taken advantage of his situation to tear at the Church, reviving the old accusations that the Church is racist, sexist, hopelessly conservative, and incompetent in the real world." "While members of the Church understand that Mecham is not a representative of the Church per se," the letter further argued, "non-members do not easily separate the actions of one Mormon from the rest. Therefore, if we wish to avoid further embarrassment to the Church, Mecham . . . must change or he must go."¹⁶

The subsequent debate in the *Sentinel's* pages over Mormon support for Governor Mecham grew increasingly acrimonious. Shirley Whitlock, president of the Arizona Eagle Forum, lamented "how sad it is to see a member of the Church join the stone throwers of the media in their campaign to vilify and destroy Gov. Evan Mecham." Whitlock charged that Mormon critics of Evan Mecham were a greater threat to the Church than Mecham was, and associated them with "fault-finders, shirkers, commandment-breakers, and apostate cliques." "Evan Mecham needs our prayers," she concluded, "not our criticism."¹⁷ Other letters echoed this view. "I wonder if [he] wants to sequester Gov.



Mecham because he perceives Mecham as an embarrassment to the Church," wrote one reader, "or, if it is really that he disagrees with Mecham's 'politics.'" ¹⁸ "The letter from [Mecham's critic], as far as I'm concerned, is bunk," wrote another reader, "It sounds like [he] is only looking at the bad . . . It sounds like he is a quitter . . . If so, he is bringing harm to the Church."¹⁹

However, other letters to the *Latter-day Sentinel* revealed a growing concern over the governor's conduct and its impact on the Church. " 'My country, right or wrong. My Republican governor, right or wrong,' so it seems to be said by so many of us," wrote a concerned reader, "Is it possible for our governor to see himself ever in error?

. . . Is it possible for him to see the consequences of his actions?"²⁰ Another reader also shared her frustration because "this publicity is so damaging—and it will be difficult to counter-balance." "This 'guilt by association' is an inaccurate representation of the Church and its political position," she wrote, "as I have discussed this issue with my non-member friends, I find them to be pleasantly surprised the LDS have more than one opinion."²¹ Another reader wrote in response "to those who feel that it is somehow un-Christian or less-Mormon to support the recall effort of Gov. Evan Mecham." "I am thankful for my God-given right," he said, "to disagree and help remove from office one who lacks the wisdom to lead this great state."²²

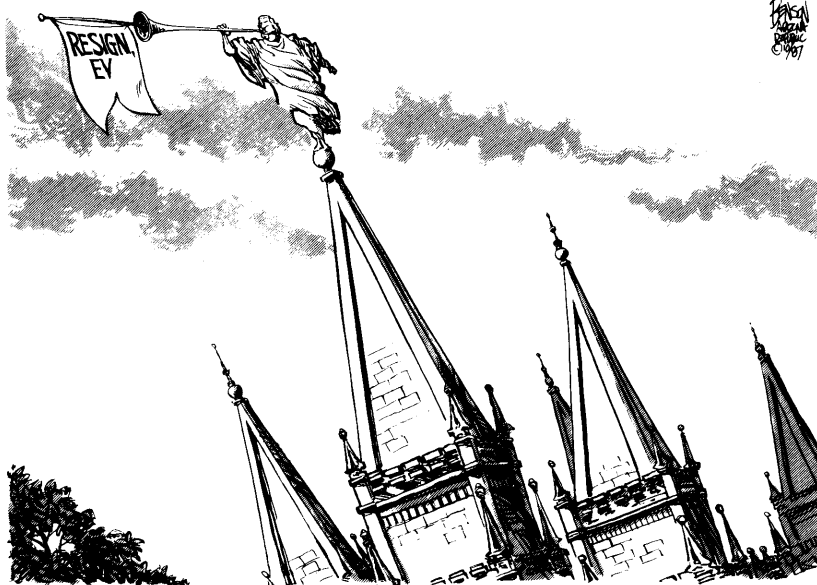
The *Latter-day Sentinel* openly abandoned its own policy of not endorsing politicians and joined in the fray by throwing its weight behind the governor. "We broke it when everyone was ganging up on Mecham," said Crismon Lewis, "We went to bat for him."²³ The *Sentinel* ran a number of editorials that staunchly supported and defended the governor, as well as publishing other articles designed to counter the reporting of the "liberal media," stories on the activities of the Mecham supporters, and full page ads soliciting support for the beleaguered governor.²⁴

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The LDS community became further polarized when political cartoonist Steve Benson, grandson of Ezra Taft Benson, openly sided with the Mecham critics. The *Latter-day Sentinel* reprinted Benson's cartoon, which appeared in the *Arizona Republic*, showing a banner hanging from the trumpet of the Moroni statue on the Salt Lake Temple, saying "RESIGN, EV."²⁵ Accompanying the drawing was an editorial by Crismon Lewis, which included excerpts from a telephone interview with Steve Benson. "Have you talked to your grandfather about the matter?" asked Lewis,

"Do you really feel that leaders are worried about the Church's image?" "Yes," responded Benson, "I wish I could feel at liberty to repeat what he has said about the governor. I just know grandpa has been watching the situation down here and there's reason to be concerned." "I'm not in the position to divulge everything I know because there are people in positions of authority, who wish not to go on record," Benson reportedly said to Lewis, "but there's a growing number of Mormons who are privately now wishing that the governor would best be served by stepping down."²⁶

The wording of the reported interview sparked a showdown



between Benson and Lewis, which one *Newsweek* article labeled an "Arizona holy war."²⁷ "Steve Benson Says, 'Oops,'" read the title of Lewis's next column, suggesting that Benson retracted his remarks.²⁸ "Steve Benson Responds" read a bold headline in the following issue. "I did not apologize for remarks made in an earlier interview," said Benson, who also accused Lewis of "attempting to create a juicier story at the expense of accuracy."²⁹ "We stand by our story," Lewis retorted

in a follow-up editorial. "The notes, with your verbatim remarks are here in our office. Would your *Arizona Republic* reporters be willing to offer such a courtesy to me or my staff?"³⁰

Outraged by the "holy war," the Mecham supporters lashed out at Benson and resoundingly condemned the "liberal grandson who is prone to gross exaggeration."³¹ "Never has any article in the *Sentinel* so infuriated me as did the Q&A with Steve Benson," wrote an anonymous letter to the *Sentinel*. "His answers read like every anti Mormon book I've ever seen."³² Another reader scolded Benson for ignoring his grandfather's admonition in the previous General Conference to "trifle not with sacred things."³³ One reader even suggested that Benson should be taken out behind the proverbial barn and given a good thrashing instead of waiting for Moroni to do it at the judgement bar.³⁴

While decrying the heresy, the Mecham supporters also sought to explain the cause of Governor Mecham's difficulties by first attributing his troubles to his moral integrity, as if morality was anathema to Arizona politics. "He is an honest, moral, (misrepresented) out-spoken, fighter for Constitutional government and a victim of a hostile news media," wrote Shirley Whitlock.³⁵ Another Mecham supporter professed that "Mecham just met with [President] Benson six weeks ago—the prophet said that he would win [a recall election] if he continued to do what's right. The problem with you is that he's honest, unlike ninety-nine percent of the politicians in the country!"³⁶

Along with exalting the personal attributes of Governor Mecham, the Mechamites also seemed to justify their support for Mecham by closely identifying him with religious figures. "Hang in there, Gov. Mecham," admonished a *Latter-day Sentinel* reader, "Don't sell your birthright for a mess of pottage! Joseph Smith did not."³⁷ Cleon Skousen referred to Mecham as "a modern-day Isaiah," who also was "beaten, spat upon, and persecuted for being a prophet."³⁸ Twice, a *Mesa Tribune* columnist noted, Mecham supporters referred to him as their "Christ child."³⁹

Clearly, many in Arizona hailed Evan Mecham as a political messiah, and the apparent similarities between the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ and the political ministry of Evan Mecham have not escaped the notice of a few Mechamites. Mecham began his mission believing that he was a divinely directed voice crying repentance in the political wilderness. He performed political miracles which afforded him a brief season of popularity. He "cleared the temple" of state government and engaged in verbal battle with the "scribes" (media) and "pharisees" (politicians). Close aids betrayed

CAN YOU FIND THE GOOD PEOPLE OF ARIZONA IN THIS PICTURE?



him⁴⁰ and members of the Church deserted him. The impeachment trial, the Mechamites claim, was an illegal assembly hurriedly convened to convict the governor. They also view his impeachment as a political martyrdom for the cause of truth. They see his fate, not unlike the atonement which bridged the gap between heaven and man, as an ultimate sacrifice to bring the return of democracy in Arizona by exposing the corruption and conspiracies in state government.

Though it is unknown if Mecham supporters openly articulate these parallels with one another, it is apparent by their actions that they share at least an inchoate association. Of the varying themes on the protest signs carried by the Mechamites throughout Mecham's impeachment trial, for example, the religious/political theme clearly prevailed. "George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Evan Mecham—True Patriots All!" read one sign. "Jesus Christ Had His Judas, Evan Mecham Has His [Attorney General] Bob Corbin, [House Prosecutor] William French, and [Department of Public Safety Director] Ralph Milstead," read another. "Fight Satan, Destroy the [Arizona] Republic and [Phoenix] Gazette!" read yet another.

Clearly, the Mechamites framed the governor's circumstances within a distinctly Mormon reference. Utilizing the message throughout the Book of Mormon that "secret oaths and combinations" constantly plot against the righteous, not unlike the official history of the Church, Mecham supporters frequently accused

various groups in Arizona of conspiring to "destroy Gov. Evan Mecham" as the effort to recall the governor grew in strength. Crismon Lewis, for example, echoed the popular belief that the recall effort was "a homosexual plot."⁴¹ The media, both state and national, were also a favorite target: "Are you judging Evan Mecham by what you *know* he has said or done—or what the media (hostile media, I must add) chooses to present to you?" Shirley Whitlock challenged this article's author. "If all your 'facts' come from the media . . . then you have a very distorted picture of the truth."⁴² Along with the media, dissident Democrats, drug pushers, organized crime, Communists, and even Satan himself

were also linked to the recall efforts and impeachment proceedings. One *Latter-day Sentinel* reader writing to "especially the priesthood," warned that the media "is fast becoming a super-power answerable only unto itself. It is obviously Satan's mouthpiece in the latter days."⁴³

As the House Select Committee on Impeachment hearings convened at the state capitol in January 1988, Mecham supporters increasingly assigned a cosmic significance to his circumstance by reaching

deeper into Mormon consciousness to explain it. "Mecham is no longer the issue!" cried out Crismon Lewis, " 'the railroad job' we're seeing in the state legislature right now is the most evil conspiracy to date."⁴⁴ Other readers also echoed the same apocalyptic message in their letters to the *Latter-day Sentinel*. "It is no longer a matter of whether or not we like Governor Mecham, but whether or not we like freedom," wrote one couple. Warning that the parallels between the Nephite destruction and the Mecham impeachment hearings were too great, they concluded: "Will we again . . . let the evil forces voice a 51 percent vote to show that we are ripe for destruction?"⁴⁵ "Clearly, members of the Church, and especially readers of the Book of Mormon," wrote another reader, "recognize the fiasco as another battle between righteousness and the forces of evil as have been prophesied would happen in our day."⁴⁶ Another Mecham supporter also endeavored to convince this author that "everything that's taking place is a continuation of the War in Heaven—read Ether in the Book of Mormon!"⁴⁷

Understanding the dichromatic vision of the Mechamites—framing Evan Mecham's circumstance within a "good versus evil" reference—also elucidates how they inter-related with the Mormon critics of the governor. Mecham supporters closely associated their political rivals in the Church with Ed Buck, the homosexual leader of the recall movement. "The previous issue featured an interview with Steve Buck — oops!

... Oh, now I remember, it was Steve Benson," wrote a Mecham supporter.⁴⁸ An apologetic Mark Augustine of the *Latter-day Sentinel* telephoned a Mecham critic to verify his membership in the Church. "Someone called into the *Sentinel*," he explained, "and said that your letter was really written by Ed Buck."⁴⁹ Another Mecham critic also related how members of his ward baited him into discussing his views by commenting: "I hear you and Ed Buck have something going on."⁵⁰

Although the Mecham critics were less vitriolic in characterizing the Mecham supporters, most agreed that the Mechamites were "right-wing" zealots within the Church. "You've always got this real wild 5 or 10 percent," said one member, "and since they have a hero, a figurehead, they've become real prominent."⁵¹ Steve Benson agreed that those Mormons who pressured him to back off the governor were "the ultra-conservative sect of the Church—not the mainstream."⁵² "Mormonism's far right," wrote another Mecham critic, "is the most militant sector in supporting and defending Mecham."⁵³

Along with characterizing the Mechamites as extremists, the Mecham critics also invoked the image of the emperor with no clothes to describe the governor.⁵⁴ Some, however, went further in criticizing Mecham. "They wonder," one member reflected, "how you can be against such a fine man. To me, he is an embodiment of everything I don't want to be and everything that . . . the Church teaches that you shouldn't be."⁵⁵ Stan Turley, former president of the Senate, described Mecham as an "ethical pygmy."⁵⁶ And Representative Mark Killian of Mesa, although voting against impeaching the governor, also denounced Mecham "and everything he stands for." "The way I was raised," Killian emotionally said on the floor of the House of Representatives, "is nothing at all the way I see Mr. Mecham conduct his affairs. He has continually skated along the lowest common denominator of social behavior, and that's barely eking by the law . . . And his outlandish, rude, classless, John Birch accusations . . . turn my stomach."⁵⁷

In the final months, Mecham's use of his Church affiliation to create a positive image eventually involved the Church headquarters. In April 1988 the media reported that Mecham's attorneys Fred Kraft and Jerris Leonard proposed a plea bargain to the state attorney general that included a promise that Mecham would instruct his followers not to seek revenge in the fall election, never run again for a state political office, and go on a

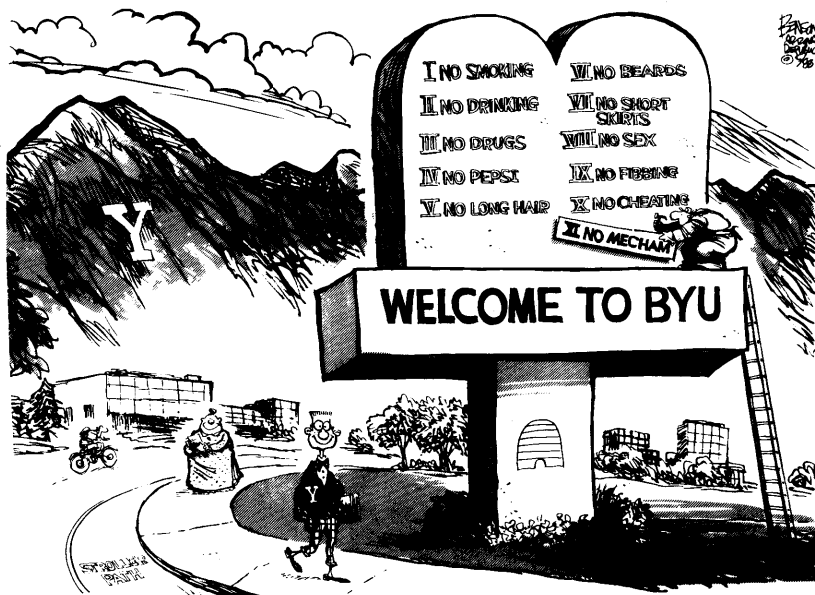
two-year mission for the LDS church. Mecham said he was "flabbergasted" by the idea of a plea bargain, although he did not deny that his attorneys made the proposal without his explicit knowledge, nor did his attorney deny that the meeting took place. Attorney General Robert Corbin would not comment.⁵⁸ In response, LDS Public Communications Director Richard P. Lindsay wrote the *Arizona Republic* denying any Church collaboration and strongly affirmed that mission calls are issued only by the Church president and are not available for plea bargains.⁵⁹

A month later, Mecham was denied permission to speak at Brigham Young University. Initially, the school's College Republicans request to have Mecham speak was denied by their faculty advisor because he thought that Mecham violated the schools ethics policy, which is supposed to apply to all outside speakers. Later BYU Associate Academic Vice President LaMond Tullis explained that Mecham had not been banned from BYU, but that the university did not confirm the club's request to bring Mecham because BYU does not invite anyone who is indicted or under legal proceedings. The

invitation would have to wait until after the trial. (Privately, school officials acknowledged that they wanted to keep distance between the Church school and Mecham so as not to legitimize him.) Mecham bristled at the decision; responding to the advisor's implication about his ethics he said, "I still have my (Mormon) temple recommend. If I had moral problems I wouldn't still have a temple recommend."⁶⁰

The clash in the Church over the Mecham administration culminated with Evan Mecham's impeachment and dissipated with his conviction. The effect and profundity of the division between Arizona Mormons, however, is challenging to assess. Except for an informal survey conducted by the *Latter-day Sentinel*, which showed 84 percent of their readers supporting Mecham,⁶¹ no surveys exist to indicate the Mormon reaction to Evan Mecham, to the debate which ensued within the Church, or to the impeachment and conviction of the first Mormon governor. Certainly the dispute among the members garnered the attention of the national media,⁶² but how representative were the readers of the *Latter-day Sentinel* of the mainstream Mormon perspective, when only one in twenty Mormons in Arizona subscribe to the paper?⁶³

The editorials and letters in the *Latter-day Sentinel*, which expressed frustration over the lack of Mormon support for the



governor, suggest that the majority of Mormons were less sympathetic to Evan Mecham's plight. "Does Anyone Care?" mourned Crismon Lewis at the lack of indignation over the Arizona Senate's vote to impeach Governor Mecham. "Our only hope," his editorial concluded, "is that somewhere, someday, somebody will care."⁶⁴ The *Latter-day Sentinel* also printed a letter accusing Mormons of being too involved in church work to rally behind the governor, or to care that "Communism is on the doorstep of our nation." "I am witnessing a blatant display of apathy among the LDS," decried a Mecham supporter. "After placing many phone calls, there are only a few LDS people showing an interest in good government."⁶⁵

Although many ignored the cacophony in the Church, they were nevertheless affected to some degree by the debate. Talk of Evan Mecham was frequently overheard at Mormon social gatherings. Many expressed frustration and remorse over Governor Mecham's imprudence. Yet they also mistrusted the press, and believed that the "worldly and liberal" media conspired to take advantage of the governor's misfortune. Many also expressed their concern over the issues, yet took comfort in knowing that if this is God's church, then He would take care of the matter one way or the other.

Ironically, although the Mechamites assigned an eternal significance to the Mecham crisis, and rallied behind the governor for religious reasons, they too believed that the Church would emerge unscathed by the controversy. "We have a real strong feeling that this is the true church." Crismon Lewis told *Newsweek*, "This church is greater than anything one man can do."⁶⁶

Perhaps the Church in Arizona will remain untouched by the turmoil over Evan Mecham as the members believe. However, despite some *Sentinel* articles to the contrary, numerous stake missionaries have complained about increased difficulty in teaching lessons and declining missionary activity. "All they want to do," said one counselor in a stake mission presidency, "is talk about Evan Mecham."⁶⁷ The attendance at the Mesa Temple Easter Pageant also decreased this last March by ten thousand visitors.⁶⁸ The noticeably smaller Easter edition of the *Latter-day Sentinel*, which is traditionally the largest issue during the year, caused some to wonder if the newspaper has faced a drop in advertising sales.⁶⁹

Even if the Church in Arizona, as an institution, remains cohesive after the division over Evan Mecham, individual members have been deeply affected. Some remain suspicious of one

another. Questions of loyalty do not fade quickly. Others have expressed feelings of frustration, isolation, and anxiety over the Mecham controversy. "Are we the only ones losing sleep over this?" one Mecham critic asked.⁷⁰ Representative Mark Killian even broke down and wept before the Arizona legislature while explaining that "this is one of the most difficult times of my life." "I felt very uncomfortable as a fellow member of the Church," he later explained, "to be put in a position of judging [Evan Mecham]." Another Mecham critic agreed that the controversy was a "gut wrenching" experience for members of the Church.⁷²

While Mormons try to rebuild the bridges of fellowship in

Arizona, the Mecham controversy uncovered many disturbing questions about Mormon political life. How much of Evan Mecham's messianic vision and self righteous zeal was a product of his religion? Can Mormons truly separate church and state? Can Mormons live "not of the world" and still function in worldly politics? The divisive tremor in Arizona may also foreshadow a potentially deeper schism between politics and religion that Mormons may someday face. In spite of

the official Church policy of institutional neutrality, would the nationwide membership experience a similar reaction if a devout Mormon felt a "call" to run for the U.S. presidency?



NOTES

1. This article could not have been completed without the help of Karen Pagán, Karen Coates, and Steve Benson.
2. Editorial, *Latter-day Sentinel*, (Phoenix) 12 December 1987, p. 2.
3. *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix) 6 March 1988, pp. C1-C6.
4. *Come Back America*, (Glendale: MP Press, 1982), "Acknowledgment," no page number given.
5. *Arizona Republic*, 18 May 1987, as cited in *The World According to Evan Mecham* (Mesa: Blue Sky Press, 1987), p. 81.
6. Many Mormon writers refer to the "hanging by a thread" prophecy attributed to Joseph Smith. For a good bibliographical sketch of these works, see William O. Nels, *The Charter of Liberty* (Salt Lake: Deseret, 1987), pp. 145-46.
7. *Come Back America*, pp. i-iv.
8. R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of America* (New York: Oxford, 1986), p. 26.
9. William O. Nels, *The Charter of Liberty*, pp. 1-3. Nels's book gives a good interpretation of American history from the Mormon view.
10. The phrase "crisis theology," in this context, is taken from O. Kendall White Jr., *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy* (Salt Lake: Signature books, 1987).
11. Doctrine and Covenants 98:10 (Salt Lake: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1977 edition).
12. The *Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson) provides a good chronology of Evan Mecham's rise and fall in the 6 April 1988, section C.
13. Editorial, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 12 December 1987, p. 2.
14. Letter to the Editor from Mike DeWitt, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 28 November 1987, p. 3.
15. *Arizona Daily Star*: 6 April 1988, p. C2.
16. Letter to the editor from Eduardo Pagán, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 22 August 1987, p. 2.
17. Letter to the editor, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 31 October 1987, p. 2.

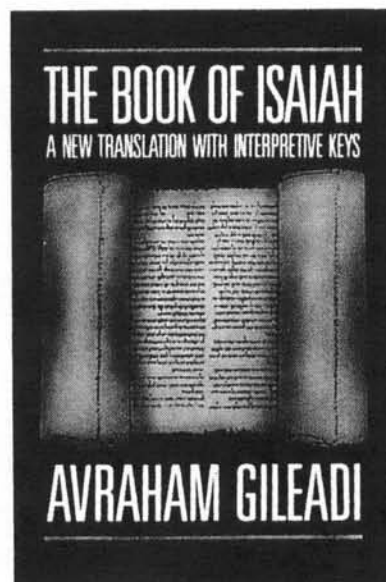
18. Letter to the editor from Vernon Whiting, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 19 September 1987, p. 2.
19. Letter to the editor from Veldon Dodge, *Ibid.*
20. Letter to the editor from Sidney Macombe, *Ibid.*, p. 3.
21. Letter to the editor from Karen Coates, *Ibid.*, 31 October 1987, p. 2.
22. Letter to the editor from Mike DeWitt, *Ibid.*, p. 9.
23. *Arizona Republic*, 6 March 1988, p. C3.
24. Sample articles highlighting the activities of Mecham supporters can be found in 19 September 1987, p. 14; 14 November 1987, pp. 1, 32-33; and 12 December 1987, p. 18. For reports critical of the Phoenix media, see 19 September 1987, p. 4, and 28 November 1987, pp. 18-19. For full page ads, see 19 September 1987, p. 13, and 31 October 1987, p. 22.
25. *Latter-day Sentinel*, 14 November 1987, p. 2.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Newsweek*, 1 February 1988, p. 28.
28. Editorial, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 28 November 1987, p. 2.
29. Letter to the editor from Steve Benson, *Ibid.*, 12 December 1987, p. 2.
30. Editorial, *Ibid.*
31. Letter to the editor from "Name Withheld by Request" from Joseph City, Arizona, *Ibid.*, p. 39.
32. *Ibid.* 33. Letter to the editor from Maude Schnepf, *Ibid.*, p. 39.
34. Letter to the editor from David Jones, *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
35. Letter to the editor from Shirley Whitlock, *Ibid.*, 12 December 1987, p. 39.
36. Personal correspondence from Lance Standiford to Eduardo Pagán, dated 28 September 1987, in possession of the author.
37. Letter to the editor from Steve Sadler, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 31 October 1987, p. A9.
38. *Arizona Republic*, 6 March 1988, p. C3.
39. Commentary, Doug MacEachern, *Mesa Tribune*, 10 January 1988, p.A9.
40. Certainly the unsavory pasts of many of governor Mecham's appointed aides cast serious doubt on Mecham's judgement. The impeachment trial of Governor Mecham, however, revealed that Lee Watkins, former fund raiser for the Mecham campaign and close aide, was, in the words of Mecham's defense lawyer, "a one-man wrecking crew" to the Mecham administration. The record-keeping skills, or lack thereof, of the governor's brother Willard eventually brought about the downfall of the Mecham administration.
41. *Latter-day Sentinel*, 28 November 1987, p. 2.
42. Personal correspondence from Shirley Whitlock to Eduardo Pagán, dated 29 August 1987, in possession of the author.
43. Letter to the editor from Mike Veejvoda, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 23 January 1988, p. 19.
44. Editorial, *Ibid.*, p. 2.
45. Letter to the editor from Gerald and Della Smith, *Ibid.*, 6 February 1988, p. 3.
46. Letter to the editor from Gloria Anderson, *Ibid.*, 20 February 1988, p. 3.
47. Personal correspondence from Lance Standiford to Eduardo Pagán, dated 28 September 1987, in possession of the author.
48. Letter to the editor from Daryl Colvin, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 28 November 1987, p. 13.
49. Telephone conversation with Mark Augustine, 24 August 1987.
50. *Arizona Republic*, 6 March 1988, p. C3.
51. *Ibid.* 52. *Arizona Daily Star*, 6 March 1988, p. A13.
53. Personal correspondence from Eduardo Pagán to Kim Sue Lia Perks, dated 6 February 1988, in the possession of the author.
54. Letter to the editor from Mike DeWitt, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 20 November 1987, p. 3.
55. *Arizona Republic*, 6 March 1988, p. C3.
56. *Mesa Tribune*, 7 February 1988, p. A10.
57. *Ibid.*
58. "Mecham Attorney's Seek Deal to Dismiss Charges," *Phoenix Gazette*, 14 April 1988, p. A1.
59. Letter to the Editor from Richard P. Lindsay, *Arizona Republic*, 6 May 1988, p. A14.
60. Gurwell, Lance, "Mecham Goes Home Again to Speak to Class of 1988 at Utah High School," *Arizona Republic*, 28 May 1988, p. A8.
61. *Latter-day Sentinel*, 31 October 1987, p. 8.
62. *Newsweek*, 1 February 1988, p. 28. Associated Press also picked up the story and ran it on their news wire.
63. *Phoenix Gazette*, 11 January 1988, p. reports the circulation of the *Latter-day Sentinel* is 200,000. Certainly, this question has been raised before by the media, with varying answers. I believe that the paper is an accurate barometer of the Church in Arizona. A look at the Advisory Board of the newspaper, printed on 22 August, 1987, p. 2, reads like a who's who of the Mormon community. Among them are very respected bishops, stake presidents, patriarchs, and the current temple president.
64. Editorial, *Latter-day Sentinel*, 16 April 1988, p. 2.
65. Letter to the editor from Marilyn Rencher Ralph, *Ibid.*
66. *Newsweek*, 1 February 1988, p. 28.
67. Telephone conversation with Steve Benson, 9 May 1988.
68. *Latter-day Sentinel*, 19 March 1988 issue. Interestingly, the Easter Pageant was also celebrating its fiftieth anniversary.
69. *Ibid.*, 16 April 1988, p. 6.
70. Telephone conversation with Karen Coates, 7 May 1988.
71. *Mesa Tribune*, 7 February 1988, p. A10.
72. *Arizona Daily Star*, 6 March 1988, p. A13.

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A Psycho-historical Study of the First Mormon Family

THE SMITHS AND THEIR DREAMS AND VISIONS

By C. Jess Groesbeck

SOME YEARS AGO, STERLING MCMURRIN WAS ASKED about the significance of the First Vision of Joseph Smith. He responded that he could not possibly have a full comprehension of this until environmental influences, family relationships and the early background of Joseph Smith were explored.¹ Recently, Bushman also noted "Mormonism . . . began with one family, the family of Joseph Smith, Sr., and Lucy Mack Smith of Vermont and New York."² Bushman then notes that Joseph's culture was predominantly a family culture and that he had little schooling until he was past the age of twenty. He noted that the family had to work on the family farm. There was no evidence that the family attended church until the children were in their teen years. He noted that Joseph was entirely under the influence of his own family and a small circle of acquaintances in the villages of Palmyra and Manchester.

The exploration of the family of Joseph Smith, Sr., is only in its beginnings. Much of this is due to a lack of historical data, but in my opinion what is available has not been explored fully. Therefore, this article will explore the life of Joseph Smith and his family, particularly utilizing the insights of psychiatry, psychoanalysis and anthropology. Although some historians feel that this method, also called psycho-history, has questionable value and is at best an uncertain methodological approach to history, I feel strongly that the combination of psychoanalysis, psychiatry, and anthropology, along with history, will in the end harvest rich and fruitful insights.

Psychoanalysis is a methodology for observing human behavior, as well as a form of psychotherapy and a means for inner

self-development. Psychoanalysis can also be utilized as a tool of historical investigation. But Erik Erikson notes that the psychoanalytic approach to history needs modification when taken out of its usual and familiar place in the consulting room, since the inability to observe the free associations, dreams, and behavior patterns of the live patient is a serious obstacle.³ Nevertheless, the historical documentation of individuals' lives can reveal much to a psychoanalytic approach, often unknown to them, in terms of self-revelations and understanding of their inner workings.

In this article I do not claim to give final opinions or conclusions about the life of Joseph Smith. My intention is to utilize psycho-historical insights in the investigation of Joseph Smith in an attempt to develop a new paradigm concerning the life of the Mormon prophet. It is hoped that in engendering new paradigms concerning his life, we might move beyond some apparently irreconcilable contradictions in his life that emerge from current viewpoints.

This article will look at the deeply personal inter-family relationships of the Smith family, focusing mainly on Lucy and Joseph, Sr. Through this approach I will show that one of the most important and remarkable tasks Joseph, Jr., performed in his early years, including the time when he had his earliest and most significant visions, was to mediate what were, at times, irreconcilable conflicts within the marriage of Joseph Smith, Sr., and Lucy Mack Smith.

LUCY'S SEARCH FOR THE TRUE CHURCH

Lucy Mack Smith's family seems to have been prone to physical illness and psychological depression. Lucy describes her mother getting "a fit of sickness" when she, Lucy, was eight years of age.⁴ Although her mother recovered, this was an extremely difficult and "low" period. Her mother well could have been depressed and ready to die.

In later years, the death of her sister Lovina had a profound effect on Lucy, most likely because Lovina played the part of a substitute mother. During this time, Lucy was "pensive and

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melancholy," and she thought "that life was not worth possessing." In the midst of her anxiety, she wrote, "I determined to obtain that which I had heard spoken so much from the pulpit—a change of heart."⁵

These words suggest that at least for a brief period, Lucy experienced a severe grief reaction, or possibly an outright clinical depression. What is significant is that she sought a spiritual resolution to her difficulties.

Shortly after this she met and married Joseph Smith, Sr. Apparently things went fairly well in the early years of her marriage, but by 1802, after having several children, she developed consumption (tuberculosis). She grew steadily weaker, and could not even bear having someone speak or whisper in the room. A Methodist exhorter came to see her and asked among other things whether she was ready to die. She feared that she was not because she "knew not the ways of Christ" and felt "a dark and lonesome chasm between [her]self and the Savior," which she "dared not attempt to pass." Then she saw a faint glimmer of light beyond the gloom. She was meditating upon death as the visitor left, and her husband felt that soon she was going to die.

At that point, she apparently went into a visionary state where she pleaded with the Lord to spare her life that she might bring up her children and care for her husband. She made a solemn covenant with God that if he would let her live, she would endeavor to serve him to the best of her abilities. She then heard a voice saying: "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Let your heart be comforted; ye believe in God, believe also in me."⁷ Not long after this, her health began to improve.

From then on Lucy became preoccupied with the subject of religion. She began to fulfill her covenant with the Lord by doing Christian service and she sought, as well, to find the true religion or the true church. Although soon after this experience she was baptized, she joined no denomination. Her anxiety about being in the true church became a very profound and significant issue for her, the meaning of life and death. She became quite perfectionistic in this quest and it became the most powerful

influence in her family. The outcome of Lucy's visionary experience directed her toward the burning question of what was the true church, finding the true church, and resolving her life conflicts around those issues.

JOSEPH SMITH, SR.'S, FINANCIAL WOES

While Lucy was preoccupied with a religious search, her husband, Joseph Smith, Sr., had other concerns. He sought to recover a financial loss which began in 1802 when he and Lucy moved to Randolph, Connecticut, to enter the mercantile business of selling ginseng.⁸ Apparently, the ginseng root was selling at a high price in China as a remedy for plague, and Joseph, Sr., invested in this root and obtained a quantity to ship. He was offered three thousand dollars for his ginseng, but he refused the offer, claiming that the price was only two-thirds of the ginseng's real value. In the ensuing weeks, he lost his profits and costs by sending his herb to China, eventually being cheated out of any returns at all. Once, when the



man who took it from him was somewhat drunk, he exhibited a large amount of silver and gold and said, "There, sir, are the proceeds of Mr. Smith's ginseng!"⁹

The financial loss had far-reaching consequences for the entire family. Indebtedness became virtually their perpetual state. They moved seven times in fourteen years with debts continually plaguing them. Even Lucy lost one thousand dollars that she had saved.

Joseph, Sr., was only marginally able to support his family. The fact that they "were on the poor rolls" in the state of Vermont suggests a condition of economic destitution.¹⁰ It is striking that by the time they arrived in Palmyra in 1816, first Alvin, and later Joseph, Jr., and Hyrum were essentially supporting the family. Alvin and Joseph seemed specifically set apart to compensate for the failure of their father.

The extant history of Joseph, Sr., suggests that he lived a very difficult life filled with suffering. He may well have suffered a clinical depression that hampered his ability to function. Psychologically, in his depression, bitterness, and economic destitution,

he probably never got over the loss from the ginseng root incident where “he was cheated out of his gold and silver.” From then on, it was as though he were a dreamer who detached himself from reality, becoming preoccupied and fascinated with money digging, probably in an attempt to recover a loss he could never fully accept. Through money digging, he expected to become rich and to find the security he had always wanted for his family.

In this state, Joseph, Sr., appears to have habitually and chronically abused alcohol, which must have had a shattering effect on the family. Although the extent of Joseph, Sr.’s, drinking has been a matter of debate, Richard Bushman notes that:

The vicissitudes of life seem to have weighed heavily on Joseph, Sr. In a patriarchal blessing given to Hyrum, Dec. 9, 1834, Joseph, Sr., commended Hyrum for the respect he paid his father despite difficulties: “Though he has been out of the way through wine, thou hast never forsaken him nor laughed him to scorn.” [(Hyrum Smith Papers, Church Archives.)] Since there is no evidence of intemperance after the organization of the church, Joseph, Sr., likely referred to a time before 1826 when Hyrum married and left home.¹¹

Years later, in an 1884 interview Lorenzo Saunders referred to Joseph, Sr.’s, drinking, saying, “The old man [referring to Joseph Smith, Sr.] would always tell yarns. He would go to a turkey shoot, get tight and then put spells on people’s guns and tell them they would not be able to shoot.”¹² In the same decade, in an interview in the *Saints’ Herald*, William Kelley noted that Joseph, Sr., and Joseph Smith, Jr., sometimes drank together, most likely cider.¹³

Mormon historian Marvin Hill notes that Joseph, Sr.’s, drinking was seldom talked about and may be one of the reasons why he seems to be left in the shadows, historically.¹⁴ Certainly, Lucy Mack Smith did not want to bring out the family skeletons in her history. It is noteworthy that when Joseph, Sr., was baptized, Joseph, Jr., cried deeply. There was a great deal of pent-up emotion. While this could be interpreted on the surface as just overwhelming joy at his father joining the Church, it could also reflect his great relief at seeing his father overcome the state he had been in, emotionally and spiritually.

A clinical interpretation of the data suggests Joseph, Sr., hoped to escape his economic woes and depression through money digging and alcohol—to always “to find a treasure.” This view suggests a basis for Joseph, Sr.’s, conflicts with Lucy and later with the rest of the family. It also contradicts the view articulated by Bushman and Anderson that the family was without stress.¹⁵

It is felt that the emotional state of Joseph, Sr., had a significant impact not only on Lucy’s own religious quest, but also on her attempts to save him spiritually. Around the same time as the ginseng root experience Lucy became pregnant and developed tuberculosis (the actual sequence is unclear), compounding the potential for stress. Having been demoralized herself, she sought to rescue her depressed husband, and failed.

LUCY’S DREAM

Lucy continued to search for the true church after 1800,

when the Smiths were living in Tunbridge, Connecticut. She urged her husband to go with her to the Methodist church. He did, initially, but after strong pressure from his father and brother he pulled away, stubbornly remaining apart from any church. Because of this, Lucy “was considerably hurt.”¹⁶ She must have felt especially traumatized because not only did her husband refuse to go to meetings himself, he also went along with his father and brother who insisted that Lucy should not attend. This was a powerful limitation on her freedom to exercise her own religious desires.

As she grappled with her husband’s stubbornness, Lucy retired to a grove to pray and when she returned she had a dream.¹⁷ She saw a beautiful meadow with two beautiful trees and a pure, clean stream of water. One tree was very beautiful, well proportioned with majestic beauty and great height. As she gazed upon it in admiration, it shone like burnished gold. The branches slowly waved in a gentle breeze. As the wind increased, the branches became animated and lively, expressing the motions of joy and happiness. This brought extreme joy to her. On the opposite side, there was another tree standing as a pillar of marble. No matter how strong the wind blew, not a leaf stirred. It was obstinate and stiff.

As she awoke, she understood the interpretation of the dream. The first tree immediately reminded her of her husband, and the pillar of his brother, Jesse, who was stubborn and unyielding. Lucy blamed Jesse for resisting the fullness of the gospel and refusing to join a church. This interpretation apparently helped reconcile her to her husband’s position, putting the blame for Joseph, Sr.’s, irreligion on his brother. This was her way of struggling to find that which was most positive about her husband.

An alternate interpretation of the dream would be that both trees represented different sides of Joseph, Sr.’s, personality. The one clearly represented the potentially ideal side, the side that was eager to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, and, as she saw it, be flexible and joyously responsive; the other was his immovable, rigid and stubborn side that led to some of the emotional disturbances suggested by his depression, his chronic inability to work productively and sustain his family, and his chronic abuse of alcohol.

A final interpretation of the dream can be derived from an interactional perspective. The dream can be seen as a composite statement of the interpersonal perceptions of Joseph, Sr., and Lucy. In a sense, the two trees apply equally to each of them; each felt that although they were flexible, the other was rigid. Conversely, each may have felt unconsciously that they were the stubborn party, while their spouse was more flexible.

Nevertheless, the chief significance of this dream was that she was hurt because her husband would not go to the Methodist church with her, which caused an emotional split between them. An overriding theme that emerges from Lucy Mack’s autobiography is perfectionism and moralism surrounding a religious quest that was part of an attempt to save and heal her husband. This was a task that later fell to other family members.

The split that occurred at this time is a theme that pervades

their marriage from then on. This split becomes pronounced with a crisis that emerged in the early 1820's which influenced some of the major events in the genesis of Mormonism.

THE DREAMS OF JOSEPH SMITH, SR.

In selling ginseng to make his fortune, Joseph, Sr., hoped to gain gold and silver, but when his treasure slipped away he became a loser. His resultant depression and alcohol abuse were conditions that contributed to the family's itinerant, struggling economic life. In a compensatory way, he sought in money digging to literally regain his treasure, the loss of which he never accepted. One of the hallmarks of depression is an inability to accept loss and separation from that which one has experienced as an object of affection.

Apparently, Joseph, Sr.'s, father had similar problems. Asael Smith lived a desperate life in economic bondage and was described as one who was "quiet and was known to feel sadness."¹⁸ He, too, experienced great discouragement and unbelief. This repeated description suggests the presence of chronic depression. He was religiously independent and could not believe the religious creeds and churches of his day, a view which would have a significant impact on his son and grandson.

Except for his wife's account, little is known about Joseph Smith, Sr. Lucy said he had seven important visions or dreams in his life, although she only recorded five of them. They are remarkable for the insights they lend in understanding Joseph, Sr., as well as other members of the family and the conflicts with which they struggled.

In the first dream of Joseph, Sr., which he had in 1811, he was traveling in an open, barren field and could see nothing except dead and fallen timber.¹⁹ There was no vestige of life. The scene was dreary with a death-like silence. Joseph had an attendant spirit by his side, who told him that this field was the world and it was lying dumb in regard to true religion and the plan of salvation. He was told to travel on.

So far, the state of affairs reflected in the dream is a good description of the psychological state of Joseph, Sr., the dreamer. Some aspects of the dream are typical of dreams from people with serious depressions, which suggests that he was in a depressed state. Notably, he too was searching for spiritual peace by trying to find the true religion. This could reflect the intense disagreement between him and his wife over what he should do.

Finally, in the dream he found a box. A spirit told him that if he ate the contents they "would make you wise, and give you wisdom and understanding." He picked the box up and attempted to eat, but at that point all manner of beasts and animals appeared, threatened him and making it impossible to go on. He was compelled to drop the box and flee for his life.

This dream has an almost classic form. The dreamer, alone, lost and forsaken, is seeking a treasure. He finds it in a special box and faces a task that involves eating. Eating is often associated with depressed states in a very fundamental way. In depression, loss is a core element, usually related to current deprivation and early-life deprivation experiences. It is said in psychiatry that

"the best treatment for depression is to feed the person, emotionally and literally."²⁰ One could say that Joseph, Sr., needed to eat to be cured; thus, his dream was pointing in therapeutic directions.

In Joseph, Sr.'s, attempt to eat, threatening animals kept him away from the food. At one level, the images of animals might reflect the instinctual layer of unconscious life. Thus, his instincts are disturbed and are stopping him from "getting the food for his spiritual quest." This could reflect his problem with alcohol, which was interfering with satisfying his spiritual needs. Here, the animals are guardians of the treasure and will not let someone partake who is unworthy. The treasure is the spiritual wisdom Joseph, Sr., needs to attain salvation and wholeness to regain his self respect. As the dream ends, however, the dreamer is unsuccessful, which is certainly reflective of Joseph Smith, Sr.'s, everyday life.

In short, this dream seems to mean that if Joseph, Sr., could get control and master his instincts, he would be able to find the wisdom necessary to resolve the problem of his spiritual desolation and find the true religion of Jesus Christ. Another dimension of the symbol of eating is that through eating, one breaks down raw materials and metabolizes them, making them ready for digestion and ultimately using the nutrients for higher purposes. All of this suggests that Joseph Smith, Sr., had a vision relating to the spiritual needs of he and his wife, but he could not complete the tasks necessary to fulfill them.

In 1811 the Smiths moved to Lebanon, New Hampshire, where Joseph, Sr., had a second vision which also seems to have been brought forth by a religious conflict within himself as well as between him and Lucy. Like the first one, the vision began with him in a desolate field which then became a desolate world.²¹ Again, a guide was beside him, but the road was broad and barren. In the middle of the vision, Joseph, Sr., quotes to himself a passage from Matthew: "Broad is the road, and wide is the gate that leads to death, and many there be that walk therein; but narrow is the way, and straight is the gate that leads to everlasting life, and few there be that go in thereat." He then followed a narrow path which led to a beautiful stream of water. He went to the source and found a valley in which stood a tree such as he had never seen before. It was a beautiful tree with lovely branches which bore special fruit, as white or whiter than snow. As he began to eat, the fruit was delicious beyond description. At that point he said, "I cannot eat alone, I must bring my wife and children, that they may partake with me." Accordingly, he brought his family, which consisted of his wife and seven children, and they all ate and praised God for his blessing. Here again is the theme of eating and finding satisfaction (this time the motif is something from God that is white and beautiful and of great nourishment). The implication of depression and the longing to be orally fulfilled is paramount; Joseph, Sr., finds his spiritual food.

The dream continues with a spacious building standing opposite the valley. It is full of doors and windows filled with people

finely dressed. With great disrespect and contempt they scornfully point fingers at Joseph, Sr., and his family. At that point, he learns the significance of the fruit. It is the pure love of God shed abroad in the hearts of all those who love him and keep his commandments.

He is then told to bring the rest of his children because all were not there. Although there is no specific statement about which children were missing, the account says he went out to get two small children. They all rejoiced and ate more fruit than ever, even taking double handfuls. Joseph, Sr., was then told the spacious building represented Babylon and its scorn, and those who despised the true saints of God for their humility.

This dream has a number of implications. In a compensatory way, the dream pointed to the destitute circumstances in which Joseph Smith, Sr., found himself, both economically and socially, in 1811. In addition, it probably compensated for the scorn which came from those about him, including neighbors and perhaps even family members. The statement in the patriarchal blessing given to Hyrum that “he did not scorn his father when he was out of the way with wine,” suggests that perhaps other children *did* laugh and make fun of their father. The scornful children might have been represented by the two small children apart from the rest of the family in the dream.

This dream would have given solace to Joseph, Sr., in the depths of his depression. Compared to the first vision where he was prevented from eating from the box to gain wisdom, in this vision he accomplishes that task and partakes of the food that is beautiful, white and “gives great nourishment.” In a sense, this dream *potentially* suggests his mastery of his problems. (Unfortunately, it wasn’t until much later in his life, and with the aid of his children, particularly Joseph, Jr., that he was emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually able to control his instincts and struggles.) At another level, it justified his own firm commitment to seek the answers to spiritual questions on his own personal road, rather than following the admonitions of Lucy and others to find the true church in an external group.

Initially the dream probably had little impact on the Smiths. Certainly, neither Joseph, Sr., nor Lucy found a spiritual solution to their religious problems. More importantly, the dream was probably used to justify Joseph, Sr.’s, interest in magic and money digging, through which he hoped to resolve their temporal difficulties and, indirectly, their spiritual concerns.

Even though this dream did not directly change Joseph, Sr.’s, life, it suggests the potential of healing through vision or trance. Joseph, Sr.’s, dream also suggests a clear potential for transforming himself, curing his depression through the eating and nourishing process, and at the same time fulfilling spiritual longings in his religious quest for himself, for his wife, and for his family.

Joseph, Sr.’s, second dream is almost identical to Lehi’s dream in the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 8). Several writers, including Hill and Bushman, have suggested that perhaps when Lucy wrote or recalled this dream of Joseph, Sr., she was influenced by the remarkable experience of Lehi in the Book of Mormon which was available to her at the time she wrote her autobiography in 1844. I suggest she did this unconsciously because the actual life event

she was really referring to was the separation and pain of being apart from the world with “scorned fingers pointed at them” at the time Alvin died. She recounted the dream of her husband almost in the words of Lehi to deny the pain and suffering that they actually felt, and with the outcome of the vision vindicating them. This suggests that ultimately the father’s vision was correct and right, even though it pointed to a more individual and less popular path. In the end, the Smith family found the fruit of the tree of life, while those in the building pointing fingers of scorn were left out.

Interestingly, in both the second dream of Joseph, Sr., and Lehi’s vision, there is a split among the children in the family. Lehi’s split could coincide with the split that was going on in 1824, when Lucy took some of the children with her while Joseph and perhaps others went with the father. Later, of course, they were all united when the true church was restored by Joseph in 1830.

On the other hand, if Lucy’s recollection of her husband’s dream was correct, then one can conclude that the Book of Mormon story of Lehi has a strong correlation with the dream of Joseph, Sr. This would suggest that in translating the Book of Mormon Joseph, Jr., may have recalled that experience of his father in telling Lehi’s story. Here, the Book of Mormon would be viewed as a symbolic expression of significant events in the conscious and unconscious life of Joseph Smith, Jr. It would be considered to be a vehicle to tell an ancient or valuable universal story; i.e., how a rejected family finds deity in spite of persecution from without and conflict and loss from within.

In a sense by recording her husband’s dream the way she did, Lucy confirms that she was wrong in 1828 when she joined the Methodist church, leaving her husband and some of the boys, including Joseph, Jr., in not joining a church. She also confirms that ultimately her husband was correct—that at that time there was no true church.

Joseph, Sr., had his third experience—now called a dream instead of a vision—around 1819 or 1820 after the family had moved to Palmyra.²² Again, it was a dream of desolation. Again, his guide was with him. Joseph, Sr., found he was very sick and lame that he thought he could walk no farther. He was urged on, and at that point he went to a certain garden where he was told he would come to a gate. In this garden, he beheld the most beautiful flowers. On each side of the center of the garden were six richly carved wooden images each the size of a man. As he walked by each image, it turned and bowed to him. Limping along, he finally made it to the end. After going by all of the images, he was healed. He asked the guide the meaning of this, but awoke before receiving an answer.

This third dream began with the dreamer in a desolate state, being sick and lame. Joseph, Sr.’s, lameness could have been his depression and his inability to support his family. The theme of illness and healing is again prominent. It is noteworthy that Lucy, just prior to describing this dream, states that after they had come to Palmyra, they were “much reduced,” but “not from indolence.”

It was "on account of the many reverses of fortune." She described being "surrounded by embarrassment." Still, she "tried to be happy within the society of her husband." She described her children and herself as being "under the affection of a tender companion and father, my husband."²³ Lucy's words belie more than what they manifestly say. In my opinion, she was trying to defend her husband against accusations of indolence for his inability to support the family.

Joseph, Sr.'s, dream may also have had a connection with young Joseph, Jr. During the years prior to the dream, Joseph, Jr., had suffered an illness that had left him lame for three years. (From a psychoanalytic perspective, perhaps Joseph's refusal of alcohol in the familiar story of his operation represented his opposition to his father's drinking.) In a certain sense this dream, like the dream of the biblical Joseph, contained a precognitive or at least a prognostic statement concerning the future leader of the family. There is a striking reminiscence with the biblical Joseph's dreams where the grain stalks and the sun and moon bow before him, indicating his future role as family leader. Family members often have dreams for others by representing themselves in the dream when, in fact, the dream refers to another family member.

In the sixth dream (1819 or 1820), Joseph, Sr., was again traveling alone and was much fatigued.²⁴ "It seemed to me that I was going to meeting, that it was the day of judgment, and that I was going to be judged." When he came to the meeting house, he saw multitudes pressing toward the door with great anxiety to get in. He felt that he had no need to hurry, that he would get there in time. However, when he arrived the door was shut and he knocked for admission. The porter informed him that he had come too late. He felt troubled and prayed earnestly for admission.

Then he thought his flesh would perish; as he continued to pray, flesh withered from his bones and he went into a state of total despair. The porter asked him if he had done all that was necessary in order to receive admission. He replied that he had done all in his power, and the porter said that justice must be satisfied, and after that mercy will have its claims. At that point, Joseph, Sr., called upon God in the name of Jesus Christ and cried out in agony of soul, "Oh Lord God, I beseech thee in the name of Jesus Christ, to forgive my sins." He felt considerably strengthened, and a porter or angel indicated that it was necessary to plead for the merits of Jesus. At that point, Joseph, Sr., felt quite well, the doors opened, he entered, and upon entering he awoke.

This dream suggests Joseph, Sr., was in a forlorn, desolate, and most of all, sinful state; yet he still expects entrance into heaven. However, he was shut out and left in a state of anxiety. At that point he underwent the withering of his flesh down to his very bones. In having this experience, one can "see himself as he really is, his essence." Seeing one's skeleton would be equivalent to attaining deep self-knowledge, even though it may be painful. It is like facing a judgment before deity.

As Bushman notes, this dream closely parallels the actual experience of an unbaptized visitor at a revival meeting.²⁵ Cer-

tainly, it reflects the chronic depression Joseph, Sr., felt with its attendant sense of unworthiness, as well as his paradoxical expectation of easy entry into the kingdom of heaven. He underwent suffering, but then he gained redemption through his pleading.

In Joseph Smith, Sr.'s, seventh and final important dream he met a man with a "peddler's budget on his back," who addressed Joseph, Sr., "Sir, will you trade with me to-day." The man stated, "I have called upon you seven times, I have traded with you each time, and I have always found you strictly honest in your dealings." He was then told that this would be the last time he would ever call upon Joseph, Sr., and that there was "one thing which you lack in order to secure your salvation." Joseph stated, "I earnestly desired to know what it was that I still lacked. I requested him to write the same upon paper. He said that he would do so. I sprang to get some paper, but in my excitement, I awoke."²⁶

This dream suggests that in spite of all his efforts, Joseph, Sr., had not yet found spiritual satisfaction. Revivalism was increasingly prominent around Palmyra in 1819 and it must have heightened his anxiety. This may have been a significant topic of conversation for the family.

This dream is reminiscent of the archetypal pattern in history of the hero who seeks the treasure, almost finds it, and then loses out at the last moment. In the hero story of Gilgamesh, he finds the plant of immortality, only to lose it on his way home when he falls asleep and a snake takes it from him.²⁷

ALVIN AS A TEMPORARY SOLUTION TO THE FAMILY CONFLICT

The problems not only within Lucy and Joseph, Sr., but also between the two created a situation that needed help. After 1818 Alvin, it seems, was the remedy to his parents' personal difficulties. He led the way in shouldering responsibility, first by building the log house, and attempting to pay for the farm. Here Joseph, Sr.'s, problems stand out. The description that Joseph, Jr., gave of Alvin is revealing:

He was the oldest member of my father's family. He lived without spot from the time he was a child. From the time of his birth, he never knew mirth. He was candid and sober and never would play. He minded his mother and father in toiling all day. He was one of the soberest men and when he died, an angel of the Lord visited him in his last moments.²⁸

This certainly could imply that Alvin may have been burdened with his parents' depression, particularly that of his father. He tried to do so much for them, stepping in and doing what his father apparently could not or would not do.

The pattern in the Smith family is a common one. In families where there is serious illness in one or both parents, often one child in particular is called and marked out (often unconsciously) to become the healer, reconciler, and carrier of the burdens that

cannot be borne by the parents. This is a nearly universal theme in the study of the dynamics of family systems. In the Smith family, Alvin was chosen.

In November 1823, Alvin became very ill with bilious colic. He was treated with Calomel, a mercury compound. A ball of it lodged in his stomach and caused death within three days.²⁹ Prior to his death, Alvin called the family to his bedside and “revealed his tender and affectionate spirit, telling Joseph to be good and to be faithful in attempting to obtain the record or the plates.”³⁰ By now, Joseph, Jr., had had a singular experience on 21 September 1823 in his attempt to get the plates. Alvin died and left great pangs of sorrow in the bosom of young Joseph, as well as in the rest of the family.

The tragedy of Alvin’s death cannot be overemphasized. Clearly, he was the mediator, the one who attempted to heal the rift between his father and the mother, particularly regarding his father’s intense involvement in magic and treasure seeking and his mother’s primary interest in organized religion. Both parents, of course, were seeking spiritual solutions to their lives’ problems, but in different and conflicting modes.

A further blow came to the family when a minister apparently claimed that Alvin had gone to hell because he was not baptized.³¹ Lucy may well have felt that this was true, and feared that all the family were going to hell because they were not members of a church. Shortly after that, Lucy took Hyrum, Samuel, and Sophronia and joined the Presbyterian church. Joseph, Sr., and Joseph, Jr., did not. Now the split in the family was more pronounced than ever before.

As the family mourned, complications ensued. Someone had apparently been playing on the family’s grief and suggested that Alvin’s remains had been exhumed. On 25 September 1824, Joseph, Sr., published a statement to discredit reports that Alvin’s body had been exhumed and dissected.

Joseph, Sr., was so angry with the minister who claimed that Alvin had gone to hell that he refused to become involved in church activity, although Lucy did. The family went into deeper depression. The load that Alvin had been carrying now had to be passed on, this time to Joseph, Jr., and Hyrum. They were left to build the family house, which went slowly without their father’s participation and leadership.

Over the next two years the strain increased. There were threats of lawsuits if they did not meet their financial obligations. One instance, Joseph, Sr., and Joseph, Jr., were away digging for money and Lucy and Hyrum were left to face the creditors and try to save the house. Where was the father at this time? This incident highlights the lack of responsibility and leadership taken by Joseph, Sr., which Lucy had to assume.³² When he did return and needed to borrow money to save the farm, Joseph, Sr., sent Lucy to get it from a Quaker friend.

By 1825, the farm was lost, and Lucy became quite depressed.³³

DIFFERING ACCOUNTS OF THE FIRST VISION

The remarkable visionary and religious experiences of

young Joseph need re-examination in the light of these tensions within the family, particularly in their connection with his father. The apparent discrepancies between the different accounts of the First Vision may reflect Joseph, Jr.’s, changing psychological state.

In the 1838 account, the one canonized by the Church, both the Father and the Son appear, the main theme is to find the true church, and it mentions the time as one of many religious revivals.

In the 1832 account of the First Vision only Christ appears, and the main theme is young Joseph’s attempt to get remission from his sins. There is no mention of revivals whatsoever.

The focus of the 1832 account, the forgiveness of sins, turns more to the internal and constant struggles of Joseph’s father. In addition, considering Joseph, Sr.’s, difficulty with alcohol and the destitution of the family—which must have engendered great feelings of rage, anger, and a sense of loss—along with the loss of Alvin, there was a strong need for a more painful repression and disowning of this dimension of young Joseph’s life.

The similarity of the 1832 account of the First Vision with Joseph, Sr.’s, 1819 sixth dream suggests young Joseph’s strong identification with his father. This dream could also be an expression of Joseph’s attempt to heal his father, experiencing his own father’s sins as though they were his own.

I suggest that the earlier conflict with his father, the loss of Alvin, and particularly the emphasis upon having one’s sins forgiven, were things that could be left behind when Joseph finally obtained his official calling as a prophet. By 1838 the issue of defining and legitimizing the true church in the context of a church organization, of which Joseph was now the president, became a much more germane issue. Finding the true church would tend to vindicate his father and would relegate Joseph, Sr.’s, particular problem of unworthiness to a secondary concern. Since there was no true church on earth, this would tend to justify his continuing in such a lowly state, while struggling with sin, depression and ineffectiveness.

In the 1838 account, which emphasizes the restoration of the true church, Joseph in essence fulfills his mother’s dreams and visionary longing for the true church.

It is important to note that in the 1832 account of the First Vision, the focus is on the Son, who offers forgiveness of sins to Joseph; whereas in the 1838 account, the appearance of the Father is primary in introducing the Son to give the message of the true church. It is almost as though the second aspect emphasized in the later account enthrones the father in a compensatory way as the significant and supreme figure. If one were to apply the First Vision personally to Joseph Smith and his father, one might say that initially the lowly son has to find a way of forgiveness, but once that is done and he has borne and worked out the burdens of the father, the lowly, lost, depressed father can return in his more glorified, exalted, and rightful state as the father who presides over the son.

Perhaps the disparities between the 1832 and the 1838 accounts of the First Vision were caused by fusing and condensing the events of 1820 (when the First Vision took place) with the events of 1823-24 (when Alvin died and religious

revivals were widespread). In doing this, Joseph, Jr., utilized a displacement mechanism at an unconscious level so he would not have to re-experience too directly or strongly the painful loss of Alvin. Indeed, psychoanalysis has shown that the mind operates on several levels simultaneously and unconsciously. A particular mental operation called condensation assuages painful memories by fusing them with others more acceptable or pleasant.

Let it not be concluded, though, that the accounts of the First Vision are just fabricated to buttress the ongoing personal struggles of Joseph Smith, Jr. As Milton Backman has pointed out, in some versions of the vision certain aspects merely could have been emphasized over others.³⁴ This in no way indicates that all of the aspects of the vision were not experienced in the actual event. In no way would it invalidate the vision in its complexity and intricacy as a psychic datum, answering the needs of Joseph Smith in a personal way.

In the end, through his visions and the subsequent establishment of a new religion, Joseph, Jr., saved his father from his problem with alcohol, his depressions, his economic woes, and perhaps most importantly from his spiritual struggles in sin. He was also able to save his mother; he found for her the true Church which she was seeking and the fulfillment to her early spiritual experiences. In addition, he helped reconcile her with his father, saving their marriage, so that they could become an intact and complete family. Beyond that, he saved his whole family, while resolving his own spiritual crisis.

The wider scope of history shows that the First Vision of Joseph Smith, Jr., was more than just a response to a personal set of family problems, or even to his own personal problems. This vision came at a particular crisis in his life that reached far beyond himself and his own father, but even into his ancestors. As we have seen, one might postulate that depression, struggle and loss, spiritually, emotionally and otherwise, plagued the Smith and Mack families for several generations.

The First Vision of Joseph Smith represented a remarkable, compensatory collective response from the archetypal level of the psyche in which multiple, significant problems were resolved for Joseph himself, his father, for his mother and other members of his family, for his forefathers, and finally for many others in his generation.

Going beyond that, the struggle of the Smith family virtually typifies the experience of a growing number of people on the new frontier of America who felt oppressed, lost, and unable to be saved. They, like the Smiths, felt locked in a Christianity filled with fear, damnation, and predestination; it was a vicious circle from which no one could escape.

Although some claim that others had revelations similar to Joseph Smith's, the important point is that Joseph Smith was the person at the particular time and the particular place who worked through a particular crisis that was universal to himself, to his own family's ancestors and those perhaps of a whole generation. His resolution became a watershed for a whole generation by which they could find a new mode of spiritual life and a new relationship to God.

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A COURT OF LOVE

By John Bennion

WHEN I RETURNED from my mission, the sky was cloudless over Utah. I felt like a full seed flung between earth and heaven on my way toward becoming a sexual being. I would soon find someone besides Amy to marry, becoming one flesh with a woman. To my right rose the blue-green Rockies, with Cedar City, Nephi, Spanish Fork, and finally Provo, tucked up against them. Directly beneath the jet fewer mountains caught the rain and the ground was arid, spotted by green only if there were a spring or a house. Fifteen minutes before landing, I saw Rockwood, a small town of tree-lined streets, surrounded by desert. With my hands cupped against the glass, I traced my eyes along Main Street and the lane that led to the cluster of trees around my house—then the wing was in the way. “That’s where I live,” I said to the man next to me. “That’s Rockwood.”

“How long were you in Houston?” he said.

“Two years.”

I’d given him a Book of Mormon with the angel Moroni embossed on the cover. I was trying to end my mission the way I’d begun it—with whole vision. He extended his hand to return the book. “Here,” he said. “An interesting idea though—Jews fleeing Jerusalem and finding the promised land in America.”

I put my hand out. “I want you to keep it.” I was having trouble keeping my mind on my duty to him. The plane circled the Salt Lake airport. “Finish it.” I found the place for him. “It says here if you read and pray—”

“Moroni Chapter 10, verses 4 and 5,” the man said without looking down. He took two leather-bound books out of his briefcase, grinning like a child at me. “I’ve got my own.”

“You’re a member? You flippin’ scoundrel. Why’d you lead me on like that?” His face was gleeful. He had played the missionary game with me, being not only condescending, but at the same time wistful, as if he could borrow righteousness from my condition.

“I wanted to see what kind of approach you elders use in Houston. I like that. ‘Do you enjoy reading?’ No one would answer ‘no.’ The man paused, looking at the books in his lap. “You’re lucky, you know, to have been out so recently.” He smiled at me. “Flip. Ours was ‘geez.’ You’ll lose it, though.”

“Fine by me. Where did you go?”

“Pennsylvania. Hard work, but—” the man laughed, “—the best two years of my life.”

“When were you out?” I wondered if my time in Houston would be the best years of my life.

“Almost twenty-five years ago. We went for two and a half years then. I was supposed to go to England but with the war, I stayed in the States.” I turned to watch the plane land. “You got a girl?” He waited for my answer, obviously curious about me as a being on the edge of sexual experience.

“No,” I said finally.

“You get a Dear John?”

“Yes.”

“Me too. I dated her for a year and a half before I left. I was out three months and she wrote me off, so I just found another when I got home. My mission president told me to be engaged within six months, only took me five.”

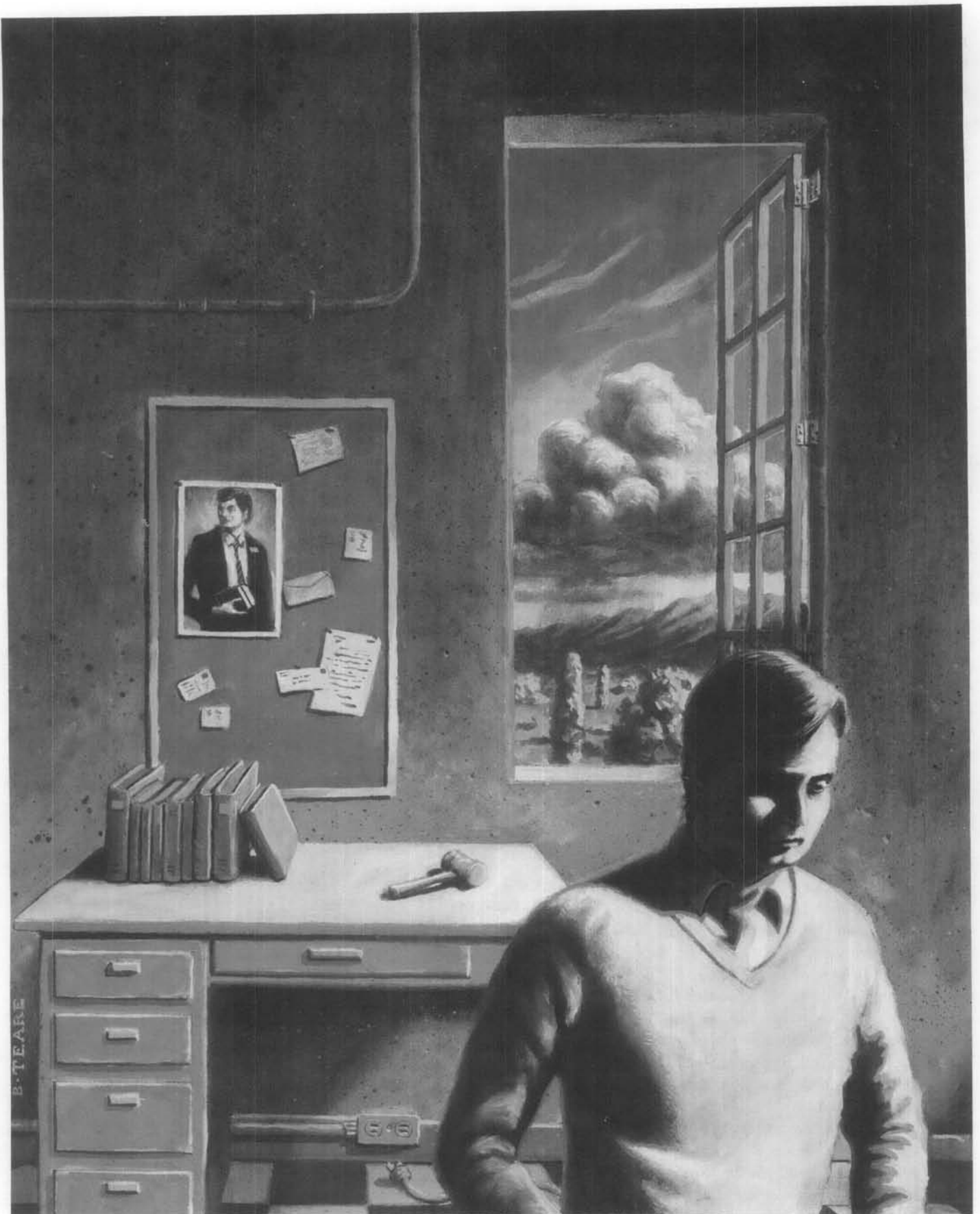
My president, a retired college professor, in the last of a two-year series of interviews, full of advice and the brotherhood of the priesthood, had told me to begin school as soon as possible. “Take your time,” he’d told me. “Get to a university and enjoy yourself.”

I watched the terminal to the right. “I’m in no hurry.”

He jostled me with his elbow. “That’s what they all say. But in a day or two you’ll be sitting on some girl’s living room couch, holding her hand, nervous because you’ve been away from she-males for two years. You won’t last any longer than I did.” A stewardess leaned across the seat opposite, reaching her arms over her head for an elderly man’s bag. My seatmate glanced toward her then caught my eye. “I know you,” he said, held by his memories again. “I was you. The next few months are like ripe plums.” He gripped my hand and lifted himself out of the seat, following the stewardess up the aisle. I remembered how anxious my two older brothers became when everyone around them talked like that. I also worried that, seeing Amy, I would focus on her sexuality, as this man was focused, and that I would then be overwhelmed by the frustration of my loss, and be unable to meet her as a friend.

In the terminal, I saw my mother first; Dad followed behind. Seeing them, something relaxed inside; I had long anticipated the pleasure. Everyone had always said my father’s face and build

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were similar to Henry Fonda's, but I was surprised at how much he had aged. My mother was smaller, more compact, darker haired; I couldn't think of a movie actress who would age to look like my mother.

"You've gained weight," she said, putting her arms around me.

"Looks fine to me," said Dad. His voice was gravelly and rich. The sound of it came back quickly; it seemed that there had been no two-year gap between this hearing and the last.

"I meant it as a compliment. You were so skinny, there wasn't much to get a hold of before." Her arms squeezed harder.

My father stood, performing now what he had planned before—a personal ceremony. He put a hand on each of my arms, staring directly into my eyes. "Glad you're safe." He gripped my shoulders. We moved to the baggage check. I took one bag and Dad the other. "Y'all," he said, "I think this is the way to the car." I looked at him and he grinned. "Just trying to make you feel at home. But let's get out of here. Too damn many people."

"David, don't talk like that."

"This place is enough to make a preacher swear."

"Let alone you," said Mom and Dad was silent. There was a stiffness between them I hadn't remembered. I wondered if it had always been there and I had been too naive to perceive it before.

We drove southward past the point of the mountain where my great-great grandfather, James Darren Rockwood—bodyguard to the prophet Joseph Smith and father of our town—had been imprisoned for illegal cohabitation, having three wives. His son had also been a polygamist, one wife before the Manifesto, one wife after, for which he had been excommunicated. We crossed the gravel bar left by Lake Bonneville, and drove westward across the desert, passing nothing for sixty miles but sagebrush, jack-rabbits, and a few cedared bluffs, a distance the jet had crossed in a few minutes. My father talked about the war and the students who had refused to go. "I'm in favor of doing your duty, but I don't sanction war either."

"They show the quality of their minds when they take to drugs and free love," said my mother. "It's all a package with them." My father didn't respond.

I felt ignorant because of my two-year absence from anything worldly. I didn't know where the troops were, which side was in possession of what cities, or what kind of fighting it was. Before I left, when I was just a boy, I hadn't been interested, and my only occupation for two years had been to do the Lord's work on the earth. An effort was made to insulate us missionaries from anything worldly. As we drove through the desert toward Rockwood, I thought with ambivalence that my town was the same as I was—isolated and protected. My grandfather told me once that the people in Rockwood weren't affected much by the Depression; they raised all they ate, self-sufficient. Time was a slow cycle from season to season, steady and languid. As we topped the ridge and drove down the tree-shaded lane toward home, the air turned cool and moist. "No different," I said as we passed the neighbor's houses.

"Did you think it would change in two years?" said my dad.

I pulled myself out the window and sat on the car door, the wind blowing my hair. "Hey, I'm home," I shouted. Brother

Williams looked up from loading seed into his grain drill, resting the sack on the hopper and waving his hat. Sister Sorenson, who taught me in Sunday school and had become my good friend then, looked up from her hoeing to wave.

"Get back in here." Mom was pulling on my pant cuff. "Save your breath for your homecoming sermon."

"Only don't use that volume when you talk," said Dad. "You'll blast them out of the benches."

I noticed that the trim needed painting. Our house, built by James Darren, was a two story adobe brick, the largest in town. "I'll have time to fix it up now," I thought. Time was an open space before me. I had nothing to do but what I wanted, which was to work next to Dad on the farm, enjoying home and town with no pressure from school or from the Church. I could stretch myself with solid physical work while I looked for a girl. Most of the ones my age would be married now to the missionaries who came home last year or to the boys who didn't go on missions. Like Amy. I thought about her letter being a Dear John. There had been more to it than that. "The memory of our love is very important to me." But.

"Well, how does it look?" said Mom.

"Needs painting," said Dad. "I've been meaning to get to it, but it seems so many other things are more important." He avoided my eyes. I had never known him to put off work. We were quiet walking inside.

After I unloaded the pecans from north of Houston and the sea shells from Galveston, my gifts for them, I changed into the oldest pair of jeans and the oldest t-shirt I could find. "Why are you wearing those things?" Mom asked. "We're going straight to town on Monday to get you new clothing."

"Leave him alone," said Dad. "I know how he feels." His voice had a force which surprised me. I looked at the two of them, trying to figure the ways they had changed. "I'm glad you're home," Dad said. "I went through it twice before with your brothers, but with you it was different. I kept imagining you getting some parasite or dying from heat prostitution." He emphasized the last word, making it a joke.

"Prostration," said Mom.

"Right," said Dad. "I didn't have any idea what either word meant."

I touched his arm.

"Sorry, I should have known," she said as she left the room, frowning. Dad looked at me and shrugged.

We sat at lunch. I felt Mom's eyes on me. "Am I so different?" I said.

"Not really."

"When's the crew coming?"

"Simon and Elizabeth will be here in the morning, Carl tomorrow evening. One night together in this house is about all anyone can handle."

"Oh, it's plenty big," I said. "When James had all three wives in here there were twenty-five. We're fewer than that."

"Maybe that's what started the foundation sagging, all those

women in one house," said Mom. "I can't imagine not having my own place for me and my children."

"No wonder James Darren spent all his time working outside," said Dad.

"Charley called."

I smiled. "What did he say?" He was my best friend, hadn't gone on a mission.

"He wanted you to call him back."

"What's he been up to?"

"He works in Salt Lake, comes home weekends. But he's still not married. Still catin' around like you and him did before you left."

"Still," I said. "When'll he ever settle down?"

My mother smiled. "Okay, so I'm a busy-minded woman." She paused. "Amy lives here with her husband."

I concentrated on my food. "How is she doing?"

"She's sick as she can be."

"What's wrong with her?" I half stood out of my chair.

"She's sick with child," said Dad. "One inside her belly and another one in her bed."

"David, he can't be that bad," said Mom. "Though I think he's a little tyrant." Mom looked down at the table. "Don't you ever be like that."

"Thank you for telling me one sin I won't have to worry about for a while."

She smiled and touched his cheek. "You forget we raised two missionaries before you. I know what's on your mind."

"Now how would you know that?" said Howard's father, his voice angry. "Don't pin him down like that." He pushed his chair away from the table. "Well, I don't have time to sit around all day. Back to work for me."

After finishing, I went out into the barnyard. It looked like someone else's place, not my father's. He had always taken loving care of everything on the farm. The plow was leaning against the fence, its greaseless surface red with rust. Some boards were loose on the barn. The milk cow had sores on her udder. She had pushed on the fence around the hay stack so she and her calf could reach through and eat. Dad hadn't fixed it, and they'd soon smash it flat and ruin more hay. I got a hammer, some staples and some baling wire and began fixing the hole. I imagined someday taking over the farm from Dad, working it until every field produced its best, every animal was fat. I thought that I could take it back to its prime, if he were winding down. One of the things I'd have to face, I knew, was my own father's mortality. I looked across the road, watching Dad walking down the road, his shovel in his hand. He stopped at Sister Sorenson's, who was widowed as a young woman some years before my mission. Since then she had rented her farm out and raised her three children by herself. Dad started digging in the ditch in front of her house, cleaning the weeds out of it. I knew it was important to help others, but I wished Dad had done his own work first.

Charley called back that night. He'd arranged dates for a dance in Salt Lake. "Becky has a cousin visiting," he said. "I

thought about you as soon as I found out she was here." His voice held some kind of mirth.

"Thanks loads." I was anxious to see and talk to girls, to try to get Amy out of my mind, but I wasn't sure about going to a crowded dance on a blind date with somebody's cousin. I couldn't tell from his voice whether old Charley was just happy reindoctrinating me into the world of women or whether he was chuckling because of what the cousin was like.

"Give me a few days," I said. "Tell them we can't make it and just you come over."

"It's all set up. You can't get out of it."

Despite my nervousness, I was glad, anxious to see what the girl looked like. I wore my suit and tie, but Charley, who rang the doorbell, pushed me back inside with one hand on my chest, before the dates in the car could see me. "I'm not going anywhere with you dressed like that. Don't you own a pair of levis?"

"Just ones with patches on the knees."

"Well, they'd be better than this outfit."

I took my jacket and tie off and changed to a plaid shirt, but I had to wear my suit pants. We walked out to the car together. I felt like a fool for being so nervous, as nervous as I had felt approaching the first door of my mission. After knocking, my companion had turned to me and said, "You take this one." I thought as fast as I could, but when the woman answered, I was unable to speak. "You go to church?" I finally blurted out. My companion didn't help, laughed at me all the way back to the apartment.

"Howard, this is Becky Summers," Charley pointed to the front seat. She was a pretty, blond girl, and she pressed herself quickly across Charley to shake my hand. "And this is her cousin, Wanda Johansen." Wanda was plainer, but with a nice smile. She had the most enormous breasts I had seen. I got in and looked at the back of Charley's head, disappointed that I was already focussed as the man on the plane had predicted.

Becky looked over her shoulder at me and giggled. I knew they had planned this so they could watch my first time with a girl for two years.

"Country looks good this year," I said loudly.

"It's nice in Sanpete this year too," said Wanda. "That's where I come from."

"Not as pretty as Houston, though. It's green there twelve months a year."

"You boys are so lucky to be able to go on missions all over the world," said Wanda. When I moved my head, I could see Charley's smirk in the rear-view mirror.

"Did you know that Houston had a hurricane while I was there? We once had our apartment demolished by a tornado." It wasn't even true. But I spent the next hour describing the weather conditions in Houston, without giving anyone else a chance to speak. I finished as we drove into Salt Lake. As I talked, I watched Wanda, trying to discover if she understood that she and I were the object of a joke. Walking into the dance, I didn't know whether or not to take Wanda's hand, so I did nothing. Once inside we sat for awhile, no one speaking. The band was playing a watered down version of "Fool on the Hill" and Charley and

Becky got up to dance.

"Do you want to shake a leg?" I said, feeling like the man in the song. I thought I'd never recover.

"Sure," she said. On the floor I placed my hand in the middle of her back, held her other hand, already sweaty.

Do you want to know something?" Wanda said.

"What?"

"I think my cousin is wild."

"Oh."

"I'm not that way at all." She moved closer and the tips of her breasts bumped against my chest. After all my wanting to talk to a girl, look at and touch one, it was strange how uncomfortable I felt. She was nice looking, but I couldn't relax enough that her physical presence wasn't overwhelming. If I could have talked to her, I would have moved beyond that barrier.

"Have you got a girl?" she asked.

"No." I felt like wearing a sign that said, "No, no one else is interested in me," but that would cause more problems than it would solve. I had heard of girls who would sit next to a guy they thought might be a returned missionary, prime husband material, brushing against his thigh to see if he were wearing temple garments. I noticed other girls looking at me. Wanda watched me watching and moved closer.

On the way home Charley drove to a rise west of town, where he and I had gone to park with girls before my mission. The last time I had been there, Amy was with me. Through the evening as Wanda moved closer and talked less, I decided she might not be as dense as I first thought she was. We got out and walked along the edge of the valley, looking over the town.

"One time I was walking not far from here enjoying nature and I discovered more than I was ready for," Charley said. "Married people."

"Well," said Becky. "What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing," said Charley. "It's just that they, ah—how can I say this in front of a returned missionary—they had partially or possibly completely disrobed."

"Still, so?" smiled Becky. "They were married; I think it's kind of romantic."

"Oh, I forgot to tell you they weren't married to each other." He looked at me—the same look as the man on the plane, the same look as my mother. "And you'd be surprised if you knew who they were."

I realized that, despite our closeness before my mission, the gap between Charley and me was wide. It wasn't that I was offended by talking about immorality. I had seen the unhappiness between immoral husbands or wives among the people we taught in Houston. One missionary was excommunicated for fornication. But it saddened me more than shocked me the way Charley assumed it would. What offended me was that Charley, once my best friend, was trying to shock me.

Wanda made incredulous noises.

"Good Lord," I said.

"Hard to believe, isn't it," said Wanda.

"Flip, I'm tired," I said.

"Flip?" said Charley. "You said 'flip.' Is that a Southern word?" He laughed. "Flip, you make me feel warm all over," he said to Becky, putting his arms around her. "Must be the spirit."

"Don't be such a clod," said Wanda to Charley.

I was only about two miles from home. "Thank you for a wonderful evening," I said to Wanda. Sliding down the hillside, I started through the brush in the direction of home. Though Charley shouted after me, I didn't turn back. But then neither did Charley follow and try to talk me out of leaving. I felt bad for Wanda; she wasn't to blame. Under other circumstances she might have been a nice person. Still, I had difficulty thinking of any of the three in a Christian manner.

The lights of town lay eastward. The sky was moonless, making the stars even brighter. The constellations burned in the clear air, not muted as they had been in Houston. It was good walking, good to be alone again after so long. It was the first time I'd been alone since I came home, the first time I had been alone for two years except for showering and using the toilet, and even then my companion was always in the next room. Traveling two by two, as the New Testament instructed, kept missionaries from sin, but it was a burden.

Suddenly I saw someone moving ahead of me through the brush. I crouched and saw that the person was going the other way—a woman, taller than Wanda. She looked back over her shoulder toward the spot where I was hiding. I stood. "Is everything all right?" I asked.

"Yes."

I walked forward.

"I was just out looking at the stars," the woman said quickly and I could tell she was Sister Sorenson. "Just look at them." She turned toward me, carrying a blanket which she wrapped around herself, despite the warmth of the evening. "Where are you coming from?"

She talked and moved nervously, and I supposed I had startled her. "I was to the creek with some friends. I wanted to be by myself, so I thought I'd take the short way home."

"I saw your lights. I thought it was teenagers parking." She grinned at me.

"Not the place for a returned missionary, eh?" I smiled, glad to be talking to her, one of my favorite people.

"Not really, probably be good for you. Leads to good things."

I looked at her. "Not you too."

"Me too?"

"All I hear since I've been home are innuendos about getting married."

A small smile showed on her lips. She opened her mouth to say something, but shut it again. She looked away from me at the mountain to the north of Rockwood. "Do you know when I had my first baby, it seemed like everyone in town was pregnant, where before I didn't notice anyone."

"Are you trying to insult me?"

"No one talks about getting married like returned missionaries do. But it's better than loneliness."

I looked at her. "I'm sorry."

"Oh, don't be."

"Do you still miss him?"

She was silent. "I'd better get back in to the kids."

"Yeah, if you saw us pull in you must have been out here more than an hour." I waved my finger at her. "And who's watching the kids?"

"They can take care of themselves for that long." I was surprised at the bitterness in her voice. "Sorry. I just get tired of them sometimes. Anyway Kerry is almost eight."

I said nothing.

"I'd better get back in." She touched my arm. "It's good to see you again."

"Same with me. Do you know you're the only person I've talked to since I came home who has made any sense."

"Counting your mother and father?"

"They are different. I can't really tell how."

She walked faster. "What am I doing? I've got to get my horde bathed. See you Sunday."

"Yeah, Sunday." I stuck my head inside the door. "Hey," I said to the three kids. "Don't give your mother a bad time tonight. She deserves a rest." They looked at me surprised.

I walked across the lane toward my own house, hoping I hadn't hurt her feelings. Before I left on my mission, I hadn't noticed the strange turns toward bitterness that she had shown tonight. Either she had changed while I was gone, or she thought of me as an adult now and was honest with me, or both. Everyone seemed different before. I started thinking that part of the change was a new awareness of the world and people in it that had come to me through being in Houston. I moved slowly across the lane, into my own yard, smelling the night air. Mom was in the kitchen. "Oh, I didn't hear you drive up," she said. "Did you have fun?"

"Sure. Loads."

"What happened?"

"Charley and I are different now, that's all. Where's Dad?"

"Ward teaching."

"Who are his families?"

"Just Sister Sorenson. And here he is now." Dad opened the front door.

"That was a long visit," said Mom.

"Only an hour. Those kids. They asked me to tell them two stories each."

I was tired after my long day. I started up the stairs toward my bedroom, only half listening to what Dad was saying. "You taught just the kids?" I asked. A warning had started in my head, holding me.

"No. She was there too. We had a good visit. Hey, maybe they'll give me Howard for a companion. Then I won't have to go by myself. It's just too hard to drive clear in to town to get someone so I can come back here to one family just across the street from my own home."

I listened to my father's loud cheerful voice and wondered why he was lying. Or maybe it was Sister Sorenson. Then I remembered the blanket she had been carrying and the angle of my father's body toward her as he had dug in her irrigation ditch,

and the mysteries of the evening clicked together for me. It was an intuitive leap on little evidence. My only defense is that I was a newly returned missionary. In my heightened awareness of my own importance, in my exaggerated trust in my body and mind as perceiving instruments, I made the leap carelessly. It was only chance that my suspicion proved correct.

Saturday the rest of the family came to honor me at my homecoming. My two brothers and my sister, Elizabeth, and all their kids made nineteen people, counting the babies, around the table. "You're either going to have to stop having kids or we're going to have to get more leaves for the table," Dad said before the blessing. Despite the bustle of everyone around, I knew Dad was watching me because of my quietness, aware that something had changed.

Elizabeth sat beside me with her baby in a high chair and her husband next. They were married just after I left on my mission and they touched eyes over their new child as they took turns feeding him. My older brothers and their wives sat across, one married five years, the other seven. They didn't look at their women: they interrupted each other when they talked. I thought of Amy, wondering how the two of us would be if we were married? Everyone talked at once—a babble of noise. I actually held my hands across my ears. Dramatic.

"Children, quiet down please," Mom said.

My oldest brother looked at me. "Don't worry, Howie. Your time will come."

"My time for what—deafness?"

"Marriage."

"Not yet."

"Don't rush him."

"I suppose he thinks his kids will act better." My brother took more ham.

"Do you expect us to believe that you didn't notice any long-haired Texan women?"

"He's got one waiting in a room in Salt Lake until he can break the news to us."

Mom knew I was embarrassed. Dad spread his arms out, and I was afraid he would tell them to leave me alone, calling the hounds to the scent, as he had so many times when I was little. "I'm glad all of you could come," he said instead, the emotion breaking his voice. "I love all of you." The words intensified my awareness of his hypocrisy—smiling over his family, the picture of a good church member, touching the hand of the woman he was cheating. As I said, I was prone to dramatics on the basis of hunches; I stood and left the table, pushing the back door open and moving through the trees in the orchard. Soon Dad came out and put his hand on my shoulder. I moved from under his hand. "What's bothering you, son?" He waited. "Too much, too fast?"

"Yeah, that's it."

"Everybody's changed while you were gone."

I looked out at the dark green trees around Sister Sorenson's house. "Right."

"That isn't it, is it?"

"No."

"What is it, Howard?"

"I saw Sister Sorenson last night."

"Did you have a chance to talk to her?"

"I mean I was talking to her while you were supposed to be ward teaching her. You lied to Mom and me."

Panic came into his eyes, but with visible effort, he fought it down. "I don't see . . . ?"

I turned and walked toward the house. Because I couldn't hear his footsteps, I knew he had remained under the trees, looking after me. I moved through the kitchen and started up the stairs toward my room.

"Come finish your dinner," Carl said.

I walked up the stairs without turning.

"I thought you might sit and talk with us," Mom said.

"I'm still tired from the time change." I shut my bedroom door behind me. I had shocked him, then left. Doing that temporarily made me feel better.

Soon someone knocked and Dad came in. I spoke quickly before he could begin an explanation. "I know you met her there."

"Did she tell you that?"

"I cut through the brush from the creek. I got mad at Charley and came home that way."

"How long were you there?"

"What do you mean?"

"Ah, did you—?"

I waited, watching his embarrassment. "I didn't see you with her." He relaxed some and the slight doubt I had allowed myself disappeared. "Stop lying to me."

"What are you going to do?" he said.

"I don't know."

"I love her."

"Love?" I had difficulty saying the word. "How did you let it happen?"

He motioned me quiet. "Don't ask that."

"Now that solves everything."

"I don't have an answer."

"Great."

"At least not one you would understand right now."

"What are you going to tell Mom?"

He was silent. "That is between me and her." He looked at me. "You leave it that way."

I said nothing.

"I'm glad you're taking this so well."

My thighs and arms were shaking. "How do you know how I'm taking it?"

"I don't." He stood in the doorway.

"Please go away," I said.

"Yes, but I'm going to go through this weekend. The kids are all here. Give me that much." He leaned against the doorway. "God, I'm tired," he said. Then he left. The image of his face with its deep, downward lines hung in my memory, making me shiver. I looked at the shut door, angry now at what he had asked of me. I wondered what Mom would do if she knew. She'd probably leave him, go to live with one of my brothers. I heard

voices downstairs and tried to imagine what Dad was saying to them. "Howard's not feeling so well."

Sister Sorenson had taught me the gospel with vitality and force. I had thought that if anyone was converted she was. I lay on my bed, wondering how it had started. Passing in the street, working together on church projects, helping her with her ditches which needed cleaning each spring because she had no husband to do it, visiting her home every month for ward teaching. She might have joined him one night for the midnight water turn. That made her calculating. He may have asked her to help him move a canvas dam at night, though he could have easily done it himself. They were both calculating. I hated them both for what they were doing to Mom.

I thought about how it had started with Amy and some of my old feeling for her came back, a feeling I knew was wrong because she was married now. While the rest of the kids in MIA painted the scenery for the Church roadshow, we crept separately down the stairs to the furnace room. "This is our own Mutual Improvement Association," she laughed. I was filled with wonder at the pleasure of my arms around her. We kissed, holding ourselves tight against each other. She undid her bra and let me curl my hand around her breast, a sin which had burned when I tried to pray it out of my soul before my mission. We listened for the door to open at the top of the stairs. The next time we went down Brother Thomas surprised us, or nearly did, and we each had to have interviews with the bishop for kissing in the cellar. "You are lucky you didn't go farther," the bishop said. "Some things are so sacred they can only be performed inside the bonds of marriage." We dated as seniors, and I couldn't believe that I would ever want to be with another girl. We had restrained our passion; fear kept us back. "Fornication is next to adultery which is next to murder in seriousness," the bishop said. I imagined that nothing could be so sweet as touching her, that we would be married after my mission. But she had waited eighteen months, not twenty-four.

I rose suddenly. Taking the box filled with family photographs, I lay my parent's pictures in a row across the floor according to their ages, from their wedding to now. I was always surprised by my mother in her wedding gown; she was thin-waisted, her hair a downward curve on each side of her face. I could easily imagine in the early pictures my father and mother loving each other, making love. I tried to see her aging body as Dad saw it. Sister Sorenson was thirty. I quickly shoved the pictures into the box. "You are weak," I said and had no more feeling for the person my father was.

Before long my sister Elizabeth came up, but I asked her to leave. "I'm sorry, I'd like to talk, but I'm worried about my homecoming speech tomorrow. I want to make it a good one." Then because I told her I would, I reread the journal entries which described the people I had converted, reliving the joy I felt with them when they accepted the gospel into their lives.

Toward late afternoon, I finished my talk and decided to act as if nothing had happened between my father and me. As he and I went out to feed the cattle, he pressed his lips onto Mom's cheek. She touched her hand to the spot and her eyes went sad. I was the only one who noticed, and I wondered if he had done

it for me to see. Dad drove to the middle of the field then shut the truck off. He was nervous but he took me by the shoulders and looked full into my face. "When you do find a woman, love her. That's the best thing a man can do; the hardest thing a man can do." Tears stood in his eyes. We fed the rest of the cows without talking. That evening we all were in the living room. Everyone else played cards, but I didn't feel like it. I lay on the couch pretending to doze.

As we walked into church, I saw Amy across the room. She was slightly fuller, but not in the belly. She looked more like a woman than she had before I left. Mom pointed to Amy's husband sitting behind the pulpit. "He's second counselor in the bishopric." He was a stocky man, a little older than me. He turned to the bishop, talking about something, full of his own importance. Watching Amy, I remembered the pleasure of loving her. I didn't want to talk to her, but she saw me and crossed the room toward me.

"It's good to see you," she said, nervous, looking away from me toward her husband.

"Yes," I said. Her eyes seemed veiled, tired and sad, I imagined, but then they caught mine and held them. She smiled and I wanted to get away from her as all my old feeling came back. If I could have, I would have taken the next plane back to Houston, anyplace to get away. "Why didn't you wait?" I wanted to ask.

"Well, Howard!" I turned toward the cheerful voice behind me and saw Wanda. "Becky doesn't go to church so I came alone."

"I'll talk to you later," said Amy, smiling with what I interpreted as wistfulness. I watched her walking away.

"I'm sorry about the other night," I said to Wanda. "Charley was getting to me, but it was pretty rude of me to leave."

"It wasn't the best situation I've been in either."

I looked again for Amy, but saw instead my father moving through the people who stood waiting for the meeting to begin, laying his hands on their arms, joking, friendly with everyone, as he had always been. Mom moved a little behind. I couldn't see her face until she turned half toward me: it was animated, laughing at one of Dad's jokes. She leaned toward him, whispering something. Dad put his hand on her arm. I couldn't see Sister Sorenson and her children yet.

"Becky is so different from when she was younger." Wanda looked at me; I could tell she was uncomfortable. Everyone was uncomfortable.

Brother Ault passed, smiling and shaking our hands. "It's good to have you home." I wanted to be alone. Sister Sorenson came in and took my hand in both of hers before I could think. "I hope things go well for you," she said. After she left, finding a seat behind and to the left of my parents, I still felt her touch on my hand. Several people turned and looked at Wanda and me sitting together.

"Look at them," said Wanda. "That's what I hate about small towns; they've already decided something about us."

I wondered how she could be so perceptive about some things and so dense about others. Maybe the denseness was an act. I

looked at the ward members, some of whom were still glancing toward Wanda and me.

"Well, I'll see you. I've got to go sit on the stand," I said. I sat next to Amy's husband, who shook my hand vigorously. "Brian Samuelson," he said. "I'm second counselor in the bishopric."

"Howard Rockwood," I said.

"Yes, I know."

Wanda sat on the first row. I looked toward the back of the room, away from the people, many of whom were smiling and trying to catch my eye. I would have to speak to them soon. I had missed marrying Amy because she couldn't wait, as my father couldn't wait. The bishop rose. "I'm pleased to welcome you to Elder Howard Rockwood's homecoming," he said.

The meeting started with everyone singing "Ye Elders of Israel." I kept my lips pressed together. Barney Thompson stood to say the opening prayer. During the prayer I watched Sister Sorenson from partly closed eyes, trying to imagine what she and my father thought about in church. The thing between them must be kept in a box somewhere that they only opened at night when they were together. They would both go crazy otherwise. Then came the sacrament song. "Again We Meet Around the Board." I watched the deacons moving down the rows with the trays of broken bread. The room was quiet except for a few fussing babies. I wanted to walk to where my father sat and stop him from taking the sacrament. A person ate damnation to himself when he took the sacrament unworthily. I wondered if I believed that. My mother's arm was threaded in Dad's. How would her face be when someone told her about him?

When I was fourteen, Mom said I couldn't go to a dance in the next town. I talked to her for an hour in her room, until she was flustered. She turned to the wall and said, "No. No. No. No. No."

"You're nothing but a thick-headed bitch," I shouted, running out of the house. Nearly an hour later when I passed her room, she was still sitting, staring at the same place on the wall.

The deacon stood in front of me, the tray of bread extended toward me. I automatically took a piece and passed the tray, feeling the texture of the bread on my fingertips. The deacon was still watching, so I put the bread in my mouth and swallowed. The yeasty taste drew the saliva sharply, unpleasantly. With the taste on my tongue I tried to think about my speech. Instead I looked at Amy and remembered the grayness of her eyes. Amy's husband folded his arms, brushing against my sleeve. I looked at Amy, remembering kissing her.

After the prayer for the water, before the tray of small cups could get to me, I left the stand, aware that everyone was watching, and went into the bathroom. Standing in front of the urinal, I thought about what my father had done. When I was finished, I waited in the doorway, just out of sight, until the sacrament was over and the bishop was talking again. It was almost time for my speech. I could stand and describe what I knew. In the early days of the Church they did that. Dad, having been a missionary and having received the Melchizedek priesthood, would be excommunicated for his sin. He would be ignored by most of the members of the ward, a trial for him, but my mother would be hurt the most. I couldn't think clearly about

what was best.

An excommunication court is a court of love, they said. It can make a person realize his sin, which is the first step toward repentance. Knowing and not saying makes a person a party to the wrongdoing. Still, I didn't know of anyone who had told the bishop about someone else's unworthiness. Of course I wouldn't know if someone told in private; the bishop would keep it confidential.

In 1930 my great-grandfather, James Darren's son, had been excommunicated from the Church for taking a second wife, forty years after the prophet's manifesto said it was wrong. She had been thirty years younger than he was. Apparently he had found another channel for his vigor than the one his murderous father, the vigilante, had used. Members of the Church still remembered what he had done, having developed a revulsion toward polygamy as strong as that toward incest. Kids who went to the cemetery for a thrill said they could still hear him, moaning. He was warning others against his mistake, people said. Once I found in my father's bedroom the metal box where my great-grandfather's diary was kept. "August 15, 1934. It has been three years since anyone in Rockwood has talked to me." I knew that the date of death on his tombstone was 1934.

At the pulpit, the bishop talked about his own mission, years before. Then he introduced me. I stood and moved to face the people. "In a Spanish speaking part of Houston lives a widow woman and her children, five of them. It was my first area before I moved to teach only anglos. We had passed the house many times on our bicycles; the kids were always dirty and running wild. We knew from talking to her neighbors that she saw men in the evening for money." I looked out at the audience. Not even the babies were making noise. Everyone was waiting to see how much detail I would go into about the woman's life. When I heard Amy's husband clear his throat behind me and murmur something to the bishop, I felt like going into specific detail. "So we didn't go there. One day we had passed her house and I had the strong and certain feeling we should go back. When we knocked, no one seemed to be home. The door was open a few inches so my companion pushed it farther to call inside. There was a goat there, but no human was home. My companion wanted to leave then. But I made him walk around the house to the back." I couldn't develop much interest in my own talk. I took a breath and went on. "They were all there under the shade of a blanket. She was trying to give water to one of her children who had a high fever. We told her who we were, and she didn't want to talk to us at first. "Go away," she said. "Can't you see I have trouble today." I told her about the power the priesthood has for healing the sick. Then she let us lay our hands on her child to bless him. When we passed again that evening, she was waiting in the road for us. "My son is well," she said to us. I looked over the audience, remembering the weeks of teaching Sister Mendez. Her eyes had grown brighter and more clear as she learned the truths of the gospel. "She began surprising us. When we came to teach, she would give us the gifts of her sacrifices. 'Last night I told the men to go away. They are no longer welcome here,' she said one night. 'Today I took my wine and poured it out in the garden. I smashed

the bottle.' One day she said nothing but her house had been scrubbed, the children bathed." One by one she had packaged the sins of her life and laid them aside, an arduous labor. Watching from the outside, I knew her steps were firm, steady, as she moved toward her own salvation. She had been a simple sure woman, believing everything we said. Gripping the podium, I let her clear spirit fill me and I spoke to the people of Rockwood from that feeling.

After all the visitors had left our house, abandoning the tables which were covered with cookie fragments and empty paper cups, I lay on my bed and thought about Amy. She and her husband had been to the reception. He was shorter and heavier than me, guiding Amy though the crowd with his hand firm on her elbow. I didn't have a chance to talk to her alone, and I didn't want to talk to her with her husband.

In the darkness I thought about putting my hands on Amy, as her husband had, of taking her clothes off. I moved out of my bed and prayed. "Lord, I give you this gift. I will no longer think about her." But the thoughts returned. The next day I stayed in bed, pretending to sleep. Finally, late in the morning, I heard my mother's footsteps, light, walking up. She knocked; I saw her come smiling through the doorway.

"Oh, you're awake," she said.

"Yes. I guess I woke up when you knocked."

"I just wondered if things were all right."

"I don't feel good."

"I'm sorry," she said. "Let me get the thermometer."

"I already took it. A hundred and one. I took an aspirin." I was surprised at the lie. From the window I could see that it was raining, hard. When I was young, running in the rain had made me feel clean.

When I heard Dad come into the house, I went down the stairs and out into the field. Soon he followed, walking along the lane toward me. I heard his footsteps and felt something, a coat, laid across my shoulders. "You're sick," he said. "Killing yourself won't help anything." I let him lead me back to the house, glad to have his arms around me.

In the old house I sit in a wooden rocking chair in the high-ceilinged living room. To my left my father reads the newspaper, glancing from behind it out the window. I look past him at the white skirt of light around the street lamp in front of Sister Sorenson's house. My mother sits on the floor and packages odd socks and baby shirts in manila envelopes. "They always forget something," she says.

I wrap my arms around myself, against my mother's sad and my father's nervous eyes. The only sound is the rocking of the chair, the hard sound of wood crossing wood. A beat up, a beat back, waiting to understand.

THE MYSTERY OF CONVERSION

By David Knowlton

HOW DOES ONE come to lose a testimony? While walking in a cold but gentle rain down the cobbled streets of the ancient, sacred city of Cuzco, Peru, a Mormon friend and I worried about this issue. According to my thoughtful friend, a testimony is a mysterious but forceful thing that overwhelms one. It is inconceivable that anyone could lose a testimony once they had received it in its spiritual strength. Once people have a real testimony, he asked, how could they lose it? As the drizzle chilled the discussion we ran for cover before I could persuade my friend of the ease with which testimony is lost.

Among the ruins of a great civilization one faces the reality of entropy. Things inevitably move towards greater disorganization. Surrounded by the massive stone foundations of former palaces and temples, the last remains of love, religion, and politics, it is not hard to imagine great loss. The harder question is how the stone walls were ever built, how a civilization came to be.

Even a testimony struggles with entropy. My friend felt it was something you receive as a whole. He envisioned its further growth but insisted there was a great conceptual and existential gulf between having and not having a testimony. But as a human and social reality, a testimony constantly faces the challenge of disorder and disorganization. If, as Alma observed, it is not carefully cultivated, like a delicate seedling it will wither. Therefore, the great question is not how a testimony is lost but rather how it fights off entropy to develop in the first place.

One night I stood in the twilight of the

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central plaza of Tucumán, Argentina, in a circle of street people, listening to a preacher call us to Christ. He eloquently compared the darkness of night with a worldly life of sickness, despair, and sin. He witnessed of how coming to Christ had transformed his life. Once he too had lived on the street, but Christ had removed him and made him whole. He asked if our lives were empty and needed filling, he asked if we were sick and needed healing. He called us into a prayer circle and asked Jesus to give us hope and understanding, to fill our lives and make us well.

I was once a missionary. I knew the techniques he was using to bring people to belief. But the emotions of being there, of being a street person and feeling the loneliness of a strange town where I had no friends and no place to go made me feel his message. When he called us to Christ, asking us to come forward and proclaim Jesus as our saviour, despite my sectarian Mormon distrust, the literalness of his message, the power of his words, and the emotions I felt around me almost made me join the small tearful group which that night came to Jesus.

Several months later I joined a thousand or so people kneeling in emotional prayer on the arid shores of sunlit, azure Lake Titicaca. As all around me people poured out their souls to the Lord with all the feeling of life, I could not help but be moved. I felt lonely and isolated because my religious faith and background would not let me open myself to the powerful and tangible spirit around me.

Kneeling in the dust among those people I felt a strong will to believe as they did and to fully join the strong emotional current unifying the congregation. I came there as an anthropologist to study them. They consider my religion false and almost satanic. Nonetheless, at that moment the barriers separating me from them came down.

The Baptist pastor who had come from the city to shepherd this flock of believing Indians gave a name to what I and the others felt. Using the full rhetorical possibilities of his tradition—his performance differed from Mormon rhetorical style as musical theater differs from a hypnotic chant—he compared us to the blind man on the road to Jericho (Luke 18:35-43). He did what Nephi encourages us to do. He compared the scriptures to our own lives. He made them speak to our own experience. When the blind man said, “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me,” all of us were asking the Lord for mercy. When the Lord cured his blindness, He healed ours as well. Jesus became a literal, living force in our lives through the power of ritual and rhetoric. The complexities of our individual lives, from mine as a North American Mormon anthropologist to that of the impoverished Indian farmer as well as that of the middle-class Hispanic preacher, became simplified, unified, and typified by one small verse from the Bible. There, like the blind man, we found the solution to our existential crisis in accepting Jesus, and the preacher showed us how to do it.

Rhetoric and ritual are powerful. In our learned society we acclaim rational discourse and rational worship, denigrating ritual and rhetoric as empty. Despite our words, ritual and rhetoric continue as constructive forces even when disguised as rational, substantive speech. Without ritual to legitimize and connect ideas with emotion and without the established patterns of rhetoric, we could not even categorize one sentence as rational and another as non-rational. Rationality, in its highest sense, depends on ritual and rhetoric for its vigor. Its style of performance merely varies from others that it then maligns.

Social validation enables truth to exist. When I was a missionary I was troubled by questions about the gospel to which I could not find answers. Following our teachings, I spent many frustrating hours on my knees seeking answers. One day while I was bearing my testimony in a routine fashion, following the ritual requirements of the discussions, a flood of emotion overwhelmed me. I still had no answers, but the questions lost their relevance in the face of ritual validation of experience. Of course, I knew the name of what overwhelmed me—the Spirit—and I soon learned to induce it in other people.

I am not arguing against the existence of the Spirit and its importance in our lives. Rather, I am exalting its presence. Nonetheless, I think we should recognize that since we are human

beings, even the supernatural depends on social process to work with us in an intelligible fashion. In this we are no different from any other human group. Unless we understand this we fail to grasp the full message contained in the story of Adam's fall.

The words "lone and dreary world," with their potent existential imagery, nicely express our separation from God and our angst at the hall of mirrors that we live in as social beings. It is easy to get lost among our own twisting reflections. This existential gloominess is one of the dangers of recognizing how the social both enables and constrains our lives, as well as our interactions with the spirit and our fellow mortals. Just as Adam and Eve sought to maintain their link with higher truth through prayer and righteousness, that is through socially established ritual, so too we cannot know the world outside ourselves except through language with motivating rhetoric and communal life with organizing ritual.

When sociologists Lofland and Stark studied the process of conversion to the Unification Church (the "Moonies"), they found that our involvement with the people around us significantly influences our religious beliefs. Faith, testimony, and knowledge are ultimately social; they depend on validation from other people for their coherence and acceptability.

I once "investigated" the Moonies. When there was a lot of publicity about how they supposedly "brainwashed" people into joining their so-called "cult," a zealous Mormon friend and I went to visit them. My friend had met them in the street and wanted to teach them the "true" gospel. She soon gave up going before their insistence on teaching us. I kept going out of curiosity. They assigned a nice young woman to be my "friend" and they overwhelmed me with kindness and warmth. They tried to show me what utopia is like. But I wouldn't convert. After several months, like our missionaries before almost professional investigators, they were frustrated and called in the local Korean leader to convince me. He was an erudite and loving man. For him the coup de grace came when he finished our discussion and asked me if their religion was not "logical." All I could answer was "yes." "Then why do you not join us?" he asked. I replied, "It's perfectly logical if you accept its basic assumptions and I don't accept those."

I loved visiting with the Moonies. They were great people. But because I would not keep up with social process and become one of them, our relationship became too frustrating for both of us. I quit going. Ultimately my relationships with my Mormon friends and family, following Lofland and Stark's discussion, were stronger

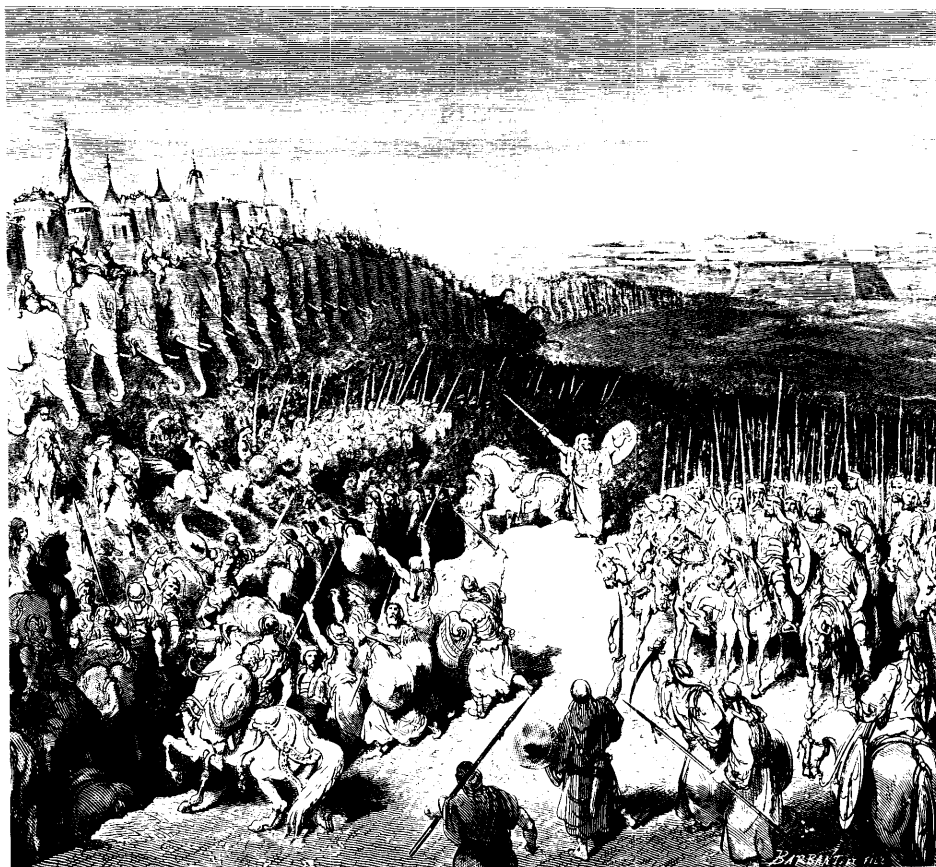
than those I developed with my friends from the Unification Church. My testimony was never challenged.

How do people gain testimonies? Simple answers are unfortunately partial answers. One simple answer focuses on the influence of the supernatural in our lives. For some people another consists of careful thought and decision making. Another stresses the sociological importance of our friends and family. Yet another must recognize how ritual and rhetorical forms enable and induce testimony. The total answer is a Gordian knot tied in a rope of at least these four strands.

The four strands together with others create our testimony and keep it alive. It is fashionable to criticize the emptiness of testimony meeting, when people merely follow the form, just as it is fashionable to criticize the almost somnolent character of Mormon testimony bearing and formal speaking. Perhaps the emptiness, like mine in Tucumán, on Lake Titicaca, and among the Moonies, pertains to the critic rather than to the person undergoing the ritual. It is the

emptiness of an aloofness that keeps us from emphatically comprehending our fellows, be they Mormons with their list of "I know that..." street preachers calling us to repentance, foreigners by an exotic lake, or "cultists" among us.

Our haughtiness exalts our separateness while hiding the basis of our existence which we share in common with all men. It gives us the sad irrelevance of a Peruvian standing among the marvels of a Cuzco built by his Incan ancestors and arguing that only people from outer space could have built such majestic structures. He thinks he is giving more importance to his national patrimony by attributing it to prestigious foreigners. But he is denying the abilities of his people and ultimately making them falsely appear sad and pathetic. He blinds himself to his own great heritage of defying entropy to create fantastic wonders. Similarly, if we do not appreciate the simple, pedestrian way testimonies appear, develop, and even dissipate we risk our own alienation in a rational hall of mirrors drenched by chill rain, a "lone and dreary world" of eternally mixed metaphors, where any kind of testimony ceases to exist.



"This year I'm sure we'll beat the second ward in the road show competition."

LIGHTER MINDS

THE PROPOSITION

By J. Frederic Voros, Jr.

A young man sits behind a tidy desk in an executive office. He is wearing a dark blue suit, a white shirt, and a red tie. The office is unremarkable except for its picture window, which directly overlooks the Lion House, and offers a panoramic view of the entire Salt Lake Valley. Judging from the view, the office must be nearly twenty stories high. The phone rings

Executive: Hello?

Caller: Hello? That's it? Just hello?

Executive: Oh, it's you.

Caller: Yeah, and have I got a proposition for you.

Executive: Amway, right? Count me out.

Caller: Close, but no cigar. Anyway, what's so wrong with Amway? It's a multimillion dollar company. You can't argue with success. Truth from whatever source, right?

Executive: I guess. So what's the deal?

Caller: I've figured out why President McKay's every-member-a-missionary program failed.

Executive: Failed? Are you kidding me? Since the inception of that program, the Church has experienced unprecedented growth. Geometric growth.

Caller: OK, OK, not failed. Why it didn't live up to its potential. The concept was great, of course, inspired. But how many people have you brought into the Church?

Executive: Well . . .

Caller: Right. Me too. Look, it's not Amway, I promise. But I am selling this diet plan, OK? Better than Amway, better than Herbalife, better—

Executive: Forget it.

Caller: OK, OK, but think about it. Obesity is a leading killer of Americans. Too much fat, your heart gets overworked, one day you wake up dead. Also, your clothes fit lousy, so you don't even look good at the viewing.

Executive: Yeah, I worry a lot about that.

J. FREDERIC VOROS, JR., is a lawyer and writer living in Salt Lake City.

sale, but he can sell the product. Lose weight and make money, too. Now what have I done?

Executive: Lost a soul?

Caller: Replicated myself. Now I earn commissions on his sales as well as mine. And then if I'm really lucky—

Executive: He'll replicate himself.

Caller: You got it. I find five of him, he finds five, they find—

Executive: The power of duplication. I've heard this before. Where are we going?

Caller: Bear with me. I earn, oh, about ten percent off sales on my first level, eight percent off my second level, and so forth, down five levels. Sounds great, and sometimes it even works. Sometimes it works great. But how well would it do if the company kept the entire price of the product? Paid no commissions at all?

Executive: Chintzy company. Nobody in his right mind would work for it, obviously.

Caller: What about saving all those people from their fat? Wouldn't that be enough motivation?

Executive: Sure, if you're Mother Teresa.

Caller: Exactly. So that's it.

Executive: That's what?

Caller: That's the problem with the every-member-a-missionary program. To put it bluntly, we do all the work, and the Church gets all the money.

Executive: Come on, you're not suggesting—

Caller: No. Too strong a word. Observing, that's all. Observing that the Church's compensation plan is, well, a little too top-heavy to be very motivational.

Look, of every dollar paid for a can of Lite'n Up, the company pays out nearly fifty cents in commissions and overrides. And those people have earned it fairly. They brought the dollars in, after all.

So why not apply the same principle? Why not share the tithing with those who generate it? Why not actually pay commissions on tithing? I see a five-level plan, heavy payout in the lower levels. Encourage depth, stability. . .

Executive: I don't believe this.

Caller: Next important concept: maintenance. Unless I buy a case of Lite'n Up every month, I'm not eligible for commissions.

Perfect for tithing. Unless you pay a full tithe, you don't qualify for downline commissions. Commissions which, needless to say, are a much bigger carrot than a building program subsidy for the ward.

Especially considering the missionary

work that will be taking place. First of all, I'd never push another can of Lite'n Up. It's a great product. don't get me wrong, but naturally I'd rather be pushing the Church.

And, of course, if you compare the dollars people pay in tithing to the dollars they spend on diet drinks, well, let's just say the economics of the thing would virtually force me to switch to missionary work. And I'm sure I wouldn't be alone.

Think about it: we're talking about revolutionizing the Church. Talk about geometric growth, I'll show you geometric growth. This is big, maybe millennial.

Executive: Get serious. First of all, even if the whole scheme weren't a moral embarrassment, which to me at least it pretty clearly is, what makes you think the Church would settle for five percent instead of ten?

Caller: Are you kidding? The Church would drown in money. Half as much, sure, but from a hundred times as many people. Think of all the part- and non-tithe payers who would gladly pay a full tithe and do heavy missionary work if they were getting a percentage off, let's see, five times five is twenty-five, times five is one hundred twenty-five, times five is—well, anyway, the point is, more people, way more people, are paying in. Same as the Laffer curve in economics. Lowering the tax rate brings in less money, right?

Executive: I guess.

Caller: Wrong. Lowering the rate creates incentive, which creates production, which creates wealth, which creates more tax dollars. Just think of this as supply-side evangelism. Believe me, the money will flow. Talk about the windows of heaven opening up!

Executive: Did you say "heaven"? Or "mammon"?

Caller: I sense an objection.

Executive: You can't see it? How can it be right to take money that is given to the Lord, through his appointed servants, and pay commissions with it as if you were selling used cars?

Caller: Hey, who pays your salary? The work you do for the Church is necessary and everything, but let's face it, you're not saving souls. Directly, I mean. What sense does it make to pay people who tabulate records or whatever but expect those who actually bring people into the

fold to work for nothing?

Except blessings, of course. Which, I might add, the Church is already splitting with us . . . well, not us personally, as it happens, but you know what I mean. Anyway, how different is this?

Executive: But why shouldn't blessings alone be sufficient motivation? It's morally repugnant that someone would even expect to be paid money for preaching the gospel. We might as well join the electric church.

Administration is one thing, it's got to be done, but receiving pay for doing what we should be doing out of love is—well, in a word, prostitution.

Caller: No. It isn't being paid that makes the prostitute a sinner, it's that the act itself is intrinsically immoral. If she had, oh, shined his shoes you wouldn't think any the worse of her. Where, like here, the act is intrinsically moral, it's simply a matter of paying your money and taking your choice, so to speak.

I call it the "Marriott Principle." Marriott could have donated to BYU anonymously, not letting the left hand know what the right hand was doing, right? Earned blessings in heaven. Fine. Fine, if you trust God's taste; he gets to pick the blessings. You might like them a lot, or you might think they are pretty well disguised. You know, like his blessings here. Plus you have to wait to get them.

Executive: Right. Die, in fact.

Caller: Exactly. Definitely a downside. Or you might think, what the heck, the glory of men is fleeting, but at least you know what you're getting. And you get it now. That's worth something, right? Everybody discounts for cash. So Marriott pays his money and takes his choice. With, I might add, the Church's cooperation—blessing, in fact

The main thing is, BYU's Marriott Center got built. Sure, it was named after a business guy instead of a prophet or something, but the Brethren go down there now and speak to 23,000 people.

Executive: Assuming they fill it up.

Caller: Sure. The point is, the building is there to be filled up, regardless of Marriott's motive.

Same with this. Better, obviously, that you bring people into the Church out of the highest possible motive—love, or whatever. But that's not the choice. The choice is the present program, where they trickle in, or my program, where

whatever its faults they will flood in.

Putting aside for a moment the purely egocentric issues of motivation and reward, what about the elect out there who aren't being reached?

Executive: But would you want to be brought into the Church by someone who did it just to get a cut of your tithing?

Caller: I'd rather that money plus a certain amount of righteous desire got him to talk to me than go to hell because the righteous desire alone wasn't enough to motivate him.

As it is, he's more likely to sell me some skin care or herbal toothpaste or something that's got a decent compensation plan. Hey, even the righteous gotta feed their kids.

Executive: Too true.

Caller: Pure dynamite, isn't it? And best of all, it's a win-win thing, nobody loses. Nobody. The Church gets more tithing than ever, 'cause five percent of a zillion beats ten percent of some normal number. More temples, more chapels, more bureaucrats like you. more—

Executive: More of everything money can buy.

Caller: Exactly. The member wins, 'cause, well, first of all he paid his tithing, right? So he gets those blessings. But if he's at all excited, his commissions will cover his tithing anyway, and more. This guy's really glad he's a member.

And the guy on the end is still paying ten percent, he doesn't even notice there's a new program, except that the member who is now somewhat motivated contacted him and sponsored him into the Church.

Otherwise he'd be, you know, believing in grace or reincarnation or something. Something definitely worse than the Church.

Executive: Yeah, that's true. I guess.

Caller: There's something to it, isn't there? A power. Too bad it couldn't actually be, you know . . . Hey, you don't think, maybe—

Executive: No way. Absolutely not. No way.

Caller: You don't think maybe just one of them, if it was presented, you know—

Executive: No way. There is no way. Believe me. Think of what you're saying.

Caller: Yeah, you're right. I guess. Too bad, though. There's so much you could do if it just wasn't a church.

Executive: Yeah, keep reminding yourself. And call me next time inspiration strikes.

Caller: Naturally. Keep smiling. Bye.

REVIEWS

LAIE AND POINTS
SOUTH

UNTO THE ISLANDS OF
THE SEA: A HISTORY OF THE
LATTER-DAY SAINTS
IN THE PACIFIC

by R. Lanier Britsch

Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1986. 585 pp. \$16.95



Reviewed by Ian G. Barber

R. LANIER BRITSCH'S NEW book is yet another independent volume from the cancelled multi-volume sesquicentennial history of the LDS church, proposed in days when scholarly historical research seemed to be almost respectable. Since secular history is now considered a means of separating the wishy-washy from the faithful, it is a little ironic to consider that the volumes which have appeared from the cancelled series are generally characterized by faithful interpretation and tremendous sensitivity. Britsch's book is no exception.

In terms of published scholarship, Britsch's work breaks new ground by examining a hitherto little studied area of LDS history. The fascinating and the mundane are all here: there is the self appointed king Walter Murray Gibson, preparing for world dominion in Hawaii. There are the disappointments and frustrations of the early Tahitian missionaries dealing with the Catholic and French authorities and occasional incarceration, as well as different Polynesian cultural concepts vis-a-vis religious commitment. There is discrimination by local gov-

ernments against indigenous LDS converts in Hawaii and Tahiti, leading to bloodshed on occasion. There are the inroads made in Tahiti and Australia by the RLDS missionaries, in the former case after years of absence by Utah missionaries, resulting in occasional tension and crossfire. There is the growth of Mormonism in Samoa and Tonga to the status of a major religious tradition, and the greater acceptance of Mormonism by the Maoris of New Zealand than by European majority there, a situation now changing.

The historical merits of this wide ranging and extensively researched work are readily apparent. Yet there are also two areas where, in my opinion, Britsch's book does not quite meet the expectations of a scholarly study of Mormonism in the Pacific. Firstly, Britsch seems overly reliant upon the mission histories prepared by Andrew Jenson and the annual mission financial and statistical reports. I do not wish to underrate these sources; Jenson's Church-wide mission histories are an invaluable historical resource, often citing information not generally available elsewhere, while the mission and financial reports in the LDS Church Archives are presently unavailable for

general research, rendering Britsch's data from this source particularly valuable. Yet a survey of the sources cited in Carol Cornwall Madsen's recent article on female LDS missionaries in Polynesia indicates that Britsch has ignored a number of relevant primary source documents. The same is also true of New Zealand missionary journals, including the papers of mission president Gordon Claridge Young in LDS archives, which would have supplemented data from Young's oral history with more contemporary insights. Britsch, in short, relies on institutional historical data at the expense of social history or alternative/unofficial institutional sources. On occasion his sources are inconsistently or unclearly cited; this is most egregious when he fails to give a citation for George Q. Cannon statement that Hawaiians were descended from the Book of Mormon peoples (pp. 97-98). Britsch refers to this incident again on pages 150-51, where the source is hinted at but still not explicitly cited.

Britsch's treatment of issues of culture conflict and assimilation raises more complex problems. To Britsch's credit, he deals with a number of specific issues in this regard, including the management of the Laie plantation in Hawaii and conflict involving traditional Polynesian concepts of land ownership, culture conflict in New Zealand involving such traditions as funerary practices, and differing cultural interpretations of sexual mores in a number of Polynesian contexts. Britsch also documents the paternalism inherent in the largely exclusive appointment of Caucasian missionaries to local priesthood and administrative positions, bolstered by an apparent hesitancy to ordain local members, a practice that continued into the earlier twentieth century in many areas of Polynesia (see Britsch, pp. 283, 388, 406). He even deals with the sensitive issue of racism against the Maori people in early twentieth century New Zealand (see especially pp. 292-93).

Yet the extent and significance of culture conflict is generally downplayed and considered anachronistic in the contemporary Church. Unfortunately for both the Church and European-dominated political administrations in Oceania, that is clearly not the case, as resurgent and increasingly vocal indigenous peoples movements have demonstrated in this region since the late 1960s. However, Britsch seems content to dismiss the problem, offering such observations as "the Church demands that Maoris [in New Zealand], like everyone else, conform to what might be called the Mormon cultural pattern" (p. 338), as well as an unfor-

Britsch's otherwise thorough, incisive and balanced analysis seems compromised on occasion. Overall, there is simply nothing else like Britsch's work, and it generally stands as a sound historical source of much higher quality than several generations of less critical and somewhat condescending works. *Unto the*

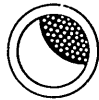
Islands of the Sea will serve as an essential starting point for further regional studies of Mormonism in Oceania, and I for one am anxious that it become known as such among Church members and interested scholars in the Pacific.

THE MAN IN THE PEW HAS WRITTEN A BOOK

IN SEARCH OF
TRUTH & LOVE

by Jae R. Ballif

Bookcraft, 1986. 143 pp.



Reviewed by Philip L. Barlow

I SPEAK OFTEN before groups and was therefore not particularly nervous that Sunday morning as I addressed the Saints of the Cambridge, Massachusetts First Ward. The congregation was reasonably attentive (for a Mormon sacrament meeting), though the numerous infants, produced mainly by the ward's graduate student couples, squawked their impatience with my abstractions.

As this ordinary scene unfolded, the extraordinary abruptly occurred. I had scarcely begun my talk when I was somehow made aware that someone in the audience *loved* me—loved me with uncommon power and without personally knowing me. A very odd time, I thought, for such a revelation. I glanced behind me at those on the stand. My wife, who sat awaiting her turn to speak, was not the source of this unusual new love. It was someone in the congregation itself. I felt the force of a personality new to me, a personality who, for whatever reason, *cared*. Moreover, the personality pos-

sessed the awesome strength to make its care known from the anonymity of a crowded pew, near the rear of a large, packed chapel.

I scanned the audience, found the man, engaged his eyes. I saw wisdom as well as love in those eyes, the same rare sort of intelligent goodness that one discerns by looking into the face of Lowell Bennion or at pictures of David O. McKay.

For a moment I dismissed my impression, guessing the "love" I felt derived merely from the man's interested facial expression. Perhaps I had unconsciously noticed it before. But others, at least a few, seemed also to be listening carefully. While I assumed their good will, I did not feel nor expect this compelling empathy from them. And in any case, what I was saying was not going to change the world; even by flattering myself it was hard to imagine the man was *that* interested in my sermon. No, this was something more and different. This man loved *me*. He cared about what I was saying in part because I cared about it—so simple can love be. And yet, again, he did not know me. What draining exertion to expend—unasked—on a

stranger! The force of his character lifted and drew me, carried me through my talk, though I had been aware of no such need.

I had arrived in Cambridge some months earlier to study religious history and to think about my own faith and values. Perceiving a soul who had something to teach me, I watched the man in the pew. I watched him for two years after that Sunday service, for as long as we both lived in New England. I observed and listened to him more carefully than he knows, in ways of which he remains unaware.

Among other things, I observed one particularly astonishing fact: *this man focused his intense, intelligent love on just about everyone he met*, or, as in my case, on people he hadn't exactly met. Often this love moved them as I had been moved. I found as I watched him that it was a little easier to imagine an even more potent love, the uniquely pure strength of soul that enabled the mortal Jesus to say simply to some fisherman, "Come, follow me," and they followed.

The name of the man in the pew was Jae Ballif, then president of the Massachusetts Boston Mission, currently provost and academic vice-president at Brigham Young University. He has now written his first book dealing with religious values.

In Search of Truth & Love is a slightly dangerous title to give a serious work. Thin, maudlin porridge is not a pressing need in the LDS literary diet just now, and a volume that accents terms like "love" and "truth" risks dismissal as literary junk food by "serious readers" who may never actually engage the book. It also risks what may be a worse fate: achieving stature as a kind of religious valentine by sentimental givers of gift-books.

But discriminating readers should look more closely. Ballif's mind is as acute as his soul is capacious. His "love" is not pathetic sentimentalism, his "truth" not a mere series of platitudes. What is more, in Ballif's own life the gap between rhetoric and behavior is thin. This voice ought not be ignored.

If psychiatrist Scott Peck is right (I think he is), genuine love is always a form of work or courage—specifically, work or courage directed toward the nurture of our own or another's spiritual growth (see *The Road Less Traveled*, N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1978). Love's "work" is in opposition to the inertia of laziness, its "courage" in opposition to the resistance of fear. Peck goes on to argue, like Rollo May, that the principal form the work of love takes is attention: an active shift of consciousness against the lethargy of our own minds, enabling us to

PHILIP L. BARLOW is the editor of *A Thoughtful Faith: Essays on Belief by Mormon Scholars*.

tunate over simplification and dismissal of *Maoritanga*, or tradition (eg. pp. 286-87). In fact, it is interesting that Britsch documents the anti-Mormon apparatus set up in New Zealand by two former Church members in 1981, while completely ignoring the defection of literally hundreds of Polynesian Mormons in Wellington and Auckland in the same year, after local ecclesiastical leaders disbanded Polynesian-speaking wards in a mistaken attempt at assimilation. The policy was reversed in 1983 by Church headquarters in Salt Lake City, but not before creating serious rifts in the Mormon communities of Auckland and Wellington along ethnic and even family lines. In my opinion, this poses a far more serious long-term problem than the anti-Mormons; it is an issue of culture conflict and assimilation that simply cannot be brushed aside with the acknowledgment that local leadership of the Church in the Pacific has now passed largely into indigenous hands.

Related to this problem are such interesting interpretative developments as the assimilation of bowdlerized colonial British, Polynesian, and American Mormon mythology into new Mormon Pacific traditions of prehistoric settlement in the Polynesian region. These frequently stand at odds with the findings of contemporary anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and ethnobotany, and I am a personal witness to the wrenching struggle of a number of Polynesian students to deal with this perceived dissonance while following the Church's dictum to pursue formal education (a struggle complicated in New Zealand, at least, with the resurgence of Maori awareness and identity, and an awareness of historical injustice on the part of the European colonialists). Yet Britsch's reference to the Mormon Polynesian tradition of Oceanic settlement by descendants of American Israelites is completely uncritical, and includes the unexplained assertion that the Polynesians appear to be Lamanites rather than Nephites (p. 278).

These problems do not devalue Britsch's book for scholars of Mormon or Pacific religious history; furthermore, in a work of this scope and intended audience, one cannot realistically expect a detailed and critical social-anthropological analysis. Yet it is worth considering whether anyone (including the Church itself) ultimately benefits from an analysis which seems to underplay social and anthropological issues as they affect contemporary populations, especially in the long-term perspective. However, this criticism should be seen as a reflection of the value of Britsch's work to both scholars and the general Church membership of Oceania, for it is clear when

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Signature _____

attend to our own or another's growth.

Although he may not remember me personally, I have experienced first-hand Ballif's intensely focused "attention." He understands love deeply, and my knowledge of this fact made me work harder at comprehending *Truth & Love* than I otherwise might have—a strategy I commend to others. The "charity" or "pure love" Ballif describes attempts to help readers past the distracting superficialities of abused and vulgar notions of "love," and toward an understanding similar to Peck's. Unlike Peck, however, Ballif's understanding exists in a Mormon context, and is thoroughly based on Mormon assumptions. The Mormon context is important, Ballif contends, because the principles and institutions of Mormonism foster love and truth uniquely well, a view also expressed by Eugene England in the title essay of *Why the Church is as True as the Gospel*. Ballif's love is not synonymous with emotion, much less with a sexual act. "People do not 'fall' into pure love, they must climb up to it" (p. 78). Love entails emotions, surely, but involves much more. It possesses, for example, the quality of endurance through time. It also promotes strength, not vulnerability to temptation or weakness.

This love involves the mind: "To love perfectly we must know truth perfectly" (p. 79)—an interesting insight, given the false dichotomy between spirit and intellect so frequently asserted in Mormon culture. More specifically, love involves wisdom ("truth in perspective") and is the opposite of ignorance and selfishness, the two principles Ballif considers the ultimate sources of conflict and problems in relationships. Wisdom is second to love as the most important attribute of godliness, but, for Ballif, wisdom is also a prerequisite for real love. This wise love allows one to appropriately give priority to "which 'should' I should" when dealing with the actual complexities of life:

To love as God loves, we must understand the needs of others, understand the true principles that apply in the situation, understand the priority of both the needs of those involved and the truths that apply, and then act, think, and feel in such a way as to provide maximum opportunity for others to improve themselves as a result of what is done. (p. 80)

Like University of Chicago philosopher Allan Bloom (*The Closing of the American Mind*) and like Mormonism in general, Ballif argues for the existence of true principles whose existence is independent of the human mind. He therefore argues against the hoary argument that all true principles are "relative" (meaning, in common usage, provisional and dispensable; in its

most degenerate democratic form, all ideas and values are held to have equal worth). But, writes Ballif, the utter relativity of moral principles "is a position taken when we tend to confuse the existence of true principles with the possession of true principles" (p. 4). Ballif's book—a kind of personal life-philosophy and synthesis of the plan of salvation—explores the process by which these principles may be known, and then links them to the notions of faith ("sufficient to move one to action"), repentance ("a self-directed change toward the truth"), divine organizations (families and the church), and other gospel essentials.

While I do recommend *Truth & Love*, I am not persuaded by every assertion it makes. For instance, the author writes that "God exists in space and time; therefore, it is possible to come to know God" (p. 48). Now it may be that God exists in space and time, and it may be that one can know God. But it is not obvious that the latter pronouncement follows logically from the former, as the author's "therefore" suggests. Similarly, the seemingly simple claims made for the scriptures (p. 124) or the role of prophets (p. 123) actually entail extremely complex issues that separate books could be used to examine. Appended so briefly to the thoughtful

discussions about the nature of truth and love, such claims left me wondering whether they were the equally sophisticated but unelaborated theses of the author's reflective soul, or merely standard bits of popular Mormon theology thrown in as an affirmation of his thoroughly LDS perspective. Furthermore, in the worthy effort to balance profundity and simplicity, Ballif's book appears to me to have been overedited, some of its color thereby blanced.

There is also a certain abstractness about this book, arising, perhaps, from the natural difficulty in discussing something like love without doing so as a poet or storyteller. The book could have used more real life case studies, like "the Samoan brother" (pp. 98-99). Love may finally lend itself more easily to showing than explaining, and not everyone will be anxious to labor to understand with the mind as well as the heart.

But abstract or not, Jae Ballif, the man, possesses what the world most deeply yearns for. Since his narrative's simple prose belies its depth and worth, really comprehending *In Search of Truth & Love* demands concentration—hard work indeed. But this search is worth the bother. The kind of love and truth Ballif practices has never come easily.



"But enough of my unique Mormon theology, tell me about yours."

A LESS PECULIAR PEOPLE

MORMON NEO-ORTHODOXY: A CRISIS THEOLOGY

by O. Kendall White Jr.

Signature Books, 1987.

196 pages. \$11.95 (paperbound).



Reviewed by Armand L. Mauss

I SUSPECT THAT MANY Mormons my age or older can remember when the Church had a different "feel" to it. People seemed more tolerant of variety in doctrinal viewpoints and less disposed to look to an encyclopedia like *Mormon Doctrine* for what they were supposed to believe. God seemed more like one of us (or we like one of His), not so remote or all powerful, more "Heavenly Father" than "Elohim." Other Latter-day Saints were not so often stiff, sanctimonious lawyers or businessmen bucking for bishop. They were more often ordinary, unpretentious folk working out their own salvation "in fear and trembling," not only about how far they had to go toward perfection in the next world, but also about how long they'd have a job in *this* world!

Who took my church away? What happened to that church whose cultural ambience was once permeated with a recognition of the finiteness of our God, the fundamental goodness of human nature, the perfectibility of common people, and a process of salvation based upon spiritual and ethical *merit*, rather than upon grace for a favored lineage or heritage? In this book, Kendall White offers a partial answer: Latter-day Saints have come to be influenced by a "neo-orthodoxy" much more akin to conservative Protestantism than to the innovative (if heretical) religion taught by Joseph

Smith in Nauvoo. This Mormon variety of neo-orthodoxy emphasizes divine sovereignty and otherness, human depravity, and salvation by grace. That may not be quite what "the Brethren" teach (at least not all of them), but that is what a lot of today's Saints believe.

In general, I am persuaded by White's contentions. They accord well with my own personal experience and research. Indeed, I came independently to a very similar conclusion, which I reported in my 1982 Redd Center lecture (Mauss, 1983). There I referred to the phenomenon as "borrowings from Protestant Fundamentalism," but I think that White and I are talking about essentially the same development. (In a footnote, he acknowledges that "neo-orthodoxy" may be a somewhat arbitrary and problematic term for what he is talking about, and that "fundamentalism" might be equally applicable if it did not carry such a specialized meaning for Mormons). White, however, goes far beyond the impressionistic argument I made to document convincingly the existence of a Mormon "neo-orthodoxy" and to identify the authors who are its chief purveyors. There are also some differences between White's ideas and my own, to which I will return later.

Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy has five substantive chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. Chapter 1 is a condensed course in the sociology and psychology of religion as of about 1970, including the ideas of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Richard Niebuhr, Freud, Fromm, Festinger, and Cantril. These ideas are all inter-

woven to provide a theoretical framework for the "crisis" theme found in the subtitle of the book. "Crisis" in this case turns out to be a fairly dramatic term for the perennial confrontation with "modernity" and secularization which new religions usually face in the Western world.

Chapter 2 provides a very useful and informative overview of Protestant neo-orthodoxy and its chief proponents in Europe and America (Barth, Brunner, and Reinhold Niebuhr). It is written in ordinary language that is easy for non-theologians to understand. Chapter 3 reviews "traditional" Mormon theology, meaning the doctrines Joseph Smith taught toward the end of his life and which were propounded in the apologetic works of B.H. Roberts, James E. Talmage, and the like. Chapter 4 introduces *Mormon* neo-orthodoxy, which seems to have its origins mainly in the 1960s. McMurrin (1965) recognized the first stirrings of it, and its main proponents were Hyrum Andrus, Daniel Ludlow, Glenn Pearson, Rodney Turner, and David H. Yarn. The neo-orthodoxy "movement" seems to be carried primarily by lay authors within the Church, and General Authorities are not much implicated in it. However, occasionally a speech or an essay by Church leaders (e.g. J. Reuben Clark, Ezra T. Benson, Bruce R. McConkie, or Boyd K. Packer) has given aid and comfort to the movement.

Chapter 5 reviews the work of recent proponents of neo-orthodoxy, including Janice Allred, Donald Olsen, Paul and Margaret Toscano, and J. Frederic Voros, none of whom would likely be considered a household name in the Mormon culture. Interestingly enough, furthermore, their work has appeared primarily in the pages of *SUNSTONE* and/or at Sunstone Symposia. White quotes extensively from their work to show how they implicitly or explicitly promote such traditionally Protestant notions as the utter infinitude and incomprehensibility of God, the contingency, helplessness, and depravity of human beings, and thus the ultimate human dependence on the grace of God for salvation. In the Conclusion, White suggests some of the implications of such theological notions, particularly their reinforcement for the authoritarianism, anti-intellectualism, and political conservatism which he sees emerging in response to the crisis of modernity faced by today's Mormons and their church.

The book's strong points, in my opinion, are (1) its useful overviews (with ample examples and citations) of the different doctrinal orientations, including traditional Mormon doctrine (at least from the 1840s) and both Protestant and Mormon neo-orthodoxy; and (2) its

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attempt (if not entirely successful) to provide a theoretical framework to explain the neo-orthodoxy "movement" in Mormonism, rather than just describing it. The chapters reviewing the different theologies are particularly helpful to those readers not acquainted with the development of postwar Protestantism. The theoretical framework is a good introduction to the way social scientists tend to think about religious developments. White's particular theoretical argument, however, is much less persuasive on reconsideration than it is in an initial reading.

At some risk of oversimplification, White's basic theoretical explanation could be put this way: Modernity, with its secularization of nearly all traditional ideas and institutions, has presented Mormonism and other religions with a "high-intensity cultural crisis" by undermining of the traditional world view and basic assumptions of religion(s). The resulting sense of human contingency and powerlessness gives rise to a compatible theology that stresses the absoluteness of God, the depravity and helplessness of humankind, and the derivative necessity of total reliance on the grace of God for salvation. The same sense renders believers susceptible to an authoritarian leadership style, which demands strict obedience and celebrates irrationality in an effort to cope with secular rationality and desacralization.

This theological syndrome is called "neo-orthodoxy." Promoted by able theologians and intellectuals in Europe and America, it spread through much of Protestantism in the 1940s and 1950s. Starting in the 1960s, a version of it finally reached Mormonism, where it has been subtly undermining the traditional teachings of Joseph Smith about the finiteness of God, the perfectibility of humankind, and salvation by personal merit (or works).

Plausible as all that may sound at first, it raises a number of questions that are not satisfactorily confronted in the book. First of all, if the cultural crisis in question is so pervasive in Europe and America, why has it not affected all religions and/or believers in the same way? Why is it that some religions (like mainstream Protestant and Catholic denominations) have accommodated a great deal of secularization while others have chosen various ways of resisting it? The difficulty of answering such a question highlights the complexity of the relationship between religion and culture and the variability in the response of particular religions to the same "crisis."

It also points to the hazards of the kind of deterministic cultural or "environmental" explanation that social scientists like White are inclined to offer for religious developments.

This conventional explanation has been challenged in recent years by the work of scholars like Stark and Bainbridge (1985, not cited by White), who argue that secularization is a "self-limiting process" by its very nature. Far from sweeping traditional religion from the face of the earth, modernity itself is limited in its power to meet the kinds of human needs met by religion. Is neo-orthodoxy, then, to be understood as one of those responses limiting the spread of modernity? White's explanation does not engage some of these new ideas in the sociology of religion, which would seem to be relevant to his argument.

Another important question has to do with the *extensiveness* of the neo-orthodoxy "movement" within Mormonism. White acknowledges (p. xxii) that he is not in a position to make any claims about how many Mormons are influenced by neo-orthodox thinking. That is, however, a damaging demurrer. If neo-orthodoxy is a response to a pervasive cultural crisis, and only a handful of Mormons subscribe to it, then there is either not much of a crisis or not much of a response. What does that do to the major thesis of the book?

Indeed, this turns out to be a serious issue in evaluating White's work here. As one reviews the literature of Mormon neo-orthodoxy cited by White, one is struck by the relative obscurity of the authors, both from the 1960s and more recently. Neo-orthodoxy does not seem to have been an important feature of the preaching or writing of the General Authorities of the Church, who would seem to be the ones who matter the most in authority and influence. Instead, the neo-orthodox literature (such as it is) comes mainly from a handful of conservative academics, most connected in one way or another with the religion department at BYU, at least in the formative period of the 1960s. The reader is entitled to have doubts about the influence of Mormon intellectuals, whether conservative or liberal, upon either the General Authorities or the body of the Saints! So what, exactly, is the constituency to which Mormon neo-orthodoxy has its appeal and makes its inroads? It may be even smaller than the constituency of *Dialogue* or *SUNSTONE*! There certainly is not much evidence here that it has made more extensive inroads.

Having said all that, however, I must confess to sharing White's suspicions that many Latter-day Saints at the grass roots are influenced to some degree or another by what he calls neo-orthodoxy and what I call Protestant fundamentalism. I offer a somewhat different explanation for the phenomenon: I see it less as a response to modernity *per se* and more as a response to the *accommodations* to modernity

that Mormonism has already made throughout the twentieth century. These accommodations have undermined the constant Mormon claims to peculiarity as Mormon culture has come increasingly to resemble that of middle America (and/or vice versa). This sense of loss of a unique identity has created a public relations problem at the institutional level and a problem of self-concept at the individual level. The response at both levels has been to search for boundaries at more distinctively conservative points on the social and religious spectrums. Meanwhile, converts from middle America (perhaps themselves attracted by these new "boundaries") have increasingly made the average social and intellectual ethos of American Mormons more conservative.

This explanation is not necessarily incompatible with White's, but it places greater emphasis upon internal Mormon developments (not just reactions to external ones). To verify empirically the theoretical notions of either White or myself, we will have to do some systematic analyses of Church lesson manuals and of teaching at the local levels, and also get more survey data on the actual beliefs of Mormons across the country. Until then, we will not know how extensive is the neo-orthodoxy "movement" which White sees in the works of the authors which he examines. Meanwhile, however, he has directed us to an important body of exegetical literature which may very well loom much more important in the Church eventually than it seems to now. In the process, White has written a very important and interesting book, which I strongly commend to the readers of these pages.

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NEWS

MEETING BREATHES LIFE INTO ASSOCIATION OF MORMON LETTERS

By Dan Maryon

The Association for Mormon Letters held an awards banquet and annual business meeting 1 April in Salt Lake City, presenting writing awards for 1987, hearing readings by award winners, and sustaining new officers and board members for 1988. While reports of AML's death are only slightly exaggerated, the group plans to resume a regular schedule of activities during the coming year and increase membership, which has dwindled from a high of over 300 to about 70 current members.

The annual banquet, held at the

home of Steven Sondrup, began with a business meeting to discuss the current state of the Association. Begun in 1976, AML has sponsored an annual symposium since 1977 and awards prizes each year in imaginative and critical writing. A newsletter and annual journal have been published, but interest has dropped sharply in the last three or four years, and only six submissions were received for the 1987 journal, according to Sondrup. The East and West coast AML symposia that have been held in the past are no longer organized, and the 1988

Utah symposium was cancelled when no proposals for papers or readings were received. Typical of this year's activity rate, only twenty people attended the 1988 banquet.

William A. Wilson, chair of BYU's English department, was named president for 1988, and Levi Peterson, professor of English at Weber State College, will serve as president-elect. John Tanner, assistant professor of English at BYU, is the immediate past president, and gave the presidential address as part of the evening's program. In addition to current board members Gloria Cronin, Dean Hughes, and Bruce Jorgensen, Linda Sillitoe and Ken Hunsaker were named to the board, with a sixth member yet to be confirmed. The board and new officers will decide what form future meetings and publications will take.

Possible changes in AML's meetings and publications were proposed during the meeting, and include cosponsoring events with other symposia (such as SUNSTONE, Mormon History Associa-

tion, and RMMLA), holding monthly readings open to the public, publishing an annual bibliography, and producing a combination newsletter/journal.

The 1987 writing awards given at the meeting are:

Critical Writing: Bruce W. Jorgensen, "Romantic Lyric Form and Western Mormon Experience in the Stories of Douglas Thayer," *Western American Literature* 22:1 (May 1987).

Personal Essay: Mary L. Bradford, *Leaving Home* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books).

Poetry: R. A. Christmas, "Self Portrait as Brigham Young," *Sunstone* 11:4 (July 1987).

Short Story: Darrell Spencer, *Woman Packing a Pistol* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Dragon Gate).

Novel: Linda Sillitoe, *Sideways to the Sun* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books).

For additional information on the Association of Mormon Letters, contact: Steven Sondrup, 1346 South 1800 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84108.

SUNSTONE CALENDAR

By Sharee Hughes

THE ANDREW JENSEN SOCIETY a weekly Salt Lake brown-bag lunch group named after the early twentieth-century assistant church historian, where historians present works in progress, has been denied permission after fifteen years to continue meeting in a room off of the LDS Church Office Building cafeteria. They are looking for a new (free) downtown location.

THE ASSOCIATION OF MORMON COUNSELORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS (AMCAP) will hold their semi-annual conference on 29-30 September, just preceding the LDS General Conference. The topic of the conference is "Change." For more information contact AMCAP, Counseling Center, 149 SWKT, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602.

HELP: HOMOSEXUAL EDUCATION FOR LDS PARENTS was recently removed from the status of a Church program under LDS Social Services. The organization is petitioning Church leaders to be reinstated. For more information contact Donna and Charles Payton, 1131B Larkin Way, Napa, CA 94558, 707/255-2629.

THE JOHN WHITMER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION awarded three individuals for their contributions to Latter Day Saint history: Best Book to Stephen LeSueur for *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri*; best article award to Les Gardner for "Great White Father: Gilbert J. Walker and the [RLDS] Church in the Hawaiian Islands" (publisher?); and a special award to John Horner for his play "The Kirtland Rehearsal." The

Association's 1988 Annual Meeting will be held in Nauvoo 23-25 September. Proposals for papers should be sent to Paul Edwards, Temple School, The Auditorium, Box 1059, Independence, MO 64051.

THE MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION has announced a call for papers for the 1989 annual meeting which will be held 11-14 May in Quincy, Illinois, and include a day-long trip to Nauvoo, Carthage and Warsaw for site papers at restoration projects. The conference theme is "Mormons in Illinois: A Sesquicentennial Consideration." Papers and complete sessions will deal with the conference theme and other aspects of the history and culture of Mormonism and its divergent groups. Proposals should include the topic, historical methods to be employed, significance of the study, and a one-page vita on each participant. Proposals should be submitted by 1 September 1988 to Program Chair, Roger D. Launius, 1001 East, Cedar Street, New Baden, IL 62265.

THE UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY is displaying the exhibit "Silver in the Golden State" in the Grand Lobby of the Rio Grande Depot in Salt Lake through 7 October. The Society's annual meeting will be 14-15 July, followed by the second annual pie and ice cream social on Saturday, 16 July. For more details call 801/533-5755.

The Sunstone Calendar will appear in the news section of each issue. Notices for the calendar should be sent to Sunstone Calendar, 331 South Rio Grande Street, Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1137.

UPDATE ON THE COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH'S PRESIDING QUORUMS

WHEN PRESIDENT Spencer Kimball announced the reorganization of the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1975 the move inaugurated a half decade redefining the roles and responsibilities of the new quorum, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. The result is a committee system of general authorities which exercises substantial oversight of the church headquarters and general programs and is designed to keep the focus of the Church on its stated three missions: to preach the gospel, redeem the dead, and perfect the saints.

Church organization was not always complex. In the 1930s the First Presidency directly supervised many departments and apostles served as general presidents of the auxiliaries. In the 1960s the priesthood correlation movement restructured the Church administration bringing all departments and auxiliaries (some of which had become quite autonomous) under priesthood direction. Coupled with that, the growth of the Church has required the Quorum of the Twelve to assume direct administration that the First Presidency once did.

In 1977 the First Presidency announced that they had made an organizational distinction between the ecclesiastical affairs of the Church and the temporal affairs (although those terms are not now the Church "buzz words" they were then). Under the direction of the First Presidency, ecclesiastical affairs were to be administered by the Quorum of the Twelve and the temporal matters (buildings and welfare services) by the presiding bishop. As a result, youth programs were transferred from the presiding

bishop to the Twelve.

On the ecclesiastical side there are three "executive councils" which direct the affairs of the Church: the Missionary Executive Council, the Priesthood Executive Council, and the Temple and Family History Executive Council (formerly the Temple and Genealogy Executive Council). Apostles are assigned by seniority to one of the committees. The senior apostle on each council serves as chair. Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy who act as the executive director of a Church department also serve on the council which directs their department. (See organizational chart for committee assignments.)

These councils directly supervise both the Church bureaucracy and "priesthood line" leaders of the Church. Like Congressional committees, these councils give programs and policies a detailed general authority review, which explains why some apostles seem particularly active in a certain area. Each council also supervises one third of the areas of the Church, giving them direct authority over the Church's hierarchal priesthood line. For each area presidency, one apostle on the council is identified as the "first contact" person (see chart for area assignments).

Overseeing these three councils is the Correlation Executive Committee, whose membership consists of the chair of each executive council and the presiding bishop. The chair of this committee is the president of the Twelve or, if for some reason he does not serve on the committee, the senior apostle on the committee. This influential committee of the three or four sen-

ior apostles directs executive councils and hence most programs of the Church. In addition, the Correlation Department, which approves all Church materials for publication, reports to this committee. One particularly influential branch of the Correlation Department is Research and Evaluation, which conducts highly sophisticated studies on the Church in areas such as membership activity and conversion processes. Obviously, the chair of this committee can be very influential; because of the activist nature of the current chair, some in the bureaucracy call him the "de facto" Church president.

This committee structure places the Quorum of the Twelve in a position to actively "regulate the affairs of the [church] in all nations" (D&C 107:33). Indeed, many informed Church staff describe the management of the Church's departments without mentioning the First Presidency. When asked about the role of the Presidency, one senior bureaucrat with years of Church Office Building experience replied, "That is the great secret." Another jokingly stated, "In this Church we made a distinction long ago between presiding and conducting." Others explain that there is an extensive informal decision-making system that is not reflected in organizational charts.

LDS Public Communications spokesperson Jerry Cahill explains that preliminary decisions made by the executive councils are approved in a weekly meeting of the Twelve and the First Presidency. According to him, the structure of that meeting's agenda is the three missions of the Church and the specific items come from the executive councils. Nevertheless, items that received an hour discussion in an executive council may get five minutes at this meeting. (For a detailed description of the administrative meetings of Spencer Kimball's presidency see President N. Eldon Tanner's speech, "Administration of the Restored Church," in the 1978 April *Ensign*.) However, members of the First Presidency

are able to exercise control through the crucial committees they chair, including the General Welfare Services Committee chaired by President Thomas S. Monson (which oversees the functions of the presiding bishop), the Personnel Committee, the Church Board of Education chaired by President Gordon B. Hinckley (which oversees Brigham Young University and the Church Educational System), and the all important budget committee, the Committee on the Disposition of the Tithes, which meets once a year.

In addition, the Brethren have a loyal bureaucracy which sincerely attempts to implement their will. Many Church administrators report that the latest talks by the prophet and his counselors are frequently referred to by general authorities and analyzed by employed staff for direction in administering programs.

If the historically ambiguous role between the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve is now fairly clearly delineated, the role of the First Quorum of the Seventy is still uncertain and the boundaries between them and the Twelve, with whom they are doctrinally equal in authority, continue to shift. Shortly after the Quorum was reorganized, the differences in quorum responsibilities were explained by assigning the setting of vision to the First Presidency, policy to the Twelve, and administration to the Seventy. The seven presidents and other seventies were made directors of the Church's main departments and the presidency began making administrative decisions. Very soon, however, the apostles began to sense that they were too distant from "regulating the affairs" and the executive councils were created to direct the departments, giving the Twelve greater supervision.

Currently seventies now fulfill their scriptural injunction to act "under the direction of the Twelve...in regulating all the affairs of the church" (D&C 107:34) on an individual basis. As area presidents, auxiliary heads, and department directors they report to mem-

bers of the Twelve on the executive councils. However, the quorum seldom has the opportunity to act as a united group. In a way, the former title "assistant to the Twelve" is more descriptive of their duties than "member of the First Quorum of the Seventy." There is a monthly quorum meeting for members in Salt Lake, and after each general conference there is a quorum meeting in which information is disseminated but no decisions are made. (One seventy in an overseas area presidency is hoping to serve his entire five-year term without attending a quorum meeting.) Apparently, when the seven presidents meet they do some coordinating, work on specific assignments from the Twelve, but outside of training new members, they do not direct the work of the members of their quorum.

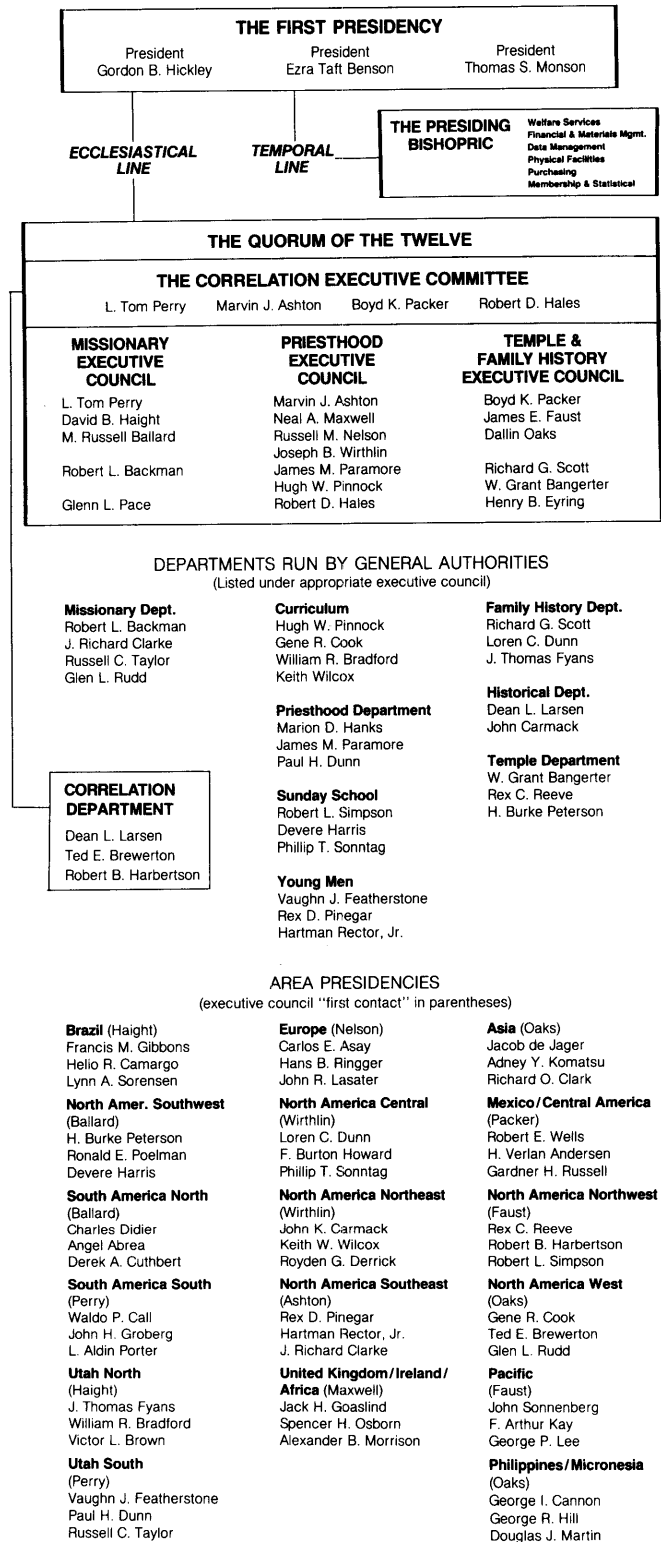
In addition to the above major committees and councils there are numerous other general authority committees, which are usually chaired by an apostle and frequently have seventies as members. A sampling of them include the Boundaries and Leadership Changes Committee, the Special Affairs Committee chaired by Elder David B. Haight (press and governmental relations), the Leadership Training Committee chaired by Elder James E. Faust (for general authorities and stake and local leaders), the committee on the restoration of temple blessings and cancellation of sealings (it reports to the First Presidency).

Even for Church Office Building employees, it is difficult to understand the organization of the general authorities. The Brethren are very secretive about their inner workings. Currently, no organizational charts are available even for the bureaucracy. For the general church member, no listing of general authority responsibilities and organization has been published since a 1979 *Church News* story announced the executive committees, as they were then called. Although the accompanying chart is accurate as of late as April 1988, it is undoubtedly now out of date

(there are rumors of major reassignments in August). Reportedly, one reason for the dearth of information on the presiding quorums is to avoid emphasizing the process and personalities over the content of their deliberations.

Terminology is important in Church administration. For example, when a seventy directs a department, he is the *executive* director and his counselors (who are also seventies) are *managing* directors; however, when a non-general authority is the director he is only a managing director. The term "administer" is now out of favor; several apostles have become attached to dropping the "ad" and simply "ministering" to the Church.

With the growth and entrenchment of the committee system, the decision-making processes of the general authorities have become more collaborative. When President Gordon B. Hinckley was a counselor to Spencer W. Kimball he easily dismissed a reporter's question about the possibility that Ezra Taft Benson might lead the Church in an ultra-conservative direction if he succeeded to the presidency. Dismissing the idea that one person alone could lead the Church in a new direction, Elder Hinckley said that the question showed no understanding of the consensus decision-making processes of the Church's leaders. In the years since, the nature and power of that process have become increasingly apparent.





New Swimsuit



Old Swimsuit

BEACHING THE WHALE

AFTER YEARS of complaints about the school's chaste but regulation black double-knit swimsuits for women, affectionally called the "whale," BYU's Physical Education Services commissioned a new speedo look designed to lure back boycotting co-eds. The navy blue, cross-straped, open-back suits are made from lycra, which pulls on much more easily than the old nylon suits. The new suits will be phased in gradually; individuals who forget their BYU I.D. cards will be issued the old suits, which pull on tight and embarrassingly expand in the water.

PRUNING BROWN'S HETERODOXY

ALTHOUGH THERE is no question that former First Presidency counselor Hugh B. Brown believed and in private conversations frequently said his famous quote, "We are not so much concerned with whether your thoughts are orthodox or heterodox as we are that you shall have thoughts," apparently he did not say it at the 1969 BYU devotional where he is reported to have said it. The quote appears in the original manuscript of the speech, which the *Church News* used for its report, and it is in the *Dialogue* published version, which Brown approved, but it is not on the BYU-issued audio tape. Is this a Tapegate controversy with an 18 second gap?

THE TOP TEN GOLDEN OLDIES

SALT LAKE fine and rare book dealer Curt Bench reports that the current top ten requests for out-of-print LDS books are: (1) N.B. Lundwall's *Temples of the Most High*; (2) Joseph Fielding Smith's five-volume *Answers to Gospel Questions*; (3) Hugh Nibley's *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, An Egyptian Endowment*; (4) The Primary Association's *A Story to Tell*; (5) Melvin Cook's *Science and Mormonism*; (6) Spencer Cornwall's *Stories of Our Mormon Hymns*; (7) Don Corbett's *Mary Fielding Smith*; (8) Joseph Fielding Smith's *Man, His Origin and Destiny*; (9) John A. Widtsoe's *A Rational Theology*; and (10) Sydney B. Sperry's *Voice of Israel's Prophets*.



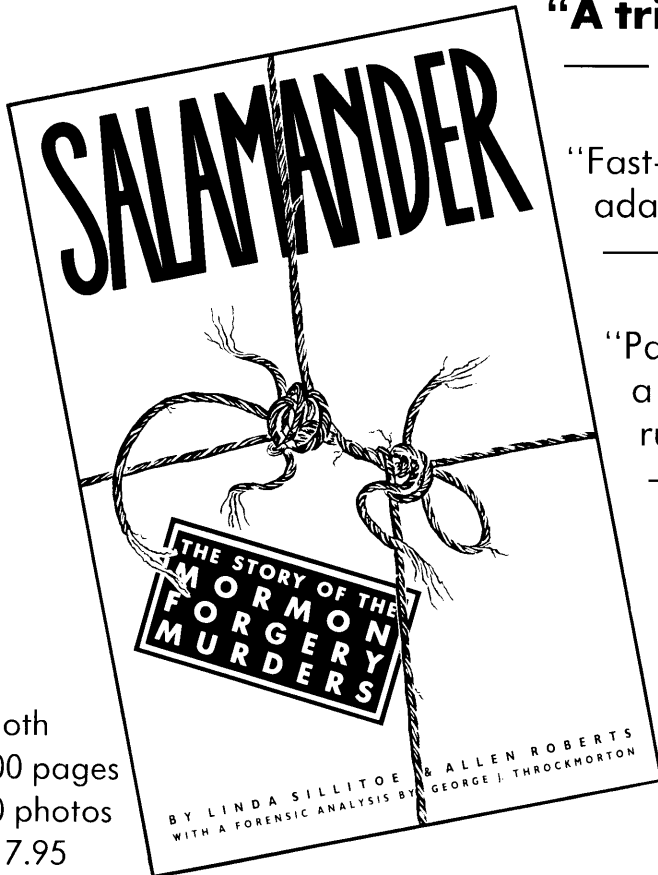
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— Robert Jones, *Los Angeles Times*



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