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BOLIVIAN CONVERSION

DAVID C.
KNOWLTON



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READERS FORUM

FUNERAL RITES AND WRONGS

REGARDING ELDER PACKER'S recent general conference address which you reported in an earlier issue (SUNSTONE 12:4), I had an unsettling experience this January after I had carefully prepared my mother's funeral program according to her written wishes. Her well-meaning bishop approached me at the viewing the evening prior to the funeral and explained that one of the songs she had chosen would be inappropriate in the chapel. He had also previously expressed concern that a priesthood bearer dedicate the grave. I told him that it would be no problem to have the funeral in the mortuary chapel.

The bishop was eventually persuaded to acknowledge my mother's wishes and "Somewhere, My Love" was performed to the appreciation of family and friends.

The implication that it was necessary for this most private and important event to be correlated and conducted without respect for those most closely involved violates our sense of privacy. It is unfortunate that Elder Packer is willing to meddle in the most intimate areas of our lives.

CONNIE DISNEY
Salt Lake City

"FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD. . . ."

I HEARTILY APPLAUD the efforts of James Hill and Richard Popp to determine a moral and aesthetic basis for the study of food in the Mormon culture ("Towards a Mormon Cuisine," SUNSTONE 12:3). They reveal a serious deficiency in Mormon studies, particularly in light of the scholarship they cite (notably that of Claude Levi-Strauss) and recent creative efforts to probe the spiritual significance of food. I would single out two influential films in particular: "My Dinner with Andre," a somewhat humanistic, even atheistic approach to the subject, and the more recent "Babette's Feast," which despite its Protestant overtones offers many insights for a Mormon audience.

I personally agree with many of the arguments offered by Hill and Popp, and feel that the secular influence of fast food and prepackaged meals may indeed have a negative effect

on the spiritual health of the Church. However, I feel that there is another side to the argument which cannot be overlooked. Just as the Lord told Joseph Smith "it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory" (D&C 27:2), we must not assume that the actual food served at Mormon gatherings is of utmost importance; rather, the spirit of that partaking together determines the inherent meaning of the meal.

My own awareness of the role of food in the gospel began, not coincidentally, on my first day in the mission field. And like many lessons learned there, I did not fully appreciate the experience for some time. I arrived, fatigued from travel and dazed by the French culture, at an apartment with three other elders, two of whom were sprawled on a couch, in worn jeans, listening to loud rock music with evident relish. Surprised, I feigned exhaustion and retreated to my humble bedroom. Not long afterwards, my companion cheerfully invited me to lunch. I quickly feigned a stomachache at the sight of a large earthenware bowl filled with layers of sticky white rice, uncooked carrots, cream of mushroom soup, and inexpensive garlic sausage, topped with crushed potato chips. At the time, I did not share the enthusiasm of my fellow elders for the dish.

Only with the hindsight of two years' experience with missionary cooking did I realize what a feast had been mine. The rice provided a heavy dose of carbohydrates, essential for the energy needed to tract door after door each afternoon; the carrots were a fresh dose of vitamins; the mushroom soup tied all the ingredients together with a salty, domestic aroma; the garlic sausage foreshadowed the many exotic food products I would encounter during my stay in France. And the potato chips? Had I known how difficult to obtain and expensive they were, I would have immediately recognized them as a loving sacrifice by my brothers in the kitchen, a kind attempt to tie the New World and the Old with a familiar food. Sadly, at the time I did not appreciate that act of compassion.

My companion, in preparing that dish, had spent extra time cooking all the separate ingredients and planning the treat (which, I later discovered, was a variation of a missionary folk recipe affectionately called "chunt"). That

and countless other meals were certainly prepared with the "singleness of heart" (D&C 59:13) that Hill and Popp cite with approval (p. 34). However, as one is called upon to sacrifice much in serving a mission, I believe that sacrificing one's delicate palate may well be as important as one's waistline, wealth, or worldly honor in devoted service to the Lord.

This is why I cannot condemn the Church's place in the current cuisine crisis. Individual efforts *must* be the starting point of a revolution in Mormon kitchens. The three examples of official Church food service with which I am acquainted—Welfare Square canning projects, the MTC cafeteria, and the Church Office Building cafeteria—all promote sound nutritional values and a home-cooked touch. That this influence does not reach individual congregations is lamentable, but perhaps predictable.

There is much to be explored in food and religion. What if we did "have James Beards and Julia Childs of our own," as Hill and Popp ask (p. 35)? Would the institutional Church accept them any more readily than the excellent artists that were juried out of the Church Museum's International Fine Arts Competition in 1987? And what if a filmed "Eighteenth Ward Budget Dinner" were to take its place

next to "Babette's Feast"? Could it adequately portray the tender care that accompanies a spiritual feast, and accept with dignity the prepackaged gravy and chicken fried steaks? I believe that any unique Mormon contribution to the genre will begin with the spirit, not the letter, of the recipes.

DANIEL MARYON
Salt Lake City

HERESY OR DOCTRINE?

I THOROUGHLY IDENTIFIED with the article "Respite for a Heretic" (SUNSTONE 12:4). After spending years trying to fit into a specific mold I somehow had decided was "Mormonism," I realized that I would be both unhappy and unsatisfied if I should fit into that little cubicle I had decided was the LDS way of life. I felt guilty and paranoid as I started questioning everything. I was soon contradicting ninety percent of what I heard and playing devil's advocate at every turn. When the men in my ward intervened, I labeled them sexist; when women interfered, I labeled them weak. For a while I felt I was a heretic: very unsettling for a returned missionary, chaplain's wife, and mother of four.

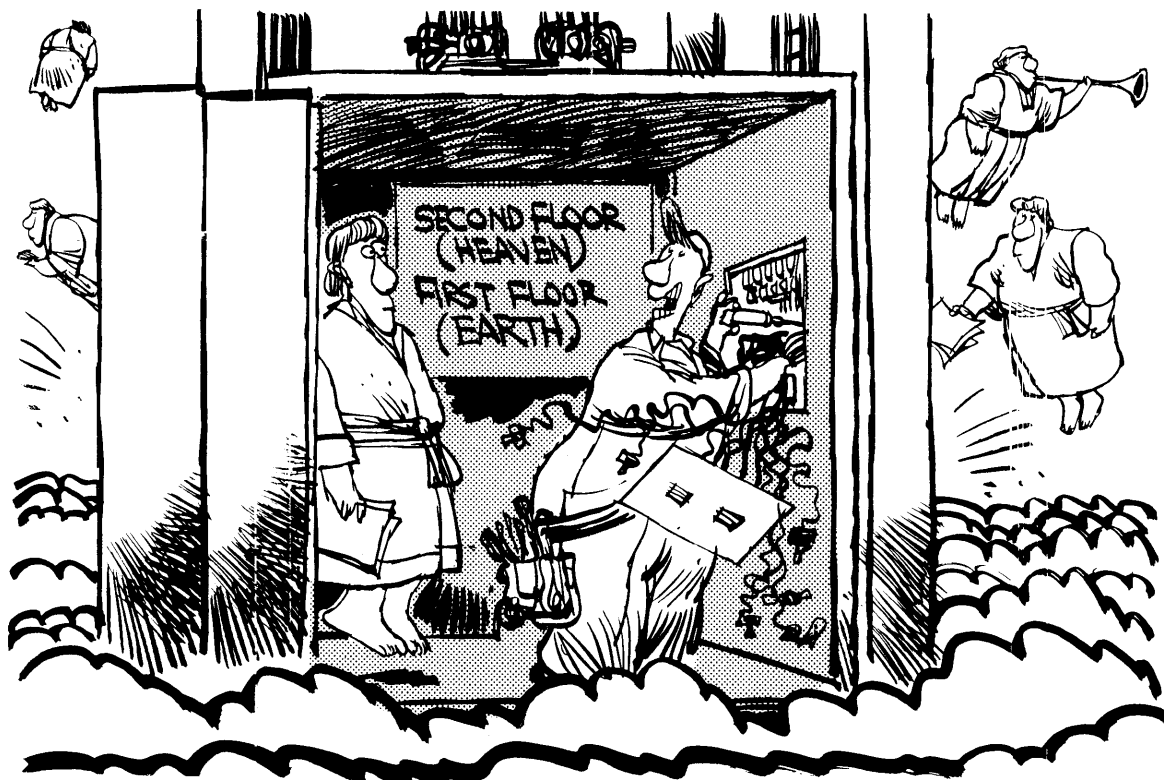
I found comfort in the story of a man who

Joseph Smith defended in a church court who was to be excommunicated for his beliefs. Joseph said that he didn't want to belong to a church that would excommunicate a man for his beliefs. Much of my guilt went away when I realized that my struggle represented growth, not apostasy. I repented of my critical and overbearing attitude. I also recognized the need to accept others if I were to expect acceptance myself.

Most important, I realized that *right* is relative and irrelevant. My little niche is very important for my identity but not as a standard or pattern for anyone else. The struggle to know about the gospel and receive personal revelation should be paramount in my life but should not interfere with my social interactions. My struggle is personal and sacred, and it should give me the inner strength to serve the Lord and interact with others in a positive light.

It is very rewarding to read of others' struggles and realize that "heretics" are not an endangered species in the Mormon church. I like to remember that one person's heresy is another person's doctrine.

MARY BURTON NELSON
Fort Dix, New Jersey



Calvin Grondahl/Standard-Examiner

"Well, they'd better study it out in their own minds because there's not going to be any visitation today."

BLIND TO THE LIGHT?

PAUL DOUGLAS MALLAMO'S "Sonia Johnson and My Journey with Dissent" (SUNSTONE 12:5) is wonderfully illustrative of the very point Johnson makes in her plea to the women to not involve the men in their rebellion against patriarchy. Mallamo was "stung" by the notion that the men were not women and couldn't help. After all, he "cared enough to be there." Yet at the same meeting when a woman in the audience drew him into her embrace in a symbolic act of solidarity, he thought to himself: "Had she known that I was a Mormon elder she might have been appalled, perhaps angry." He missed the point altogether: if he had been in true solidarity with those women he would have been a fellow human being and an honorary woman (Johnson's term). At that moment his rank in a typical patriarchal power structure should have appalled him and made him angry at himself for being part of the problem. His solidarity was feigned.

Mallamo's characterization of the sexism of the radical feminism espoused by Johnson was superficial and inaccurate. The "sex that shaves its face" is not excluded from "the greatest spiritual revolution in history." To that sex is extended salvation. As Mallamo notes, feminists are out to save the world, and men are half of humanity. And if men will but repent of their patriarchal minds and ways, they may fully participate in approved auxiliary—but vital—activities. Johnson writes concerning men seeking to join the movement: "The stipulation always to the men so honored is to do something about male violence, personally and publicly. . . . to teach and reach their brothers." "The universe is challenging men to love that which is womanly in themselves and in all things, and to honor and respect women everywhere all the time" (*Going Out of Our Minds* pp. 288, 292). The men are not consigned to outer darkness.

But the only hope for saving the race is for women to overthrow patriarchy which stands for inequality, coercion, oppression and violence. The vision of salvation is this: "To crowd patriarchy off the stage of history with our own rich, vital reality; in the midst of the rubble of the androcentric, gynocidal world, to create within ourselves right now a post-patriarchal paradise. As we do this, that ugly sick old world—unsupported by [the women's] slave emotions, unsupported by our belief and attention and energy—will collapse

of the weight of its own misery and evil" (p. 347).

Sonia Johnson feels the prophetic and spiritual fervor when she breaks into ecstatic vision, a vision affirming all life, not just female life. "Learning moment by moment to be free in our minds and hearts, we make freedom possible for everyone the world over. . . . Women have given the world a new power symbol: no longer the upraised fist, because we know that force is the antithesis of strength; instead, hands holding hands holding hands holding hands. . . . Hand in hand let us leap off this stinking rubbish heap men call 'civilization,' out of our limited, lightless, dying patriarchal minds, and reach for our lives—for all life—deep into the cosmos that is our own souls" (p. 349).

For the believer, this symbolic handholding is the electrifying ending to Johnson's book, as it was to the lecture Mallamo attended. The embrace at the end was more than a symbol of solidarity, it was the feminist communion, a sharing of "the flood of passionate energy and invincible spirit that pours from among" empowered women (p. 348).

And there is Paul Mallamo, in the midst of this pentecost, feeling left out! His thinking of his Mormon priesthood office at that moment should have startled him into the realization that this is what it must be like to be a woman in Mormondom. That realization should have broken his heart and spilled his love all over that room, but instead he was already retreating into the safety of "the battle to forge a more humane Mormonism," wishing Johnson was still in those trenches with him, those trenches wherein he has the power and she is auxiliary, eternally auxiliary.

It is sad and discouraging that Mallamo was momentarily surrounded by the liberating light of feminism but did not comprehend it. In the light of feminism, one can see that all patriarchal power structures, and thus all present or eternal blessings predicated upon allegiance to them, are immoral and illegitimate. Johnson's call to stop supporting all patriarchal power structures, her "exclusionary brand of feminism," is really "the only act now possible that has in it the power to transform the world" (p. 347). I hope that no one interested in Sonia Johnson would be satisfied with Mallamo's article, but that they would make the effort to read her version of her ongoing story in *Going Out of Our Minds*.

ABRAHAM VAN LUIK
Chantilly, Virginia

WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY

HURRAY FOR PAUL Douglas Mallamo! I hope his experience attending a radical feminist forum which expounded the inherent depravity of men and advocated the separation of the sexes won't diminish his interest in and concern for women's issues. There is a considerable diversity among feminist theories, and Sonia Johnson represents only one strand—admittedly on the far left of the spectrum.

It is all too easy for women to be overcome by their anger at men for the many injustices perpetrated by that sex. But as the distinguished journalist Linda Ellerbee once said, feminism is not a "let's turn the tables on them" construct; feminism should stand for the giving out of more tolerance and justice than we as women have ever received. Ultimately, we need to build bridges with our brothers. While a little anger can serve as a great source of motivation to action, too much becomes destructive and functions only to build walls.

In my women and law class at UCLA Law School, a handful of male students are enrolled. I appreciate their participation and attempt to understand women. Rare, indeed, is the man who can disengage himself from his presumed birthright as the dominant power in order to contemplate the plight of others who are struggling merely to share in the rewards offered by this society. I applaud all those men who do so and am willing to accept your outstretched hands in the community.

KATHLEEN A. McDONALD
Los Angeles

THE INTEGRITY OF EXCOMMUNICATION

PAUL DOUGLAS MALLAMO'S article on the present state of Sonia Johnson was of interest to me, because I was living in Washington, D.C., at the time of her excommunication trial and had spoken to some of the participants in those events. I was asked a few times whether my law review article research in the records of the nineteenth-century Church courts had any meaning for that modern proceeding, but I had no ready answer at the time.

It seems to me now that it is useful to compare the Church court process of excommunication with the formal procedure used by

the military for administrative discharge of airmen and soldiers whose behavior, though possibly tolerable in the larger society, does not conform to the strict standards of the military. It is vital to any organization which values its integrity and unity to have such a mechanism—not to silence dissent, but rather to identify it as antipathetic to the goals of the organization. Particularly when the sole sanction is the simple fact of separation from membership, any organization has the right to define the boundaries of acceptable behavior for those who *want* to be members.

What is more, I feel that such proceedings present individuals with the question of their own integrity: it asks them to ask themselves whether they want to be committed members of the organization, or instead define their own paths. At the time, Sonia Johnson told the *Washington Post* that she did not consider the preceding to have held any authority to affect her status before God. It is difficult to see why she would want to remain a member of an organization whose authenticity she so clearly rejected.

In the many reports of the incident, none of the reporters asked Sonia Johnson whether she was in fact committed to the fundamental precepts of the Church. No one asked if she believed in the bona fides of Joseph Smith of the Book of Mormon. No one asked why she felt the Equal Rights Amendment was more important than missionary work, or how she, as a purportedly “model Mormon woman,” could reconcile her membership in the Church with her hostility toward its fundamental structure and authority. To be frank, I see her efforts to use the news media to coerce the Church into compliance with her views, while she went through the motions of commitment, to be hypocritical on her part. Her excommunication restored her integrity.

I therefore disagree with Mr. Mallamo’s implication that the Church is somewhat to blame for Sonia Johnson’s radical lesbian feminism. Her present views are on a straight line along the tangent which she had already established for herself before her excommunication. Her greatest complaint was always over her inability to share in the organizational power of the Mormon priesthood, so she has now established her own power structure. The self-righteousness and intellectual intolerance of opposing views which now characterize her pronouncements are not qualitatively different from her denunciations of “the Brethren” in 1979.

Her confession of lesbian behavior also raises the broader issue of whether homosexuals are such due to inherent genetic factors

or through their response to their environment. I am wary of the repeated refrain that homosexuals are genetically destined to behave as homosexuals, and therefore have no moral duty to curb such behavior

The rationalizations presented for homosexual behavior, even in such publications as *SUNSTONE*, *Dialogue*, and *Exponent II*, are suspiciously identical to the rationalizations I have heard presented by child molesters and confirmed adulterers in the context of my work as an attorney. The common thread is a refusal to take responsibility for controlling one’s own behavior in the face of strong sexual impulses. There are striking

similarities to the behavior of those addicted to drugs or alcohol. In the latter case, experience has confirmed that abstinence is the only way to avoid a spiralling feedback loop of increasing temptation and compulsion. The indulgence of these destructive behaviors only makes the tendency stronger.

Sonia Johnson has put behind her the hypocrisy of her former stance as an “anti-priesthood Mormon.” We can only hope that the homosexual community will likewise overcome its own schizophrenic doctrines and assume responsibility for its actions.

RAYMOND TAKASHI SWENSON
Omaha, Nebraska

A PSALM

DE PROFUNDIS: REFLECTIONS ON PSALM 130

De profundis clamo ad Te Domine audi vocem meum.

When I am as harmless as a dove all is clear and comforting.

When I try to balance the divine equation to become serpent wise, my understanding falters.

I ask, seek, knock, and try to walk uprightly, but I am no longer a child and often see through a glass darkly.

Fulfillment here, exaltation there, even Heaven and Hell depend on the comprehension of Thy will.

Why then does every known recorded version of Thy mind contain internal contradictions, obscurities?

Why is the faulty human hand everywhere evident, hindering Thy children in gaining a perfect understanding of Thy will?

Or do I perceive it thus only because my comprehension of Thee is immature, imperfect?

I yearn for the sureties of youth, before I took thought.

Did I serve an institution more than Thee?

Did I try too hard to prove all things, to hold that which was good?

Good, I understand, but what is best, the most true?

As three score and ten approaches the road shortens, shadows lengthen.

I cannot return to the cocoon of blind faith.

Guide my feet, O God! Bring me back, Father, grant me time that I may live more fully than I have, to Thy greater glory,

that I may become a better, refined, repentant version of my old self,

that I may lose the pride of learning, the vanity of mind service.

I do not require proof. I can live by faith—unobscured faith.

Is the Great Truth simply to love and serve Thee and humanity?

—STANLEY B. KIMBALL

FROM THE EDITOR

MEDITATING UPON PRAYERS

By Elbert Eugene Peck

O GOD, WHERE art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?" Joseph Smith's poignant prayer opens Section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants, one of the world's great meditations on humankind. I have contemplated Joseph's petition and the Lord's subsequent counsel and promise more than any of the Prophet's other writings; its ponderings have blessed and directed my own.

As early as his resolve to go to the Grove, Joseph seemed confident in the efficacy of his prayers. Fortunately, he wrote some of them down, such as the Kirtland Temple dedicatory prayer (D&C 109) in which he shared his vision for the gathering of Zion and the purpose of the temple. Some of his recorded prayers are simply questions and answers (D&C 113). Most of the Prophet's revelations are written in the voice of God responding to his petition. The more his writings reveal human desires—the fumbling quest for an elusive God—the more they engage me when I read them, for I find in them the familiar strivings of my own heart.

Joseph, of course, was not the first to write down his prayers for the benefit of others. Numerous prayers are recorded in the Old and New Testaments. The author of Matthew shared the Lord's Prayer which has been the well-spring for numberless consoling meditations. And, like the rest of Israel, Jesus was schooled in the Psalms, most of which are prayers.

Consider what just the opening lines of the Psalms taught the Children of Israel about God as they preserved them through vocal repetition and song: "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness" (Psalm 4), "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation" (5), "O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust" (7), "O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" (8), "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord?" (10), "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth" (12), "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord?" (13), "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength" (18), "My God, my God,

why hast thou forsaken me?" (22), "O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath" (38), "Be merciful unto me, O God" (57), "Deliver me from mine enemies. O my God" (59), "O God, thou hast cast us off" (60), "Hear my cry, O God" (61), "Make haste, O God, to deliver me" (70), "Truly God is good to Israel" (73), "Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks" (75), "Keep not thy silence, O God" (83), "Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me; for I am poor and needy" (86), "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever" (89), "O God, my heart is fixed" (108), "Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary" (150).



Thee, God, I come from, to thee go,
All day long I like fountain flow
From thy hand out, swayed about
Mote-like in thy mighty glow.

What I know of thee I bless,
As acknowledging thy stress
On my being and as seeing
Something of thy holiness.

Once I turned from thee and hid,
Bound on what thou hadst forbid;
Sow the wind I would; I sinned;
I repent of what I did.

Bad I am, but yet thy child.
Father, be thou reconciled.
Spare thou me, since I see
With thy might that thou art mild.

I have life left with me still
And thy purpose to fulfil;
Yea a debt to pay thee yet;
Help me, sir, and so I will . . .

—GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

SINCE the Resurrection, yokefellows have crafted prayers which, when meditated upon, cultivate an intimacy with and reverence for the divine, and a stronger desire to pray. As with the Psalms, the words of these prayers help me express—and discover—my heart's desire. For example, in the third century, Origen wrote,

O Jesus, my feet are dirty. Come even as a slave to me, pour water into your bowl, come and wash my feet. In asking such a thing I know I am overbold but I dread what was threatened when you said to me, "If I do not wash your feet I have no fellowship with you." Wash my feet then, because I long for your companionship. And yet, what am I asking? It was well for Peter to ask you to wash his feet, for him that was all that was needed for him to be clean every part. With me it is different, though you wash me now I shall still stand in need of that other washing, the cleansing you promised when you said, "there is a baptism I must needs be baptized with."

St. Augustine's fifth century *Confessions* are rambling, chapter-length, introspective prayers contemplating his similar meandering, reluctant spiritual journey to God. They help me confront my own double-hearted deliberations:

In my heart I kept saying "Let it be now, let it be now!", and merely by saying this I was on the point of making the resolution. I was on the point of making it, but I did not succeed. . . . I was held by mere trifles, the most paltry inanities, all my old attachments. They plucked at my garment of flesh and whispered, "Are you going to dismiss us?"

From the Early Fathers to St. Anselm, Martin Luther, John Wesley, and the present, written prayers for meditation comprise a rich Christian literary tradition. Unfortunately, they are not greatly celebrated in the Mormon experience. Perhaps because we believe public and private prayers should be extemporaneous we are uncomfortable with even the phrase, "written prayers." We avoid using prayers in the devotional way we use poetry, fiction, painting, sculpture, and scripture. Curiously, hymns are *written* prayers (D&C 25) which we sing. Many begin with a prayer-like salutation ("O God our Help in Ages Past"), some are from the Psalms ("The Lord is My Shepherd") and other prayers (St. Fran-

cis's canticle, "All Creatures of Our God and King").

Over the years, some Latter-day Saints have crafted prayers; both Eliza R. Snow and Wilford Woodruff wrote prayers to commemorate occasions. For my tastes, their prayers are too formal and ceremonial, revealing little about the private yearnings and struggles that melt words into prayer. Contemporary LDS poets occasionally compose prayer-poems. For example, Eugene England's *Dialogue* essay, "Easter Weekend," includes a beautiful prayer, as does Meg Munk's book of poetry *So Far*.

STARTING in this issue with a prayer by Stan Kimball (p. 5), *SUNSTONE* inaugurates a tradition of presenting written prayers by contemporary Mormons and their friends—only, we'll call them psalms. We welcome submissions. I expect that *SUNSTONE* readers from a wide variety of perspectives will thoughtfully use this literary form to explore their feelings of faith. Through sharing these prayers, the LDS intellectual community celebrates as well as analyzes God's works and glories on earth.

Short or long, since they are prayers, these psalms address God and may express awe

and adoration, doubt and faith, blessing and thanksgiving, dedication and obedience, suffering and protection, guidance and acceptance, and penitence. They may be polished poetry like Hopkins's, free verse like Solzhenitzyn's, or paragraphed prose like Origen's.

Over time, I hope to share a psalm by a historian balancing facts and faith, a social scientist linking institutions and individuals, a mother debating discipline, a bishop feeding the flock, a Relief Society president contemplating Heavenly Mother, a home or visiting teacher serving by assignment, a backpacker celebrating sunrise, an AIDS victim confronting death and alienation, a subway commuter contemplating community, and, of course, a psalm by the pardoned prodigal.

These psalms will have added force because they will have been written by Saints in twentieth-century circumstances with which we can empathize. Similarly, much of the strength in a prayer by Alexandr Solzhenitsyn is because we know of his imprisonment and suffering in the Soviet Union. The same is true of former U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld—when we are aware of his intense struggle to be a Christian while mediating Cold War superpower politics his words have deeper moral

authority. I think the same will be true with our peers and friends.

Twice I have written a prayer; once during a period of spiritual confusion and once in an attempt to compose a personal creed (as did St. Francis of Assisi). I had to confront the questions, "What do I really feel?" and "What do I truly believe?" As with all writing, the hard work of trying to be clear revealed myself to me (I have a friend who only prays through composition). In "The Strength of the Mormon Position," LDS apostle and poet Orson Whitney argued that poets are prophets, albeit "minor" when compared to the "major" scriptural prophets. These psalms will help us explore the religious implications of our scholarship through a gentle form.

Whether writing them or reading them, these prayers—oops! I mean *psalms*—are like poems, they should be savored, pondered, and read aloud, twice. Then they may help cultivate the contemplative side of the LDS intellectual community, uniting our hearts and minds.

I pray that we will take the time to read, and write, and share Latter-day psalms and rejoice with the psalmist, "My heart is inditing a good matter" (Psalm 45). ☪

How easy, Lord, it is for me to live with you.
How easy it is for me to believe in you.
When my understanding is perplexed by doubts
or on the point of giving up,
when the most intelligent men see no further
than the coming evening, and know not
what they shall do tomorrow,
you send me a clear assurance
that you are there and that you will ensure
that not all roads of goodness are barred.

From the heights of earthly fame I look back
in wonder at the road that led
through hopelessness
to this place whence I can send
mankind a reflecting of your radiance.

And whatever I in this life may reflect,
that you will give me;
And whatever I shall not attain,
that, plainly, you have purposed for others.

—ALEXANDR SOLZHENITSYN

Thou who art over us,
Thou who art one of us,
Thou who art—
Also within us,
May all see thee—in me also,
May I prepare the way for thee,
May I thank thee for all that shall fall to my lot,
May I also not forget the needs of others,
Keep me in thy love
As thou wouldest that all should be kept in mine
May everything in this my being be directed to thy glory
And may I never despair.
For I am under thy hand,
And in thee is all power and goodness.
Give me a pure heart—that I may see thee,
A humble heart—that I may hear thee,
A heart of love—that I may serve thee,
A heart of faith—that I may abide in thee.

To love life and men as God loves them—
for the sake of their infinite possibilities,
to wait like him
to judge like him
without passing judgment,
to obey the order when it is given
and never look back—
then he can use you—then, perhaps, he will use you.
And if he doesn't use you—what matter. In his hand,
every moment has its meaning, its greatness, its glory,
its peace, its co-inherence.

—DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

ON "FATE" AND CIRCUMSTANCE

Thomas F. Rogers



IN VARANASI, HOLIEST of India's cities, women beggars, traditionally cast out by their children when widowed, spend their remaining years waiting for death and a more blissful new life. Some were widowed at a very young age, even as child brides, but most are content to blame their past karma and make the best of what strikes a Westerner as an intolerable and unjust circumstance. How naive can these women be, one asks. Why do they allow it?

TWO OF MY acquaintances now lie, where this life is concerned, forever still. Neither is any older than I, and one is several years younger. This man was physically more vigorous than I—played basketball, skiied—an ectomorph, not a spare ounce of fat on his frame. At the time his heart stopped, he was

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a faculty peer, a city councilman, and the bishop of a student congregation. He was about to conclude his civic duties, having announced he would not run for office again in order to spend more time with his wife and children. He was, in every ostensible way, a model disciple and citizen. He also tended to be extremely conscientious in serving others and to keep within himself the pressures that came with his several stewardships. This may have intensified the strain, if strain it was, that brought on his cardiac arrest. Even that might not have been so consequential if he had not been alone—found after who knows how long by a student custodian in a campus men's room on a Saturday morning. Had it occurred on a weekday, there would have been plenty of people to notice and call for help. Ironically, what brought him there that Saturday morning at the outset of another school year, was a planning session with his counselors in behalf of the students he'd been called to

shepherd on Sundays and at many other times when personal needs arose. His counselors had apparently just left when, feeling unwell, he had made his way to the lavatory and there collapsed. He lay in bed some thirteen months before succumbing. He never regained consciousness. Given his otherwise excellent physical condition, he, like some others, might well have remained alive, though braindead, for years more . . . or decades. As it was, his and his family's more-than-a-year-long ordeal seemed, until it ended, an eternity.

The other was a man with whom I last associated as a missionary some thirty years ago. I had known him even earlier as an undergraduate and fraternity brother in a then Church-sponsored student organization. He was just leaving the field, having completed his service as mission secretary, when I arrived there.

Years later I learned that sometime in the present decade, while serving as a bishop and a father of four, he had appeared on a TV talk show in his community and "come out of the closet." This was apparently how he announced his sexual orientation to his family and congregation. (This friend always did have a flair for the dramatic.) I mention him because just recently I learned that he is now dead, one of over 42,000 U.S. victims of the dreaded AIDS virus.

Thinking of this friend and recalling our common missionary experience, I was reminded of the boy who succeeded him as mission secretary (we were all "boys" back then, if we aren't still). Already an expert accountant, he spent whole nights without sleep, often weeping with discouragement, to bring the mission financial and statistical records into expert order. He was a valiant mission secretary. After his mission he completed his C.P.A. degree. Several years later I happened on a brief notice in a newspaper, stating that this same brother had just been sentenced to a long term in prison for attempting to embezzle several million dollars from the firm which employed him.

I can think of at least three other exemplary missionaries from that period whose later lives failed to conform to our expectations of one another back then. Each served for a time as counselor to the mission president. Two of them, interestingly, also became professors. The third, who was the first to take me tracting and who helped ease my initial adjustment to the missionary routine, was a fine pianist and aimed at becoming a surgeon. I will never forget what a difference he made for me and my mission. He was truly an

“angel” to me at a critical juncture in my life and Church membership, though I doubt he ever knew it. He is dead now too. Some twenty years after we were missionaries I learned that he had not become an M.D. In fact, he had never married and was no longer active in the Church. He had involved himself to some extent in restaurantering in San Francisco. Then in his mid-forties he returned to the remote Utah town of his birth on the Green River where he was nursed by an older sister until his death from cancer. It is possible, in retrospect, that he too was infected with AIDS, one of its earliest victims.

I visited with one of the other two second counselors more recently. He is now the academic vice president at a liberal arts college in his community. We had not seen each other for at least sixteen years. In addition to his genuine good will, he indicated to me his extreme mistrust of the sentimentality we generally associate with either religion or infatuation. The two seemed to him to fit the same description. I found his detachment impressive but disturbing, I do not judge him for that. In fact, we agreed about a great many things, theoretically. It's just that I can't conceive of being that totally cerebral, that fully in control of one's feelings. Nor does it seem to me desirable or healthy, even if it were possible.

I don't judge the others either. Each strikes me as having had the need in his later life to achieve that “individuation” Jungians speak of. At nineteen or twenty-one, it still had not fully taken place, even though we felt perhaps more strongly than before or since, that we had “arrived.” In our naiveté we thought we had escaped the ravages that come upon the less blessed or less committed. Obviously, we still had much to discover about life and about ourselves.

With my students I have re-examined that provocative last play by Euripides, *The Bacchae*. Its reversal is as stark as in any play by Sophocles. First the Theban king Pentheus, the symbol and enforcer of convention and civic order, taunts the unfamiliar upstart, the young exponent of a new ritual and divinity. Later in the play this mysterious stranger, though imprisoned by Pentheus, induces the latter to climb the hills and witness the rites of his new order, the Bacchantes. The stranger is himself their divinity, Dionysus, in whose name the very tradition of tragedy and theatre first arose in Athens. When Pentheus is drawn to the revels of Dionysus's worshippers, he is destroyed, dismembered by his own mother, one of Dionysus's principal devotees. Euripides's implied celebration of the primor-

dial creative energies which Dionysus represents has been seen as his final testament—his affirmation of the need in each of us to give our essential self its necessary development and expression. But the play is also cautionary: by failing to recognize and properly deal with that elemental chaos which Dionysus stands for, Pentheus was literally destroyed. Perhaps Pentheus and Dionysus are two aspects of the soul or *psyche* in each of us. If so, *The Bacchae* tells us that the seeming irreconcilables in us must inevitably confront each other at great, even tragic personal risk. We should then view the struggle—in others, as in ourselves—with humility and compassion.

Where are those missionary peers we once so admired—those now dead and those still living? How are they faring? Are they no longer growing and progressing? Have any of them made irretrievable choices of eternal consequence? If so, what provoked them? Were some truly the victims of forces over which they had no control? I've seen the beauty and good will, the light, in each of their souls. Are some of them at this point irredemably, qualitatively different from others whose lives seem, on the surface, far more fortunate? Or is the reverse possibly as true? Or does it even matter? How can I be sure or ever presume to know, at least in this life? Even the gospel, as I understand it, cautions against that kind of presumption.

And what of the first two? What did either do that he might have avoided? Would prior knowledge of certain freak circumstances and their consequences—of the need to cancel a meeting and go golfing instead, or to avoid at all costs contact with a deadly virus—have made some difference? In each case, a life was cut abnormally short.

On the surface, the two cases are vastly different. The first individual apparently did nothing deliberate to jeopardize his life or to complicate the lives of his immediate kin, whereas the second appears to have done just the opposite, however unaware of where it would lead him. But their ignorance—and ours—about what may have driven and finally thwarted them must also lead us to pity both, though pity may only assuage us, the living, in our confusion and be far less needful where they now are.

Meanwhile, both *lived*. Both *were*. At various times both served others in a variety of meaningful ways. Since both were professors in the humanities, each entertained a rich variety of reflections about our common life and

undoubtedly acquired insight from matching his own life and sensitivities, however vicariously, against those of the world's most comprehensive minds. Both knew the love of significant others. Both gave love as, to some extent, all fathers and all bishops do. I do not doubt that both expressed their love as best they knew how. Which of them was least wise? More unfortunate? Or was either? What can we say about mistakes, blame, guilt, divine punishment, or even accident that fits one case better than the other? Charitably, even realistically, we can only conclude that both their abruptly terminated lives served their own and God's broad purposes and had positive worth. As with every other life, they diminish us by their departure until we can be with them again.

This essay was also occasioned by a boy we knew (or think we did). We recently attended his funeral. He was eighteen when he died, Pentheus-like, on a residential street, speeding his motorcycle to elude a policeman. From earliest childhood he'd been what is called “hyperactive” and probably couldn't help himself. The funeral sermons took this into account but admonished the rest of us with his negative example. We were challenged to consider long-term values and the folly of instant gratification, to avoid compulsiveness and emotional agitation, to prefer and live instead for spiritual serenity, a quiet conscience, and a concomitant, exalted, eternal life.

The sermons and the event itself sobered us, as religious services are generally meant to. Each of us was made more conscious of our mortality and the seeming futility of a life that bears no post-mortal promise or, equally depressing, a life whose conduct would not assure its fullest realization in the hereafter. Love was also mentioned in this context—the self-denying, commiserative *agape* the sense of others' value and sacredness which separation by death most powerfully brings to mind. I was reminded of the Schopenhauerian notions that are metaphorically summed up in both the title and emotive force of *Der Liebestod*, Wagner's climactic duet from *Tristan and Isolde*. But I was also, at least for the moment, powerfully swayed by the old utilitarian argument that no amount of austerity, suppression of urges, or general self-denial is too much for the rewards held out to those whose lives are sufficiently compliant and enduring.

A day later, one of those in attendance was heard to pronounce in sincere prayer at the table of his hostess: “We thank Thee that we are friends and neighbors, but more that we

are Christians, and even more that we are good . . . Mormons." It is wonderful, I suppose, for those who can reduce life's ultimate purpose and challenge to a distinct label, a particular affiliation, and strictly undeviating conformity to its prescribed norms. But I wonder if this alone affords sufficient common ground for authentic fellowship. Too often it may finally come across like a flat and less than inspired story or poem, which seems somehow bloodless and only proximate to the life within us.

I also wonder, as I view those who willingly settle for abstract, stereotypical, conventionally proper notions and the language that attends them, if such persons are any more compassionate or giving or self-perfecting than others—if, with their accretion of days and years, they are "growing" any more than others, maintaining a sense of awe and wonder before the Mysteriously Inexplicable that keeps life so zestful, remaining truly open and flexible, becoming any more "as little children" in their humility before what they must increasingly recognize they do not comprehend or any more need to.

And I wonder if our civilization's long-standing consignment of so much in life that is innately pleasurable and unregulated to the category of reckless evil doesn't deny a creaturely side in us which is there anyway and which, if we are ashamed to celebrate it, we will accommodate or at least sublimate in some disguised "worldly" way. For instance, isn't the sense of one's own moral superiority a petty, judgmental, mostly illusory and ultimately evil response? Doesn't the social pressure which precludes the making of choices through inner conviction simply delay the moment when the frustrated soul must, to assert its very integrity and volition, reject what was heretofore so suffocatingly and untrustingly thrust upon it—at least until it can freely choose the object of its loyalty and commitment for its own personal, God-inspired reasons? What can we ever genuinely achieve if our principal motivation is, however subtly, rooted in fear?

Finally, does the concept of Good, so restrictively defined in terms of all else that is otherwise Evil, not tend to miss the broad reach of human experience? Much of life is good and fulfilling and sufficient unto itself, and most of us aspire to it without special prompting. To what extent do we ignore and deny ourselves that broad neutral ground—the goodness of life, *per se*—which is essentially free of valences? It simply is and, as the God of Genesis himself describes his Creation, is, as such, "good"—affording even that

portion of eternity we call the present its very piquancy and richness, its immediate moment-by-moment significance. To what extent, for example, is what has long been traditionally viewed as "carnal" or "lustful" in the human psyche simply innate and, without imposing on others' privacy and freedom of choice, necessary for total health, contentment, and wholeness?

To what extent should or even *can* our love for some others divorce itself from the physical yearning that so spontaneously accompanies our awareness of them? To what extent does the suppression of some urges simply frustrate the sense of submission-to-the-inevitable that sacredly foreshadows both the *Liebestod* in human fate and communion with the Divine?

And yet, and yet . . . the restless, agitated youth who, greedy for sensation, seemed to flit from one novelty to the next and in his self-absorption so weakly perceived that we too have feelings and largely unfulfilled desires . . . now, in his perfect stillness, acquires a dignity he did not have before. By no more being there to aggravate and worry us he is sorely missed and provokes us to question our imprudence which, like his, might bring disaster—if not to us directly, then to those we love. Does death then somehow unavoidably define us so that all we live for here and now must seem vain and ephemeral, and only the desperate hope of something afterward, however stringent its terms, makes any sense or bespeaks true wisdom? Perhaps death is compensated for by the depth of our love for others, knowing that, in terms of this existence, they are mortal—just as on other occasions and perhaps for the same reason we so desperately cling to nature, friends and our intensely passionate moods, fearing we will never have enough of them.

These are the vital questions which those who are so certain about what is right and wrong, particularly where others are concerned, are and always were least inclined to ask. The urge to take an extreme position in either direction for the sake of what we would all naturally prefer—*certainty*—may yet be our greatest oversight, the greatest failing of our race. The greater wisdom, as certain pagan Greeks urged, may be found in that difficult middle ground from which we are all so disinclined and as much encourage each other constantly to stray?

Recently I attended a memorial service for the man who, with his wife, had some years ago founded a foreign-language theatre in a nearby city—one of the few such outside their native land. The service was restricted to

immediate family members and those who had acted in the man's theatre. Seated on the theatre's stage, relatives reminisced about but did not particularly eulogize the deceased. They acknowledged his despotic personality along with his remarkable gifts and accomplishments. But, in the aftermath, somehow that no longer interfered with our fully accepting him as he had been or missing and loving him for what he was. We required nothing more or less of him.

Surely, if we are capable of sentiments as positive and magnanimous as these, then the Creator is at least as constructively disposed toward each of us, whatever awaits us in that grappling with experience—both bitter and sweet, both our doing and not our doing which is the primary reason for our mortal being. Meanwhile, that persons *are*, or even *were*, itself suffices, for as spiritual and physical kin, we are (though we too seldom recognize it) literally one, in each other, and that is wonderfully sacred. It is everything. Praise to the Maker for one another and for this our existence. Life and the people in it are too wondrous, too fine, too precious for us ever to think or feel otherwise.

INDIA'S holiest of cities, Varanasi, women beggars, traditionally cast away by their children when widowed, spend their remaining years waiting for death and a more blissful new life. Some were widowed at a very young age, even as child brides, but most are content to blame their past karma and make the best of what strikes a Westerner as an intolerable and unjust circumstance. How naive can these women be, one asked earlier. Why do they allow it? Now one marvels at their stoic wisdom and for oneself wishes the same. 🍵

beside the wheel

thank you for the clay
with my fingerprints on it
thank you for the light
when there is light

and for the touch and sound
of pots and shape in darkness

in case light should return
to sear the kiln and glaze the clay
i have cast an unseen lantern
to warm my hands

—LINDA SILLITOE

INTERVIEW

ART AND THE PROMISED LAND

A Conversation with John Telford,
Terry Tempest Williams and Royden Card.



John Telford, an adjunct professor of art and manager of Photographic Services at the University of Utah, has been photographing the canyons of the Colorado Plateau for more than ten years and has been exhibited and published both nationally and internationally.

Terry Tempest Williams, naturalist in residence at the Utah Museum of Natural History, is the author of several books on natural history including Pieces of White Shell—A Journey to Navajo Land.

Royden Card, a woodcut artist and part-time BYU printmaking instructor, cut and printed the illustrations for a fine press book Dale L. Morgan's Utah published by the University of Utah.

This interview with three Utah Mormon artists was prompted by two events: the publication of a book of Williams's short stories and Telford's photographs entitled Coyote's Canyon (Gibbs Smith Publishing, \$14.95) and an art show, "Canyons," at the Courtyard Gallery in Salt Lake City in April featuring photographs by Telford and woodcuts by Card.

ALL OF YOUR WORKS RELATE TO THE LAND. WHY?

WILLIAMS: Spiritual people need to have a place they can call home. Brigham and Joseph established a land ethic and I think as Mormons we have removed ourselves from that land ethic and have become more economically based. I would love to see us return to those original tenants of what it means to have a place to call home. If they look, I think every person has their own sense of place where their spiritual needs are renewed. It's an individual relationship with place, wherever that may be. If you asked an individual to talk about his or her spiritual autobiography, there would be connections to the natural world—houses, streets, gardens, trees, smells, light, and weather. Think of Christ in the wilderness and the Garden of Gethsemane, Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove, and you could go on with every person—their spiritual memories are strongly connected to the land.

Think of Abraham, the twelve tribes, and the promised land.

TELFORD: For Utah Mormons, their place is Utah. For Korean Mormons, Korea, and so on. But it's still this planet, and in that sense, their place—land—is what they ought to be understanding, what their life is based on.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE SPIRIT PLAY IN YOUR ART?

TELFORD: There is a spiritual nature to the work. I respond emotionally to the desert which I guess is another way to say I respond spiritually to the desert. My desert photographs are on that emotional level. Other works of art are on a more cerebral level. But when I'm working in the desert and when I'm working in the landscape, I respond very emotionally, very spiritually, and I try to communicate those feelings basically spirit to spirit—artist to viewer.

I deal so much with landscape because it has been part of my upbringing. The intermingling of environment, culture, and religious upbringing is what I am. When I express those things photographically, I don't try to depict a spiritual nature specifically, but that comes through. I like the concept that I am depicting the creations of deity as opposed to the creations of humans. And in that sense, it may be spiritual. So, there is a spiritual interpretation but not necessarily a religious interpretation of the landscape.

CARD: To me all art is spiritual. If it is not dealing with a spiritual concept, then it's not really art. One of the Mormon tenets is that the earth has a spirit, is alive. Going to the desert is a spiritual pilgrimage for me. I'm always in awe of the landscape. I'm drawn to the flat ocean of sagebrush that some people consider boring. I love driving through Nevada, all of those wonderful barren hills. I celebrate the ongoing creation, the cycle of life—coyotes, kangaroo rats, lizards, horned toads, rain, sun, wind.

Sleeping under the stars, waking up, watching the fire, looking at the land, feeling cold in the morning, feeling hot in the afternoon, being in touch with all of those environmental aspects, that to me is a spiritual experience. That's why most of my work tends to be rocks, trees, desert things. Part of my religion is going to the land. My art springs from my spiritual-emotional response.

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO COYOTE'S CANYON?

TELFORD: I feel this work describes a desert which does not fit into the stereotype that most people have. When a person says that the desert is hostile, uninviting, a wilderness that is not meant for humans to experience, that person has never *experienced* a desert. They may have driven through a desert and felt that, but they have not truly experienced the desert. I think the person needs to first of all get out into the desert away from the vehicle. Away from the qualities that people have placed on the desert, and go and truly experience the desert. The book breaks down a lot of those stereotypical ideas. There are sections depicting the green grottos, water, life, and emotion found in this so-called dry wilderness and wasteland. That comes through very strongly in the book.

The desert's very accessible for people to come and experience those qualities. I think people can experience that through the book. But they can't go to the desert in their great big motorhomes with satellite dishes on top of them and drive through Utah's national parks and experience it. They have to stop that vehicle, get away from it, and go and feel it. At that point I think they begin to sense that this is not a land that is owned by contemporary human beings. This is a land that has been lived in by other human beings, either contemporary or ancient, who do not have a feeling of ownership of this land, but one of stewardship. The land is there to provide for them the things that only a creator could provide for them. Our contemporary culture looks at land as something to be owned, to be numbered in our portfolio of possessions, and to be exploited for the financial gains that it might provide for us. I always remember the feelings that I had when I first went by myself to the desert and walked into that country and felt like I was in someone else's domain—that I was only a visitor. As strong and warm and positive as I feel about that country, I've never felt that it was mine. I've always felt that it was someone else's and that I was intruding on *their* land. I think that as long as I feel that way, my respect for the land will be very high and I will never do anything to abuse that land any more than I would abuse someone's living room where I am a guest.

WILLIAMS: I understand what you're saying, John, about people in Winnebagos and satellite dishes, but I'm not so sure they don't have

a relationship with the desert, too. It's just different. I think of my grandparents who have enormous affection for red rock country and their experience is largely sitting on the porch and watching sunsets or taking small walks. On the other hand, every time my husband goes into that country he's convinced that he's the first person there and takes climbing ropes and harnesses and questions my relationship to the canyons. There are many levels on which the desert can be experienced. That's part of its charm. It can be hostile, and I do think that ringing silence is unnerving. It's bare-bones country and there's no place to hide. I find I cannot work in the desert. It's too distracting. If I'm going to write, I go to Jackson Hole where I feel safe and nurtured. The desert is much more dynamic and full of tension.

I hope *Coyote's Canyon* will ask Westerners to rethink their homeland, to see it with new eyes, and to realize their obligations to that country.

WHAT'S THE BOOK ABOUT?

TELFORD: The book, which is primarily about the Colorado Plateau area of Utah, is not so much about the physical description of the landscape, but a description of the emotions of the landscapes. We're dealing with images both in story and photographic form which do not necessarily depict reality but are based on reality. They are suggestive of other things and it's up to the viewer to decide where reality departs and where imagination comes into play. Based on that playful concept we call the book *Coyote's Canyon*, the coyote being the mythological trickster figure of the Navajo people.

WILLIAMS: John and I wanted to do something innovative and to create a landscape of the imagination. Certainly John's photographs reflect that and I hope the stories also reflect the sense that nothing is as it appears in this landscape of red rocks and ravens. There are seven stories, all true, which come from Southern Utah. They've been white-robed a bit to give them a mythic sense, they are creative nonfiction—as all good myths tend to be. They have to do with the mysteries that surround us when we're in the desert.

One story, "The Bowl," has its roots in anarchy—the sense of breaking away from traditional roles—about a woman who leaves her family and her children. She looks into the mirror and sees the power that comes when everything is going out and nothing is

coming in. She decides that her life and the lives of those she loves depend on her leaving. And she retreats to the landscape of her childhood, to a desert wash. She sheds her clothing and creates a bowl. I think it's very symbolic how humans have to replenish themselves in order to keep giving.

There's another story about a couple who creates a spiral out of river stones. It's symbolic of the creation in which a man and a woman participate. Another story is about hearing Kokopelli's flute in Keet Seel and addresses the question of what is real and what is imagined.

WHAT'S THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PHOTOGRAPHS AND THE STORIES?

WILLIAMS: Our attempt was not to have the photographs illustrate the stories nor the stories illustrate the photographs, but to have both of them go down parallel roads along their own line. There's a story called "A Woman's Dance," about a woman who dances in the desert and suddenly she has an unexpected audience. The abstract image that John placed alongside the story is this wonderful dance of rock, the sandstone is fluid. I think the images strengthen the stories and the stories hopefully give new light to the images.

TELFORD: The photographs stand alone visually and the stories stand alone literarily. For one to try to describe or support the other would be wrong. But together they weave an image that is stronger than each individually.

One of the magical things that has happened here is that while our intent was not to illustrate each other's work, the fact that they weave together in describing the emotional feelings that we have about the desert indicates that both of us are in tune with the same desert. There are photographs that you would think were placed there to illustrate something, and they do, but there's a quality of the words being brought out in the photographs and the photographs being brought out by the words.

HOW WOULD YOU CRITIQUE THE STATE OF ARTS IN THE CHURCH?

CARD: There's a lot that I think is overtly sentimental or that draws on a historical sentimentality such as the paintings that you see inside the covers of Church magazines—two

obscure figures in the landscape of Far West or standing on a bluff overlooking part of England. Put a title with it and it serves a purpose. I think it gives Church members a tie, something somewhat beautiful to look at. But it stops short. It is an illustration: after you've looked at it a few times there doesn't seem to be anything else to draw on. Then there's art which is more rooted spiritually in love and the grandeur of God's creation: people, landscapes, ideas that are purely visual and abstract but which carry an innate love of creation.

TELFORD: One of the things that always discouraged me with art in the Church is that we seem to place so much emphasis on performing art and so little on visual art. As I look at the art that is typically represented by the Church magazines, my first impression is that they are tied completely and totally to reality. The art is meant to depict reality in the sense of either sacred buildings, experiences, or happenings that took place for the most part in the nineteenth century. Much of the current depiction is done with an impressionistic look: We are now at a level to appreciate what was happening in art 100 years ago but we're not able to appreciate what is happening in art today. Ironically, much of the religious rites that we experience are highly abstract and symbolic, but we as a people are unable to appreciate the symbolism because we are so totally tied to reality. When we can look at things that are not representational and see the symbolism associated with them and feel the spiritual experience, then I think that we can better appreciate the symbolic rites that we experience so often in the Church. As we progress in our ability to appreciate art, we progress to a higher level of expressionism, a higher level of emotion.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE ARTISTIC VISION OF MORMONS?

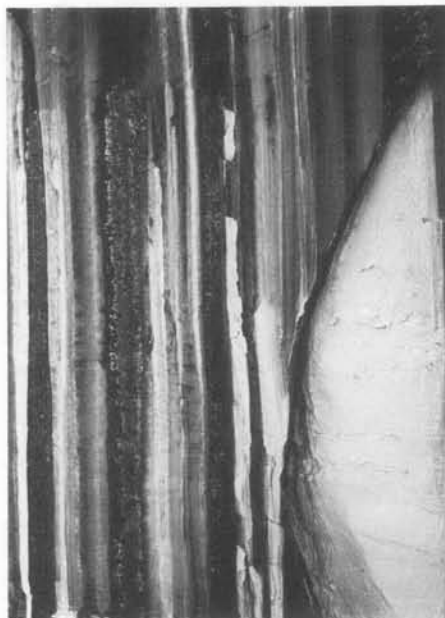
TELFORD: Well, to say that Mormons are appreciating impressionistic art right now and therefore Mormons are 100 years behind is false. The American culture in general is about 100 years behind its artists so that's not an indictment against members of the Church, it's an indictment against our whole culture.

I don't see a problem with exhibiting impressionist paintings. But, let's keep impressionism in its time frame. I do have problems when contemporary artists make pseudo-impressionistic paintings, because impressionism isn't what's happening right now.

They're living in a time one hundred years ago.

CARD: We need to examine what we expect art to do. We need to get away from buying a \$19.95 K-Mart reproduction to match the \$3,000 sofa and approach what Joseph Smith said about a person being saved only as fast as he or she gains intelligence. We need to emphasize the importance of getting visual intelligence.

TELFORD: The "sofa-sized painting" concept has nothing to do with a vision that will elevate the human mind. And the fact that it's inexpensive means that five years down the road when our interior designers have come up with a totally new color concept, then that



work can be thrown away and we can bring in another piece that matches our new sofa. That's not the reason we should have art. Art is meant to elevate the human mind and the experience of being human. If we can bring that into our environment and experience that on a higher level, be it spiritual or cerebral, then we're approaching what art really has the ability to do for us.

WOULD IT BE CONSTRUCTIVE FOR THE CHURCH OR WEALTHY PATRONS TO COMMISSION ART FOR CHAPELS AND TEMPLES?

TELFORD: When that happened during the renaissance, art was basically restrictive because the patrons determined what was

art—artists merely executed their ideas and wishes. The answer is for people to realize that they are placing a restrictive criteria on what they think art is. If people will simply realize that there are a lot of differing ideas about art and then explore someone else's idea they would grow in their ability to appreciate and understand the art that is out there. Instead, when they don't understand a piece immediately the typical response is "That could be done by a monkey" or "My child could do that" and therefore they reject it instead of saying, "This is probably done by a gifted person and I don't understand it, maybe I should try to understand what this is about."

CARD: In the late 1970s and early 1980s when neo-expressionists were being shown, I was ready to dismiss it as junk. As time passed, however, I looked at more and more works—some on the cutting edge—and I realized I didn't understand what was going on. I had some artists walk me through their work so I could start understanding some of their personal symbols. Now I can look at some of these paintings and say, "This one speaks to me." My effort to understand has increased my ability to discern.

DOES MORALITY AFFECT ART?

TELFORD: Yes. The morals of a particular artist come through in the work. I've seen some very interesting interpretations where psychoanalytical critics have come up with a correct interpretation of the artist's psychological make up—morality. I don't know that I agree that morality can be seen immediately, on the surface. But, I've seen a lot of examples where a person's character comes through the work.

A National Geographic approach to photography is meant strictly to communicate information about what is happening some place else in the world. But when you put a camera in the hands of a gifted person who has the ability to express emotion, and express artistic ideas, then the camera is every bit the tool as a canvas, brush, or knife. The important thing that people need to realize is that the hands do not create. Nothing that the hands do is particularly creative, be it with a brush, a knife, or a camera. It is the mind that creates and the tools are merely the things that the artists use to express what goes on in the mind. ☐

The Creation Of Sacred Mormon Myth

MISSIONARY, NATIVE, AND GENERAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS OF A BOLIVIAN CONVERSION

By David C. Knowlton

In 1976, A CONGREGATION OF AYMARA speaking peasants in Bolivia petitioned the Mormon mission to send them missionaries. After a period of negotiations, missionaries were sent and within a few weeks had baptized almost the entire congregation and organized a thriving branch. This event was soon mythologized, entering into the canon of “miracles” the mission had experienced.¹

The missionaries who served in Huacuyo used the folk themes and genres they were accustomed to in order to comprehend the events they had experienced (Wilson 1981). These were communicated to other elders and eventually an article was written in the *Church News*, using a mythic format, describing the supposed events in Huacuyo. Finally, Elder Gene Cook made passing reference to this community as a substantiating example in his General Conference talk on “Miracles among the Lamanites.”²

The further removed from Huacuyo these narratives were, the less they corresponded to the actual, empirical happenings of 1976. Instead they spoke the “truths” of Mormon religious and folk culture. They were thus myths in the popular, negative sense; that is, they were false because they only minimally corresponded to what really happened. But they are also myths in a more technical and positive sense, as sacred narrative. They transformed the happenings of Huacuyo to fit the requirements of this genre of Mormon discourse. As such they tell us more about Anglo Mormonism and what it considers important. They teach “higher” and different “truths” than those of mere empirical reality.

This article explores the stories told by Elder Cook, by Vira H. Judge in the *Church News*, and by an elder who served in Huacuyo to understand the genre constraints of these tales and their social logic. These tales have divergent origins and social contexts—talk in general conference, journalistic article, and conversation between me and the elders—but they form a set unified by their topic and, as we shall see, by the way they

select themes from what happened in Huacuyo. These will be contrasted with how the people of Huacuyo understood the events, from their very different cultural tradition.

HUACUYO

The Church in Bolivia has generally limited its growth to the cities and towns. There its style of proselyting and the formality of its organization work. In the rural areas, the hills, valleys, and plains where most of Bolivia’s population lives scattered, it has yet to find a way to work with the people.

Huacuyo is a rural community. It has a ritual center that passes as a “town” to those untutored in Aymara culture. In reality Huacuyo covers two broad valleys in the heart of the Copacabana peninsula in Bolivia. Its people do not live in the various small adobe houses of its ritual center. Rather they live scattered in individual homesteads across the two valleys. In this remote setting their conversion to Mormonism really is unusual.

Huacuyo as a whole has about 1000 inhabitants. They survive by raising potatoes and herding sheep and cattle for subsistence and for market. In addition, many of the community’s members work in the city of La Paz, to which they commute, or in the neighboring town of Copacabana, the political capital of the province. Some also migrate seasonally between Huacuyo and the tropical colonization zones in the Yungas and Santa Cruz. As a whole Huacuyo’s greatest problem stems from its relative overpopulation. There simply is not enough land for its children to continue within the community. As a result parents struggle to find enough cash to educate their sons, and to a much lesser extent their daughters, so that they can obtain meaningful employment in the cities. At the same time the people hold the somewhat contradictory goal of seeing their community as a whole progress and maintain itself as a vital, Aymara-speaking entity.

In pursuit of these aims the people have become known as activists and even somewhat radical. They have lived, over the last century, an incredible social odyssey. Before 1952, the people of Huacuyo lived as quasi-serfs on an estate owned by

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the sanctuary of the Virgin of Copacabana. Bolivia previously legislated social stability by prohibiting the acquisition of education by peasants/Indians. The people of Huacuyo assiduously fought this restriction and obtained full education for their children. The community even became a regional center to which the children of neighboring communities came for secondary schooling. With the agrarian reform, they obtained ownership over the land of the community, throwing out the hacienda. Through careful political action, the peasants gained considerable independence from the nearby city of Copacabana and its political and religious hierarchy. They also sought every developmental assistance they could from outside the community.

As part of this process, Huacuyo became institutionally diversified. Shortly after the agrarian reform the Quakers established a small congregation in the community. Methodists, Seventh Day Adventists and other Evangelicals set up churches in neighboring communities. A freelance preacher came to Huacuyo around 1974 and organized a fairly large congregation. Later, the members of this group became dissatisfied with their pastor and asked him to leave. He tried to negotiate with the Mormons and various other missions to pass the congregation to them. Meanwhile a delegation of peasants met a group of Mormons in an Aymara-speaking branch in La Paz. From the encounter they took home literature and an interest in Mormonism.

While the pastor tried to find a formal mission that would take over this rebellious congregation, its members drafted a formal letter to the Mormon mission asking it to send missionaries. The mission at first was skeptical because of its previous interactions with the pastor, who at one time had been a Mormon. It did send missionaries to investigate the situation and meet with the people while the people sent delegations to meet

with the mission and correspondence continued. Finally permanent missionaries were sent to Huacuyo toward the end of 1976 and soon baptized the vast majority of the congregants. For a while the missionaries continued to find converts, but soon their success diminished drastically and they were withdrawn. The branch in Huacuyo was left to fend for itself, in which condition it pretty much remains today.

Huacuyo is composed of four sectors. The missionaries baptized the majority of one of the four sectors, Kalamarka, which has pretensions of striking out as a community in its own right.

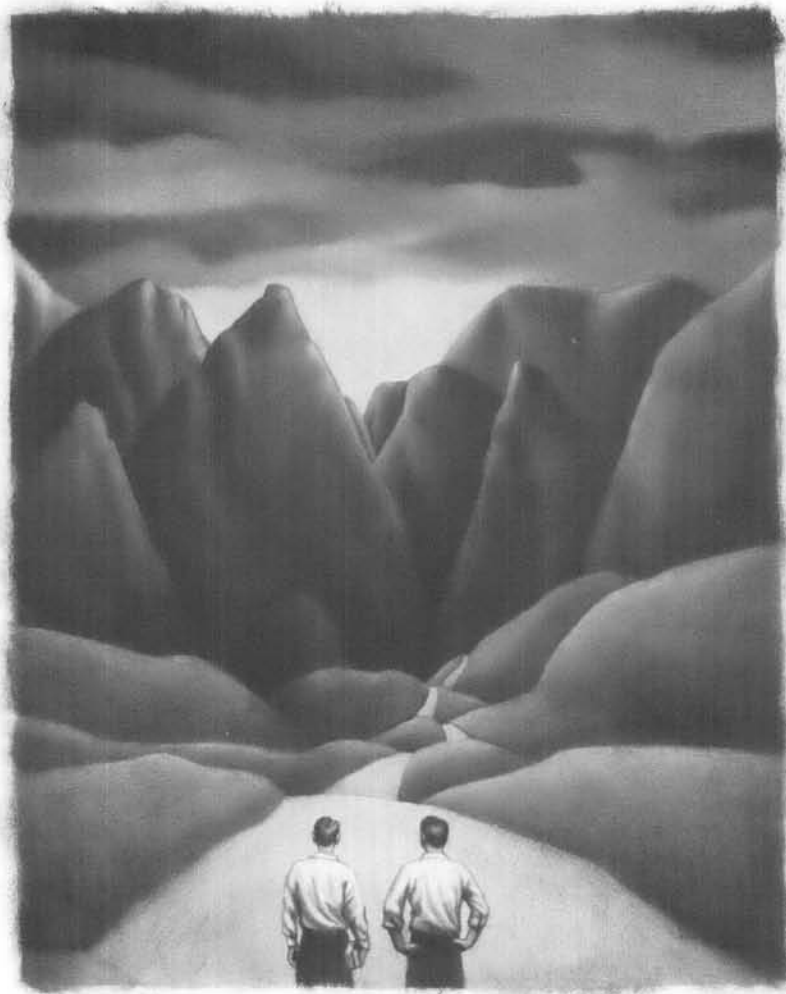
Few people from the other sectors—Supukachi, where the people are Quakers, Baptist and Neo-Catholic; Axanani, where they are more modernist and secular; or Kallakami, where they are traditionalist—ever joined the Church. Its limits became those of Kalamarka, reflecting the importance of religion in inter-sectorial and inter-community politics.

GENERAL CONFERENCE

Myths function in all societies. Thus it should not surprise us to find them in our own. In 1980, Elder Gene R. Cook gave a talk in General Conference, entitled "Miracles among the Lamanites" (Cook 1980). In that context he used the example of "a small village of Aymara Indians is converted within the matter of a few weeks, the entire village" which probably referred to Huacuyo. As

we have seen in Huacuyo, only the people of Kalamarka became Mormon, not the entire village. But Huacuyo became known in the mission as "the town that converted," even though this was not the case. In fact, the missionaries eventually were withdrawn, at least in part because this misapprehension became current.

Elder Cook used Huacuyo to demonstrate how "their lives teach of simple truths like faith, confidence, trust in God." This is a theme that occurs many times in our discussion of narratives



From *The Church News*

ENTIRE ANDES VILLAGE JOINS

They All Wanted Baptism

By *Vira H. Judge*

HUACUYO, BOLIVIA – Every inhabitant of this village, set in the high Andes mountains and remote from communication with the Church, asked for baptism after hearing the Book of Mormon read to them by their children.

Just a little more than a year after the request came to the missionaries, the families in the area have all joined the Church and the branch has an activity rate of about 96 percent.

The elders are still proselyting. They thread their way along the connecting hillside paths on horseback in search of more people who want to learn of the gospel.

In June of 1976, few people in the Bolivia La Paz Mission had heard of Huacuyo. Then a letter came, signed with the thumbprints of more than 100 villagers. The letter, written by a lawyer for the villagers, asked for missionaries to come to stay there.

DeVere McAllister, president of the mission, was skeptical of the letter. Because of the severe shortage of elders who could speak the Aymara language used by the villagers, and because of the six-hour four-wheel-drive vehicle trip to the village, he waited.

Then, a few weeks later, another letter came.

"Please send missionaries to us," the letter pleaded. "Our children have learned to read Spanish in school. At our village, they read the Book of Mormon to us. We know it is true, and we want to be baptized." It isn't known how the villagers first obtained a copy of the Book of Mormon.

This time, Pres. McAllister assigned two elders to spend several weekends in the remote village. The first four weekends convinced him that Huacuyo should have full-time missionaries.

When Elder Brandt Clark of Bedford, Wyo., and Elder Ernest Richter of El Centro, Calif., arrived in Huacuyo, they found a chapel of adobe walls with a tin roof had been built and the people were anxious to hear the gospel.

On Oct. 28, 1976, two weeks after the elders arrived, they held a mass baptismal service. The icy waters of the river were dammed to form a pool and 36 persons were baptized. Two weeks later, 23 more persons were baptized, and by May of this year, 96 persons, mostly in family units, had become members of the Church.

At the first service, there were only two outfits and each

person had to slip into the wet, cold clothing of the person who went before.

The elders took turns baptizing, one remaining on the river bank thawing out while the other performed the ordinance. The service lasted three-and-one-half hours.

"The people were eager to help," said Elder Richter. "But we still couldn't have done it without the help of the Lord."

The elders had to learn the Aymara language with no tapes or books. Their only training was by memory and a few notes from a previous missionary. They lived in an upstairs apartment across from the chapel.

With only a couple of chairs and a table, they learned to live like the villagers. Water had to be brought from the river, and a truck brought in supplies once a week.

From the time they first came to the village, the people welcomed them with open arms.

"The leader greeted us and helped us get settled," said Elder Richter. "By dusk, people started coming down out of the hills bringing gifts of potatoes, eggs and other foods.

"I am with the most humble people in the world," he later wrote in his journal. "I love them. I love this place. I have never been happier or more filled with the gospel."

Activity in the branch has thrived. Entire families have joined the Church. Recently, 51 men and boys attended priesthood meeting. There were 112 in attendance at Sunday School. At fast and testimony meeting, 125 attended.

One converted villager bowed his head and sobbed as he bore his testimony. "I used to drink and use drugs," he said when he could finally control his voice. "I was mean to my wife and children.

"Now we are happy. We know God loves us. We know the Book of Mormon is true and this is Christ's true Church."

After the service, the sisters in an orderly manner sat in a semi-circle on the meadow. Their colorful skirts were spread around them and derby hats perched jauntily on their heads. They uncovered their food—boiled potatoes, a root vegetable the color of yams and bowls of spicy sauces for dipping. Some of them brought roast guinea pig, a favorite food, to serve the elders.

Since the letter came from the Huacuyo villagers, the Church has developed a language training program in Aymara and a related language, Quichua. Plans are being made to take the gospel to other villages, many more remote.

about Huacuyo and in a sense expresses the didactic purpose such “myths” are supposed to have.

In this way, stories take what is abstract and make it tangible. They take the great themes of the religion and give them a reality that can motivate believers and recreate their beliefs, ever fresh, in new circumstances, thus uniting continuity and change. For example, Elder Cook states that today is a day of miracles. He claims to have witnessed these “spiritual miracles” wrought by the Lord in fulfillment of prophecy among the Lamanites. Furthermore, he holds the lives of these Lamanites should teach Godly principles for us to emulate.

Elder Cook did not need to elaborate on any of the myths. He merely stood in Conference and testified that he had seen the miracles with his own eyes and then in an extremely compressed form he made reference to them. This brought his discussion down to earth, gave it empirical believability. Anyway, those of us who are native Mormons can easily fill in the basics of the stories from the brief reference he made. We intuitively know the essentials of that genre of tales. It stems from our folk tradition.

When Elder Cook speaks of a village being “converted” suddenly, we understand how this took place because of the hundreds of similar stories we have heard since childhood. As we shall see, the people of Huacuyo understand something radically different by “conversion” than do we. This fact alone should make us take pause and raise our implicit assumption to the level of explicit awareness for examination. Fortunately, the tale in the *Church News* does that for us.

THE CHURCH NEWS

ONE of the probable sources for Brother Cook’s talk was an article about Huacuyo in the quasi-official *Church News*.³ Its author, Vira H. Judge, evidently visited Bolivia and spoke with the mission leaders and the missionaries who had baptized the congregation of Huacuyo. Using this information she prepared her story. However, it is not the story told by the missionaries or by the people of Huacuyo, as we shall see. Rather, it is a more elaborate form of that relied upon by Elder Cook. In many of its particulars, the article is simply wrong. It does, however, transform the happenings of Huacuyo into an easily grasped form that is meaningful to Mormons in general.

Her article stresses the miraculous. (The entire article is included in the sidebar; here I merely stress its important themes.) She writes that the people of Huacuyo, far removed from easy knowledge about Mormonism, learned about it when their children read to them out of the Book of Mormon. From reading it they obtained a “testimony,” she argues, a “desire to be baptized.” One could almost annotate this with reference to the scriptures supposed to motivate human action, e.g. Moroni 10:4-5, making this event a subtle witness to the validity of what was instead supposed to have motivated the people of Huacuyo.

As we shall see, the actual motivations listed by the people for their actions are substantially different, residing in their own

social problematic. Mormons assert from their own cultural understanding of religious motivations that “Testimony” is crucial for conversion. It occupies a central place in our religious practice, where it is heavily ritualized, and in our rhetoric, where it is a particular recognizable trope with complex, many-layered meanings as well as a distinct mode of discourse (Knowlton n.d., 1988).

Without previous interaction, she writes, the people of Huacuyo wrote to the mission office to ask for missionaries, greatly surprising the skeptical and overworked mission president. When institutional constraints permitted, he sent missionaries to investigate this invitation. Two themes here are intriguing: first, the contradiction between the resources of the institutional Church with their inherent limits and the free movement of the spirit which must be socialized; second, the similarity in this instance between missionaries and Roman Catholic investigators of miracles.

To ground her “myth” in ostensibly observable, empirical reality as narrators often do by locating their narrative in a place everyone knows, she quotes from the letter.

“Please send missionaries to us,” the letter pleaded. “Our children have learned Spanish in school. At our village, they read the Book of Mormon to us. We know it’s true, and we want to be baptized.” It isn’t known how the villagers first obtained a copy of the Book of Mormon.

Unfortunately, I cannot find this quote anywhere in the correspondence between the mission and Huacuyo. I question its reality because it does not have the rhetorical form that the Aymara-speaking people of Huacuyo used either in their conversations with me or in their letters in Spanish to the mission.

Furthermore, this quote is important in Mormon ritual practice, where it is a formal statement of belief. The people would have had to spend long hours with the missionaries in order to grasp the concept of “the Book of Mormon is true.” This is not a self-evident and universally meaningful claim. Such a meaning is extremely difficult to communicate within the constraints of Aymara or in common Bolivian Spanish. As used here “truth” refers to ritual and to religious understandings of epistemology that we Mormons are only marginally conscious of, but which nevertheless occupy such an important place in our lives that we restructure events to reflect them.

She goes on to say that the elders visited Huacuyo periodically until two missionaries were sent to stay. On their arrival they found that the faith of the people was such that they had already built a chapel, indicating how anxious they were “to hear the gospel.” The chapel of Huacuyo was built under the previous preacher and was one of the points of contention between him and the community, according to what the people of Huacuyo told me. Neither the preacher nor the people could find the money to put a roof on the chapel and furnish it. So he evidently told the people to turn to the Mormons because they were “rich” and could finish the chapel. They did and the Mormons, as part of the contract with the community, completed the building. Recently they put an elaborate and,

by local standards, luxurious cinder block chapel in the community.

But, for the narrative, this kind of empirical cavil is not important. The story must witness to the almost heroic work the people did as proof of their unusual interest in Mormonism. To do so, it uses a particularly Mormon image, "the people were anxious to hear the gospel." "Hearing the gospel" here stands for the entire act of conversion, making it something significant. Once again, this is not important in Aymara culture, but it is in Mormonism. Much of our "worship" consists precisely of "hearing the gospel." Like going to the temple, partaking of the sacrament, etc., it is a central ritual act that we constantly perform to reemphasize our belonging.

Next Judge presents the mass baptism, reminiscent of those told about Wilford Woodruff. She stresses the physical hardships involved as testimonies of the people's and the missionaries' "commitment," another crucial Mormon word. The river water was "icy" and had to be socially domesticated by "damming" to "form a pool" first. There were only two sets of clothes, and the people had to change into clammy, wet clothes to be baptized.

Her tale continues in a similar vein, emphasizing the unusualness of Huacuyo as an indication of the movement of the spirit of God on the people. In and of itself, this tale becomes a mythic formal "testimony" of the "truthfulness" of Mormonism. This becomes clear when, near the end, she quotes a villager in words that sound more like a missionary's mistranslation, common journalistic hyperbole, or an extreme wrenching of a snippet from its original context than like the actual statement of an Aymara-speaking native.

One converted villager bowed his head and sobbed as he bore his testimony. "I used to use drugs," he said when he could finally control his voice. "I was mean to my wife and children."

"Now we are happy. We know God loves us. We know the Book of Mormon is true and that this is Christ's true church."

MISSIONARIES' ACCOUNTS

GENERALLY the missionaries use similar cultural presuppositions to those found in Elder Cook's and Mrs. Judge's narratives. But they are closer to the event. Consequently, their accounts perform less of a transformation. They are less mythologized, being stories told in conversation rather than more formal tales. They also do not make the error of assuming that all of Huacuyo became Mormon.

Bolivia's culture is extremely different from Anglo American culture, and therefore, presents difficulties of understanding for Anglo missionaries. Mission folklore as developed and passed among missionaries provides a cushion of understanding that allows them to make sense out of the otherwise unintelligible (Wilson 1981). For the present, two themes, which appear over and over in mission tales, are important.⁴ First, Bolivia appears as a place of extreme hardship and persecu-

tion. The missionaries elaborate endlessly on their physical woes in this underdeveloped country, running the risk of seriously alienating the Bolivians, should they overhear. The missionaries understand their social alienation and the Bolivian ambivalence towards strangers, as well as their frequent anti-Americanism, in terms of persecution. The missionaries misunderstand Bolivian culture as being immoral, filled with drunkenness and devil worship. But they also balance this with a second theme of Bolivians as extremely humble and spiritual people, who in their untutored simplicity are spiritual giants and can teach us much about the gospel.

One of the first Aymara-speaking elders to visit Huacuyo said the following:

The people of Huacuyo were different from most Aymara in that they were terribly interested in the Church. The people seemed really excited about the gospel. We had barely gotten there when we were surrounded by people wanting to shake our hands. They asked us to have a meeting with them and to teach them some songs and to teach them about the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. . . .

We were surprised that some of the people had really been studying the Book of Mormon and D & C. They asked really complicated questions. Four or five people really knew about the Church. They seemed enlightened and gave momentum to the community in joining the Church.

The people of Huacuyo were just ready, they were prepared to receive the gospel. They were so spiritual that I felt I was polluting them because they were so much better than me. They should have been teaching me. Instead of coming home, I wanted to go and live among them for a while so as to learn of their great faith and spirituality.

This statement of love expresses not just some of the noblest of themes of mission culture, it also describes very real feelings the elders had in Huacuyo. It also forms another example of how Anglo Mormons define conversion.

A NATIVE PERSPECTIVE

IN contrast, I shall present at some length a narrative by Mr. Quispe, the then branch president of Huacuyo which mythologizes the events in a different way. He produced this tale when I asked him how they came to know the Church. His story is similar to the others the people told me when asked.

I always wanted to enter the religion. We couldn't enter until this Mr. Vargas came. I wanted to enter the . . . the evangelist, that which is called the Friends, in it. We couldn't go until we met.

When this Vargas came, he came here to my house and from there we had to follow him he told me and I said OK. And he put a Bible on my head and said "you are now a believer and from Sunday on you have to come.

At Justino's we will be in a meeting this Sunday," he told me.

So we went. When we got there it was just beginning. Then we carried the meeting. Then we rested at noon and everyone together we ate our food, all together. And then again the meeting of . . . sacrament meeting he said also and then we carried it. . . .

With another name (Vargas) came to add to the Friends. Christ the Conqueror was its name and then for almost a year we walked with Mario Vargas. And then my brother Domingo was president. They named him. Then a year exactly and then they changed. They named me also. And for almost three or two months only I was directing as president. Then the missionaries came, from President McAllister.

I had a letter written as a request and the people signed. I sent it to the mission and then the answer came. Then "three times the missionaries will come to visit" they told me and the missionaries came. "Then on the fifteenth of October the permanent missionaries will come." And they arrived on that day with ten benches and two tables. They also brought four chairs.

After the Saturday when they came Sunday arrived and we went from house to house visiting. The elders told me "make us know the houses where they live" they told me. From there we started and went up, all day Sunday.

From Monday the missionaries began to go from house to house teaching, Elders Richter and Clark. And there they told me "you are no longer president." Then they named me president then the mission told me that Elder Clark was the first president here.

From there I learned little by little how the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was. In the pamphlets we have read and the Bible. Only then did we learn.

First for a year we learned from Vargas. I couldn't even talk. He spoke alone every Sunday and singing hymns in the afternoon. We almost learned by memory, what's it called, the Baptists their hymnal CALA we almost memorized it well. Then later when the missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ, it was a little difficult to learn their hymns. We have now learned little by little. And that is how we have been!

There is much here that could be explored. In manner of expression, this account requires a substantial understanding of Aymara culture to make it intelligible. For now, though, it is enough to point out the extreme differences between it and the article in the *Church News*.

The point of view is immensely different. While Mrs. Judge stresses the "miraculous" break with the past the Church represented to Huacuyo, Mr. Quispe here stresses continuity. In his community there was something called "religion" which he always wanted to join. For him, "religion" is merely a part of the community, although his choice of language marks forcefully the disjuncture between this and the traditional politico-religious organization of Aymara communities. Most of the tale

involves the changing authority structure of the congregation. The Mormons represented a break only because it did not allow Mr. Quispe to fill his term of office. Other than that it was a continuity.

Three other themes of interest here appear. First, the conversion to "the religion" is unlike that conceptualized by Elder Cook and Mrs. Judge. Rather the preacher comes to Mr. Quispe's home, metaphorically dissolving the social distance between Mr. Quispe and "the religion." The new unity by which Mr. Quispe became "a believer," a significant term in its own right (c.f. Knowlton 1988), was marked by the ritual placing of a Bible on his head. The other narratives stress the baptism, the ritual rebirth from a pool of water. The difference stems from the distinct cultural traditions of the Aymara and Anglo Mormons.

Second, the understanding of "worship" varies. For the Anglo Mormon it was receiving the "word of God" in various different ways. The Aymara here focused on "carrying," i.e., performing adequately, the "meeting." We Anglos do not usually see our "meetings" as ritual performances, although they are. To exalt our differences with Catholic tradition we would rather deemphasize what we see as ritual. For Mr. Quispe, the "meeting" is the crucial, minimal unit of Religion. It was not believing or obeying the commandments, per se. It was "carrying the meeting." The word "carrying" stresses that this is probably a ritual burden, like many others in their tradition, that must be carried by the communally selected leaders for the benefit of the entire community.

Mr. Quispe further stresses within the meeting that they talked and sang. Although we would stress this as well we would mention that these are merely vehicles for the spirit and word of God to manifest itself to us. Mr. Quispe stresses them in their own right and further emphasizes the transformation when Mormonism came: the people replaced Vargas as the speakers and the hymns were difficult to learn.

Third, for Mr. Quispe the essential event in the coming of the missionaries was that they kept their word, coming when they said they would and bringing the benches, chairs, and tables they had promised. We would have stressed the message, the gospel, that they brought. Mr. Quispe emphasized the material facts of reciprocity and gift giving, following his culture. Furthermore, like Mr. Vargas, the missionaries visited house to house, reducing the social gap between themselves and the future members as well as initiating thereby a formal relationship of sociability with each household.

Mr. Quispe's account does not vary significantly in its choices among the possibilities provided in the actual coming of Mormonism to the community from those of others in Huacuyo. It merely stresses his own leadership role and subtly refers to the frustrations he and the community felt with the Church's misunderstanding of how the congregation should be organized in terms of rotation of authority. For those of us who are Anglo Mormons, it presents an "alien" view that is not easily grasped. But it should clarify for us the cultural presuppositions in our own accounts.

CONCLUSION

NARRATIVES are necessary. They enable us to make sense of the inchoate experiences and feelings we all have in life. Through their form they provide a sense of stability and continuity. But they also work with a censor's scissors when they pick and choose what is relevant for the story. Out of this arbitrariness, social scientists discover a people's culture.

For example, here we have seen how the Aymara and Anglo Mormon perspectives give very different understandings of an event. They especially diverged in how they defined the process of conversion. These differences of ideas are significant because around them people build their ritual and their interpersonal interactions. These stories could serve as a jumping-off point for an extensive analysis of both cultures. For now they merely remind us that myths and other stories compose and comprise knowledge.

Truth is an exceptionally slippery word. It defies even the professional epistemologist to pin it down. Yet it is a concept we rely on almost daily in our discussions one with another. It certainly is important in Mormon ritual, where we stand to bear testimony about it and claim that it validates our faith. We think we know what it means and for most intents and purposes we probably do. Every once and a while, though, its inherent contradictions rise up, challenging the word itself and all that depends on it. Here we have seen myths told from the pulpit or in Church publications as didactic validations of faith that really only minimally correspond to what actually happened. Are they, therefore, "false" and "untrue"? No, they merely raise for analysis our conflicting assumptions about "truth." At such moments of conflict, of clashing expectations, we can probably learn more about "truth" than at any other time. ☺

NOTES

1. The research on which this paper is based was funded by a generous grant from the Inter-American Foundation and by the kind assistance of the people of Huacuyo and the missionaries who served there. For all this I am very grateful.

2. Cook, Gene R. "Miracles Among the Lamanites." *Ensign* 10:11:67-69, 1980.

3. Judge, Vira H. "Entire Andes Village Joins: They All Wanted Baptism." *Church News*, July 30, 1977.

4. This account of Bolivian missionary folklore is not merely based on my research. From 1974-1976 I was a native of that particular sub-culture.

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DAVID'S MUSIC

I

It ought to have worked—
—some simple shepherd songs,
a young clear country voice,
just the things for poor King Saul:
a few strings snapped,
others slipping, sinking into madness.
Saul listened, his sons and daughters
listened, the servants listened,
the doorposts listened like
forest trees who hear a high wind
and answer softly with low sighs.

Saul could not stand it. Taking his
javelin like a baton, he thought to fix,
to still the song, but David only danced
and never missed a step until
it seemed that there was nothing
left to do but take him back and
play along—give him an extra daughter
(with only minor strings to the offer),
ask only a simple warrior's gift:
two hundred Philistines represented
by parts at the gala affair.

II

The rounded river stone
had its own sort of song,
drowsy from rocking in the pouch
at the boy's waist, warm
in his hand, cradled in the sling,
waved off with a quiet sound,
the sort a shepherd makes for sheep,
a lullaby to leave Goliath
dreaming of battle, his head,
like Jacob's, propped on a stony pillow.

The victory music was all ram and bull
horns and the hard-edged clanging
of sword flats on brazen shields,
the hero bouncing high on the shoulders
of a strong blown music,
like Joshua at Jericho, an awful
unison, stamping at the walls
chanting and blowing till
the horns have cowed every heart,
unrelenting, determined to see
every last gate part.

—M. D. PALMER

Pillars of My Faith

ANOTHER KIND OF FAITH

By Irene M. Bates

ABOUT THREE MONTHS AGO A RELIEF SOCIETY TEACHER phoned to ask if I would share my testimony of the Book of Mormon in her lesson. I told her I would, but that I might not be the right one to ask. I explained that the principles of love taught by Jesus were the foundation of my faith and that where the Book of Mormon illuminates those principles then it serves to build upon that foundation.

There was a pause of a few seconds then the teacher asked "Well then, why do you need to be in the Church?" My initial unspoken response was "Why not?" After all, this is the Church of Jesus Christ. But as I thought about it I realized her question was relevant. I could be in any Christian church, or not even belong to a church, if that were indeed the sum total of my interest and faith. Since then I have pondered her question many times.

I know that the foundation of my faith remains deep and strong, yet I also know that over time some of my more naive, idealistic pillars built on that foundation have become somewhat fragile. The kind of saw-edged wisdom that is grief has eroded some quite severely. But I imagine many people have shaky pillars that need shoring up, and it might be more helpful if I shared some of the stalwart supports that have withstood the challenges of the years. Three of them have survived because they are constructed from the materials of my own spiritual experience—those things which I cannot deny. Two are quite predictable and uncomplicated, the third somewhat ironic and complex but always exciting.

First of all, as a convert in a mission setting thirty-three years ago, I was very moved—and still am—by the awakening of the spirit that can be seen in converts. There is a glow, an enrichment of personality, a new kind of self-esteem, a discovery of talent, and a hunger for truth, as well as a touching vulnerability in people as Jesus Christ touches their lives. It has seemed to me that missionaries are like naive angels unaware, who enter the lives of people and mine hidden treasures

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in the souls of those they teach. I have seen it in many converts and know what that feels like myself. I could tell no end of stories about changed lives—not tales of repentant sinners who become "good" overnight, but of people who illumine for me the words of Christ when he said "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." This is difficult to explain away.

The second support for my faith is a product of the first. Because of that spiritual awakening and the vulnerability accompanying it, we are afforded the opportunity of discovering a deep spiritual kinship with some of our fellow travellers in the Church, first with certain missionaries who remain our friends for life, then with others with whom our spirits feel at home. This, too, is difficult to explain away. It is not just a token response, institutionally fostered, it is a spiritual affinity that makes us feel for one another, be responsive to one another, know we can depend on one another. It is, to use President Hanks's beautiful phrase—an "ultimate concern" that is shared. It can extend to people not of our faith and even to people with whom we do not always agree. It allows for differences. Not long after we joined the Church I read a speech given by Hugh B. Brown at BYU. It thrilled me when I read it and it has been a comfort to me since. He said:

We are grateful in the Church and in this great university that the freedom, dignity and integrity of the individual is basic in Church doctrine. . . . Here we are free to think and express our opinions. Fear will not stifle thought, as is the case in some areas which have not yet emerged from the dark ages (March 1958).

In the mission field there were always differences of opinion openly discussed because there was a hunger for truth, although I admit we did get off the subject at times. I think our present greater preoccupation with order and conformity does a disservice to such vital spiritual exchange. I am reminded of Henry Adams. After touring an art exhibition at the Royal Academy in London, a friend asked Adams what he thought of the show. Adams hesitated and then said he thought it was just chaos really. His friend, Stopford Brooks, answered by asking "whether chaos were not better than death" (Adams, p. 220). Lately, I have had the sense that the Church liberates the spirit

only to feel a need to tame it, confine it, and make it conform. This can lead to a loss of vitality of spirit, and a fear of honest expression. Nevertheless, I cannot deny the wonder of those early experiences, and the sense of renewal I always feel here at the Sunstone symposium. I believe the Lord understands my determination to keep alive this spirit of inquiry, to retain the knowledge of what the Church can mean in my life. My participation in gatherings of like-minded people provides reinforcement for this particular pillar of my faith.

And this leads me to a third pillar. It may seem a strange one but from the beginning it has remained deeply rooted, despite increasing institutional onslaughts. It has survived, constant and strong, through changes in Church leadership and in Church policies over the years. It has to do with what I have learned since becoming a member of the Church. I don't mean doctrine, or scripture, although they are necessarily a part of it. I mean the significant spiritual insights afforded by having to confront the paradoxes, myths, and contradictions that are ever present in the Church. These exist in all institutions, but because of the peculiarities of our faith they are more accessible for us.

As a lay church we have opportunities to confront and come to terms with the inevitability of conflict and paradox because most of us are involved in administrative duties as well as spiritual adventures. Choices have to be made in terms of priorities and there is a constant danger that the element of choice itself may become hidden in institutional routine. A personal experience of mine might serve to illustrate.

My aunt was a staunch Methodist, the soul of integrity, highly practical, not given to displays of emotion, yet she had a kind heart which she took pains to disguise. My uncle was not much of a chapel-goer, so when he died my aunt decided to have an informal funeral service in the home. The Methodist minister came and delivered a nice little sermon and then he ended with an appropriate prayer. He had barely breathed the word "Amen" when my aunt addressed the group. "Did anyone remember to tell the bread man we don't want any bread today?" she asked. That may well have been a cover for emotion, but she was very practical.

It seems to me we are faced with that kind of a situation in the Church all the time. The practical needs of the institution and the successful implementation of programs and policies require that we attend to such ongoing demands. The programs provide opportunities for growth, but sometimes they become the end rather than the means. I recall, not long after we became a stake in Manchester, forever after to be tied to a central bureaucracy, one of our leaders asked my husband if he could be released. He felt he was being swallowed up in paperwork instead of serving as a spiritual leader and comforter, something he felt he had been as a branch president in the mission setting. He feared the ease with which institutional demands could be allowed to compromise the Church's spiritual reason for being. My husband also was keenly aware of that danger.

I remember on one occasion, after a particularly statistic-oriented stake conference in Salt Lake City, my husband in closing with prayer asked the Lord in all sincerity to help us "feed thy sheep as well as count them." I believe we are all required to be aware of the nature of this ongoing balancing act.

There are other paradoxical concerns. For instance, there is excommunication. In light of the teachings of Jesus I have always been uncomfortable with the practice of excommunication and disfellowshipping. Despite the rationale given for such actions it has always seemed to me rather like turning a wounded person away from a hospital lest he leave blood on the clean floor. Where do we draw the line between the need for purity, order, and efficiency in the institution and the aching needs of those individuals the institution is there to serve, and who may need concern and understanding the most? I remember with gratitude Sister Fern Lee, Harold B. Lee's wife. I was being admonished for not regarding Church rules as all important. Sister Lee came to my rescue saying, "Sister Bates, never, ever, believe you are required to forget the higher law of kindness." How wonderful it is to experience such elevating incidents firsthand, because often they are the stuff of which myths are made.

And all institutions have myths. They serve a purpose in shaping culture, not least our own Mormon culture, and they are often greater motivators than history. But a church as young as ours, its history relatively accessible, cannot expect those myths to remain unchallenged. It is human nature to seek the elusive truth in history, and history will continue to be rewritten. The Church cannot hope to escape revisions in its history, so why not enjoy them and recognize how enriching they can be? Faith itself has to be stronger than history. Joseph Smith's testimony cannot ever be mine. I have to discover my own knowledge and understanding of all truth. Myths may have a purpose, they can be comforting, familiar frameworks for our faith, but that is all they can be—they can never serve as pillars of our faith. They are too vulnerable, I have discovered, and they cannot be allowed to stand guard over truth itself. Since we lay claim to the truth, we may be setting ourselves up for a basic contradiction in our faith.

And we have enough contradictions to deal with. The Bible itself has its fair share, and our own prophets have not been immune—even contemporary leaders. One General Authority can tell us to turn to the scriptures for guidance, and another caution us to heed the words of current prophets rather than relying on the words of dead prophets. Both can be useful. Both can help us weigh our choices. I know I am quoting a dead prophet, but Brigham Young's advice mediates between those two extremes. He said:

I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by Him. I am fearful they settle down in a state of blind self-security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God in their salvation. . . (Young, p. 135).

So why do these seeming conflicts reinforce this particular pillar of my faith? It sounds as if they might more appropriately be seen as threats to that faith. At the most, they might be accepted as a requisite testing of faith, by requiring me to endure to the end without questioning the inexplicable. The fact is, though, they serve my faith in more positive ways. They do not disturb the foundation of my faith but instead contribute to my understanding of the central purpose of the Church in two ways. Ironically, first of all, by requiring me to turn to that foundation even more, they bring me closer to the Savior. They cause me to measure everything by the truths He taught and exemplified as I experience the meaning of those principles in my own life. Second, these challenges serve as a means of developing, often painfully, greater understanding, wisdom, and humility. The weighing, the balancing, the choice between two or more competing goods, and the recognition of complexity, can help me have compassion for others, even for leaders in their formidable task, as I am forced to discover my own values and limitations. When people talk of the simple truths of the gospel they are right. What more simple teaching than the paramount virtue of love—love of God and love of one's neighbor? What we are less anxious to point out are the complexities involved in living such simple truths.

We talked about this in our book group. A few women from our Relief Society meet once a month in the home of a bright, inquiring woman who is homebound. At one of our meetings we reviewed Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, and discussed what love entailed and how each of us had to interpret what love may require in any given situation. We focused on a specific problem in our ward. Our chapel, which is situated in a lovely secluded area, has been perceived as a relief station by a homeless, mentally disturbed man. He is one of those formerly institutionalized but now out on his own. We discussed the differences of opinion that have emerged informally in our ward as to how true caring might be expressed in his case. And I recognized anew how truly Lowell Bennion spoke when he pointed to the necessity of loving intelligently with a knowledge of human nature and its needs.

The organizational structure of our church can afford us access to the paradoxes, myths, and contradictions of our faith in ways that many religions, by the nature of their structure, do not. The ultimate irony is that although the Church preaches simple ideas and standards, and rather simplistic prescriptions for living them, in practice it contributes its own share of contradictions, and in so doing affords us the opportunity to grow and develop spiritual insights. It is true that some choose not to notice troubling questions. But my experience in the Church over the years has taught me that when we do confront these challenges we become alive in a faith that is truly our own, suffering the pain and uncertainty, taking the risks, and enjoying the exhilaration of personal discovery.

The "wisdom of age" I believe, has less to do with it than the kind of honesty and courage and trust shown by the small son of friends of mine. One day, while riding in the car with his mother, he said, "Mom, I don't think God and Jesus Christ

can be perfect." She asked why he thought that. And he answered, "Well, in the Old Testament it tells of God sending the Israelites to kill men, women, and children. They were all His children. Good parents don't kill their own children." That is quite an observation for a nine-year-old boy. I think the Lord must have a special love for that pure, trusting, and concerned spirit. I hope well-meaning members will not discourage Jeff's honesty. I know his parents won't. It may seem a small incident but it touched me very deeply, and I wondered why. Later, as I thought about it, again and again, I realized that there in that one small boy was manifest a central pillar of my faith. He had dared to face his God honestly and without fear. In so doing Jeff reaffirmed the promise of the Gospel in my own life. Love itself was ever present for me before joining the Church. Conversion simply widened the lens. But this new and significant aspect of faith was awakened in me. Since my conversion, there has been—to use the words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning—an "ever-lasting face-to-face with God" in my ongoing search for truth. In an institutional setting such a quest can be quite perilous and frustrating at times. In gatherings of people who share the quest, it emerges unafraid. On a personal level it is both humbling and inspiring. And it is always exciting. ☞

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A MORMON CONCEPT OF THE SELF

PRIDE OR SELF-ESTEEM?

By Janice M. Allred

IT WAS FROM OTHER CHRISTIANS, NOT MORMONS, THAT I learned pride is a sin. Of course, I had upon occasion heard pride denounced and humility recommended; it did not escape my notice that pride was considered a vice and humility its corresponding virtue, but after years of Mormon religious instruction, my impression was that pride was certainly a minor fault and humility only one virtue among many. In terms of exhortation, pride received nothing like the attention that sexual sin did and humility was far behind chastity as a virtue.

In the course of my reading, I became aware that a certain kind of Christian upbringing was much harder on pride than Mormonism is, and I concluded that this was more evidence for the truth of Mormonism. For it seemed to me that the pride denounced was often admirable and that, at least in novels, breaking the proud spirit was much wickeder than pride itself. In my mind, pride was associated with independence, achievement, and excellence. Pride was the integrity of the individual that resisted tyranny, never ceased striving for a goal, and refused to compromise standards.

Of course, as I read the scriptures now and then or heard them quoted I realized that they always condemned pride. The disparity between my estimation of the nature of pride and that of the prophets did not bother me for many years. I assumed that the pride they condemned was vanity or arrogance, the vanity that is excessively concerned with appearances and that needs the admiration of others to confirm its admiration of itself, or the arrogance that looks down on others because they are inferior in wealth, breeding, education, or status. In the Book of Mormon the Nephites always seemed to become proud whenever they became rich. Then they started wearing fine apparel and thinking they were better than others just because they were rich and well dressed, and this led them to persecute those they considered inferior. I could certainly understand why that was wrong, although the attitude seemed more

stupid than sinful. Hence, I began to distinguish between good and bad pride, never really asking myself if there were any relationship between them. My inclination, however, was to admire good pride and to consider bad pride a somewhat trifling sin.

So I was surprised to learn that many Christian theologians regard pride as the worst of sins, in fact, as the root of sin. What, you may ask, had induced a faithful Mormon girl to read non-Mormon theologians? Metaphysical questions had always enthralled me but my attempts to explore them were not encouraged nor was my appetite for theology satisfied by the people, programs, and literature that constituted the Church for me at that time. So it was with joy that I discovered the philosophy section of the public library. Philosophy led me to theology where I learned that non-Mormon theologians had a great deal to say about what I had once supposed were uniquely Mormon concerns.

My concept of the nature of pride changed gradually as I considered what I had learned from Christian theologians and as I examined myself and observed others. As I studied the scriptures more seriously, particularly the Book of Mormon, I came to realize that a remarkable agreement exists between Christian theologians and the Book of Mormon prophets on the subject of pride.

I would like to begin my analysis of pride with a point on which I think there is widespread agreement—the belief that there is good pride and bad pride. But first we need to be clear about the kind of thing pride is. It is a mental or spiritual thing—a condition, emotion, judgment, or quality of the mind or spirit. (This may be one reason Mormons have difficulty thinking of pride as a sin. We tend to think of a sin as something we *do*; perhaps it is an inner something, a specific thought or emotion or motive, but we rarely consider sin to be a condition of the spirit.)

Certainly the word pride is sometimes used pejoratively and sometimes as a term of approbation. What then is the relationship between the two concepts? Perhaps they are related as opposites, since good and bad are opposites. But is it possible to have one word denote two opposite things or concepts?

Single words with contrary meanings appear in many lan-

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guages. In English, for example, we have “clip,” which may mean “to cut” or “to hold together,” and “cleave,” which may mean “to separate” or “to adhere closely,” and even “fast,” which may mean “stationary” or “rapid.” This curious feature has been explained by noting that all concepts are based on comparisons; for example, if it were always day, not only would we have no concept for night, but we would have none for day either. This, of course, reminds us of Lehi’s teachings about opposites:

For it must needs be that there is an opposition in all things. . . . Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility (2 Nephi 2:11).

Somehow, opposites are necessary for life and free agency. “Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other” (2 Nephi 2:16).

The pairs of opposites Lehi mentions are all desirable/undesirable combinations. This might lead us to suppose that in every pair of opposites, one of the two is good and the other bad. But it’s easy to think of oppositional pairs which do not fit into desirable/undesirable categories; for example, spontaneous/planned, male/female, reason/intuition, give/receive, object/subject, free/determined, community/individual, and dominate/submit. We usually recognize the need to achieve some kind of balance between the extremes

of these pairs. Lehi’s words suggest that this cannot be a settling down at the midpoint for he asserts that agency requires that we be drawn by one or the other. But Lehi is not simply saying that as agents we need to be presented with opposites to choose between; there is a deeper metaphysical meaning in

his idea of the compound in one. Lehi’s insight is that there could be neither life nor existence if opposites were not somehow connected. Life requires growth and the epigenetic principle states that “anything that grows has a ground plan and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole.”¹ Growth, life, agency, and opposites, then, seem to be inextricably related.

That there is an intimate connection between opposites is apparent when we realize that if two things were completely different, we wouldn’t think of them as opposites. Opposites are different values of the same thing. For example, “hot” and “cold” refer to temperature. The word temperature covers the whole range of values of the phenomenon which “hot” and “cold” describe. This demonstrates that one may use a single word for two opposite meanings by using quantifiers or other contextual clues to indicate the precise meaning.

With this in mind, let us ask again; “Is there bad pride and good pride, and are they opposites?” Sev-

eral dictionaries agree that pride may be either inordinate, unreasonable self-esteem or reasonable, justified self-esteem.

The phenomenon that pride describes is, of course, the self and its evaluation of itself—self-esteem. Perhaps bad pride is too much self-esteem and good pride is the right amount.



However, there is a problem with this suggestion. The scales of pride and self-esteem in common usage don't seem to fit; that is, on the self-esteem scale "good" and "desirable" are on the high side, while on the pride scale "bad" and "undesirable" are on the high side. We think of self-esteem positively and seldom think that one might have too much self-esteem. In fact, having too little self-esteem is usually regarded as an undesirable condition. Perhaps "good pride" is simply synonymous with "self-esteem." But then, where does bad pride fit in? Is it something else entirely?

And what about humility as the opposite of bad pride? Certainly humility is not what we mean by good pride. Its dictionary definition closely aligns it with the concept of low self-esteem. "Humility is the state or quality of thinking lowly of oneself." This core definition is repugnant to most of us; it goes against our ideas about self-esteem. Humbling or humiliating oneself, or putting oneself down, is not regarded positively. It is clear that if pride and humility are opposite extremes of self-esteem, they also do not fit the self-esteem scale as it is generally accepted. Perhaps the virtue of humility needs to be defended. Is there something positive about it? We will return to this question later.

Now, let's consider whether or not what we've been thinking of as good pride is the same thing as self-esteem. First we need to be clear about what good pride is. Our original intuition was that it is linked to excellence and achievement. Whenever we say "I am proud of x"—x being something we have made or accomplished—then pride is the emotion arising from the judgment that x was well done. It is the glow of pleasure that comes when I am able to apply some set of standards to my work and say to myself, "I did a good job." It is a combination of pleasure in the excellence of the work itself and satisfaction that I accomplished it.

Good pride, however, is not always an emotion. It may be a disposition or characteristic of a person. For example, when we say of someone, "He takes pride in his work," we mean that he has certain standards which he sets for himself and does whatever is required to achieve excellence in his work. When we say "He is a proud man" or "They are a proud people" in a complimentary sense, we mean that they have certain achievements or traditions which, judged by certain objective standards, are of excellent quality and that they take pleasure in their past achievements and look forward to continuing that tradition of excellence. For our purposes, we can call this type of pride "self-respect." I'm not advocating that people generally do this. "Self-respect" is usually a better synonym for pride as a characteristic than as an emotion. Otherwise we would have to say, "I respect myself for painting that picture," which is not the same as, "I'm proud of that picture."

Now, what is self-esteem? There is a large body of literature available on that subject. Here is a representative definition: "Self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness; it indicates an attitude of approval or disapproval toward the self; it indicates the extent to which the individual considers himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy."² In this defi-

inition, the term "self-esteem" refers to the whole continuum of values of worthiness of the self, using "high self-esteem" and "low self-esteem" as quantifiers. I suspect most people use the term this way, and they generally agree that high self-esteem is necessary to happiness and achievement.

How similar is this to self-respect as we have defined it? Self-respect is definitely based on accomplishment. We respect ourselves for what we have accomplished or for the capacities or virtues which we have proven ourselves to possess. The definition of self-esteem given above seems to agree. It says that our approval of ourselves depends on whether or not we consider ourselves to be "capable, significant, successful, and worthy." But couldn't we consider ourselves significant and worthy even if we felt unsuccessful and incapable and even if we generally disapproved of ourselves? And if self-esteem is a precondition of achievement, then isn't it something deeper and more basic than self-respect?

Most discussions of self-esteem do fail to distinguish it from self-respect. That the two are distinct can be made clear by two considerations. The first concerns measuring self-esteem. The psychological concept of self-esteem arises from the observation that certain attitudes and behaviors generally go together, that a positive attitude toward one's capabilities and worth is correlated with independence, the ability to achieve goals and establish satisfying personal relationships, and a generally cheerful attitude towards life. To explain this correlation psychologists postulate the concept of self-esteem. Being scientists, they naturally want to measure it. But certainly self-esteem is subjective; it cannot be measured directly, so psychologists have to content themselves with measuring its objective manifestations, namely the statements subjects make about themselves and their observable behavior or accomplishments. For this reason self-esteem is often identified with the attitudes and feelings that a subject expresses. But some people whose achievements and competence would generally be regarded as superior nevertheless disparage themselves and their achievements, while others boast of their capacities but seem to have done nothing to prove them. Such apparent discrepancies between theory and observation do not cause psychologists to abandon the hypothesis that high self-esteem leads to achievement and positive attitudes and satisfying relationships. Instead they fall back on the immeasurability of self-esteem. Since the subjectivity of self-esteem is at least partially unconscious and we do not even have direct access to our own self-esteem, they can always assert that a person's self-esteem is whatever the theory and his attitudes and behavior show it to be. The immeasurability of self-esteem thus means that the theory of self-esteem is untestable, that it is in reality a postulate rather than a theory, and that the concept of self-esteem must be something more basic than the concept of self-respect.

The second consideration that distinguishes self-esteem from self-respect concerns methods for increasing self-esteem. Since the manifestations of self-esteem are generally held to be intrinsically good, most of us have come to accept the idea that everyone needs high self-esteem, and that it is worthwhile to help

those who have low self-esteem to increase it. The attempt to raise self-esteem can begin from either the behavioral or the attitudinal half of the self-esteem complex. We sometimes try to increase a person's self-esteem by telling him that if he will just believe in himself, he will be able to accomplish all he desires. On the other hand, he may be urged to set goals and then to achieve them in order to feel better about himself. Neither of these methods succeeds in increasing self-esteem. They both confuse self-respect, which is based on achievement, with self-esteem, which is not. The initial insight that self-esteem is the cause of certain attitudes and behaviors is lost, and self-esteem becomes identified with its measurable manifestations.

It may be retorted that acquiring self-esteem is accomplished step by step; a simple desire for self-esteem, a willingness to take the risk, is enough. A small amount of belief in oneself can lead to achievement; achievement leads to more faith, which leads to more and greater successes. But the desire or faith has to come from outside the attitude-behavior complex. The decision to strive for improvement is made by the deeper self, which must first consider itself worthy of becoming a better self.

The basic difference between self-esteem and self-respect is that the first is unconditional, while the second is conditional. Unconditional love is the elusive good we are looking for in our search for self-esteem. It cannot be identified with behaviors or attitudes that we attempt to measure or acquire.

We have been considering the relationship of good pride and bad pride to the concept of self-esteem. We have identified good pride with self-respect and concluded that it is not the same as self-esteem. We also decided above that the idea of bad pride as too much self-esteem is not correct, because the idea of too much self-esteem doesn't make sense. But caring too much for the self in relationship to others does make sense; in fact, that is what we mean by selfishness. What is the connection between pride and selfishness?

Selfishness, like pride, is not universally condemned. Although it is generally considered a vice, it has been defended as a virtue. This contradiction is related to the ambivalence we feel about the nature of pride. The confusion in both cases arises from our uncertainties about the self. The concepts of pride and selfishness are both about the self, but pride is the broader concept; selfishness is one manifestation of pride.

An important insight for our understanding of the sin of pride can be gained by examining what is sometimes called the problem of selfishness or altruism. A cynic would say that all actions are fundamentally selfish. Philosophically, this view is called psychological egoism. This theory of human motivation states that people always do what they want to do, that they always act to promote their own interests. Understanding the reasoning behind this view can help us avoid the confusion that makes it difficult for us to distinguish between good pride and bad pride. Imagine a conversation between a freshman and a sophomore.

Sophomore: Everyone is selfish.

Freshman: I don't think so. My little brother acted unselfishly

at his birthday party. He had the first choice and he chose the smallest piece of cake.

Sophomore: He probably doesn't like cake.

Freshman: Yes, he does and it was his favorite kind.

Sophomore: Then he likes praise better than cake. He expected to be praised for being unselfish.

Freshman: Mothers are very unselfish. They always take the smallest piece of cake.

Sophomore: I don't think they always take the smallest piece and even when they do, they do it because they want to.

Freshman: Certainly no one forces them to. That's why they're unselfish.

Sophomore: They know that cake isn't good for them.

Freshman: Then it would be to their best interests not to take any at all.

Sophomore: The real reason they take the smallest piece is that they like peace better than cake. They don't want to hear anyone else complain about having the smallest piece.

Freshman: What about the saint who spends years serving in a leper colony? What's in it for him?

Sophomore: Probably praise or fame.

Freshman: What if he serves for years and doesn't get any? What keeps him going?

Sophomore: He thinks that God will reward him in the next life. He's a bit peculiar but he does it for that reason.

Freshman: But what if he's not a saint but a humanitarian who doesn't believe in God but wants to help suffering humanity?

Sophomore: He does it so that he can approve of himself for doing his duty.

Freshman: What about the person who donates a large sum of money to charity anonymously?

Sophomore: He does it because of the sense of personal satisfaction he derives from doing so. It gives him a warm glow to think of the good he's doing.

There are several good arguments against psychological egoism, but, of course, they are beyond the scope of this paper. There is only one point I want to make here: That which permits the psychological egoist to go on making his claim, despite his having to back up on such claims as that all motives are for physical gratification, fame, or power, is the phenomenon of egocentricity. The egocentric predicament states that it is impossible for me to directly apprehend another's inner reality. A corollary is that I can only act upon my own motives; whatever the nature of these motives are, they must be mine. (This is, of course, free agency.)

We can thus tell the cynic that he seems to be defining egocentricity rather than selfishness. All men must be selfish in the sense that their wants and desires are their own and they must act upon their own motives, but there is a difference between the man who wants to do good to others and the one who does not, between the man who is interested in promoting the welfare of others and the man who is indifferent or hostile to others' good. This difference is what is meant when we characterize one person as unselfish and another as selfish. The sin of pride is inextricably related to being a self.

But pride is not sinful because it is a sin of self any more than the essence of selfishness is egocentricity.

So far we have decided that the idea of too much self is not useful in understanding what pride is. Let us now turn to the other meaning of inordinate—unlawful or going beyond what is justified or reasonable. Perhaps pride is the unreasonable or false estimation of the self.

How should the self be esteemed? Mormon ideas about the nature of the self strongly affirm the ultimate worth of the individual self. The ultimate constituent of the self is intelligence which was neither created nor made. Selves are particular from all eternity. “These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they” (Abraham 3:19). This also says that the individuality of spirits entails differences between them. Selves are susceptible to or capable of enlargement or advancement, but only in accordance with law. Perhaps the sin of pride is trying to advance or enlarge oneself in unlawful ways.

What is the condition of selfhood? Self-consciousness, the ability to know myself as an object or to think about myself as a self, is widely held to be an essential condition of selfhood. Another analysis of opposites might help here. Let’s try to understand what a self is in terms of the opposite of the self. What is the opposite of the self? Two possibilities come to mind: others and the world.

Studies of the development of the human ego can yield fascinating ideas concerning the nature of the self. According to certain studies in child development, the infant begins life in a state of oneness between himself, his mother, and the world. Sometime during the first three years of life a child is born as a psychological being possessing selfhood and the consciousness of a separate identity. Learning to perceive himself or herself as an object is an important part of this development. The child learns that his or her body is in the world but that it is different from other objects because it is under his or her control. Finding another will in opposition to his, learning that the mother does not always want what the child wants, is the beginning of knowledge of other selves.³ Apparently the spirit not only loses consciousness of the pre-existence and the knowledge and experiences which it gained there, but it also loses its self-consciousness and must gain a mortal self-consciousness as well as a mortal body.

It is through the body that the self is identified, seen, and understood to be separate, and it is through the mind or spirit that the self is transcended or enlarged. To understand what is meant by transcendence, think about what is involved in the act of knowing. To know an object—for example, a tree—is to somehow bring it within, to comprehend it. (Both meanings of “comprehend” apply.) To know an object is to be able to form a mental image of it when it is not present, to have memories of one’s interactions with it, to be able to imagine or project future or possible interactions with it as well as to have an idea of the kind of thing it is. The self is also transcended in its interactions with other selves. By sharing

knowledge, emotions, and experience with others we can somehow make them our own.

But even in its transcendence the self remains particular. My mental image of a tree is not the tree itself. My experience of your experience is not the same as your experience. Neither is your experience the same for you after you share it with me and receive my view of it. Thus, in interacting with the world and other selves, the self builds its self-concept, its worldview, and its concept of others. Every self contains the world or, rather, a view of the world. Part of being a self is having a world-view. The soul must create or construct the world for itself—not, of course, without input from physical reality and others—but it cannot apprehend the thing in itself or experience directly the thoughts of others.

This is, of course, the philosophical concept of egocentricity. The psychological notion of egocentrism is somewhat different. It has to do with the immature cognitive abilities of children who cannot yet construct the world as the mature adult does. The egocentrism of the child includes being unable to distinguish between transient and abiding aspects of reality (mother no longer exists when she leaves the room), between subjective and objective aspects of reality (my stomach-ache is the world), and between universal and particular aspects of reality (every man is daddy).⁴ Thus, from the psychological point of view, egocentrism is overcome by developing a worldview that fits reality. Perhaps spiritual maturation can overcome philosophical egocentricity.

We are now ready to understand the relationship between pride and self-esteem. If pride is a false estimation of the self, in order to understand how the self should be estimated we need to know how self-esteem should be acquired. But to talk about acquiring self-esteem is to begin with the mistaken assumption that self-esteem is like a possession, something that the self can gain and add on to its existing self. But self-esteem is the essence of the self—the self’s idea of what a self is. This is another way of saying that self-esteem is unconditional. It is not based on my being *my* self, but *a* self.

You will recall that we distinguished self-esteem from self-respect by showing that self-esteem is unconditional while self-respect is conditional. We might now say that self-esteem is universal while self-respect is particular. My self-esteem is based on my concept of what a self is and what it can be, how it relates to other selves and how it should relate to other selves, what the world is and what the self can accomplish in it. My self-respect is directed toward myself, the qualities that I have developed and the achievements I have made. Self-esteem emphasizes potentialities while self-respect emphasizes actualities.

It is clear that we need to amend our definition of pride. If my self-esteem is based on my being a self, then true self-esteem regards others as being equal in value to the self because they are also selves. The false self-esteem of pride considers itself to be *the* self. Pride, then, is the false estimation of the self in relationship to others. Most people will assent to the proposition that all selves are of equal value. This does not mean

that few people are proud, but that pride goes deeper than propositional knowledge; it goes as deep as my love for myself.

Behind pride is the conviction that I am the highest good because I am I. As a proposition, this is simply too ridiculous to be believed, so pride must disguise itself in some universal proposition or interest. We can see how this happens by examining the position of the personal ethical egoist. The egoist has one moral principle: "I should promote my own interest." To justify this ethic he must either claim that he is more important than anyone else, or he must revert to a universal ethical egoism and say something such as, "The greatest good for the greatest number will be achieved if everyone looks out for his own interests." Few, I think, would maintain the first. In other words, when the personal ethical egoist reflects on his code he must universalize it. Similarly, the belief behind pride is pre-reflective.

There is a reason why we are so confused about whether pride is good or bad. The insidious nature of pride is that it attacks us at our good points and corrupts them. To insinuate itself into our lives, to become respectable, pride must disguise itself.

Pride has made itself respectable today by calling itself self-esteem, by obliterating the distinction between self-esteem and self-respect. Since self-esteem is regarded as a psychological necessity for happy, achieving human beings, our savants have set about telling us how to acquire it. Either we are told that we should think well of ourselves and that we can do this merely by trying, or we are told to set goals for ourselves, that when we accomplish them we will feel good about ourselves.

In fact, conditional self-esteem is pride, and when we urge people to acquire it we are inculcating pride. Those who seek self-esteem through achievement fluctuate between arrogance and despair—arrogance if they reach their goals, despair if they do not; despair, when upon reaching their goals they discover that their goals were shallow or insignificant or that they still do not feel good about themselves, arrogance when they see all those who have not achieved what they have. Arrogance and despair are the two sides of the pride that bases its self-esteem on conditions—arrogance when the self succeeds in persuading itself that it is important because of its special talents and accomplishments, and despair when too much concern with truth dispels the illusion.

We sometimes try to encourage self-esteem by teaching that everyone is unique or special. But then being unique is not unique so why is it special to be special? This encourages pride because it assumes that we are only worth something if we are unique in some way when the truth is that it is our sameness, our all being selves, that makes us intrinsically good. The idea of universal uniqueness feeds pride because it feeds our desire to be indispensable. We are all indispensable in two ways: we are indispensable to ourselves; and, being eternal, we cannot be dispensed of. However, we are not indispensable to anyone else in the sense that they cannot get along without us. God is, of course, indispensable to all of us. Thus my desire to be indispensable to others is the desire to be as God to them

or to swallow up their selfhood in my own, in other words, pride. Many people sin by trying to be indispensable.

Pride is essentially competitive; it pits one ego against another. In our highly competitive culture, competition, if not regarded as an unmitigated good, is generally considered to foster excellence. Thus, pride becomes respectable by calling itself ambition, success, and competition. The false notion behind this kind of pride is that the self cannot be happy unless it is better than someone else. The competitive imperative of pride is "I must win because I am I." When I think about it, I realize that this is, indeed, the motivation behind winning. I do want to win because I am I, not because I am the best. I try to make myself the best because I want to win.

In the discussion of self-respect, we found two elements in the emotion of pride, the pleasure in the thing that I am proud of and the pleasure in the fact that I did it. As long as I am thinking of the thing created or the act accomplished I am not glorying in myself, but when the second element predominates I am being seduced by pride. After God created the earth, he saw that *it* was good, not that *he* was good.

Watching and listening to the disputes of my children, I have been struck by the realization that the younger they are the sooner they forget what the argument is about. The controversy deteriorates into a competition to determine *who will win*. Pride takes us away from the complexities of issues and reduces all controversies to the competitive imperative.

Self-sufficiency is a well established Mormon virtue. However, in the early days of Mormonism economic self-sufficiency was defined as the self-sufficiency of the entire Mormon community, not the self-sufficiency of the individual family. Pride easily disguises itself as self-sufficiency, independence, and self-reliance.

If the absolute meaning of these concepts is meant, these are obviously extreme examples of pride; a self that is sufficient to itself is a self that is isolated from God, others, and the world. This is madness if not an impossibility. No one is independent from everything. In a given context, the independence of the self is only relative. As a virtue, self-reliance or self-sufficiency simply means that one does for himself what he ought to and doesn't ask others to take care of him.

The temptation here is to exaggerate our own contribution and to forget what we owe to God and others or to retreat into our private lives and ignore, as much as we can, the difficulties and obligations of community. If we are all self-sufficient, independent, and self-reliant in some ways, we are all beggars, dependent, and in need of succor in other ways.

Pride can also disguise itself as free agency. It take the virtue of accepting responsibility for one's own actions, feelings, and choices and then corrupts it. A popular phrase now is, "taking control of my life." This can be good if it means examining my life to see if I am really doing what I want to do and not simply drifting, if it means deciding what my aspirations are and taking steps to achieve them. But if it means refusing to let others make demands on me, or asserting myself just because I believe I have the right to do so, or refusing to help

or sympathize with others on the grounds that they chose their own difficulties, then it is pride.

Since pride disguises itself as virtue, how can we recognize it? One thing is certain: if we don't look for it, we won't find it. Sometimes pride is easy to see in others, but until I can see it in myself I have not really understood it. As C.S. Lewis said, "If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed."⁵

One sign of pride, then, is the inability to recognize it. It is important to realize that the deception of pride is self-deception. As soon as we begin to see pride's falseness we have taken the first step in overcoming it. For this reason pride cannot abide criticism. Criticism, of course, means analysis and evaluation, not simply fault-finding. This doesn't necessarily mean that the proud man wants praise from others; the vain man does, but if I am really proud I might disdain the good opinion of others, caring only for my own. Neither is wanting a good opinion of others always necessarily a sign of vanity. I may want to please others because I care for them and value their friendship.

Another sign of pride is its concern with appearances. While this may be simple vanity, it may also be the outward sign of a deeper pride. Status symbols are important to pride because they are the proofs of superiority. Status symbols may be any number of things: fine apparel, success in the world, or a certain kind of education, but they are always measurable in some way. They are the conditions that a certain way of life demands for its self-esteem.

We can look for pride in our relationships with others. The proud person dominates and manipulates others; he treats them not as selves of equal value with himself, but as objects or means to his own ends.

Once we have recognized pride, how can we overcome it? Can we do it by developing humility? In other words, is humility a positive thing, something more than the absence of pride? Three aspects of humility are suggested by our definition of pride as the false estimation of the importance of the self in relation to others. These three aspects of humility—truth, love, and service—provide three antidotes to the poison of pride.

The first is truth. Since deception is at the heart of pride, only truth can dispel it. Remember that the deception of pride is primarily self-deception. Of course, the self may try to persuade others to go along with its lies in order to bolster its belief in that which it wants to be true.

Knowing the truth about ourselves requires self-examination, so to cure our pride we must turn inward. But if our self-esteem is actually pride, where will the courage for this venture come from? How can the self give up the lies which enable it to maintain its selfhood?

Another antidote to pride is love, the love which opposes the enmity which is the essence of pride. If I can love my neighbor as myself, then certainly I have overcome pride. But if my self-love is pride, the illusion of my own preeminence, then I cannot offer it to anyone else; to do so would destroy my selfhood.

We are sometimes told that the key to love is service, that by serving others we will come to love them. Might not service, indeed, be the antidote to selfish pride? But if I pursue service as a duty for my own self-improvement, am I not using it to build my pride? If we simply try to use truth, love, and service as the means to self-improvement, to rid ourselves of the defect of pride, then pride has corrupted our enterprise and it will fail.

We must turn to the source of truth and love, the one who is the supreme exemplar of service, Jesus Christ. And we must come in humility. In this case, humility does mean self-abasement. It must be negative before it can become positive.

If you haven't been fidgeting and squirming and wanting to cry out that in our definition of pride we have forgotten the most important thing, then you should ask yourself why you didn't notice that we left out God. We should have said that pride does not recognize God or that it is a false estimation of the self in relationship to God.

Among others, we are equal in being selves, though our particularity makes us different, and our obligation to others is to esteem them as ourselves. God is on a different level. "I am the Lord thy God; I am more intelligent than they all" (Abraham 3:19). We are to abase ourselves before him. The people of King Benjamin were awakened to a sense of their nothingness and their worthless and fallen state by being taught about the goodness of God (Mosiah 4:5). After seeing God, Moses said, "Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed" (Moses 1:10).

I fear that we Mormons are uncomfortable with the idea of self-abasement. We dwell so much on our potential godhood that we sometimes forget the difference between potentiality and actuality. We have aspired to be God so long that it is hard to remember how wide the gap is between us and him. But if we cannot understand our own nothingness in relation to God, then we cannot worship him. And if we are too proud to worship him, we are in grave danger of being able to worship nothing but ourselves.

"Come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit," Jesus says, offering us the love whose only condition is that we accept it, "and I will heal you." After the pain of the broken heart comes the joy of healing.

As a mother's love gives her baby the sense of its own worth and her faith in him and his ability to grow draws him into the world, so we can grow when our self-esteem is based on God's love for us. When we know that we can receive forgiveness for our sins, we can have the courage to open ourselves to self-criticism. When we can esteem ourselves just because we are selves with the potential to grow, we can esteem others and hope for their growth. When service is embarked upon because God, to whom we have submitted ourselves, has commanded it, the paradox of sacrifice can take place as Jesus promised. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:24).

It is the nature of selves to be self-transcendent. Pride does not recognize this and thinks it can keep its selfhood private. But the self grows by reaching out to the world and others and, with truth, bringing reality within, possessing it, not as an exclusive but a shared possession.

He comprehendeth all things, and all things are before him, and all things are round about him; and he is above all things, and in all things, and is through all things, and is round about all things; and all things are by him, and of him, even God, forever and ever (D&C 88:41).

That is the kind of being God is, and he wants us to be like him. But, we can't achieve godhood by launching ourselves upon a program of self-improvement in which we utilize our inner resources. We must submit ourselves to him.

It should be apparent that I have developed a concept of pride that agrees with the traditional Christian theologians in considering pride as the basic sin, the sin of the spirit which is in rebellion against God and at enmity with all others.⁶

A careful study of the Book of Mormon teachings on pride reveals that it is surprisingly close to traditional Christianity in its estimation of the nature of pride. In fact, Book of Mormon writers equate pride with a state of sin. The phrase "pride of their hearts" is used often to describe the state of those who have deliberately rejected God. In designating the wicked the Book of Mormon often simply calls them "those who are proud and do wickedly," thus setting forth the inward and outward aspects of sin. Pride is rarely listed as one sin among others but is usually considered to be the source of other sins. In the Book of Mormon the proud person sins against others as well as God. He does not esteem his neighbor as himself; instead he supposes he is better than others. This pride leads to envy, strife, persecutions, and a struggle for power and gain that finally leads to the destruction of an entire civilization.

But don't we learn in the our Mormon Sunday School and Seminary classes that the greatest or most serious sin is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the second is murder, and the third adultery? That we teach this is evidence of our failure to think seriously about the nature of sin and of our tendency to think of sin basically as acts.

A little understood verse in the Doctrine and Covenants casts doubt upon the enterprise of enumerating and rating sins. Not forgiving, it says, is a greater sin that whatever sin we are not forgiving someone for (D&C 64:9). Not forgiving, like forgiving, is basically an inner attitude. The failure to forgive is so serious because it is a rejection of the Atonement. Not forgiving is a failure of the self to establish the right relationship with God and others—in fact, pride.

In reference to the three greatest sins of Mormonism I will just remark that these are special sins in the sense that they can be committed only by those who have entered into advanced covenant relationships with God. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost can only be committed by someone who has received a special type of revelation. There is no forgiveness for murder, only for those who have entered into the new and everlasting covenant with God. Remember that the people of

Ammon were forgiven for their murders. The seriousness of adultery for those in the new and everlasting covenant of marriage is related to the breaking of that covenant. As deliberate acts of rebellion, these sins are sins of pride, unmistakable signs of what has already taken place in the heart.

But if pride is rebellion against God, why should it be a danger to Church members who believe in God? Rebellion is from the inside and it never begins as open rebellion. In the Book of Mormon pride is never mentioned as a sin of the Lamanites. It is always the once righteous Nephites who succumb to pride, and Moroni warns us that we have the same problem. He is speaking to us as members of the true Church of Christ when he says:⁷

And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts (Mormon 8:36.).

We have seen that pride is at the root of our relationship with God and others and that more than rightmindedness and good intentions are required to root it out. Because pride wants to think well of itself, it is the greatest temptation for those who aspire to righteousness and its subtlest disguise is that of righteousness.

When man glories in his own righteousness he becomes self-righteous. Pride disguised as righteousness is pride at its most spiritual and most sinful. Self-righteousness leads to the persecution of others. First, the self-righteous man makes up his own rules. Of course, he doesn't think of them as his own rules; he bases them on the commandments, but they reflect his understanding of the commandments—they are his rules for keeping the Sabbath Day holy or his measurable objectives for increasing spirituality. After making up his own rules, he judges others by them and condemns them because they don't conform to his standards of righteousness. He may persecute them by imposing his standards on them, causing them to acknowledge his superiority if he persuades them he is right and, perhaps, to despair of their own righteousness. If he is in a position of power, he may persecute them by trying to force them to accept or obey his standards or by denying them positions of responsibility and respect. And for all his persecutions he claims divine sanction.

I can never know God as long as I am self-righteous. If I imagine that my limited and relative moral standards are the same as God's, if I imagine that my righteousness is the same as God's, if I imagine that because I have pleased God in one respect that I have his total approval, then I imagine that there is very little difference between myself and God.

Stripping myself of pride is, I suppose, at least a lifetime effort. No sooner have I divested myself of the fine apparel that pride offers me than I discover that I have been deceived into accepting another of its disguises. None of the formulas or definitions or insights into the nature of pride and how it can be

detected which I have offered here is absolutely guaranteed to reveal pride. Recognizing pride requires spiritual insight, and overcoming it requires outside help.

NOTES

1. Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (W.W. Norton and Co., 1968), p 92.
2. Stanley Coopersmith, *The Antecedents of Self-Esteem* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1967), p 5.
3. Louise J. Kaplan, *Oneness and Separateness: From Infant to Individual* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p 15.
4. David Elkind, *The Child's Reality: Three Developmental Themes* (Hilldale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associated, Publishers, 1978), p 85, 86.
5. C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1943), p 99.
6. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. 1, Human Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), pp 186-203.
7. Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Company, 1970), pp 415-416.

ACCOMMODATION

Willene sighs as Elise looks to see
if Beth saw her tuck her garment
sleeves to accommodate her new dress
which is a little bare in the arms.
Beth resolutely looks away.

Only a Mormon would design a nylon garment
hanging at the one end to the knees.
And at the other: sleeves.
Only someone caught in the eternal round
of eavesdrop and peek by God,
devil, and Brethren.

Willene remembers the relief at dispatching
the first. At thirteen, she had, as her mother
said, "developt." More than mirrors showed
her new self: her shadow when she turned
sideways; rounding third base after a solid hit,
the whole world in motion; the uncle who ruffled
her bangs when she wanted his Old Spice bearhug.

One day too much thinking about the good
and bad of breasts convinced Willene
that if she didn't quit it, God would plant
cancer there. She loosened her straps,
hunched her shoulders, but it was no good.
Nothing could make her not jut out, not check
to see how the flat girls looked.

And breasts were everywhere. Billboard
women poured out of strapless gowns
to sell Chiclets, Smirnoff, CrackerJacks.
Women in Maidenform bras plucked chickens,
danced at the Waldorf-Astoria, took first
in the Indy 500. On the day that breasts
became too much to bear, Willene squinted
at the sky and hissed, "All right, take both
of them, but leave me be." God not only stopped
bothering her after that—they got along fine.

The dismissal of the devil must have begun
the first time she decided she could get
into trouble without him. Or realizing
that sin would not have caught her
in the first place if she had not been afraid
in some way. The devil seemed to have gone the way
of Clearasil, saddle shoes, and hula hoops.

They smile at Willene's battle of the breast,
but Beth and Elise reject her dismissal
of Satan, even when she insists that life's
easier without him. Nothing though can make

the Brethren fade. Dark suits. Clean shaven
as real estate, the Politburo, Amway. And
why they live so long? Maybe too busy to die.
Maybe so wanting to finally live right, they hang
on for one more day. Maybe seeing the limits
in those waiting to take their place.

The priesthood. The garment of the priesthood.
Some members left the Church when the Brethren
shortened the garment length. But not those
who tell faith-promoting stories of Saints
unscathed (in the places that garments make safe)
by flood, fire, or airplane crash. Such faith
accommodates the loss of a bit more limb.

Prayer is over and breakfast, and the other
two are gone. Sorting her dirty clothes,
Willene sees she has enough for only
one full load. That would mean washing
her garments with other clothes. Beth
and Elise do—and no one says not to.
And besides a second load would take
her day's subway fare. But it would mean
washing her garments with other clothes.
The free spirit thinks about what
she can really let go, then makes two
small piles, sighs, and goes to the laundry room.

—LORETTA RANDALL SHARP

 Seeking All Things Praiseworthy

RESTORING THE CHURCH: ZION IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

By Edwin B. Firmage

I

The American Puritans' "City upon a Hill" prospered because it was a City on the Sea. How different the story of New England, or of America, might have been if they had built their Zion in a sequestered inland place—some American Switzerland, some mountain-encircled valley! The Sea helped New Englanders find resources, not in the land, but in themselves and in the whole world. The sea was the great opener of their markets and their minds.

—Daniel J. Boorstin¹

THE MORMON PEOPLE AND THE MORMON PROPHETS sensed from the beginning that their religion would work only in community. Peculiar Mormon teachings did not simply demand their own institutions, radical social innovations like polygamy and the United Order required a unique lifestyle and community. We can say now in retrospect that a separate Mormon system of law and society was necessary to protect their vision against hostile government and inadequate law. Beyond that, however, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young understood that for religion to be effective it must be woven into every warp and woof of our lives. No laws of God are temporal; all are spiritual. If this is to be, the community must allow the introjec-

tion of spirituality into the law to enliven the community with God's spirit.

For Joseph and Brigham, this vision, in its highest level of effectiveness at least, demanded a gathered church: Zion. This vision was absolutely central for both of them, so much that they led the Mormons into an unequal, nearly hopeless, struggle. And yet, long after Zion should have been obliterated by an industrial state and national markets, its institutions flourished. Mormon law and courts existed with vitality into the twentieth century until Church leadership decided that Mormon survival demanded accommodation with the national community, even if it meant abandoning the distinctive and controversial practices of communal economics, polygamy, and theocratic government.

WITH the powerful literalism of commoners, the Mormons, with lay leaders indistinguishable in education and social position from other Church members, set out to make Zion a reality. Brigham exhorted with characteristic pungency, "I have Zion in my view constantly. We are not going to wait for angels, or for Enoch and his company to come and build Zion, but we are going to build it."² His counselor and friend, Jedediah M. Grant, exclaimed, "If you want a heaven, go to and make it."³

Self-serving individualism, particularly when motivated by wealth, was severely sanctioned. The communal vision, like ancient Israel's, was all-encompassing. Looking forward to a return to Jackson County, Missouri, as the center stake of Zion, Brigham warned in 1865, "If this people neglect their duty, turn away from the holy commandments which God has given us, seek for their own individual wealth, and neglect the interests of the Kingdom of God, we may expect to be here quite a while—perhaps a period that will be far longer than we anticipated."⁴

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The hallmark of Mormonism was, and is, this vital and powerful communal cohesion. The power undergirding Mormon communality is reinforced by factors in addition to the theological vision of Zion. The trek to the Great Basin and the colonial experience of settling a major part of western America welded Mormons together with unbreakable bonds. There they built Zion in mountain-encircled valleys. They had consummated one of the great migrations of American history in a self-conscious pattern of the camp of Israel. This intensely authoritarian system might have been expected to continue as Mormons turned from the exodus to colonizing a hostile wilderness. Brigham Young, perhaps this country's greatest colonizer, extended Zion's tent with stakes implanted from San Bernardino to Old Mexico, throughout much of California, Nevada, Idaho, Arizona, and New Mexico—a rugged, at times brutal experience made possible by a shared vision of Zion. The authoritarian structure inherent in such an endeavor was helpful, perhaps indispensable, and probably inevitable.

The uncoerced social affinity essential to the legitimacy of Mormon community was powerfully strengthened not shattered by persecution. The federal government began a half-hearted campaign against the Mormons with ineffective legislation against polygamy, then attempted to eradicate the practice by enforcing laws with heartless brutality. Simultaneously, the government attacked Mormon civil rights and liberties, including the rights to serve on juries, to emigrate, to vote, and to hold office. Finally the government waged a war on Mormon society and corporate personhood by seeking to disenfranchise the Church.

The effect of all this, of course, was to cement the Mormon community into an impregnable whole. Mormons survived initial persecution and developed the bones and sinews of a people, as did Israel in exodus. Forging a community in the American West, they grew under intense and protracted persecution and matured in an isolation that ensured a distinctive, deeply rooted community.

But great costs were paid. The combined effect of overt federal persecution and the more thorough and irresistible subversion of Mormon society by widespread industrialization and encroaching national markets finally obliterated much that was unique. Nevertheless, a distinctive Mormon culture survived—part religious community, part ethnic group. Mormonism has powerful characteristics of both church and tribe.

THE nineteenth-century Mormon experience can only be described as heroic, whether one's historiography is faithful or detached. Our challenge as we approach the twenty-first century is to continue with equal integrity. This cannot be done by attempting to repeat the past, nor by continuing traditions appropriate to continental migrations, colonization, and resistance to persecution. The courage of our founders can be approached only with the same robust vitality that empowered Mormons of the nineteenth century to break decisively with the culture of their time.

Like our individual strengths and dominant characteristics, our corporate strength of intense communality possesses a shadow that we deny at our peril. We have inherited the shadow of our fathers' nineteenth-century traditions of great strength, not simply the traditions themselves. If we recognize this we have nothing to fear; if we do not, we will descend into a parody of the past, devoid of its integrity. We must examine the characteristics of our intense communal insularity and authoritarianism, particularly as they reinforce chauvinistic, ethnocentric tendencies that are no longer valuable in our dissent from the larger national culture.

II

The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the gentiles. . . . For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.

—Acts of the Apostles 15:23, 28

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

—Paul (Ephesians 2:13-14, 19)

THE challenge for the Church in the twenty-first century must be to forge common bonds, not to accentuate differences. Our characteristics of both church and ethnic group must be acknowledged. The characteristics of church possess the regenerative power to change our lives toward God's image-saving grace. Those of ethnic tribalism do not.

Military-like discipline may have been needed to colonize a hostile frontier, but it is an obstruction to conversion, not a helpful invitation to mature spirituality. Conversion occurs from the center outward; external coercion does not help the process. We need to move from authoritarian ethnocentricity to a church of Jesus and Paul. When worship of community displaces worship of God we accentuate our idiosyncrasy by self-love and self-worship. When we worship God we proceed inward to our center and outward in identification with all the human family and all life. We love as God loves. Nevertheless, the empowerment possible only with the Church *in community* must be preserved. The religious teachings and practices of the Church can only become real in community. Outside community, such teachings remain strangely disembodied—ideas that have little effect on our lives. Church without community is impotent. Community without church places itself rather than God at the center, resulting in an unregenerating tribal culture.

THE Church in the first century after Christ also faced this grave crisis and the Pauline solution points the way for every Christian community that followed.

The Christian idea took flesh in community—an intense, insular, Jewish community. For some time it seemed inconceivable that Christianity could exist outside the Jewish matrix in which it was born; but Paul, like Joseph Smith, had a vision. Paul came to see that the sociology of Judaism was not prerequisite to the Christian idea. Christianity could be embodied in other cultures, all cultures, and Jesus, not the Jewish law, was the gateway. This vision precipitated so great a crisis in the Church that the first conference in Christian history was called at Jerusalem. After much discussion the Pauline vision was accepted. The enormous struggle to realize that vision ultimately cost Paul his life, but henceforth the direction of the Church was outward—to the entire Roman world and beyond.

No greater burden than the *necessary* core of the Christian message should be required of the community as a condition for accepting and living the Christian idea. Any Christian community exporting the gospel cannot require the investigating group to accept the sociology of the community presenting the message. The grafting culture must be given the same freedom enjoyed by the exporting group: to nourish the Christian message within their own cultural tradition.

Of course, some social practices in any culture may be antithetical to the Christian message. Other customs may be more or less conducive to Christian flowering; but each culture must receive freedom sufficient to make these experiments and reach their own conclusions. The alternative is cultural imperialism in the guise of Christian evangelization.

The dialogue within Christianity as to what constitutes the necessary core message continues in every generation and in every community where the message is introduced. The process compels openness and outwardness, even in fiercely insular communities that resist every step—unless, of course, they give way to idolatrous, ethnocentric self-worship. God is then displaced with the communal self which grows in its own image, accentuating every group characteristic in perfect caricature.

THIS dialogue on core essentials exists not only between contemporaneous communities but also between generations within the same community. The gradual change within a believing community obscures the evidence of the evolutionary process; but, the process can be seen starkly by separating the centuries.

Accordingly, we examine here the Mormon experience in the nineteenth century and contrast it with our situation now as we approach the twenty-first century. What follows are examples of persistent nineteenth century practices which I believe Mormonism will have to confront as it embraces a different time and other cultures. By no means is this a challenge to the spiritual core of either Christianity or Mormonism. Rather, it is an invitation to discover and distinguish our core spiritual principles from the sociological matrix in which we happen

to live at a particular time and place. The former we hold and revere; the latter we change as circumstance reveals to us the wisdom of doing so.

The inherited gift of intense community has a tendency to enthrone any peculiar communal characteristic as if it were a divine absolute. This is particularly true for Mormons because of a peculiar insight that, paradoxically, should produce openness but if unexamined results in the opposite—the open canon. Joseph Smith believed that God could and would give revelatory messages to the world, revealing himself in every age and among many peoples. With a liberality of spirit that even now seems starkly modern he taught that the Jewish and early Christian scripture was holy but not perfect or inerrant, and surely not complete. God had spoken and would yet speak to many groups. The records of that dialogue could be considered to be as authoritative—authentic—as our Bible. The result of this insight should have been, and to some extent has been, that we avoid the presumptuousness of creeds that tightly define and confine God and our relationship to him. Every generation and people wants to be left with great freedom to explore that awesome mystery. Such a people, one would think, would never presume formally or informally to excommunicate each other—to pronounce anathema—because someone saw another way.

Over time, however, Mormons developed an idea of a de facto infallibility concerning prophetic pronouncements. The authoritarian tendencies developed in our early community building were inappropriately transferred to doctrinal areas and ecclesiastical government. Although Joseph denied any notion of infallibility or inerrancy, even for the biblical canon, we have come perilously close to believing in the infallibility of the comments of religious leaders, however casual and unexamined.

Similarly, like any other religious community, we can all too easily see God's benediction upon, perhaps even his hand in creating, our every social more. Our group customs—for example, our predilection for conservative politics and classical, marketplace economics—become hallowed, divine.

If this process continues unchallenged and unexamined, we begin to worship ourselves, not God. We enthrone every social peculiarity as being revelatory. We defend and accentuate every custom and cling to them through time. Customs of a particular time and place, perhaps defensible or at least understandable near the time of origin, become increasingly grotesque as we carry them into another age.

A painful example illustrates this phenomenon. Early Mormons originally came in large numbers from New England and the East. These displaced Puritans carried with them healthy notions of abolitionist sentiment. In Missouri, some blacks were evangelized, baptized, and ordained to priesthood office, like other converts. Understandably, slave-owning Missourians were frightened. As a self-defensive measure of preservation in an increasingly violent environment, the Mormons agreed to desist

from evangelization among slaves. Over time, and probably unevenly at first, the ordination of blacks to priesthood office ceased.

In time the origin of this policy was forgotten. Given the Mormon belief in continuing public revelation, we increasingly bestowed upon this expedient practice a revelatory status. Later, Brigham Young and subsequent Church leaders made perfectly indefensible statements to justify the practice long after its evolutionary origins were lost. A wretched theology of sorts grew up around a practice that, at any point and surely beyond the early Missouri community, was antithetical to Christian teaching. Paradoxically, an early Mormon insight was lost—that abolitionism and Christian equality were consistent with God's universal fatherhood and our universal brotherhood and sisterhood—and a belief in continuing revelation was turned on its head.

Although that practice has now thankfully been reversed, its history is a good study in the potential dysfunctions of the community. Our notion of revealed truth must be moderated, indeed bounded, by the realization that we perceive God's will through the filter of our own subjectivity, our imperfection, our humanity. Without this insight that which should liberate, imprisons: outworn practice becomes new dogma, more rigid, not adaptable to changing circumstance. When the concept of revelation is joined by a notion of prophetic infallibility, a dogmatic system is born that eventually becomes excessively authoritarian, ironically imprisoning a people in the past when the revelatory notion was meant to free them from the past.

Similarly, we have adopted a means of succession to the presidency of the Church based on length of apostolic tenure which insures that this vital office once held by the youthful Joseph will almost always be held by someone of extreme old age. Yet no authoritative doctrinal precept mandates this. Over time custom hardened into rule and now Church government is enfeebled at senior levels in the Council of the Twelve and the First Presidency. Nothing in Church doctrine forbids an emeritus status for members of the Quorum of the Twelve. This would insure younger leadership in the Council of the Twelve and in the person of the president of the Church. Apostolic succession to the presidency, still based on tenure, could continue only with individuals at least a decade younger assuming the presidency. Or, better yet, perhaps members of the Council of the Twelve might select the president from among themselves.

AT this point another early Mormon characteristic with its accompanying twentieth-century shadow appears: We accept a greater degree of authoritarian leadership than would most people living in a modern industrial and democratic state. Undoubtedly this authority is legitimate: it is uncoerced, flowing naturally from a group as homogeneous and communal as ours.

But a religious community must also respect individuals even as it preserves the core beliefs of the community. Mormons

believe in uncreated intelligence: A soul sovereign and co-eternal with God.

I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the First-born. . . . Ye were also in the beginning with the Father. . . . Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. . . . Behold, here is the agency of man. . . (D&C 93:21, 23, 29, 31).

This should allow—demand—an enormous respect for each other's beliefs, our individual vision, even in community. Prophetic leadership should consciously decry any notion of infallibility of leader or scripture.

If we believe this, then egalitarian dialogue should be encouraged with full heart. This would include searching, open, and honest examination of our history and our scripture. "Honest" and "faithful" history would be the same. Mormon teachings and practices would be discussed and opinions sought at all levels.

The profoundly energizing Mormon practice of lay priesthood would be lived more fully than it is currently, with even less distinction between clergy and laity. Theological notions or Church practice would be discussed with great openness in every class and quorum. Any creed-like attempt to confine God to something as tiny as our minds would be greeted with good humor. Authoritarian pronouncement would be made infrequently and with caution. All women would be invited into full priesthood participation, with every quorum and office in the Church open to them. No Mormon Christian doctrine, of which I am aware, forbids this. The absence of feminine spirituality in the councils of church government is a loss of such enormity in Christian history as to be impossible to overstate. With other Christian traditions Mormons must no longer ignore this open wound.

By not decreasing authoritarian tendencies within Mormonism, we risk spiritual and moral infantilism or, at best, adolescence—a dependence on others for inner spiritual and moral structure that prevents our own robust maturity. Notions of lay priesthood assume that for most purposes we need no intermediary between ourselves and God, save Christ himself. One may be our spokesperson, to be sure, at the pulpit or before the altar. But he or she acts for us all. On another occasion, we might be the voice. No difference in kind exists. This is the mature form of Christian belief that can take us into the next century, growing in likeness of God, not ourselves.

HOW do we get there? Perhaps the Pauline example contains the key. A burgeoning church, spilling beyond our mountain enclave—our "sequestered inland place"—will face challenges in crossing each frontier. With each barrier we cross, we will become more a church and less an ethnic group. If simultaneously we maintain our core beliefs, our communalism will remain intact but more refined.

This growth will bring with it paradox. As we attempt to save our brothers and sisters in the Third World, perhaps they

will save us. As Mormon missionaries evangelize people in South and Central America, Asia, and Africa, we constantly will be forced to decide what portion of our message is social custom from Kanosh, Kanab, and Kanarraville, or the essence of Christianity.

Our lay priesthood is an enormous advantage. We cannot impose foreign clergy on native communities for long. At most, we will train native lay leaders and ordain them within months. We simply cannot impose full religious and cultural imperialism on a community in which the entire congregation at every level of leadership is governed from among themselves. If we listen, they will teach us.

The issues will be many: African or Tongan drums in religious ceremonies; forms of dress and food; appropriateness of practices or teachings in a radically new environment; marriage customs. Poverty in the Third and Fourth Worlds will be our great teacher: our cultural notions of the government's role in a nation's economy will be called into question and appropriately discarded by many nations. Our wealth blinds us; their poverty may remove the scales from our eyes. A core Christian gospel will emerge, "these necessary things," uncluttered with our own sociological baggage.

Similarly, as Mormonism enters Communist countries in Eastern Europe and eventually China, we will find that our own ethnocentric notions, however dear to us, are not essential to the gospel's core.

Within our own country the growth of Mormonism in large urban areas among diverse racial and ethnic groups will force a dialogue upon us and within us. The result, I hope, will be a different sort of community: richer in texture, more diverse, less authoritarian.

Perhaps we can enter into interfaith dialogue with our Christian and non-Christian brothers and sisters, not seeing them primarily as potential converts but as disciples like ourselves. We might give more attention to converting ourselves to the truths they possess. Mormonism's influence for good in the world will be much greater, I suspect, among the many who remain firmly attached to their own religious tradition, rather than within the relative handful of people who join our faith.

We trivialize God when we see all history pointing toward New York in the 1820s. Our own community becomes too short, too narrow, too thin. Robert Bellah's "community of memory"⁵ must extend for us before the nineteenth century. In the next century, as our Mormon community moves outward into Africa, South and Central America, and Asia we will likely expand in time as well. Mormons who think that God ceased to speak sometime after the first century of the Christian era and resumed dialogue with us in the nineteenth century ignore centuries rich in the continuing story of God's relationship with us all. That bleak picture of utter apostasy is hardly brightened by seeing a few preparatory acts as God's prologue, as it were, to the Restoration.

Alternatively, we can choose to see God's message in the writings of Christian fathers and mothers through the centuries as wonderful messages complete in themselves. A vital sense

of continuity is lost for Mormons, who generally are closed to such literature and history. The Latin and Greek fathers; the writings and meditations of Christian mystics from the first century to the present; reformers within and without the dominant church of a time and place: all reveal the mystery of God's relationship with us.

Beyond Christianity the Jewish tradition, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and the Islamic tradition have a richness to offer us, particularly within the contemplative traditions of East and West. We may gain invaluable richness from an inward journey, not into cultural ethnocentricity but to the center of our own soul. We Mormons have excelled in the outward journey as colonizers and organizers, making deserts blossom, but too many of our hearts may remain an arid desert. Christian and non-Christian mystical traditions have much to share with us, more in corrective ways than as replacements for our traditions. Taken alone, the mystical tradition could result in an other-worldliness divorced from human need and social action. Equally true, social activism shorn of direction from our spiritual center could produce even greater injustice. A dynamic balance between spiritual meditation and action for social justice is the ideal.

Our view and use of scripture could expand as well. Overwhelmingly we now see the Bible as a proof text, using isolated passages to prove a particular teaching, and pass this off as pastoral instruction in scripture. What loss. This is strange, too, because formally we do not accept the fundamentalist belief in scriptural inerrancy, nor do we see the scriptures as a source of priesthood empowerment, as in the Protestant tradition. As we sense our own need for real nourishment, we may move toward non-dogmatic, non-apologetic study of the Bible simply to gain the richness of its real message.

We would aid this process greatly by diminishing our monopolistic use of the King James version of the Bible. This most beautiful of all English translations is a treasure beyond price. But thousands of documents are now available, and have been for decades, that the King James translators did not have. And our language has changed dramatically. If we want the scriptures to come alive for us and for our children, we should embrace new translations. (The New English, the New Jerusalem, and the Anchor Bibles are three of my favorites.) Again, it is strange that a people who rejected Protestant fundamentalism toward scripture in the nineteenth century should seek so avidly to board a ship in this century that is so clearly sinking as is this form of scriptural fundamentalism, relegating scripture to the status of an icon: something to be venerated but not understood. Our choice of Bible translation, too, must turn outward. If not, we remain cut off from much dialogue in biblical research and from greater meaning and sensitivity in biblical education. Of course Joseph Smith used the King James translation, what other translation would he use? After one wades through all the rationalizations for our current practice, this is the fundamental reason, and it is not sufficient.

I suspect that even something as central and sacred in Mormon teaching as the role of the family will come under

scrutiny as we move into the next century. It seems reasonable to believe that loving family associations formed in mortality may continue in the resurrection. But retaining the absolute centrality of the family in our beliefs can cause us to miss a much bigger picture. Millions of single and divorced people can be hurt, feeling that they are only marginally involved in Church participation. It is possible to make an icon of the family as easily as a particular version of the Bible.

Jesus, in his own life and teachings, revealed a much grander vision. In almost every example of family association in his life and ministry, Jesus taught us to transcend the family. The family relationship was often used by him as a negative example—that is, he taught that if our sense of love and obligation did not move beyond family and blood relationships, we had not yet perceived his message. When his family found him in the temple he responded to Mary's mild rebuke by saying that he was about his Father's business—not theirs (Luke 2:41-50); when informed that his mother and brothers were outside, he told a crowded room that his disciples were his family (Matthew 12:46-50); in an intentionally harsh statement so we would not miss the point, he responded to a disciple's request to bury his father, "Let the dead bury the dead" (Matthew 8:21-22); there is no evidence Jesus ever married; his disciples forsook all and followed him (I hope they did not desert their families, but the record does not clearly demonstrate that they did not).

III

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

—Jesus (John 14:6)

Ours is a society that requires people to be strong and independent. As believers, we must often operate alone in uncongenial circumstances, and we must have the inner spiritual strength and discipline to do so. Objecting to its authoritarianism and paternalism, religious individualists have often left the church or sect they were raised in. Yet such people often derive more of their personal strength than they know from their communities of origin. They have difficulty transmitting their own sense of moral integrity to their children in the absence of such a community and they have difficulty sustaining it themselves when their only support is from transient associations of the like-minded. It would seem that a vital and enduring religious individualism can only survive in a renewed relationship with established religious bodies. Such a renewed relationship would require changes on both sides. Churches and sects would have to learn that they can sustain more autonomy than they had thought, and religious individualists would have to learn that solitude without community is merely loneliness.

—Robert N. Bellah⁶

THE journey outward is not so much toward individualism, though that is part of it. The individual must be free from coercive, demeaning authoritarianism if he or she is to mature spiritually into responsible autonomy. If the community is too insular, this process of individuation can take place only by breaking outside. The journey outward, however, is primarily a journey into larger community, larger in time and space. We will come to identify ourselves with Christians beyond the Mormon experience, those living now and those who have gone before; with believers in traditions other than Christianity we see similarities in the human quest that are more fundamental than our differences. Part of this recognition may come as we travel inward on the meditative journey to our own center, or outward as we graft into our community of memory others from radically different cultures.

Jesus' life and message transcended community, race, gender, nationality, tribe, even family. If we trivialize this message we violate the first commandment by some form of self-worship. Ethnocentricity indeed has power. Religion in community is the spiritual word embodied. But ethnocentricity alone is communal self-worship. The refining process of God's grace is in the true religious experience, with God at the center.

Jesus broke traditional bonds. He recognized that his message would set children against parents, brothers and sisters against their kin. But that same message has the power to bind them up again, united across differences of race, gender, nationality, religious traditions even through time. His parable of the Good Samaritan; his teaching of having no place to lay his head or to lodge; his refusal to eat or converse only with the "good people"; the first great crisis of Christianity, that of resolving Jewish and Gentile Christianity through the Pauline paradigm—all point the way.

Jesus preached and practiced a transcendent message of self-love, love of neighbor, and finally love of enemy. Neighbor and enemy combined such that no one was excluded from our love. On our inner journey of Christian meditation, on our outer journey that will transcend race, gender, and nationality, Mormonism must and will overleap the mountain redoubt that nurtured us in our infancy. With the Puritans across the continent in an earlier age, with Joseph and Brigham, Augustine and Paul, we continue our search for the City of God. ☪

NOTES

1. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience*, (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1965), p. 3.
2. *Journal of Discourses* (JD), 9:284.
3. JD 3:66.
4. JD 11:102.
5. R.N. Bellah, R. Madsen, William Sullivan, A. Swidler and S.M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985).
6. Bellah, pp. 247-48, note 8.

A CHANGED MAN

PROPHETS AND ASSIMILATIONISTS

By Orson Scott Card

A RECENT ISSUE of *SUNSTONE* reported on some negative reactions to Boyd K. Packer's address on funerals. The gist of those reactions was that general authorities have no business meddling in areas that general authorities don't usually meddle in.

"It isn't that he spoke about funerals," they seem to be saying. "What bothers us is that he demanded we change the way we do things. Worse yet, his changes would give the Church more control over our lives."

Indeed, if there is one theme that runs throughout Elder Packer's career as a prophet, seer, and revelator, it is this: He persists in speaking about topics that few others are willing to touch, and he persists in trying to get us to change our customs in ways that would make us even more different from the world around us than we already are. He expects us to transform ourselves as a people, and he insists on his authority to teach us how to do it.

Let me give you an extended example. Years ago, I sat in the large BYU audience that listened as Boyd K. Packer gave his address on Mormon art. At first I was excited—what other general authority had given art in the Church more than a passing mention?

But soon excitement gave way to dismay. Did he really propose that Eliza R. Snow's and Orson Whitney's tacky little poems be treated as seriously as truly *great* literature?

And when he made his joke about temperamental artists being "more temper than mental" I was offended. He might be an apostle, but what did he know about artists? What did he know about art?

Years went by. I stopped dabbling in writing and made it my career. I went on to graduate school at two universities and began to make some discoveries about the world of lit-

erature in America.

At first inadvertently, but later by design, I did most of my storytelling within the genre of science fiction and fantasy. It is the one genre that allows a storyteller to create worlds that function by different rules; I needed that possibility of strangeness, that control over milieu, in order to tell the stories that seemed most important and true to me.

Science fiction and fantasy are, together, the latest incarnation of the oldest tradition in literature. From Gilgamesh and Odysseus on through medieval romances and the folktales that every community in the world adapts to its own needs, the stories that people have loved and retold all contain strangeness, the possibility of magic, the immanence of powers normally beyond the reach of human beings. My conception of the working of the world was formed primarily by Joseph Smith, and I found it impossible to tell my most truthful stories without strangeness, without the immanence of power.

But my professors, with rare exceptions, despised science fiction and fantasy. I quickly learned that they also did not understand it, did not even know how to read it. I, however, *did* know how to read and understand the works that *they* valued, and I soon discovered that at the heart of every one of their most treasured stories there was a seed of strangeness. But this tiny shred of romance was so buried in details of realism, so camouflaged by flamboyant and distracting style, that it could only be extracted with patient labor. Rarely was it worth the effort.

Why did they insist on telling their stories in disguise? Why did they despise and deplore stories that offered themselves plainly? Their stories had gained nothing and lost much. Their audience, and therefore their ability to influence the world, was small and shrinking.

But there was compensation for the litterateurs, a meta-story that they valued more

than the stories of their purported literature: the story that said, "People who can read *serious* literature are finer, more intelligent, and more important than people who read that easy stuff." Their fiction, by its very inaccessibility to untrained readers, made them an elite.

They have captured the American university English departments, and from that bastion they try—and often succeed—in their effort to make people ashamed of reading any story that is told plainly enough to be understood by an untrained reader. You know how we apologize for the stories we love: "Oh, I just read these romances / mysteries / fantasies for escape." Or: "I only read this sort of thing at the beach / on the plane / when I'm sick."

The academic-literary establishment teaches students to value only those stories that must be carefully explicated and decoded by those ordained to the high priesthood of literature. They have persuaded most Americans that any story that does not require their mediation is trash.

All the arguments and conflicts within the academic-literary establishment are simply efforts to rise higher within their hierarchy. For instance, all the obfuscation of the Deconstructionists can be boiled down to a few clear concepts; but by masking their ideas in a daunting, untranslatable, circular, self-referential vocabulary, the Deconstructionists have been able to pose as an even higher priesthood—Gnostics who pretend to know a Mystery, which gives them power over those who don't know the proper incantations. It is a mass of confusion, designed not to be understood.

I looked at the critical theories of the academic-literary establishment and realized that, with a few exceptions, they were worthless, good only for decoding a certain narrow group of stories. Their theories were incompetent to explain the workings of most of the stories throughout all ages of the world—so they dismissed those stories as not worth reading.

But I saw that every human society in all of history creates and devours stories as their one indispensable crop; we don't contemplate our stories, we *use* them as surely as our bodies use food. Any theory of criticism that excludes the very stories that most people love best is worthless. And any story designed to satisfy the requirements of that worthless theory would have no meaning to most people. "Serious literature" in America is devoted to creating junk food. It may be served on fine china, but it's still a Twinkie, and after fifty

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years it's getting pretty stale.

It isn't just literature. *Every* American art except film has walked down that same road. Young painters and sculptors are taught to despise art that an untrained audience might love. Young musicians are taught to compose music that is deliberately unmelodic and unrhythmic and inaccessible. Young poets are encouraged to believe that clear communication is the enemy, not the essence, of their art.

The result is that young artists who study at American universities and believe what they are taught come away incapable of having any effect on the American people at large. Their art is valued only by a jaded audience that is generally incapable of being moved or transformed except at the shallowest level, which is the same as saying that their art is wasted.

When I finally understood this, I remembered Boyd K. Packer's address to the students and faculty in the arts at BYU. Though his rhetoric was sometimes offensive and his examples perhaps unhelpful, his fundamental message was not only true but the most important thing that Mormon artists could learn: The artistic standards of the world are directly inimical, not only to the Church, but also to art itself.

Many who resented Elder Packer's address said that he wanted to turn our art into propaganda for the Church. This is absurd. He was warning us that we were turning our art into propaganda for worldly elitists. He was warning us that if we believed their lies, we would be incapable of producing art that had any value whatsoever. And he was right. He was also ignored—not by all, but by far too many. BYU's English department too often prides itself on its ability to persuade its student writers to accept the values of the academic-literary establishment. BYU's music department still rewards most those young composers whose music has the least power to move an untrained audience. Only the art and theatre departments occasionally give honor to students and faculty who create works that might have some effect on an audience of volunteers. All these years after Elder Packer's address, BYU still does not take him very seriously.

To put it plainly, Elder Packer was warning Mormon artists of the danger of assimilationism. Assimilationism is the greatest danger facing the Church in America. There is enormous pressure for us to conform to the values of the nation around us. We have weakened under that pressure, and there is grave danger that it will destroy us, not by breaking the Church apart, but by erasing the boundary

between the Church and the world. The Great Apostasy did not come because members left the Church; it came when the Church adopted the values, philosophies, and practices of the world.

As to Elder Packer's recent speech about funerals, it is astonishing that anyone could imagine that it is somehow inappropriate for an apostle to insist on the Church's close involvement with the rituals surrounding death. Putting the bishop in charge of the funeral services does not take control away from the family. The bishop—who knows the family well—is more likely to respond to the desires of the family and the needs of the religious community in which they live than the paid stranger who is usually in charge. At every Mormon funeral I've attended, the family spends most of its time fulfilling the expectations of the undertaker. Do we give greater authority to the American mortician than to the Mormon bishop?

Too often the answer is yes. Yet Elder Packer has not forgotten that Mormonism is a revolutionary movement, that it is our job to subvert or overthrow the world's institutions and philosophies. He reminds us that the gospel touches every part of life, that the Spirit of God cannot be shunted into a small compartment and remain alive in us. He has dared to think and speak about how the Saints must change in order to better fit the gospel.

He is most often criticized by those who prefer to change gospel ideals and customs until it is possible to be a "Mormon" without ever having to go through the embarrassment of being different from the non-Mormons they admire. These assimilationists long to reconcile the world and the Church by changing the Church to fit the world.

If we refuse to let an apostle teach us how we should deal with death, if we refuse to let an apostle teach us how we should conceive and use our art, then in what sense do we sustain him as an apostle? And if, having rejected that apostle, we turn to undertakers and anti-religious elitists to teach us on those same subjects, then in what sense do we remain Latter-day Saints?

Assimilationists excuse themselves by whimpering, "Surely there's nothing wrong with learning truth from many sources. After all, even the apostles sometimes disagree." But they rarely consider and choose between the teachings of apostles; rather they seize on any apostolic statement that seems to justify their adherence to the views of the world. The assimilationists invariably *act* on the assumption that the world knows better than the Church.

Sonia Johnson trusted in the doctrines of feminism more than she valued her fellowship with the Saints; her excommunication only formalized her shift in loyalties from the community of Jesus Christ to a competing one.

The businessmen who erect their obscene mansions on the hills of Salt Lake and Utah valleys trust in their money more than they value their temple covenant of consecration; they struggle to resist fellowship with the faithful poor, forgetting that wealth, not poverty, is the fatal disease of the world.

The professors who teach their students not to create art for the masses trust in the academic-literary establishment more than they value the struggle to bring to pass the eternal life of man; the students who believe them are effectively silenced for life in a world that is hungry for their voices.

Parents who teach their children not to date or marry good and faithful saints of another race trust in the opinions of their bigoted neighbors more than they value Christ's commandment that we be one.

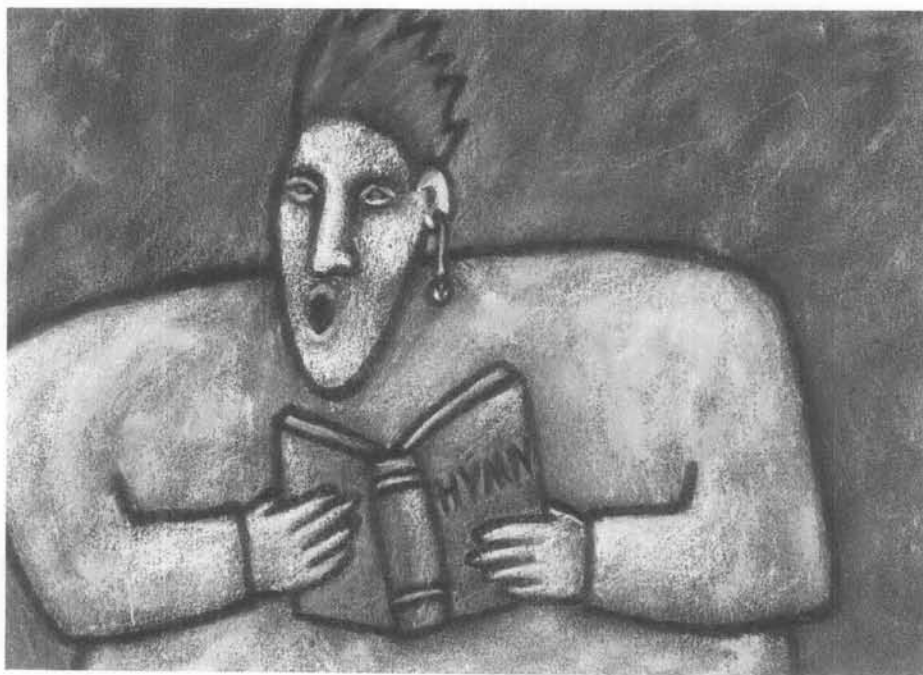
Knowing that these values are contrary to the gospel, many of these assimilationists seek to distort the gospel and deceive the rest of us into thinking it supports the degenerate values they have learned from the world. If they ever succeed, then we, the Church, the salt of the earth, will have lost our savor.

The Church as a community is far from perfect, but its imperfection comes from its failure to live up to the ideals of the gospel, not from the few areas where we have succeeded in differentiating ourselves from the world. The status quo within the Church is not very good, but the status quo outside it is much worse. The Church is in need of transformation, but the true revolutionaries within the Church are those who are radically orthodox, not those who are loudly assimilationist. When Elder Packer says something that makes the assimilationists squeal, it is safe to assume he is doing his proper work as a prophet. ☞

ANOTHER VIEW

ABSURDITY

By Kira Pratt Davis



I LOVE FOYERS on Sunday. I like the chaotic stream that passes. I remember watching the Anderson boys, one with his pseudo Vietnam camouflage (he was seventeen and had a “thing” about Vietnam, pretended to have nervous “flashbacks” during Sunday School), the other one with his dangling earring and smirk and black mohawk, dressed in black leather, and how they both used to goo at my Katie when she was a baby, crawling across the carpet, getting stuck on the hem of her dress. That was in our old ward.

Here in this new ward we have Cambodian kids, little ones playing tag—their mothers just send them out into the foyer so the mothers can hear the speakers; the teenage

Cambodian girls roam the halls and foyers in a troop, giggling and speaking in a high nasal Cambodian, as if they are imitating someone, as they walk by. They giggle when I answered their “soc so bai,” which means “how are you,” which I learned from a friend. They wear high heels and chew gum.

The hall here in this ward is filled with vertical action, people roaming up and down the long gangways. My one-year-old Lizzie runs, arms slightly behind her as if from the velocity. There are lots of unruly babies in the halls. Carrying her back, I stop to check out anyone Lizzie’s age and compare achievements.

I like the foyer. It’s a great mixer, jumbling us all together. And it’s so deliciously absurd at times, the tag games, the mixed languages, the little irrelevant conversations. Some of the deepest and most honest gospel discussions

I’ve had have been whispered between stuffed chairs, eyes half on crawling babies, in the foyer. I think we need the room for chaos. Absurdity is an often undersold commodity.

Last summer we were living in Holland and we went to the Frankfurt Temple dedication. We took a friend with us, dropped her off at the temple so she could look around, and then went racing down the autobahn to find the nearest chapel where the official nursery was. It was farther away than we thought, and when we came back our friend was standing outside with one of the ushers, waving frantically. We hurried in as the organ prelude came over the loudspeakers.

I was touched by the inside of the temple—the design for the basic structure was a sort of huge tepee with an independent steeple. I had seen it in architects’ drawings on the posters in Primary in Holland and was all prepared for acoustic tiles, industrial carpets—a sort of office/temple of the type we see more of these days. But there was a long strip of delicate stained glass up one of the outside angles—a stained glass tree, in blues and greens. And inside, there were lots of angles in the ceilings, and surprising wide views of other parts of the temple, a little plexiglass barrier you could look over and see the oxen in the baptistery, narrow spots in the hall had cut-away walls to view the foyer, and the celestial room. We slipped blue plastic slippers over our shoes and made shushing noises, with the other visitors, as we walked. There was carefully mild art nouveau in the light switches, the lamps, even the water fountain. It was delicate. It was lovingly precious, done with a graceful economy of space.

We found a place to watch the proceedings on a video monitor in a wide hallway. Groups of French-speaking Belgians shuffled past us into a special French language video hookup. They seemed confused and whispered to us as they passed, did we know the way? All we could do was shrug, not really understanding. Our group in the hallway was entirely Dutch-speaking except for one French Belgian lady who grew red and then huffily excused herself as the ceremony started, in English with Dutch translation, awkwardly sidestepping out of the back row of tightly wedged folding chairs.

Elder Thomas Monson was conducting, dragging up little stories about all the Dutch people he had ever known in Utah, as if he had to make sure and spread the butter evenly. “You can’t beat the Dutch!” he kept repeating. Mark whispered to me that he wondered how the Belgians liked that. A nervous young man with a very red nose translated

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THE SALT LAKE TEMPLE

By Michael Hicks

it all into Dutch for Brother Monson, but the young man was so terribly nervous that it seemed to strain the nerves of all of us, and some of the people in the group whispered the difficult words under their breath, as if to telepathize them, because nearly all the Dutch members can speak English. The young man's composure grew worse and worse through the ceremony, especially after the other translator had his turn—the second man translated as though there were no other people in the room. He stood straight, he smiled confidently out into the room, he even knew the Dutch translation of “playing hooky,” and it rolled out almost simultaneously as the speaker said it. Our little group murmured in admiration.

There was a meek little hosanna shout, led by Apostle Russell Nelson who manfully did his best in Dutch, sometimes ending his cadences on the wrong word, however, so that we all sat forward on our chairs and listened with hard little smiles and restrung the words mentally.

But what struck me most were the faces on the video monitor of the choir and the little congregation—beaky noses and jowls and stubby short hair and crooked teeth, making the faces people make when they sing, some smiling, some stony, hawklike, into the camera. I thought of something, swimming in the aura of it all, that struck me as terribly profound. It struck me that there is absurdity at the core of things, and that it has to do with love and free will, like liquid, sloshing in the middle of a diamond—the elixir the diamond was meant to carry. I thought this as I stared at a crystal chandelier, hearing the choir wail on.

It filled me with a peaceful, amused, justified feeling: we are alive, and that is excuse enough for our absurdity; we are blunt, acceptable facts.

At BYU, I had an English teacher who was fond of saying that absurdity, like barnacles, fixes itself to every unchanging thing, that relics turn into caricatures, that the sublime of one generation is the sentimental of the next. It reminds me of the astronomical fact of the way stars grow and swell up and die again, splattering their particles all over the universe, and how the bits of the old stars come together into new stars. The random mixing is the vortex of creation. It makes me love the mulch of humanity, the absurd variety, the concoctions we mix of faith and doubt, of crossed cultures, of infinite spaces between our categories. To fully be, I think we must be a little absurd. ☞



WHEN I USED to walk past this temple, I would look hard at it, study it, digest it with my eyes. But I don't look at it much anymore, because somehow it is now fully formed in my mind, and exists there more complete than the building I used to look at.

The temple began as a vision, I have heard, an image that burned in the skull of Brigham Young and then spent forty years being realized. It is an emblem of its century: a composite image, a hustling together of available metaphors and architectures into a pseudo-colossal edifice. In this century, the brains of Brigham's heirs have been saturated with depictions of its many-angled shape, images in cloth, metal plaster, ink, film. It is as though, through a kind of cosmic transaction, the substance of the temple has been broken down into its component parts, all in the likeness

of the building itself. This may account for what seems to me the temple's psychic seepage, in which the structure has leaked out and away into heads like mine and made the actual building an almost superfluous object. What began as Brigham's dream has become all of ours.

Like the original building, that dream is a composite, a collage of all the pictures of the temple that have been made. I have a sunny, brightly-colored one at the top of the stairs, three or four prints in drawers, dozens in books, and probably ten or twelve more in boxes in the garage. But when I try to conjure the temple in my mind the picture I see first is an old sepia print of the temple when it was being built, when it was still a potential thing, not quite formed, an evolving mass of stone. The steeples are missing and a team of stonemasons sits on the roof with their legs dangling above the window arches. To me, it is a pure image. It is dead, frozen by the camera, yet because the image is unfinished,

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it seems forever under construction, growing, living. And I savor the physical contact, the workers in worn clothes held by gravity—natural law—against the sacred stone building. In this picture the people are the capstones.

It is a transgression of temple photography. While there are many portraits of people with the temple for a backdrop, portraits of the temple itself always seem to omit people. We angle our lenses up toward the spires and masonwork; we crop the grounds and lower stories out of the picture. For in photographs the temple must transcend humanity, appearing as a fortress or a castle, and a deserted one at that. (In night shots, the lights always seem to come from the outside.) Interior photographs show only vacant rooms, forever depopulated, like Eden.

Back when my sepia picture was taken, the temple was huge, the “mountain of the Lord’s House,” a tower that presided over the city. People could look to it without effort, study its raw facade from afar, and stand easily in its shadow, which was uncluttered by other shadows. The building still looks immense in most of the pictures taken of it. But in the cityscape where it now sits it looks small (though oddly stretched, as though pushing up against a resistant skyline). This is what almost everyone notices nowadays about the temple: how it has shrunk. The secular world erects itself around it, intensifying the already awkward throwing together of sacred and profane orders. Like a modern Jonah, the temple is being swallowed up in the belly of the city.

Some people are bothered to see this happening to the temple. But they miss the point: the temple is not an icon of futility, but of tran-

scendence. It shrinks to remind us that God does not need big things. With buildings climbing around it, the temple sits stolid and aloof from their pretenses, as if to say (after Elijah) that its landlord is not in the whirlwind of commerce, or in the earthquake of construction, or in the fire of politics, but in the diminishing voice by which the old, gray building speaks.

In the days when I used to study such things, I read that certain ancient cultures likened the temple to “the navel of the earth.” I have forgotten what that meant to them, but when I think of the Salt Lake Temple, the metaphor fits. The navel, the smallest member of the body, is a vestige both of connection and of cutting off. It is a scar that says its bearer is an heir, but must thrive on his or her own blood and sustenance. In time the navel submerges into the flesh, but never fully fades: it is the body’s constant center. Some

find it an erotic object, perhaps, but, apart from symbol, it is useless.

I think I can believe that the Salt Lake Temple is the navel of the earth, or at least the navel of the City of Man, a kind of vestigial organ in the vast, crazy physique of the world. It is the center that tells of the world’s struggle to thrive while connected yet aloof, recalling yet refuting the heaven that bore it. The temple will recede but will never disappear. Some people want to turn it into a utilitarian fantasy—a tower to reach heaven, not literally, but by virtue of the work that goes on in it. But the temple’s power overruns utility and pierces everyone in its psychological orbit. That power is in being obscured, hiding itself. In space and in imagination, the Salt Lake Temple sinks, as if engulfed by the water for which it is named, and in sinking, refutes the doctrine of Babel. ☒



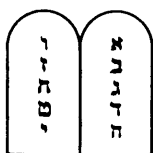
“Shees! You’d think the BYU religion faculty could drive cars to work like everyone else!”

REVIEWS

PLAYING BALL IN THE CHURCH'S COURT

ZION AND THE COURTS: A LEGAL HISTORY OF THE
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, 1830-1900

by Edwin Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum
University of Illinois Press, 1988, 430 pages, \$26.00



Reviewed by M. Reed Hunter

THE IDEA OF writing a legal history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may not have occurred first to Edwin Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum, but they have produced what should remain the definitive volume on the subject, at least for the period it covers.

The prolific Firmage, who has been very visible on the Sunstone scene in recent years (particularly for his role in facilitating publication of writings of his grandfather, Hugh B. Brown), and Mangrum are both professors of law (Firmage at Utah; Mangrum at Creighton in Omaha).

Firmage and Mangrum have managed to eschew legalese and at the same time produce an intellectually challenging book. The story they tell should be of interest to both students of Mormon history and students of American legal history.

It is a fascinating story, well told.

It is in fact two stories. The first, which occupies about two-thirds of the book, chronicles the Church experience in the secular courts. The second describes the nature

and evolution of the Church's own court system during this same period.

THE MORMONS IN AMERICAN COURTS

MORMON posture toward American courts evidenced an institutional schizophrenia throughout most of the nineteenth century.

On the one hand, the Church made obedience to the law and sustaining duly constituted civil authorities an article of faith. Its view of the United States as a land of unique promise, with laws grounded in a divinely inspired Constitution, intensified that commitment.

On the other hand, the Church's early experience with specific laws, and authorities invested with the power to enforce them, was anything but salutary. The Church and its members were repeatedly brutalized. Thus, doctrinal affirmance and pragmatic hostility marched in an uneasy yoke for most of the century.

Firmage and Mangrum make clear that in the beginning this was not so. In its earliest years, the Church was not ill disposed toward the civil courts, and used them with some frequency—but not as frequently, nor as effec-

tively, as did the enemies of the Church. From the earliest days in Palmyra, through the Kirtland, Missouri, and Nauvoo periods, Joseph Smith was subjected to repeated suits over both ecclesiastical and business matters, and the line between these two areas was often blurred. Further, it was sometimes difficult to tell whether Joseph himself or the Church was the target of a particular action.

The magistrates before whom these matters were prosecuted were themselves cause for alarm. Often semiliterate, these embodiments of frontier justice sometimes simultaneously wore the hats of judge and prosecutor. It was whispered that occasionally a third hat, that of mobster, was worn as well. The situation did not reassure.¹

It is almost inconsequential that most of the suits were vexatious; many were frivolous. Very few led to civil recovery or criminal conviction. But their negative impact, which gave rise to almost a century of distrust, can hardly be exaggerated.

This frontier justice resulted in, among other things, the final incarceration of Joseph at Carthage. (This resulted from the destruction of the Nauvoo Expositor presses, an incident chronicled in the book.)

To virtually the end of his life, however, Joseph retained his basic faith in the Constitution. As late as 1843, he stated that he was "the greatest advocate of the constitution of the United States there is on this earth," while asserting its misuse by corrupt men. His successors repeatedly echoed the same thought.

One legacy of calamitous experiences of the 1830s and 1840s was the admonition against "suing before the ungodly" during the administrations of Brigham Young and John Taylor. Violation of this injunction sometimes brought severe censure, including excommunication (p. 21). Another legacy was Brigham's years of lawyer-bashing which brought forth such dazzling rhetorical displays as "they are as corrupt as the bowels of hell, and their hearts are as black as the ace of spades . . . they are a stink in the nostrils of God and angels. . ." (quoted on p. 17).

Yet by 1973, Brigham was urging worthy young Mormon men to study law to protect the Saints against its enemies.

Much of the book centers on efforts of the United States to rid itself of one of the "twin relics of barbarism," Mormon polygamy. The discussion of court cases and legislation appears almost exhaustive (it is the most taxing part of the book to read), but emphasis is properly on the more influential events, i.e., the 1878 *Reynolds v US* case (98 US 145) and the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887.

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The Mormon polygamy cases are significant not only in Church history, but in the history of American constitutional law. They helped forge the principle the law eventually more or less espoused – that the law may not inhibit religious belief, but may inhibit and control expression of that belief (p. 154).

THE ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS

THE second half of the book, dealing with the Church court system, is sketchier. This is unavoidable; records of Church courts, for very sufficient reasons, enjoy a degree of confidentiality that records of civil courts do not. Firmage and Mangrum got much of their information from Church Archives.²

The authors stake out their position on Church courts in the introduction. They do this by asserting that the earlier treatises on the subject by Raymond Swenson (1978) and Mark Leone (1979) “miss the essence of the church court system in the nineteenth century” (p. xvii). Swenson is criticized for overestimating the infusion of civil law principles and procedures into the Church court system, Leone for underestimating the same, and both for “believing that the absorption of the Mormon markets into the national economy and the extension of the federal court system into the far reaches of the Great Basin immediately affected the Mormon ecclesiastical system” (p. xvii).

As Firmage and Mangrum view it, the Church courts managed to both (1) incrementally incorporate the common law and civil procedure into the Church court system, thereby eventually facilitating the absorption of the Church into the larger society, and (2) simultaneously maintain their distinctive reliance on inspiration and discernment. Although there were occasional injustices, such as abuses by local leaders acting under obvious conflicts of interest (for example, see p. 345), the authors make a persuasive case that the quality of justice dispensed in Church courts was at least comparable to that dealt by the secular courts of the era. This they credit to the ability of the Church courts, not bound by precedent, to focus on the exigencies of justice in each particular case in a way secular courts could not.

Those acquainted only with the modern Church court system, with its focus on doctrinal deviance and sexual transgression, might be surprised at the variety of cases brought before the 19th Century Court: tort, contract, property and water disputes, and domestic squabbles, among others. Again, the

explanation for this is the admonition against trafficking with the ungodly. As now, the Church had power to enforce only religious discipline (excommunication and disfellowshipment) but used the threat these disciplines posed to members of a closely-knit community to facilitate *de facto* enforcement of a wide variety of decrees.

One of the more interesting sections of the book is that which considers the role of teachers (that's teachers as in Aaronic priesthood bearers, not school teachers) played in the Church court system (pp. 279-282).

Much of this part of the book dealing with Church courts is anecdotal. Specific individuals involved in the incidents recounted are identified by initials or descriptions.³

Some of the incidents described are amusing, such as the account of the bishop who tried to meet what he saw as a religious duty to assist transient Gentiles to tithe by stealing 10% of their horses and cattle (pp. 363-364).

Others are more sobering, as for example the account of persons suffering Church discipline, even excommunication, for forgiving and continuing to live with errant spouses (p. 359). The underlying idea, mercifully in force for only a few years, appears to have been that an act of adultery, without more, severed the marriage relationship, and therefore the condoning spouse who reestablished marital relations with the transgressor was also adulterous.

The fundamental utility of the Church court system was in the ability it had to help cement the body of the Saints into a cohesive unit by (1) continuously redefining acceptable standards of doctrine and orthodox behavior, and (2) encouraging individual sacrifice for the common good.

Time and change, particularly the end of polygamy in the Church, led eventually to the assimilation, if not the secularization, of the Mormon community. This brought significant changes. Distrust of, and penalties for resorting to, civil courts decreased. As the role of these courts as primary arbiters of disputes grew, the use (and eventually the influence) of the Church courts correspondingly waned. While there is much to laud in this, there is also something lost. The 19th Century Church courts were a positive force and often resolved matters submitted to them wonderfully well. For better or worse, the Mormon community now seems no less litigious and lawyer-infested than the Non-Mormon community with which it dwells.

ZION and the Courts covers the formative, and most dramatic, years of Church history. But it covers less than half of that history. A legal history of the Church in the 20th century would make fascinating reading, and one dares to hope that Messrs Firmage and Mangrum or some talented acolyte might be persuaded to continue the story.

As Michael Quinn, Richard Van Wagoner, and others have documented, the struggle over polygamy was far from over in 1900. Its selective continuity for a few years after the turn of the century in the Church, and to the present day in the various fundamentalist splinter groups, furnished fodder for many fascinating scenarios in both secular and Church tribunals. These deserve recounting.

Now that the Church has fully regained its trust in the secular Court system, it uses that system with a vigor that Brigham Young and John Taylor would have found incomprehensible.

For example, in *Corporation of the Presiding Bishop v. Amos* (24 June 1987) 483 US ____, 97 L Ed 2d 273, the Church successfully defended its discharge of a Deseret Gym custodian, and others, because of their inability to qualify for temple recommends. In so doing, it established its right (and the right of churches throughout the land) to discriminate in hiring based on religious orthodoxy. More than a trace of irony might be perceived in this use of the courts by the Church to enforce internal discipline almost exactly a century after these same courts were being used by Gentile forces to frustrate such discipline.

And finally, there is the garish, often lurid parade of criminal cases through Utah courts that has fascinated and sometimes astonished the rest of the country. Utah is not the Church, and Church connection to most of these matters is remote at best. But since Church members are involved in most of these cases, there is probably sufficient nexus to justify inclusion in a 20th Century Church/law volume.

If we are to believe what the business journals tell us, Utah has become the Ponzi scheme capital of the known world. A history of these bunco artists, purveying their watered stocks, forged documents, and illusory promises would be illuminating.

A study of the cases involving homicides would be even more illuminating. Some of them, such as the matters centering on Joe Hill, Gary Gilmore, Joseph Paul Franklin, Ted Bundy, Arthur Gary Bishop, and Frances

Schreuder, have only tangential connection to the Church or its history. Others, such as the Ervil LeBaron, Lafferty brothers, Singer-Swapp, and Mark Hofmann affairs, are less distant. Books have been written, some quite celebrated, about certain of these cases. What has not been written is an integrated history and analysis addressing the question of whether more than coincidence is involved in the fact that these truly bizarre cases seem to recur in Utah in a number wildly disproportionate to its population.

There is obviously a second book in these 20th century matters. Because many of these events are recent, it will probably be a more difficult one to write than *Zion in the Courts*. One hopes it will be half as good. ☞

NOTES

1. The authors confirm our suspicions that things did not get appreciably better during the territorial period in Utah. The roster of judicial worthies dispatched from Washington to bring justice to the hinterlands is not graced with the names of many logical contenders for Supreme Court vacancies.

2. The authors do not state whether this archival material is available to Church members generally.

3. One of the significant formal gaffes in the book is the failure to include in the "Abbreviations" listing on pages 377-378, the repeatedly-used designation "Fd." A reader paying close attention on page 265, will discover a parenthetical comment explaining that "Fd." refers to a folder in Ecclesiastical Court Cases, 1839-1965, LDS Church Archives. Many readers will slide over this, and be confused for a hundred pages or so. If there is a second edition, consideration should be given to adding the reference "Fd." to the Abbreviations section.

MOVING?



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LIFE IN DIXIE

A SERMON IN THE DESERT:
BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR IN EARLY ST. GEORGE, UTAH

By Larry M. Logue

University of Illinois Press, 1988, 161 pages, \$19.95



Reviewed By M. Guy Bishop

ENVISION A DESERT community of some 2,400 persons who marry early and often, where the males live long lives but the females die at about the national average, and the populace, predominantly devout churchgoers, tend to unquestioningly accept much of the official doctrine of their faith but have altered or ignored aspects which do not mesh with community thought. This is the St. George, Utah, (ca. 1860-80) described by Professor Logue.

By employing the tools of the demographer as well as the family and local historian, Logue has been able to get at the very roots of life in this late nineteenth-century Mormon Utah community and some of his findings are a bit surprising. For example, Logue contends the ratio of polygamous households to monogamous households was far greater than the estimates rendered in Nels Anderson's *Desert Saints* (1942)—three times higher, in fact! (pp. 49-50, 66n) Logue has used not only manuscript census returns but also family group sheets and other genealogical sources to "catch" more polygamists than Anderson was able to find simply

by using the censuses. An innovative records linkage approach, also used by Lowell "Ben" Bennion, allows students of polygamy to uncover considerably more incidents of plural marriage than was ever before imagined.

Dr. Logue's chapter of fertility rates in this southern Utah town is equally insightful. As with Mormons everywhere, St. George Saints were expected to "fulfill the measure of their creation" by providing tabernacles for waiting spirits—and they seem to have done their very best to fulfill this charge. The overall TFR (total fertility rate) of 8.7 births per 1,000 womanyears (p. 77) was not, however, the most interesting of the author's findings. Rather it was the fact that monogamous couples had a fertility rate comparable to that of polygamous households. Thus, according to Logue, polygamy "did not affect the rate of childbearing" (p. 86), but actually fewer children (per wife, at least) were born in plural marriages since childbearing was often cut short by the death of the husband. At least in the case of St. George, the main effect of polygamy was to bring about early marriage among the women and intense competition for wives among the men. The real determinant for fertility was not plural marriage but the Church-prescribed standard of large families (p. 87).

Dr. Logue's analysis of the extant diaries of

M. GUY BISHOP is the head of research services at the Seaver Center for Western History Research at the Natural History Museum in Los Angeles, California.

St. George Mormons demonstrates that much like Church members today, these Saints eagerly accepted some doctrines while, in fact, rejecting others. The townspeople married early, raised large families in some cases and generally worked to support and strengthen the position of the LDS priesthood in their community. Yet, at the same time, they resisted the Church's attempts to promote the United Order in St. George—due to what Dr. Logue sees as a desire to maintain economic individualism—and they tended to hold views of the postmortal spirit world contrary to standard Church dogma.

While the leadership in Salt Lake City liked to speak of an active spirit world where one jumped right in and continued the work of the kingdom beyond the veil, these weary pioneers of Utah's Dixie preferred to dream of a spirit world which offered rest from one's labors. Says Larry Logue, "it was the spirit world's *difference* from this world that was [their] comfort" (p. 23). Such thinking was more in line with the beliefs of Joseph Smith-era Mormonism. In fact, the Mormons at St. George seem to have been, in many ways, closer to the church of Joseph Smith than of later prophets—an interesting fact in and of itself. But, while these free-spirited southern Utah pioneers may have occasionally balked at following *all* that came forth from the headquarters of Zion, their degree of loyalty far outweighed their level of discord.

Social history and community history are currently very much in vogue as they have swept into American historiography during recent years. Now Professor Logue has placed Mormon history in with similar studies of Colonial Andover, Massachusetts, or nineteenth-century Sugar Creek, Illinois—and it is clearly a step in the right direction. The amount of new knowledge about Mormon social history which could be gained from comparable studies of communities like Independence, Nauvoo, Logan, Nephi, or San Bernardino would greatly enhance the historical understanding of the movement. This book should be read and pondered by scholars and Mormon history buffs alike. ☺

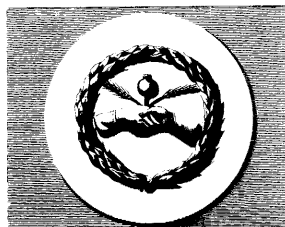
VOICES OF FAITH AND REASON

PERSONAL VOICES

edited by Mary L. Bradford

Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987,

268 pp., \$8.95



Reviewed by William James Kelly

PERSONAL VOICES APPEARED quite some time ago. It was actually released in conjunction with *Dialogue's* twentieth anniversary in 1987. But like the essays contained in *Personal Voices*, this review should be considered timeless. Indeed, the book is a valuable compilation of twenty years worth of personal essays and is a worthwhile addition to any library whether purchased a week or two years after publication.

Many will recognize the contents from the title of the book. For twenty-plus years, *Dialogue* has been giving us excellent feature articles, research and fiction. But perhaps the most important feature of the quarterly journal is its emphasis on the personal essay. The book takes its title from the regular feature of the same name in the journal.

Mary Bradford, the former editor of *Dialogue* and the editor of *Personal Voices* states in the first essay appearing in the book, titled "I, Eye, Aye: A Personal Essay on Personal Essays,"

The busy structure of the modern Church does not lend itself to the rumination required for the birth of that fragile form—the personal essay. Nor do I think essays can grow from the soil of

Mormon life without considerable husbanding.

She goes on to extol the value and necessity of this written form. Unlike a scholarly piece of research, the personal essay cannot "stand upon its footnotes." It is by definition the very personal feelings of the author, trying to capture "their particular observations according to their own slightly eccentric habits." These observations are the worth of personal essays. There is tremendous advantage in our search for truth to be able to view the world through someone else's eyes.

Personal Voices is a chronicle of the past twenty years of Mormon essay writing. It includes essays which have become classics in our culture. One example is Richard Poll's "What the Church Means To People Like Me." Although some agree and others disagree with his delineation of Church members into Liahonas and Iron Rods, the essay provoked a discussion that continues on the campus of Brigham Young University and elsewhere even today. Eugene England's classic "Blessing the Chevrolet" was included, as well as Clifton Jolley's wonderful response, "Selling the Chevrolet: A Moral Exercise"

No such book would be complete without something from Hugh Nibley. *Personal Voices* contains his challenging and poignant BYU commencement address "Leaders to Managers: The Fatal Shift." This contains an explanation

WILLIAM JAMES KELLY was the founding publisher of *The Student Review*, the current independent student magazine at Brigham Young University.

of his earlier commencement remark about "being clothed in the robes of a false priesthood," as well as his famous condemnation of education for the sake of marketability.

Voices contains many essays that recount individuals' experiences under unique circumstances. Among these are Margaret R. Munk's "Service Under Stress: Two Years as a Relief Society President," as well as "The Death of a Son" by Carole Coombs Hansen and "To Be Native American—And Mormon" by Lacey Harris. These are extremely valuable additions which encourage tolerance and understanding for those among us who must deal with similar circumstances.

The most important function of *Personal Voices*, though, is not necessarily the contents of any of the essays, although each essay is very valuable. More important is perhaps the legacy that the essays represent as a whole. For twenty years, *Dialogue* has given us the thoughts and research of individual members of the Church who are trying, as many of us are and will, to reconcile faith and understanding, emotion and reason. The fact that a corpus of over twenty years' worth of essays and articles of this nature exist will encourage us to continue this dialogue. As L. Jackson Newell and Linda King Newell state in their foreword to *Personal Voices*.

For two decades, the journal has encouraged dialogue where monologue has been the rule, it has caused humor to flourish where solemnity has threatened to oppress, and its authors have shown daring where orthodoxy has often been pursued as a fine art The authors whose works are presented here, we believe, are a testament to the unconquerable human mind and to the unquenchable divine spirit.

I agree with the Newells. *Personal Voices* is mandatory reading for those who have never been exposed to these ideas, as well as for the seasoned veteran of *Dialogue* reading. It is especially vital for those who feel they have important thoughts and experiences and who would like to immortalize those thoughts in the form of the personal essay. Just as dialogue is vital to "express the Mormon culture and examine the relevance of religion to secular life," the personal essay is central to dialogue and must be "cultivated like the plants that transformed the desert." As Mary Bradford states, "Both readers and writers must help create the right environment for the growth of this distinctive form which is capable of giving such peculiar and particular pleasure." I am confident that the start *Dialogue* has given us will not be lost, and I look forward to reading *Personal Voices II* twenty years from now. ☐

A CLASH OF VALUES

by Stephen LeSueur

THE 1838 MORMON WAR IN MISSOURI

University of Missouri Press, 1987

286 pages Illus. Index. Bibliography, \$19.95



Reviewed by John Sillito

THIS YEAR MARKS another sesquicentennial for Latter-day Saints, though it will not be observed with as much fanfare as eight years ago. Indeed, it likely will not be celebrated at all. I am referring to the fact that it is 150 years since the violent clashes between Mormons and Missouri vigilantes ultimately led Governor Lilburn Boggs to issue an extermination order. The events which transpired in Missouri—the Mormon Zion—in 1838–39, have become well known in Church history: a time when Mormonism produced some of its first martyrs, and when names like Haun's Mill came to symbolize the oppression of Mormons at the hands of their enemies.

Even though the details of these events have been studied by historians before, Stephen C. LeSueur has produced an important and insightful re-examination of this crucial period in his book *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri*. LeSueur asserts that such a reexamination is now both possible and necessary due to the discovery of new primary sources on the period. At the same time, he argues that a new scholarly treatment of these events is also valuable because it shows that the series of clashes that finally culminated

in a major confrontation "between the Mormons and their Missouri neighbors illustrates the powerful cultural forces that have fostered a tradition of extralegal violence in America."

As LeSueur notes, "rioting and violence" and the existence of vigilante groups was a prevalent fact of life in Jacksonian America. Vigilante activities were generally conservative in purpose, supported by a large percentage of the population, and were considered as an acceptable way to preserve "established customs and practices against persons or groups that were perceived as a threat to society." Moreover, vigilantism was seen as a legitimate response to those threats; for many Americans of the 1830s, "their ultimate source of authority and law," in the "Jacksonian spirit of popular sovereignty." In this sense, it is important to note that vigilantism was very different from mobocracy. Vigilantism was an organized, semi-permanent, extralegal movement that usurped the function of civil authority when a power vacuum occurred. In contrast, mob action was less organized and more spontaneous and ephemeral. Though the terms are often used interchangeably, and incorrectly, there is a vast difference between mobs and vigilante groups. Moreover, vigilante actions often came—as was the case in Missouri—only after the efforts of citizen's committees, who issued broadsides, held meetings and passed resolutions calling on

JOHN SILLITO is archivist at Weber State College.

civil authority to quell a given "threat," seemed ineffectual.

Mormons were a likely target for vigilantes not only because they possessed a different cultural heritage from that of the residents of northwestern Missouri, who tended to be Southern in orientation, but also because they were believed to pose economic, political and demographic threats to civil order. Consequently, the Missouri vigilantes and their supporters regarded their actions against the Mormons as "a supplement to, not a rebellion against," constituted authority in light of an extraordinary combination of conditions and circumstances which the political establishment apparently could not handle.

In addition to providing a contextual understanding of the vigilante actions, LeSueur identifies several other important aspects key to fully understanding the Mormon/Missouri conflict of 1838. In the first place, he shows that Mormon actions and inflamed rhetoric "often contributed to rather than allayed" the fears of Missourians. Second, he sheds important light on the actions of non-Mormon Missourians who initially supported the Saints' cause but ultimately sided with the vigilantes. Moreover, he provides detailed information on the organization and activities of the Danites, operating under the direction of Joseph Smith, who dealt punitively with internal dissenters as well as antagonistic Missourians.

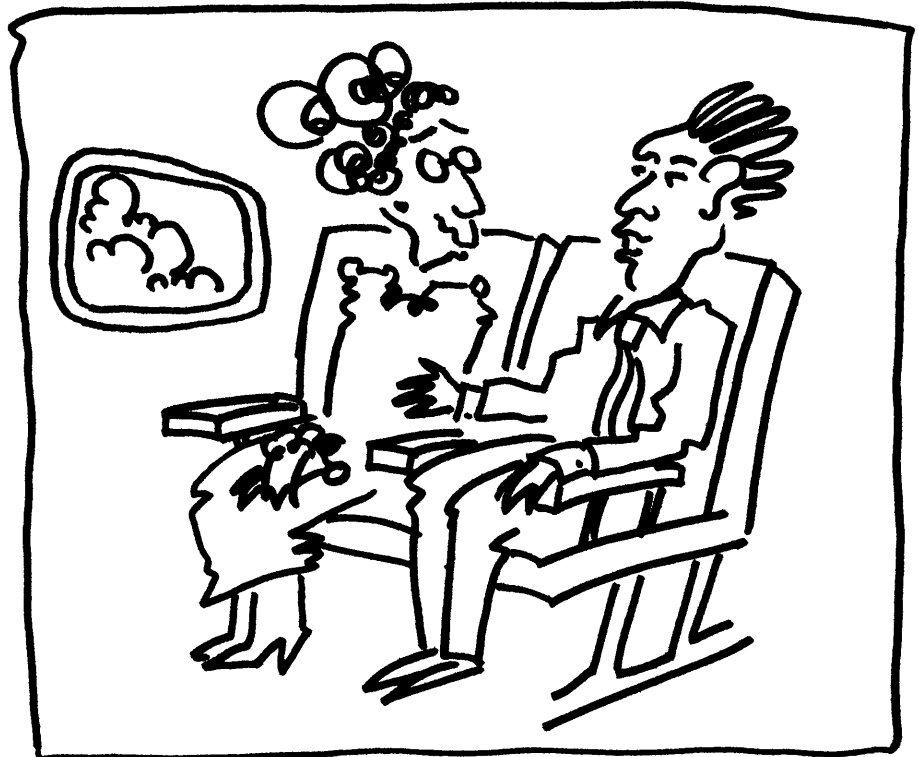
Most significantly, however, LeSueur recognizes that the events of 1838 are best understood as the result of the combination of several related factors—Mormon versus non-Mormon, civil authority versus popular sovereignty, and the validity of extralegal responses to civil threats. Its culmination in the extermination order and expulsion of the Mormons was, LeSueur concludes, "a triumph of popular will over the rule of law." Consequently, LeSueur believes that while the Mormon settlers of Missouri did not receive "fair or just treatment" from the civil authorities who could not suppress the actions of the vigilantes, the disturbances "can best be seen as a working out of dominant forces in American social and political development." Mormons found themselves in "the same position as Indians, blacks, abolitionists and other groups whose activities, values, or physical appearance conflicted with community norms." Indeed, the action is indicative of the tensions that pervaded the decentralized structure of frontier society. As LeSueur views it:

The conflict between the Mormons and their neighbors had many

aspects of a classic frontier confrontation over land, a confrontation with both temporal and spiritual dimensions. For the Mormons, Zion represented both the physical location where the Saints would dwell and the religious community where all would live in the embodiment of their faith. Missourians sought control of the land in order to obtain its economic resources, but they also recognized that whoever controlled the land determined the type of society that developed. Control of the land meant control of community values. In this sense, the Missourians' attachment to the land was, like the Mormons, both temporal and spiritual. Neither group saw its actions as being motivated by greed, by the struggle to control and

exploit land—though each accused the other of such motives. For the Mormons, the conflict was over religious principles; for the non-Mormon vigilantes, it was over community values.

Stephen C. LeSueur's study is an important contribution to our understanding of Mormonism's first decade. It weaves Mormonism into the larger fabric of American society, demonstrating that while the history of the Saints is at times unique, at other times it is reflective of larger societal trends. The University of Missouri Press deserves to be commended as well for publishing such a significant work, and joining the growing ranks of non-Utah/Mormon publishers willing to treat Mormon history as a legitimate field of study which helps us better understand the larger course of American history itself. ☞



"I had the strangest dream last night. Lowell Bennion became head of Welfare Services, Tom Monson became chair of BYU philosophy department, Michael Quinn director of the Historical Department, Mary Bradford Ensign editor, Boyd Packer over BYU social sciences, and Hugh Nibley director of Correlation."

NEWS

AML SYMPOSIUM CONSIDERS VIRGINIA SORENSON AND HER CONTEMPORARIES

By Valerie Holladay

THE ASSOCIATION of Mormon Letters (AML) gathered at Weber State College Library on 28 January 1989 for its annual symposium. Highlighting the theme of Virginia Sorenson and her contemporaries, there were presentations by both professors and students on the works of several Utah authors of a generation ago including Sorenson, Ardyth Kennelly, John D. Fitzgerald, and Juanita Brooks.

After opening comments by 1989 AML President Levi Peterson, the morning panel focused on Sorenson's works, *Where Nothing is Long Ago*, *The Proper Gods*, and *On This Star*. Eugene England described Sorenson not only as a skilled fictionalist but as "a witness" because her short stories contain the piercing truth of the personal essay. Jackie Burns dis-

cussed Sorenson's *The Proper Gods* where the author departs from her usual Mormon historical fiction in telling a tale of a young, modernized Indian who finds peace and stability in his traditions. Both Edward Geary and Linda Berlin defended the merits of *On This Star*, which Berlin felt was both Sorenson's "best and worst" work. After an initial reading Geary found the book flawed but compelling; his second reading yielded strong parallels to Rene Girard's psychological criticism.

During the luncheon the 1988 awards were announced (see sidebar) and new officers were announced: Levi Peterson, president; Bruce Jorgensen, president-elect; William A. Wilson, immediate past president and program chair. Linda Brummet and Dennis M. Clark were added to the execu-

tive committee, which also includes Dean Hughes, Ken Hunsaker, Lowell Durham, Jr., and Linda Sillitoe. The association also announced the formation of reading groups to provide opportunities for authors to present their work in progress. Linda Sillitoe chairs this program.

William Wilson's presidential address, read by Levi Peterson, described how folklore differs from literature in that "the artistic tensions developed in a folklore performance occur directly and dynamically between listener and performer," rather than between the reader and the written lines on the page. He related examples of missionary folklore perpetuated in the mission field and described how these serve both to comfort and to exhort the participants of the folklore performance. As a unique culture, he stated, Mormons have a responsibility to understand their own folklore and the literature of their heritage.

The first afternoon session covered a diverse array of Utah writers. Patricia Truxler-Aikins called Ardyth Kennelly the "most neglected Utah woman writer." The laughter that rippled through the room when she read passages

of Kennelly's *The Peaceable Kingdom* indicated that the neglect was undeserved.

Unlike the other novels discussed at the conference, Audrey Godfrey said the conflict in John D. Fitzgerald's books arises from children testing family-taught principles rather than individuals searching for faith. Although sentimental, Fitzgerald's books, such as *Papa Married a Mormon*, charm and humor the reader.

Karin Anderson England reviewed Juanita Brooks's biography of John D. Lee's seventeenth wife, Emma. Lacking the depth of Brooks's previous works, *Emma Lee* does not explore the questions she might have faced in a challenging society, but it does give a voice to a "vibrant spirit."

The sessions cultivated a desire in many to read these almost forgotten authors. Visits to Benchmark Book's display table proved that most of these out-of-print books are also hard-to-find and the book search requests multiplied.

After examination of these early Utah writers, three current Utah writers—Linda Sillitoe, Dean Hughes, and Gordon Allred—discussed their own writing. Each

SUNSTONE CALENDAR

THE ASSOCIATION OF MORMON COUNSELORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS (AMCAP) spring convention will address the topic "Building Self-Esteem in Families" and feature keynote speaker Dr. Richard L. Bednar followed by a case-oriented, audience-involved workshop designed to make concepts useful in changing families. The conference is open to the public and will be held on 30 March 1989 at the University Park Hotel in Salt Lake City from 3:00 to 9:30 PM. For registration information call the AMCAP office at 801/226-2525.

THE BROOKIE AND D.K. BROWN MEMORIAL FICTION CONTEST deadline for short stories dealing with LDS issues (25 page maximum length) is 15 June 1985. For more details see the announcement in the September 1988 Sunstone or contact the Sunstone Foundation, 331 Rio Grande Street, Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1136 (801/355-5926).

EXPONENT II is sponsoring the second Helen Candland Stark Essay Contest. Submissions are being accepted until 1 June 1989. Essays should be typed and not exceed twelve double-spaced manuscript pages. If possible, please submit essays on a computer disc. *Exponent II*, Box 37, Arlington, MA 02174.

LITERATURE AND BELIEF has announced the Literature and Belief Writing Contest for verified student and non-students in the

following categories: short story, poetry, personal essay, and critical essay. *Literature and Belief* is interested in literature that achieves a meaningful blend of artistic form and moral content. Entries that represent religious values in the Judeo-Christian tradition are encouraged; the sentimental or artlessly preachy are discouraged. Entries must be received before May 15. For more details see previous issue of SUNSTONE or contact: Literature and Belief Writing Contest, 3134 JKHB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION (MHA). The 1989 annual meeting will be held 11-14 May in Quincy, Illinois, at the Holiday Inn, and feature over 50 papers including some at historical sites in Nauvoo, Carthage, and Warsaw. Optional pre- and post-conference tours to Nauvoo are being arranged. The conference promises to be intellectual activity with a commitment to understanding in a climate of shared vision. Program chair: Roger D. Launius, 1001 East Cedar Street, New Baden, IL 62265.

MORMON WOMEN'S FORUM April 5 meeting at 7:00 PM at the University of Utah's Art and Architecture Building will feature Jan Tyler on "Transcending the Cassandra Complex: Overcoming Spiritual Abuse and Abandonment." The May 16 event, "Celebration of Women," will be a reception at the Lion House from 6:00 to 9:00 PM.

acknowledged the difficulties in combining writing with rearing families and voiced the dilemma in producing for both regional and national audiences.

Hughes admitted soberly that "the worst thing about writing is

that it's lonely," adding humorously, "sometimes in the afternoon I wish I could go to a faculty meeting." Sillitoe provided a glimpse into Mark Hofmann, whom she studied as she wrote *Salamander*. Just as writing

is her own creative process, so forgery became Hofmann's creative process. "The figuring it out and devising little things to convince are more fun than the production," she said.

The conference concluded

with an evening buffet and readings by firelight at the home of Candadai and Neila Seshachai, both on the English faculty at Weber State College. The 1988 award winners read selections from their works. ☞

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS 1988 AWARDS

Special Recognition in Biography

Levi S. Peterson

Juanita Brooks: Mormon Woman Historian
(Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988)

Levi Peterson's study of Mormonism's first modern — and most heroically self-made — historian is already acclaimed as the winner of the David W. and Beatrice C. Evans Biography Award, given by the Mountain West Center for Regional Studies, and readers along the Wasatch Front and elsewhere applaud its richly enthralling, highly readable story of the life of a great woman, a fiercely loving and fearlessly critical maverick riding the edge of the herd as long as body and brain would endure. In its breadth and depth of research, its generous and judicious use of that research, and its sky-wide, canyon-deep, native-born sympathy for Juanita Brooks and for the native earth that nourished her and the implanted Mormon community whose history and dynamics she used her life to comprehend, Levi Peterson's *Juanita Brooks: Mormon Woman Historian* honors its subject by emulation, and raises the bar a sizeable notch higher for all who will yet write the stories of Mormon lives.

Special Recognition in Criticism

Wayne C. Booth

The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)

Wayne Booth's *The Company We Keep* is not specifically, not doctrinally a work of "Mormon criticism"; yet it is the work of a Mormon critic who has always acknowledged the roots of his most enduring values, his persistent sense of the world and what is worthy in it, as first nourished in Mormon country and community — in a place some still call "American Fark." In the present situation of literary criticism, which often can seem desiccated by skeptical polemics rather than fertile with plurality, Booth argues learnedly, lucidly, generously, and delicately for not just the relevance but the necessity and centrality of ethical criticism, and demonstrates the athletic complexity of its action, as if his life — as if all our lives — depended on it. And he persuades us that our lives do indeed depend on our alert, quickened ethical relations to those who offer us the community at large, and the smaller community of Mormon letters within it, is one that promises (or threatens) to keep on giving. We thank him heartily, glad of his company.

Special Recognition in Poetry

Clinton F. Larson

Selected Poems of Clinton F. Larson
(Provo: Brigham Young University, 1988)

The poetry of Clinton Larson has been honored before by The Association for Mormon Letters as the best Mormon poetry in a given year, and has been discussed in a Symposium session. This year, prompted by the publication of his *Selected Poems*, edited by David Evans, we honor Clinton Larson for forty years of outstanding contributions to Mormon Letters. He has been praised as one of America's finest Western poets, called the first *real* Mormon poet, the father of modern Mormon writers that emerged in the 1960s and forged new combinations of honesty and faith, formal skill and concern for the truth of Mormon experience. We honor him for his role as a pioneer,

both in conceiving and helping to found the first modern journal of Mormon letter, *Brigham Young University Studies*, and in setting new standards for Mormon writers in the quality and content of his poetry. We honor him for the splendid lyrics that have appeared regularly throughout his career and are gathered in *Selected Poems*. And we honor him that in his fifth decade as a publishing poet he continues to produce good work and to nurture and challenge us all.

An Award in the Personal Essay

Karin Anderson England

"The Man at the Chapel"

Dialogue 21.4 (Winter 1988): 133-41

Mormon literature includes sizeable amounts of serious fiction — especially stories and story-cycles — about missionary experience. And the missionary homecoming talk must be one of our most stable and perennial oral narrative genres, with conventions nearly as fixed as those for public prayer or testimony: the mission is "the best two years" of the elder's or sister's life, and the tale of those years must arrive at a faith-promoting sum of successful conversion stories, in which the missionary serves mainly as a fibre-optic conduit for the signals of the Spirit. So we sit and wonder, What is it really like? Karin England's "The Man at the Chapel" offers us a taste of what a forthright severity of self-scrutiny, it searches experiences that won't easily add up, hard cases of the wandering and lost, the poor, the beaten the dubious in spirit; cases as tough as the one that face Bartleby's employer, and of less certain ending. And though at its end it still fears and trembles, her essay moves from harrowing toward healing.

An Award in the Novel

Ann Edwards Cannon

Cal Cameron by Day, Spider-Man by Night

(New York: Delacorte, 1988)

Although aimed at an adolescent market and thus simple in style and resonant with the idiom of the young, this Delacorte Award-winning first novel's insight and depth, its acute rendition of and wise commentary on the conflicts of the young, make it a novel for adults as well. In the author's skillful hands the ordinary becomes extraordinary. She has created a protagonist of high school age in whom an emerging tolerance and decency triumph over the clannish values of his peers; who learns to understand the sometimes not-so-understanding adults around him and to affirm the outcasts from his own age group; who learns, most notably, to discount the fear of eccentricity. "So we do all sorts of things to show how superior we are," Cal Cameron recognizes; "We treat [the eccentric] like they're not even real — ignore them, laugh at them, trick them into singing private songs." And Cal moves in an authentic contemporary social context: young and old, the personalities with whom he interacts are alive and credible. With quiet eloquence and unflagging perspicacity, the author has revealed, explained and judged attitudes and motives. Although none of her characters are expressly Latter-day Saints, they exist in the familiar setting of Provo, Utah and may easily be construed as Mormons who display, not the peculiarities of their faith, but the traits of a universal humanity.

An Award in Poetry

Dennis Marden Clark

Tinder: answer might be. With an almost Augustinian Dry Poems

(Orem, Utah: United Order Books, 1988)

Dennis Marden Clark's first collection of poems provides an occasion to honor him as one of the best of younger Mormon poets. He is not only an exceptional poet, but has served the cause of poetry — and of Mormon letters — as a fine editor (of poetry for *Sunstone*), anthologist (of a forthcoming collection of Mormon poetry), and critic and bibliographer. And he has now founded his own press for publishing poetry. *Tinder* provides us, in a lovingly chapbook, twenty-one of Dennis Clark's best poems. They reveal the great range of his subject matter, from a sonnet for his daughter's baptism, to an elegy for his brother's deaf ear, to an ode for his father's garden, from immersion in a glacial lake to utter rejection of a nuclear doings on Jackass Flats, Nevada. They show the qualities of his voice, from lyric elegance to down home Orem vernacular, from engaging what he calls the "soil you have banked against your ruin" to "one good joke to get us through today." His work is indeed tinder for our burning.

An Award in the Short Story

John Bennion

"A Court of Love." *Sunstone* 12.2
(March 1988): 30-38.

"A House of Order." *Dialogue* 21.3
(Autumn 1988): 129-48.

"Dust." *Ascent* 14.1 (1988): 1-10.

In three finely-honed stories — each appearing in a separate journal and one of them the 1986 D.K. Brown Fiction Contest winner — John Bennion squarely confronts the age's challenges to the Mormon world view and way of life. Whether themselves transgressors and uncertain believers or their distressed kin, Bennion's protagonists reflect both the conscience of sensitive, good people and sophistication and vulnerability of real twentieth-century human beings. As in much significant fiction, the common objective correlative and concrete occasion of their inner struggle — till now largely skirted by Mormon writers — is sexual distress. The world of insular communality, agrarian values, strong family and marital ties, an accepting if narrow view of sexuality, dogmatic convictions, and individual sacrifice is — in each of their minds — arrestingly opposed to one of rootless personal autonomy, self-centered professionalism, guilt-ridden hedonism, cosmopolitanism, and underlying dread of nuclear destruction (closely paralleling the conventionally religious anticipation of Armageddon). This juxtaposition, dynamic and kaleidoscopic, creates a refracting lens in which Bennion's Mormon readers can easily discern their own uneasy ethnocentric selves. His portraits urge that the choices before us were never more subtle, all-determining, or difficult. In its culturally informed context, Bennion's psychological realism should enhance Mormons' self-understanding and others' recognition of their intrinsic humanity. John Bennion is a talent of great promise — one to be watched with thanks and applause.

LECTURE SERIES EXPLORES THE BOOK OF MORMON

DURING 1988 the Sunstone Foundation sponsored its second Salt Lake-based monthly scripture lecture series related to the adult Sunday School course of study. Last year's Book of Mormon presentations are summarized below. Most of the abstracts have been provided by the authors.

JANUARY

EUGENE ENGLAND: "Why Nephi Killed Laban: Reflections on the Truth and Value of the Book of Mormon." (In a forthcoming *Dialogue*.)

Most attempts to vindicate the claim that the Book of Mormon is a divinely-inspired book, based on the actual history of an ancient culture, have focused mainly on external evidences, parallels in the geographies, cultures, and literatures of the Middle East and ancient America that seem consistent with ancient knowledge and forms to which Joseph Smith could have had access only through revelation. My essay took a somewhat different approach, based essentially on internal evidence provided by the book itself as literature and making use of the insights of two of the finest contemporary literary critics.

Northrop Frye, through close analysis of the Bible's "unique" typological literary structure and its kinds and quality of language, and Rene Girard, through examination of its revealing and healing response to violence, have each come to the conclusion that the Bible is not only unique in its literary qualities but divine. I explored ways that the Book of Mormon attains similar qualities of form and content and thus stands as a second witness not only for Christ, but for the *Logos*, the redeemed and redeeming Word. Central to my essay is a close analysis of Nephi's account of his killing of Laban, which seems to me, whether read as a record of a permanently troubling rationalization or a witness to a troubling Abra-

hamic test, to be a remarkable and true record of an ancient experience with violence.

FEBRUARY

MARK THOMAS: "Lehi's Doctrine of Opposition in its Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Contexts."

Every objective interpretation of the Book of Mormon must begin with an understanding of the language and theology of the early nineteenth century. But the point of interpretation is to render the book intelligible to the twentieth-century reader. If we ignore the original audience, interpretation becomes an arbitrary reflection of the interpreter; if we ignore the modern context, interpretation becomes meaningless.

In 2 Nephi, Lehi (using nineteenth-century theological arguments and concepts) contends that everything necessarily has an opposite. Since every category and definition is exclusive, (determining what is and what is not a member of a certain class or concept), Lehi is correct in stating that, in a loose sense, everything does necessarily have an opposite. But Lehi is saying much more: that opposites exist necessarily. For example, if good exists, then evil *must* of necessity exist.

This is an invalid argument. Existence itself is necessary; opposites, as concepts, do not necessitate their own existence. What Lehi has done is use an revised Pythagorean doctrine of opposition to address the problem of evil implicit in the nineteenth-century theological issues: satisfaction theory of atonement, universalism, and freedom of the will. Lehi's message, albeit theologically outmoded and logically invalid, is still existentially meaningful to the modern reader. If evil exists necessarily, inherent in finitude, it can only be contained, not destroyed. But Lehi and the Book of Mormon

celebrate our human freedom. (In nineteenth-century terms, "we act and are not acted upon.") It is through exercising this freedom that we conquer death, guilt, and meaninglessness.

MARCH

RICHARD L. BUSHMAN: "Book of Mormon History from the Lamanite Perspective."

One of the puzzles of the Book of Mormon is why the Lamanites ceaselessly attack the Nephites year after year, century after century, when almost always they are rebuffed with many casualties. Not until the end of the Book of Mormon are the Lamanites at last successful. The impulse that drove the Lamanites to war on the Nephites can best be understood by looking at the Book of Mormon from the Lamanite perspective. Although Nephites kept the records, the essence of the Lamanite view is recorded. They believed that at the foundation of their nation, the original Nephi deprived Laman of his rightful position as ruler over all the people; moreover, there is evidence that Nephi's domination was associated with the deprivation of pleasure, as on the oceanic voyage to the promised land. Lamanite sufferings could be blamed on the Nephites.

This perspective on national origins was more than a rankling memory that forever irked the Lamanites: it was the founding story of their state, the essence of their identity as a people. Consequently it was a motivating force. Patriotism for the Lamanites impelled them to attack the Nephites, as American patriotism, because of our founding story in the Revolution, impels us to strive for freedom. Lamanite leaders were forever stirring up the people to do battle against the Nephites as American leaders stir us with speeches on freedom when we are going to war. This tradition of the fathers, as the Book of Mormon called it, was deeply imbedded in Lamanite culture. Missionaries to the Lamanites

were nearly as conscientious about refuting this false tradition as they were about preaching the gospel. Lamanite converts had to repudiate their national history as well as believe in Christ. When they did so, they became peace loving and the curse was lifted from them. Conversion to the Nephite perspective on Book of Mormon history thus is part of the redemption of the Lamanites as a people.

APRIL

BLAKE OSTLER: "Scriptural Fundamentalism and the Book of Mormon."

The notion that scriptures are entirely free from what is often called the "philosophy of men" is not tenable in light of modern textual criticism. All scriptural accounts are conditioned by the circumstances surrounding their production, and by the human viewpoint which witnesses the recorded events. In the case of the Bible, the evidence of the human fallibility is clear: Old Testament documents give contradictory reports of the same events, and authorship of certain texts is highly debatable. There are, for example, parts of the Pentateuch which despite tradition cannot be legitimately attributed to Moses (such as the final chapters of Deuteronomy which record Moses' death). When we turn to the New Testament, the case is similar; several Pauline epistles are considered inauthentic; the Gospel of John expands considerably on the words of Jesus, and varies with or contradicts the synoptic tradition theologically and in narrative. All of the evidence suggests a tradition of expanding and updating scripture.

This is exactly what the Book of Mormon suggests we will find in scripture. It repudiates both the narrow fundamentalism which insists on scriptural infallibility and the "God-breathed" status of revelation as divine dictation, or the broad fundamentalism which admits limited fallibility of scripture (in, for instance, corruption in transmission) but maintains the

literal historicity and complete doctrinal harmony of the texts. The Book of Mormon tells of wicked record keepers (Omni) and says that the errors of men may be found in the text (Mormon 8:17). In short, the Book of Mormon informs us that scripture contains human expansion and revision, and we should expect that it will consist of human interpretation of a divine message.

MAY

HUGH NIBLEY: *"The Book of Mormon: Forty Years After."* (Available from F.A.R.M.S., see Sunstone Calendar.)

The purpose of the Book of Mormon is to make all things present to us; it has been edited to delete anything not relevant to our situation. Hence, the parallels that exist between the Book of Mormon and world history in general should be of interest to us not simply as evidences to prove the legitimacy or the fraudulence of the Book of Mormon, but as they relate to us, either to specific current circumstances or to the motifs which repeat historically and inform our culture. Such parallels include: the internal struggle of Enos, which is an example of the young prince coming to terms with himself, and significantly resembles the struggle of his contemporary Gautama, although the spiritual principles derived from the experiences are very different; the contest for the royal flocks at the waters of Sebus, which in every way suggests a deadly ritual game like the Norse brain-ball and the famous ball-court games in ancient Mesoamerica, and reflected in the laser tag of our own enlightened age; the cultic implications of Zoramite corruption (Alma 31) and the following of the harlot Isabel (that being the name of the Phoenician patroness of harlots) and the neopaganism of today's culture; the Gadianton robbers and the marauding brigands and covert government ploys that continue to be a major influence in history; and the warnings about

the lust for money which are as harsh an indictment of our own stratified economy as they are of the culture depicted in the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon's significance is chiefly doctrinal, of course; in it the need to work out our salvation in fear and trembling during our probation is made explicit. The book's lessons converge dramatically on the present scene: the futility of military solutions; the need for personal, individual transformation; and a deep, warm, personal affection miraculously conveyed to the reader personally from the writers.

JUNE

PAUL JAMES TOSCANO: *"The Book of Mormon Concept of Priesthood."* (In a forthcoming SUNSTONE.)

The Book of Mormon is one of the earliest Mormon scriptural texts containing concepts relating to both the structure and the nature of priesthood. It appears that the Book of Mormon view on priesthood is this: God calls his own priests directly. But those called must also be ordained by a holy ordinance, which may involve not only the laying on of hands but symbolic rituals typifying the salvific work of Christ. By this holy ordinance the ones called are also authorized by the divinely acknowledged priestly order to act within the church structure. However, on occasion, certain individuals with unmediated callings (Lehi, Alma, Samuel the Lamanite) are presented as not waiting for ordination before embarking upon their ministries. Ordination, therefore, is not presented as being essential either to create a church or priesthood structure where none before existed, or to preach repentance or teach the gospel, or to castigate an existing ecclesiastical or even political structure that has become rigid or corrupt.

JULY

DAVID P. WRIGHT: *"The Literary Aspects of the Book of Mormon Narrative."*

Through a study of Alma 30, the Korihor story, this paper sought to show that a close reading which pays attention to literary issues can significantly augment our understanding of the Book of Mormon. The paper treated and gave examples of general literary techniques and phenomena such as foreshadowing, ambiguity, repetition, characterization, and the function of illogic. It treated terminological issues such as wordplay and the use of keywords. It also described specific formal features such as resumptive repetition (repeating information from earlier in the story after an excursus to put the narrative back on track), parallelism, and the distribution of cited speech between characters.

One specific example of the paper's concerns is the grand irony that the story contains. Korihor finally had to live—and die—by his own nihilistic philosophy. He taught that a person "fared in this life according to the management of the creature," "prospered according to his genius," "conquered according to his strength," and that "when a man was dead that was the end thereof." After he confessed and was expelled from the community, he had to go from house to house begging for his food and thus manage himself and prosper by such strength as he had. He did not do so well. The implicit message is that humanity cannot fare successfully by their own abilities; they must trust in God and their church leaders. The irony goes deeper. Balancing what Korihor said about the end of man, the story tells us that publishing the anti-Christ's confession "put an end to the iniquity after the manner of Korihor." His death apparently soon after this insured that the matter was settled. Thus when Korihor said, "when a man was dead that was the end thereof," he was right—or almost right. It is not the end of the soul

of man, but the end of the pain that he brings the community of believers. Altogether the paper demonstrated that there is art in the Book of Mormon which is intellectually, not just spiritually, stimulating.

AUGUST

JOHN L. HILTON: *"The Reliability of Wordprint Measurements in 5000-word Texts: A Preliminary Book of Mormon Case Study."* (Available from F.A.R.M.S.)

With the advent of modern computers a new science of literary stylometry or wordprinting has become practical. An ecumenical, inter-disciplinary group of scientists have recently completed a multi-year independent reevaluation of wordprinting, and determined, by rigorous statistical measurement, that contrary to "conventional wisdom," the revised mathematical model of wordprinting does reliably identify which of a suspected group of authors is not the author of a controversial text. When measured correctly these objective determinations can be made notwithstanding normal differences in literary forms, writing times, subject matter, or deliberate intent by the single author to simulate the writings of different people.

After examining a number of 5000-word texts from academic English translations of German novellas written by different authors and all translated by the same translator, it was shown that unique inner-consistent wordprints exist for each German author, independent of each other and the translator.

The Book of Mormon manuscript was sampled with two sets of three 5000-word texts, taken from Nephi and Alma. The six independent within-author tests showed the expected within-author consistency, as the nine between-author tests unambiguously showed the same degree of author independence as was measured in the control study, despite a very small English vocabulary used uniformly

throughout the full manuscript.

Tests between the writings of Oliver Cowdery, Solomon Spaulding, and Joseph Smith all show inner consistency, as well as independence from each other and the Book of Mormon samples.

These initial findings are consistent with the Book of Mormon containing literal translations of the writings of at least two different original authors, expressed by a translator using a very restricted English vocabulary. Further, it is demonstrated that the Nephi and Alma samples were written by different authors, neither of whom was Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, nor Solomon Spaulding.

SEPTEMBER

VAN HALE: *"Defending the Book of Mormon from its History, not its Historicity."*

In my essay, I traced the development of my own belief regarding the Book of Mormon. As a missionary, I was convinced that the authenticity of the Book of Mormon as a historical record had been established by archeology. This belief was modified during my studies at BYU when I determined that there were evidences but no conclusive proof as yet to substantiate the Book of Mormon's historical claims, but I felt that the proof was forthcoming. When I considered that expectation, however, it occurred to me that any conclusive proof would not only support the version of history presented in the Book of Mormon, but also the inescapable supernatural implications of the origins of the book. Such proof seemed doubtful, since the claims of miracles made on behalf of biblical figures such as Moses and Jesus have never been validated by science or history, and in fact the resurrection itself has been disputed since the birth of Christianity. It seems unlikely that suddenly proof of the miraculous will surface today when God has denied it thus far.

It now seems to me that if we wish to find evidence of the divine at work with regard to the Book

of Mormon, we might consider its history rather than its historicity. For various reasons, none of the explanations for the book's origin put forward thus far are satisfactory to me, but the idea that is the most satisfactory is that the Book of Mormon is a divinely inspired work meant to set in motion the chain of events that did in fact follow from it. It has succeeded as a tool for evangelizing, laying the foundation of the Church, and changing millions of lives. As the Bible contains both historical and nonhistorical elements (the sack of Jerusalem and the story of Jonah, for example), so the canon unique to the LDS tradition contains historical episodes in the Doctrine and Covenants, while the Book of Mormon's historicity has always been contested. Yet it is the Book of Mormon, not the D&C, with which people have miraculous and life-changing conversion experiences.

OCTOBER

STEVEN WALKER: *"How to Read the Book of Mormon and Stay Awake."*

Our usual ways of reading the Book of Mormon—as a lesson manual, as a history book—may be the worst possible ways to read it. The Book of Mormon is narrative, and it is better read as narrative. Our misdirected expectations of the text as a theological handbook or historical text make us miss what the book is actually saying, as when we fail to notice that after Nephi's stirring vow to "go and do the thing which the Lord commandeth," Laman has to go.

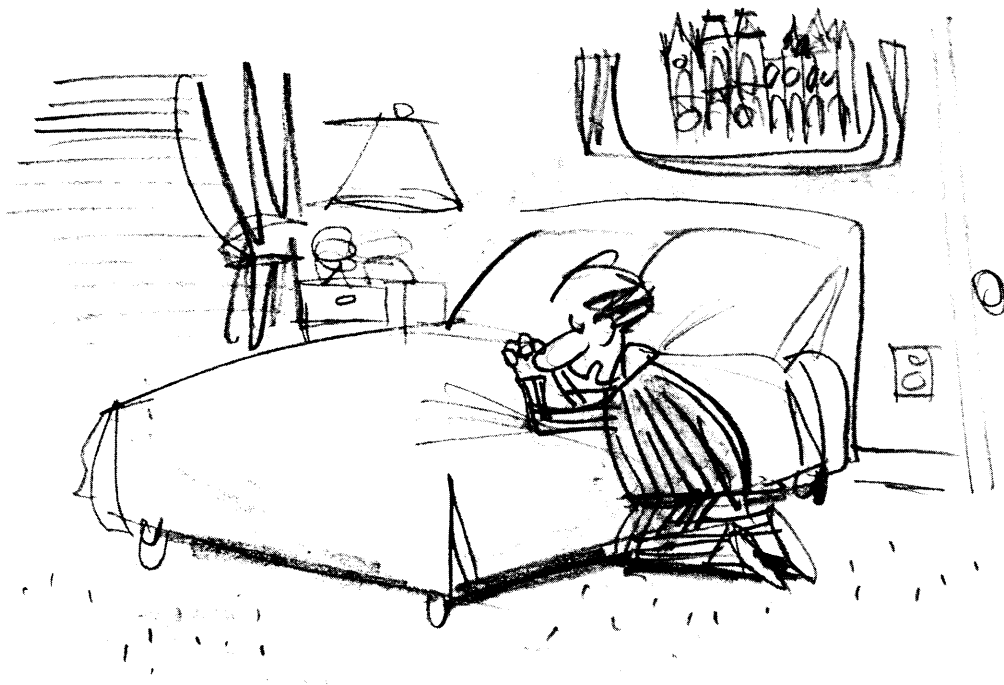
The way to read the Book of Mormon and stay awake is to read it as literature. The literary perspective makes us likelier to understand what the Book of Mormon is saying, and much more likely to care. Literary identification can "liken" the Book of Mormon to us, can bring its people alive as we read ourselves into the book's human situations, its tragedies and its triumphs—even its humor. A literary eye open to such

unlikely aspects of the Book of Mormon as humor can penetrate deep enough between Book of Mormon lines that we begin to catch glimpses not only of the book's profoundest dimensions, but of our own.

NOVEMBER

DANIEL PETERSON: *"The Gadianton Robbers."*

The similarities between the Gadianton Robbers and Freemasons, often pointed out by environmentalist critics who contend that Joseph Smith invented the Book of Mormon and modeled the Gadianton Robbers on Masonry, are not as substantial as has been contended. Much of the evidence brought forward does not meet the issue at all, and those who make the argument often betray a lack of knowledge about the historical periods in question. In fact, there are a number of secret societies which resemble the Gadiantons more than do the Masons; particularly the assassins in the Middle East who were the descendants of a long tradition of



"I don't want much, but I want quality."

such groups in that area.

The details of the Gadiantons' "secret combinations" seem to have been systematically suppressed by the Book of Mormon authors, but there is enough material in the Book of Mormon, in the philosophy of some of their heresiarchs, and in the political intrigues that are recorded, to make a reconstruction of what their society may have been. In some ways it seems like a mirror image of the religion that the Book of Mormon expounds, and a counter-culture which parallels the mainstream; at one point the Gadiantons even seal up their records in a mountain, foreshadowing the fate of the book itself. The military exploits of the Gadiantons read like a textbook case of guerrilla warfare: they succeed when they are fighting in the wilderness, ambushing and not seeking to hold territory; they fail when they engage in sieges or open battle. It would seem that the term "robbers" is a pejorative one for a politico-religious revolutionary group whose social agenda was vehemently opposed by the writers of the Book of Mormon.

DECEMBER

PANEL: "Is the Book of Mormon Ancient or Modern History? A Discussion Focusing on the Book of Mosiah." Panelists: Richard Bushman, Stephen Ricks, Mark Thomas, and Blake Ostler.

Richard Bushman noted that the debate on Book of Mormon historicity has changed from one drawn largely along Mormon/non-Mormon lines to the current situation where some professing Mormons believe the Book of Mormon to be a revelation to Joseph Smith for our time, couched in the form of a historical record. The question of Joseph Smith's calling is no longer the issue that it once was.

This change has grown in part out of historical research, and in part from a new view of how God might choose to reveal himself in the world, Bushman said. Although it may seem extreme and contradictory to many Mor-

mons, this newly developed view has some basis in traditionally accepted ideas. For example, the language of the Book of Mormon has almost always been understood to be Joseph Smith's own; at least this much of the Book of Mormon is accepted as from the nineteenth century.

Again, experience with the Egyptian text of the Book of Abraham has led many to conclude that Joseph Smith did not actually translate the manuscript, but that somehow the text was an occasion for him to receive a much broader revelation not on the papyrus. This, and the discovery that Joseph Smith did not look at the plates when dictating the text of the Book of Mormon have led to the conclusion that the translation was not coming off the plates by means of a divinely aided scholarly process, but was rather arising in Joseph Smith's mind.

Bushman presented these ideas not as his own, but to indicate how the issue of Book of Mormon historicity has changed.

Stephen Ricks contended that the Book of Mormon is a historically authentic ancient document. With the exception of the translation language which is incontestably nineteenth century, he said, he could see no acceptable reason for explaining any element of the Book of Mormon as a nineteenth-century product of Joseph Smith's mind and environment. Parallels between revival nineteenth-century camp meetings and revival language and the King Benjamin address do exist and have been noted. However, he said, the context more strongly parallels the covenant renewal assemblies described in the Old Testament.

Other than those made in the book itself, he said, there are no consistent explanations for the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and its historicity which take all the evidence into consideration. Disagreements on the subject, he said, do not reflect so much a flaw in the reasoning of any party, but rather differences in the assump-

tions underlying that reasoning.

Mark Thomas presented the view that the Book of Mormon must have been written in the nineteenth century because even a loose translation of an ancient document would reveal an ancient theological context. Such would be expressed by the translator selecting the modern theological concept which best matched the ideas in the text. But on all major theological issues (the doctrines of God, humanity, and salvation), Thomas said that the Book of Mormon consistently takes the nineteenth-century position most foreign to the ancient Jewish thought from which the book purports to spring. That Jewish thought is closer to the Unitarian view of God, the New Haven Calvinist view of man as *not* an enemy to God, and a corporate view of salvation. But, said Thomas, the Book of Mormon takes a Trinitarian view of deity, a conservative Arminian position on fallen man, and the evangelical position of individual salvation.

Blake Ostler outlined three assumptions of his approach to the Book of Mormon: (1) there is no human experience without interpretation; (2) revelation is a human experience; and (3) it fol-

lows that revelation involves some human interpretation.

The background of the Book of Mormon is an ancient source, said Ostler, but it reflects modern theological concerns. He said that trusting a God who could fool us the way we must be fooled if the Book of Mormon is entirely modern would be impossible; but it is also impossible, he said, to maintain integrity while ignoring the modern interpolations of quotes from the King James Bible and the highly developed Christian themes which are foreign to what we know of ancient Israel.

Ostler likened the Book of Mormon to the Gospel of John as a largely non-historic but extremely valuable religious document. The Book of Mormon was not detracted from when Joseph Smith added to it from the nineteenth-century context. He said that Smith would have done this, not consciously, but inevitably as part of the translation process; but the expansion should not detract from the significance of the book or our having been enriched by another prophet.

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CHURCH BOMBS

MORMON MURDERS

A 22 January 1988 *Washington Post* story announced that the filming of the CBS mini-series based on the biased *The Mormon Murders* of the Mark Hofmann murders/forges had been postponed due to script rewrites as a result of pressure from wealthy West Coast Mormons. Church and producer said that there was no Church pressure but both admitted that they were working closely together to clear the way for permission to film on Church sites. Mini-series producer Zev Braun said he was considering purchasing television rights to the factually acclaimed *Salamander* to help in the rewrite but insider sources say that is PR talk.

Across town at Twentieth-Century Fox the first draft of the movie screen play loosely based on *A Gathering of Saints* was completed in December and tentatively titled "Salamander Murders." It is written from the viewpoint of a fictional faithful and naive LDS police officer who goes through a crisis of faith as a result of his investigation of the forged documents and the Church's involvement. With the exception of Hofmann and a few others, all historical personalities are given fictional names which frequently combine several real-life individuals; President Gordon Hinckley becomes Clement Niles but Dallin Oaks is "The Apostle."

Meanwhile, it appears that the long-awaited release of the Church's list of factual errors in the Hofmann-related books will now be a full-length book marshalling the Church's enormous resources and will be written by Richard Turley, the top non-General Authority of the Church Historical Department, presenting the Church's position and reportedly including never released documents.

HEDGING THE BET

WHILE THE smoke clears from the Church's covert and unsuccessful campaign against the Idaho Lottery which left LDS donors and other churches dismayed at Church denials of involvement, Albert Guis of Pocatello threw some dust in the air in a letter to the *Idaho Statesman*:

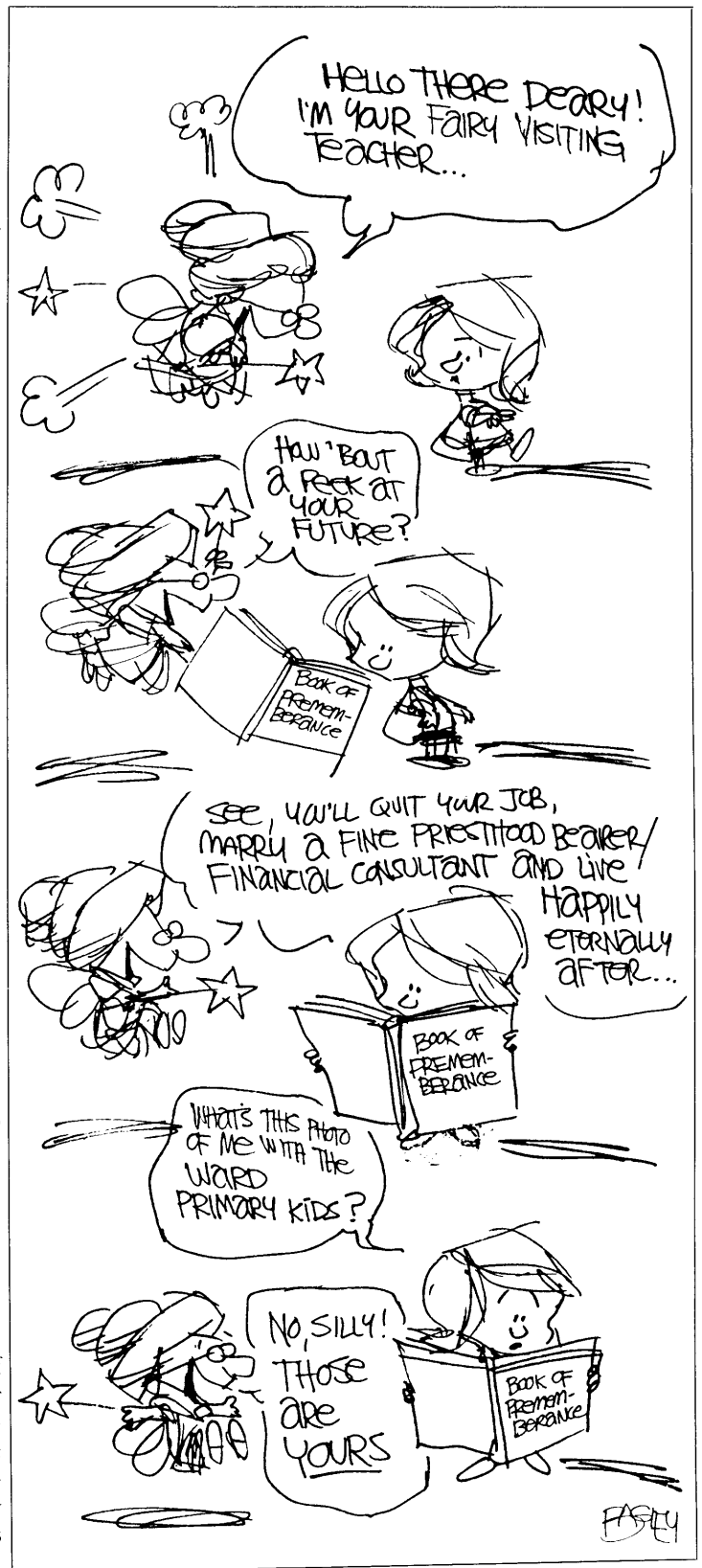
"It is interesting to note how upset some Idaho Mormons were after the November general election. They were upset because the people of Idaho once again voted for a lottery. They and their church leaders were against the Idaho lottery.

"The Mormon church owns KIRO-TV in Seattle. KIRO-TV broadcasts commercials for the Washington State Lottery and airs lottery results during local newscasts. Thus, advertising revenue from the lottery in Washington state is helping the church.

"It is hard to understand why these Mormons are so anti-lottery when their church benefits from the Washington State Lottery."

THE MORMON CORPORATE EMPIRE

THE UNITED States financial community has spent a lot of time analyzing Japanese business management; but if sales are any indication, the Japanese are doing a good deal of their own study—on the Mormon Church. The Japanese edition of the controversial *The Mormon Corporate Empire*, by John Heinerman and Anson Shupe (Beacon Press), has sold in excess of 3,000 copies. A Portuguese edition in Brazil is also rumored to be in preparation. If Brazil emerges as the next major economic power, American financiers might do well to eliminate the middle man and study Mormon management style directly by enrolling in the LDS Business College.



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